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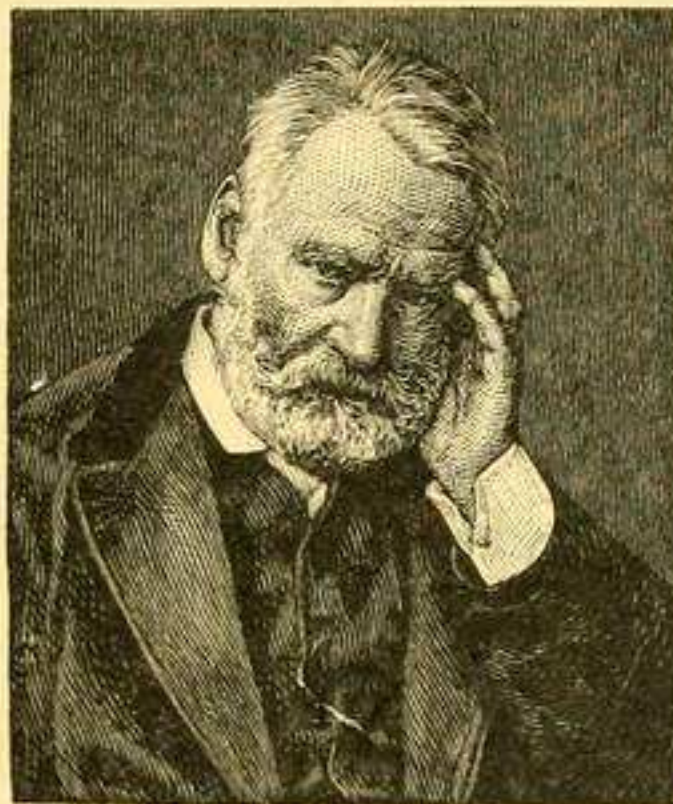
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THE
MAN WHO LAUGHS

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

BY VICTOR HUGO



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

BOSTON
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THE MAN WHO LAUGHS.

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P R E F A C E.

IN England, everything is great, even what is not good, — even Oligarchy. The English Patriciate is the patriciate in the absolute sense of the word. No more illustrious, more terrible, or more vigorous feudality exists. Let us add that this feudality has been useful at times. It is in England that the phenomenon of Seigneurie must be studied, as in France the phenomenon of Royalty must be studied.

The true title of this book should be "Aristocracy." Another book that will follow may, perhaps, be entitled "Monarchy." These two books, if it is given to the author to finish his task, will precede and introduce another, to be called "Ninety-Three."

HAUTEVILLE HOUSE, 1869.

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THE MAN WHO LAUGHS.

PART I.

THE SEA AND THE NIGHT.

I.

TWO PRELIMINARY CHAPTERS.

URSUS.

I.

URSUS and Homo were fast friends. Ursus was a man, Homo a wolf. Their dispositions corresponded. It was the man who had christened the wolf: probably he had also chosen his own name. Having found "Ursus" fit for himself, he had found "Homo" fit for the beast. Man and wolf turned their partnership to account at fairs, at village *fêtes*, at the corners of streets where passers-by throng, and out of the desire which people seem to feel to listen to idle nonsense, and to buy quack medicine. The wolf, gentle and courteously subordinate, diverted the crowd. It is a pleasant thing to behold the tameness of animals. Our greatest delight is to see all the varieties capable of domestication parade before us. It is this feeling that brings so many people out to view a royal *cortége*.

Ursus and Homo went about from cross-road to cross-road, from the High Street of Aberystwith to the High Street of Jedburgh, from country-side to country-side, from shire to shire, from town to town. One market exhausted, they went on to another. Ursus lived in a small van upon wheels, which Homo was civilized enough to draw by day and guard by night. On bad roads, up hills, and where there were too many ruts, or there was too much mud, the man buckled the trace round his neck and pulled fraternally, side by side, with the wolf. They had thus grown old together. They encamped at hap-hazard on a common, in the glade of a wood, on the waste patch of grass where roads intersect, at the outskirts of villages, at the gates of towns, in market-places, in public walks, on the borders of parks, or before the entrances of churches. When the cart drew up on a fair ground, where the gossips ran up open-mouthed and the curious formed a circle round the pair, Ursus harangued and Homo approved. Then Homo, with a bowl in his mouth, politely made a collection among the audience. Thus they earned their livelihood. The wolf was lettered, likewise the man. The wolf had been trained by the man, or had trained himself unassisted, to divers wolfish tricks, which swelled the receipts. "Above all things, do not degenerate into a man," his friend would say to him.

The wolf never bit: the man did, now and then. At least, that was his intention. He was a misanthrope, and to increase his misanthropy he had made himself a juggler: to live, also; for the stomach has to be consulted. Moreover, this juggler-misanthrope, whether to add to the complexity of his being or to perfect it, was a doctor. To be a doctor is nothing: Ursus was also a ventriloquist. You could hear him speak without his moving his lips. He counterfeited, so as to

deceive you, any one's accent or pronunciation. He imitated voices so exactly that you believed you heard the people themselves. All alone he could simulate the murmur of a crowd; and this gave him a right to the title of Engastrimythos, which he took. He reproduced the notes of all kinds of birds, — as of the thrush, the wren, the pipit lark, otherwise called the grey cheeper, and the ring ousel, — all travellers like himself; so that at times, when the fancy struck him, he made you aware either of a public thoroughfare filled with the uproar of men, or of a meadow loud with the voices of beasts, — at one time stormy as a multitude, at another fresh and serene as the dawn. Such gifts, although rare, exist. In the last century a man called Touzel, who imitated the mingled utterances of men and animals, and who counterfeited all the cries of wild beasts, was attached to the person of Buffon, — to serve as a menagerie.

Ursus was sagacious, contradictory, odd, and inclined to the singular expositions which we call fables. He even pretended to believe in them; and this impudence was a part of his humour. He read people's hands; opened books at random and drew conclusions; told fortunes; taught that it is dangerous to meet a black mare, and still more dangerous, as you start on a journey, to hear yourself accosted by one who does not know whither you are going. He called himself a dealer in superstitions. He used to say: "There is one difference between me and the Archbishop of Canterbury: I avow what I am." Hence it was that the archbishop, justly indignant, summoned him before him one day; but Ursus cleverly disarmed his Grace by reciting a sermon he had composed upon Christmas-day, which the delighted archbishop learned by heart, and delivered from the pulpit as his own. In consideration thereof, the archbishop pardoned Ursus.

As a doctor, Ursus wrought cures by varied means. He made use of aromatics; he was versed in simples; he made the most of the immense power which lies in a heap of neglected plants, such as the hazel, the catkin, the white alder, the white briony, the mealy-tree, the traveller's joy, the buckthorn. He treated phthisis with the sun-dew; at opportune moments he would use the leaves of the spurge, which plucked at the bottom are a purgative, and plucked at the top an emetic. He cured sore throat by means of the vegetable excrescence called "Jews' ear." He knew the rush which cures the ox, and the mint which cures the horse. He was well acquainted with the beauties and virtues of the herb mandragora, which, as every one knows, is of both sexes. He had many recipes. He cured burns with salamander wool, — of which, according to Pliny, Nero had a napkin. Ursus possessed a retort and a flask; he effected transmutations; he sold panaceas. It was said that he had once been for a short time in Bedlam; they had done him the honour to take him for a madman, but had set him free on discovering that he was only a poet. This story was probably not true; we all have to submit to some such absurd reports about ourselves.

The fact is, Ursus was a bit of a savant, a man of taste, and an old Latin poet. He was skilled in two forms of verse, — he Hippocratized and he Pindarized. He could have vied in bombast with Rapin and Vida. He could have composed Jesuit tragedies in a style no less successful than that of Father Bouhours. It followed from his familiarity with the venerable rhythms and metres of the ancients that he had peculiar figures of speech, and a whole family of classical metaphors at his command. He would say of a mother followed by her two daughters, "There is a dactyl;" of a father preceded by his two sons, "There is an anapæst;" and

of a little child walking between its grandmother and grandfather, "There is an amphimacer." So much knowledge could only end in starvation. The school of Salerno says, "Eat little and often." Ursus ate little and seldom, thus obeying one half the precept and disobeying the other; but this was the fault of the public, who did not always flock to hear him, and who did not often buy.

Ursus was wont to say: "The expectoration of a sentence is a relief. The wolf is comforted by its howl, the sheep by its wool, the forest by its finch, woman by her love, and the philosopher by his epiphomena." Ursus at a pinch composed comedies, which he all but acted in recital; this helped to sell the drugs. Among other works, he composed an heroic pastoral in honour of Sir Hugh Middleton, who in 1608 brought a river to London. The river was lying peacefully in Hertfordshire, twenty miles from London: the knight came and took possession of it. He brought a brigade of six hundred men, armed with shovels and pickaxes; set to breaking up the ground, scooping it out in one place, raising it in another, — now thirty feet high, now twenty feet deep; made wooden aqueducts high in air; and at different points constructed eight hundred bridges of stone, bricks, and timber. One fine morning the river entered London, which was short of water. Ursus transformed all these vulgar details into a fine Eclogue between the Thames and the New River, in which the former invited the latter to come to him, saying, "I am too old to please women, but I am rich enough to pay them," — an ingenious and gallant conceit to indicate how Sir Hugh Middleton had completed the work at his own expense.

Ursus was great in soliloquy. Of a disposition at once unsociable and talkative, desiring to see no one,

yet longing to converse with some one, he solved the difficulty by talking to himself. Any one who has lived a solitary life knows how deeply seated monologue is in one's nature. Speech imprisoned longs to find a vent. To harangue space is an outlet. To talk out loud when one is alone is as it were to have a dialogue with the divinity within. It was, as is well known, a habit with Socrates; he declaimed to himself. Luther did the same. Ursus took after those great men. He had the hermaphrodite faculty of being his own audience. He questioned himself, answered himself, praised himself, blamed himself. You heard him in the street soliloquizing in his van. The passers-by, who have their own way of appreciating clever people, used to say, "He is an idiot." As we have just observed, he abused himself at times; but there were times also when he did himself justice. One day, in one of these allocutions addressed to himself, he was heard to cry out: "I have studied vegetation in all its mysteries, — in the stalk, in the bud, in the sepal, in the stamen, in the carpel, in the ovule, in the spore, in the theca, and in the apothecium. I have thoroughly sifted chromatics, osmosis, and chymosis; that is to say, the formation of colours, of smell, and of taste." There was something fatuous, doubtless, in this certificate which Ursus gave to Ursus; but let those who have thoroughly sifted chromatics, osmosis, and chymosis cast the first stone at him.

Fortunately, Ursus had never gone into the Low Countries; there they would certainly have weighed him, to ascertain whether he was of the normal weight, above or below which a man is a sorcerer. In Holland this weight was sagely fixed by law. Nothing was simpler or more ingenious. It was a clear test. They put you in a scale, and the evidence was conclusive. Too

heavy, you were hanged; too light, you were burned. To this day the scales in which sorcerers were weighed may be seen at Oudewater; but they are now used for weighing cheeses. How religion has degenerated! Ursus would certainly have had a crow to pluck with those scales. In his travels he kept away from Holland, and he was wise. Indeed, we believe that he never roved beyond the limits of Great Britain.

However this may have been, he was very poor and morose; and having made the acquaintance of Homo in a wood, a taste for a wandering life came over him. So he took the wolf into partnership, and with him went forth on the highways, living in the open air the great life of chance. He had a great deal of industry and caution, and great skill in everything connected with healing operations, restoring the sick to health, and working wonders peculiar to himself. He was considered a clever mountebank and a good doctor. As may be imagined, he passed for a wizard as well: not much indeed,—only a little; for it was unwholesome in those days to be considered a friend of the devil. To tell the truth, Ursus, by his passion for pharmacy and his love of plants, laid himself open to suspicion, seeing that he often went to gather herbs in rough thickets where Lucifer's salads grew, and where, as has been proved by the Counsellor De l'Ancre, there is a risk of meeting in the evening mist a man who comes out of the earth, "blind in the right eye, bare-footed, without a cloak, and with a sword by his side." But for the matter of that, Ursus, although eccentric in manner and disposition, was too good a fellow to invoke or disperse hail, to make faces appear, to kill a man with the torment of excessive dancing, to suggest dreams fair or foul and full of terror, and to cause the birth of cocks with four wings. He had no such mischievous tricks. He was incapable of

certain abominations, — such for instance as speaking German, Hebrew, or Greek, without having learned them, which is a sign of unpardonable wickedness, or of a natural infirmity proceeding from a morbid humour. If Ursus spoke Latin, it was because he knew it. He would never have allowed himself to speak Syriac, which he did not know. Besides, it is asserted that Syriac is the language spoken in the midnight meetings at which uncanny people worship the devil. In medicine, he justly preferred Galen to Cardan, — Cardan, although a learned man, being but an earthworm in comparison with Galen.

To sum up, Ursus was not one of those persons who live in fear of the police. His van was long enough and wide enough to allow of his lying down in it on a box containing his not very sumptuous apparel. He owned a lantern, several wigs, and some utensils suspended from nails, among which were musical instruments. He possessed, besides, a bearskin with which he covered himself on his days of grand performance. He called this putting on full dress. He used to say, "I have two skins: this is the real one," pointing to the bearskin.

The little house on wheels belonged to himself and to the wolf. Besides his house, his retort, and his wolf, he owned a flute and a violoncello on which he played prettily. He concocted his own elixirs. His wits yielded him enough to sup on sometimes. In the top of his van was a hole, through which the pipe of a cast-iron stove passed so close to his box as to scorch the wood of it. The stove had two compartments: in one of them Ursus cooked his chemicals, and in the other his potatoes. At night the wolf slept under the van, amicably secured by a chain. Homo's hair was black, that of Ursus grey. Ursus was fifty, — unless, indeed, he was sixty. He accepted his destiny to such an extent that, as we have

just seen, he ate potatoes, — the trash on which at that time pigs and convicts were fed. He ate them sadly, but resignedly. He was not tall, — he was long. He was bent and melancholy. The bowed frame of an old man is the settlement in the architecture of life. Nature had formed him for sadness. He found it difficult to smile, and he had never been able to weep; so that he was deprived of the consolation of tears, as well as of the palliative of joy. An old man is a thinking ruin; and such a ruin was Ursus. He had the loquacity of a charlatan, the leanness of a prophet, the irascibility of a charged mine; such was Ursus. In his youth he had been a philosopher in the house of a lord.

This was a hundred and eighty years ago, when men were more like wolves than they are now. Not so very much though.

II.

HOMO was no ordinary wolf. From his appetite for medlars and potatoes he might have been taken for a prairie wolf; from his dark hide, for a lycaon; and from his bark prolonged into a howl, for a Chilian dog. But no one has as yet examined the eyeball of a Chilian dog sufficiently to determine whether he be not a fox; and HOMO was a real wolf. He was five feet long, which is a fine length for a wolf, even in Lithuania; he was very strong; he looked at you askance, which was not his fault; he had a soft tongue, with which he occasionally licked Ursus; he had a narrow brush of short bristles on his backbone, and he was lean with the wholesome leanness of a forest life. Before he knew Ursus and had a carriage to draw, he thought nothing of doing his fifty miles a night. Ursus meeting him in a thicket near a stream of running water had conceived a high opinion

of him from seeing the skill and sagacity with which he fished out crawfish, and welcomed him as an honest and genuine Koupara wolf of the kind called crab-eater.

As a beast of burden, Ursus preferred Homo to a donkey. He would have felt a repugnance to having his hut drawn by an ass; he thought too highly of the ass for that. Moreover, he had observed that the ass, a four-legged thinker little understood by men, has a habit of cocking his ears uneasily when philosophers talk nonsense. In life the ass counts as a third person between our thoughts and ourselves, and acts as a restraint. As a friend, Ursus preferred Homo to a dog, considering that the love of a wolf is more rare.

Hence it was that Homo sufficed for Ursus. Homo was for Ursus more than a companion, he was an analogue. Ursus used to pat the wolf's empty ribs, and say, "I have found the second volume of myself!" Again he said, "When I am dead, any one wishing to know me need only study Homo. I shall leave him as a true copy behind me."

The English law, which is not very lenient to beasts of the forest, might have picked a quarrel with the wolf, and punished him for his assurance in going freely about the towns; but Homo took advantage of the immunity granted by a statute of Edward IV. to servants: "Every servant in attendance on his master is free to come and go." Besides, a certain relaxation of the law had resulted with regard to wolves, in consequence of its being the fashion of the ladies of the Court under the later Stuarts to have, instead of dogs, little wolves, called "adives," about the size of cats, which were brought from Asia at great cost.

Ursus had taught Homo a portion of his accomplishments, — such as to stand upright, to restrain his rage into sulkiness, to growl instead of howl, etc.; and on

his part, the wolf had taught the man what *he* knew, — to do without a roof, without bread and fire, — and to prefer hunger in the woods to slavery in a palace.

This van, which served both as a dwelling and a vehicle, and which had travelled so many different roads without ever leaving Great Britain, had four wheels, with shafts for the wolf and a cross-bar for the man. The cross-bar came into use when the roads were bad. The van was strong, although it was built of light boards like a dove-cote. In front there was a glass door with a little balcony used for orations, which had something of the character of the platform tempered by the air of a pulpit. At the back there was a panelled door. By lowering three steps, which turned on a hinge below the door, access was gained to the hut, which at night was securely fastened with bolt and lock. Rain and snow had fallen plentifully on it; it had been painted, but in what colour it was difficult to say, changes of season being to vans what changes of reign are to courtiers. In front, outside, was a board, — a kind of frontispiece, — on which the following inscription might once have been deciphered; it was in black letters on a white ground, but by degrees the characters had become confused and blurred:—

“By friction, gold loses every year a fourteen hundredth part of its bulk. This is what is called the Wear. Hence it follows that on fourteen hundred millions of gold in circulation throughout the world, one million is lost annually. This million dissolves into dust, flies away, floats about, is reduced to atoms, drugs, weighs down consciences, amalgamates with the souls of the rich whom it renders proud, and with those of the poor whom it renders brutish.”

The inscription, rubbed and blotted by the rain and by the kindness of Nature, was fortunately illegible, for

it is possible that the philosophical remarks concerning the circulation of gold might not have been to the taste of the sheriffs, the provost-marshals, and other big-wigs of the law. English legislation did not trifle in those days. It did not take much to make a man a felon. The magistrates were ferocious by tradition, and cruelty was a matter of routine. The judges of assize increased and multiplied. Jefferies had become a breeder of whelps.

III.

IN the interior of the van there were two other inscriptions. Above the locker, on a whitewashed plank, a hand had written in ink as follows:—

THE ONLY THINGS NECESSARY TO KNOW.

The baron, peer of England, wears a cap with six pearls. The coronet begins with the rank of viscount. The viscount wears a coronet of which the pearls are without number. The earl, a coronet with the pearls upon points, mingled with strawberry leaves placed low between. The marquis, one with pearls and leaves on the same level. The duke, one with strawberry leaves alone,—no pearls. The royal duke, a circlet of crosses and *fleurs-de-lis*. The Prince of Wales, crown like that of the king, but unclosed.

The duke is “most high and most puissant prince,” the marquis and earl “most noble and puissant lord,” the viscount “noble and puissant lord,” the baron “trusty lord.” The duke is “his Grace;” the other Peers their “Lordships.” “Most honourable” is higher than “right honourable.”

Lords who are peers are lords in their own right. Lords who are not peers are lords by courtesy:—there are no real lords, excepting such as are peers.

The House of Lords is a chamber and a court, *Concilium et Curia*, legislature and court of justice. The Commons,

who are the people, when ordered to the bar of the Lords, humbly present themselves bareheaded before the peers, who remain covered. The Commons send up their bills by forty members, who present the bill with three low bows. The Lords send their bills to the Commons by a mere clerk. In case of disagreement, the two Houses confer in the Painted Chamber, the Peers seated and covered, the Commons standing and bareheaded.

Peers go to Parliament in their coaches in file; the Commons do not. Some peers go to Westminster in open four-wheeled chariots. The use of these and of coaches emblazoned with coats-of-arms and coronets is allowed only to Peers, and forms a portion of their dignity.

Barons have the same rank as bishops. To be a baron peer of England, it is necessary to be in possession of a tenure from the king *per Baroniam integram*, by full barony. The full barony consists of thirteen knights' fees and one third part, each knight's fee being of the value of twenty pounds sterling, which makes in all four hundred marks. The head of a barony (*caput baroniæ*) is a castle disposed by inheritance, as England herself,—that is to say, descending to daughters if there be no sons, and in that case going to the eldest daughter, *cæteris filiabus aliundè satisfactis*.¹

Barons have the degree of lord,—in Saxon, *laford*; *dominus* in high Latin; *Lordus* in low Latin. The eldest and younger sons of viscounts and barons are the first esquires in the kingdom. The eldest sons of peers take precedence of knights of the garter. The younger sons do not. The eldest son of a viscount comes after all barons, and precedes all baronets. Every daughter of a peer is a "Lady." Other English girls are plain "Mistress."

All judges rank below peers. The sergeant wears a lamb-skin tippet; the judge one of vair, *de minuto vario*, made up of a variety of little white furs, always excepting ermine. Ermine is reserved for peers and the king.

¹ As much as to say, the other daughters are provided for as best may be. (Note by Ursus on the margin of the wall.)

A lord never takes an oath, either to the crown or the law. His word suffices; he says, "Upon my honour."

By a law of Edward the Sixth, peers have the privilege of committing manslaughter. A peer who kills a man without premeditation is not prosecuted.

The persons of peers are inviolable. A peer cannot be held in durance, save in the Tower of London. A writ of *supplicavit* cannot be granted against a peer. A peer sent for by the king has the right to kill one or two deer in the royal park. A peer holds in his castle a baron's court of justice. It is unworthy of a peer to walk the street in a cloak, followed by two footmen; he should only show himself attended by a great train of gentlemen of his household. A peer can be amerced only by his peers, and never to any greater amount than five pounds, excepting in the case of a duke, who can be amerced ten. A peer may retain six aliens born, any other Englishman but four. A peer can have wine custom-free; an earl eight tuns. A peer is alone exempt from presenting himself before the sheriff of the circuit. A peer cannot be assessed towards the militia. When it pleases a peer he raises a regiment and gives it to the king; thus have done their graces the Dukes of Athol, Hamilton, and Northumberland. A peer can hold only of a peer; in a civil cause he can demand the adjournment of the case, if there be not at least one knight on the jury. A peer nominates his own chaplains; a baron appoints three chaplains, a viscount four, an earl and a marquis five, a duke six. A peer cannot be put to the rack, even for high treason. A peer cannot be branded on the hand. A peer is a clerk, though he knows not how to read; in law he knows.

A duke has a right to a canopy, or cloth of state, in all places where the king is not present; a viscount may have one in his house; a baron has a cover of assay, which may be held under his cup while he drinks. A baroness has the right to have her train borne by a man in the presence of a viscountess.

Eighty-six tables, with five hundred dishes, are served every day in the royal palace at each meal.

If a plebeian strike a lord, his hand is cut off.

A lord is very nearly a king; the king is very nearly a god.

The earth is a lordship.

The English address God as "my lord!"

Opposite this writing was written a second one, in the same fashion, which ran thus:—

SATISFACTION WHICH MUST SUFFICE THOSE WHO
HAVE NOTHING.

Henry Auverquerque, Earl of Grantham, who sits in the House of Lords between the Earl of Jersey and the Earl of Greenwich, has a hundred thousand a year. To his lordship belongs the palace of Grantham Terrace, built all of marble and famous for what is called the labyrinth of passages,—a curiosity which contains the scarlet corridor in marble of Sarancolin; the brown corridor in lumachel of Astracan; the white corridor in marble of Lani; the black corridor in marble of Alabanda; the grey corridor in marble of Staremme; the yellow corridor in marble of Hesse; the green corridor in marble of the Tyrol; the red corridor, half cherry-spotted marble of Bohemia, half lumachel of Cordova; the blue corridor in turquin of Genoa; the violet corridor in granite of Catalonia; the mourning-hued corridor veined black and white in slate of Murviedro; the pink corridor in cipolin of the Alps; the pearl corridor in lumachel of Nonetta; and the corridor of all colours, called "the courtiers' corridor," in motley.

Richard Lowther, Viscount Lonsdale, owns Lowther in Westmoreland, which has a magnificent approach, and a flight of entrance steps which seems to invite the ingress of kings.

Richard, Earl of Scarborough, Viscount and Baron Lumley of Lumley Castle, Viscount Lumley of Waterford in Ireland, and Lord Lieutenant and Vice-Admiral of the county of Northumberland and of Durham, both city and county, owns the

double castleward of old and new Sandbeck, where you admire a superb railing, in the form of a semicircle, surrounding the basin of a matchless fountain. He has, besides, his castle of Lumley.

Robert Darcy, Earl of Holderness, has his domain of Holderness, with baronial towers, and large gardens laid out in French fashion, where he drives in his coach-and-six, preceded by two outriders, as becomes a peer of England.

Charles Beauclerc, Duke of St. Alban's, Earl of Burford, Baron Heddington, Grand Falconer of England, has an abode at Windsor, regal even in comparison with the king's.

Charles Bodville Robartes, Baron Robartes of Truro, Viscount Bodmin and Earl of Radnor, owns Wimpole in Cambridgeshire, which is really three palaces in one, having three façades, one bowed and two triangular. The approach is by an avenue of trees four deep.

The most noble and most puissant Lord Philip, Baron Herbert of Cardiff, Earl of Montgomery and of Pembroke, Ross of Kendall, Parr, Fitzhugh, Marmion, St. Quentin, and Herbert of Shurland, Warden of the Stannaries in the counties of Cornwall and Devon, hereditary visitor of Jesus College, possesses the wonderful gardens at Wilton, where there are two sheaf-like fountains, finer than those of his most Christian Majesty King Louis XIV. at Versailles.

Charles Seymour, Duke of Somerset, owns Somerset House on the Thames, which is equal to the Villa Pamphili at Rome. On the chimney-piece are seen two porcelain vases of the dynasty of Yuen, which are worth half a million in French money.

In Yorkshire, Arthur, Lord Ingram, Viscount Irwin, has Temple Newsam, which is entered under a triumphal arch, and which has large wide roofs resembling Moorish terraces.

Robert, Lord Ferrers of Chartly, Bouchier and Louvaine, has Staunton Harold in Leicestershire, of which the park is geometrically planned in the shape of a temple with a façade, and in front of the piece of water is the great church with the square belfry, which belongs to his lordship.

In the county of Northampton, Charles Spencer, Earl of

Sunderland, member of His Majesty's Privy Council, possesses Althorp, at the entrance of which is a railing with four columns surmounted by groups in marble.

Laurence Hyde, Earl of Rochester, has, in Surrey, New Park, rendered magnificent by its sculptured pinnacles, its circular lawn belted by trees, and its woodland, at the extremity of which is a little mountain, artistically rounded, and surmounted by a large oak, which can be seen from afar.

Philip Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield, possesses Bretby Hall in Derbyshire, with a splendid clock tower, falconries, warrens, and very fine sheets of water, long, square, and oval, one of which is shaped like a mirror, and has two jets, which throw the water to a great height.

Charles Cornwallis, Baron Cornwallis of Eye, owns Broome Hall, a palace of the fourteenth century.

The most noble Algernon Capel, Viscount Malden, Earl of Essex, has Cashiobury in Hertfordshire, a country-seat which is in the shape of a capital H, and which rejoices sportsmen with its abundance of game.

Charles, Lord Ossulston, owns Darnley in Middlesex, approached by Italian gardens.

James Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, has, seven leagues from London, Hatfield House, with its four lordly pavilions, its belfry in the centre, and its grand courtyard of black and white slabs, like that of St. Germain. This palace, which has a frontage two hundred and seventy-two feet in length, was built in the reign of James I. by the Lord High Treasurer of England, the great-grandfather of the present earl. To be seen there is the bed of one of the Countesses of Salisbury; it is of inestimable value and made entirely of Brazilian wood, which is a panacea against the bites of serpents, and which is called *milhombres*, that is to say "a thousand men." On this bed is inscribed, *Honi soit qui mal y pense*.

Edward Rich, Earl of Warwick and Holland, is owner of Warwick Castle, where whole oaks are burnt in the fireplaces.

In the parish of Sevenoaks, Charles Sackville, Baron Buckhurst, Baron Cranfield, Earl of Dorset and Middlesex,

is owner of Knowle, which is as large as a town and is composed of three palaces standing parallel one behind the other, like ranks of infantry. There are six gables in steps on the principal frontage, and a gate under a keep with four towers.

Thomas Thynne, Baron Thynne of Warminster, and Viscount Weymouth, possesses Longleat, in which there are as many chimneys, cupolas, pinnacles, pavilions, and turrets, as at Chambord, in France, which belongs to the king.

Henry Howard, Earl of Suffolk, owns, twelve leagues from London, the palace of Audley End in Essex, which in grandeur and dignity scarcely yields the palm to the Escorial of the King of Spain.

In Bedfordshire, Wrest House and Park, which is a whole district, enclosed by ditches, walls, woodlands, rivers, and hills, belongs to Henry, Marquis of Kent.

Hampton Court, in Herefordshire, with its strong embattled keep, and its gardens bounded by a piece of water which divides them from the forest, belongs to Thomas, Lord Coningsby.

Grimsthorp, in Lincolnshire, — with its long façade broken by turrets; its park, its fish-ponds, its pheasantries, its sheep-folds, its lawns; its grounds planted with rows of trees; its groves, its walks, its shrubberies; its flower-beds and borders, formed in square and lozenge-shape, and resembling great carpets; its race-courses, and the majestic sweep for carriages to turn in at the entrance of the house, — belongs to Robert, Earl Lindsey, hereditary lord of the forest of Waltham.

Up Park, in Sussex, a square house, with two symmetrical belfried pavilions on each side of the great courtyard, belongs to the Right Honourable Forde, Baron Grey of Werke, Viscount Glendale and Earl of Tankerville.

Newnham Paddox, in Warwickshire, which has two quadrangular fish-ponds and a gabled archway with a large window of four panes, belongs to the Earl of Denbigh, who is also Count von Rheinfelden, in Germany.

Wytham Abbey, in Berkshire, with its French garden in which there are four curiously trimmed arbors, and its great embattled towers supported by two bastions, belongs to Mon-

tagne, Earl of Abingdon, who also owns Rycote, of which he is Baron, and the principal door of which bears the device *Virtus ariete fortior*.

William Cavendish, Duke of Devonshire, has six dwelling-places, of which Chatsworth (two-storied, and of the finest order of Grecian architecture) is one.

The Viscount of Kinalmeaky, who is Earl of Cork, in Ireland, is owner of Burlington House, Piccadilly, with its extensive gardens, reaching to the fields outside London; he is also owner of Chiswick, where there are nine magnificent *corps de logis*; he also owns Londesborough, which is a new house by the side of an old palace.

The Duke of Beaufort owns Chelsea, which contains two Gothic buildings, and a Florentine one; he has also Badminton, in Gloucestershire, a residence from which a number of avenues branch out like rays from a star. The most noble and puissant prince Henry, Duke of Beaufort, is also Marquis and Earl of Worcester, Earl of Glamorgan, Viscount Grosmont, and Baron Herbert of Chepstow, Ragland, and Gower, Baron Beaufort of Caldecott Castle, and Baron de Bottetourt.

John Holles, Duke of Newcastle, and Marquis of Clare, owns Bolsover, with its majestic square keeps; his also, is Haughton, in Nottinghamshire, where a round pyramid, made to imitate the Tower of Babel, stands in the centre of a basin of water.

William, Earl of Craven, Viscount Uffington, and Baron Craven of Hamstead Marshall, owns Combe Abbey in Warwickshire, where is to be seen the finest water-jet in England; and in Berkshire two baronies, Hamstead Marshall, on the façade of which are five Gothic lanterns sunk in the wall, and Ashdown Park, which is a country-seat situate at the point of intersection of cross-roads in the forest.

Linnæus, Lord Clancharlie, Baron Clancharlie and Hunkerville, Marquis of Corleone in Sicily, derives his title from the Castle of Clancharlie, built in 912 by Edward the Elder, as a defence against the Danes. Besides Hunkerville House, in London, which is a palace, he has Corleone Lodge at

Windsor, which is another, and eight castlewards, one at Burton-on-Trent, with a royalty on the carriage of plaster of Paris; then Grumdaith, Humble, Moricambe, Tewardraith, Hell-Kesters (where there is a miraculous well), Phillinmore, with its turf bogs, Reculver, near the ancient city Vagniac, Vinecaunton, on the Moel-eulle Mountain; besides nineteen boroughs and villages with reeves, and the whole of Pen-neth chase, all of which bring his lordship 40,000*l.* a year.

The one hundred and seventy-two peers enjoying their dignities under James II. possess among them altogether a revenue of 1,272,000*l.* sterling a year, which is the eleventh part of the revenue of England.

In the margin, opposite the last name (that of Lin-næus, Lord Clancharlie), there was a note in the handwriting of Ursus:—

“Rebel; in exile; houses, lands, and chattels seques-trated. It is well.”

IV.

URSUS admired Homo. One admires one's counter-part. That is a universal law.

To be always raging inwardly and grumbling out-wardly was the normal condition of Ursus. He was the malcontent of creation. By nature he was a man ever in opposition. He took the world unkindly; he gave his approval to no one and to nothing. The bee did not atone for its sting by its honey-making; a full-blown rose did not absolve the sun for yellow fever and black vomit. It is probable that in secret Ursus criti-cised Providence a good deal. “Evidently,” he would say, “the devil works by a spring, and the mistake that God made is having let go the trigger.” He approved of none but princes, and he had his own peculiar way of

expressing his approbation. One day, when James II. made a gift to the Virgin in a Catholic chapel in Ireland of a massive gold lamp, Ursus, passing that way with Homo, who was more indifferent to such things, burst into loud exclamations of admiration before the crowd, and exclaimed: "It is certain that the blessed Virgin needs a lamp much more than those barefooted children there need shoes."

Such proofs of his loyalty and such evidences of his respect for established powers probably contributed in no small degree to make the magistrates tolerate his vagabond life and his disreputable alliance with a wolf. Sometimes of an evening, through friendly weakness, he allowed Homo to stretch his limbs and wander about. The wolf was incapable of an abuse of confidence, and behaved in society, that is to say among men, with all the meekness of a poodle. All the same, if bad-tempered officials had to be dealt with, difficulties might arise; so Ursus kept the honest wolf chained up as much as possible.

From a political point of view his writing about gold, not very intelligible in itself, and now become undecipherable, was but a smear, and gave no handle to the enemy. Even after the time of James II., and under the "respectable" reign of William and Mary, his caravan might have been seen peacefully going its rounds of the little English country towns. He travelled freely from one end of Great Britain to the other, selling his philtres, and phials, and performing, with the assistance of his wolf, his quack mummeries; and he passed with ease through the meshes of the nets which the police of that period had spread all over England in order to catch wandering gangs, and especially to stop the progress of the Comprachicos.

This was right enough. Ursus belonged to no gang.

Ursus lived with Ursus, a *tête-à-tête*, into which the wolf gently thrust his nose. If Ursus could have had his way, he would have been a Caribbee; that being impossible, he preferred to be alone. The solitary man is a modified savage, accepted by civilization. He who wanders most is most alone; hence his continual change of place. To remain anywhere long, suffocated him with the sense of being tamed. He spent his life in moving on. The sight of towns increased his taste for brambles, thickets, thorns, and caves. His home was the forest. He did not feel much out of his element in the murmur of crowded streets, which is so like the rustling of trees. The crowd to some extent satisfies our taste for the desert. What he disliked most in his van was its having a door and windows, and thus resembling a house. He would have realized his ideal had he been able to put a cave on four wheels and travel in a den.

Ursus did not smile, as we have already said, but he used to laugh, — sometimes, indeed frequently, a bitter laugh. There is consent in a smile, while a laugh is often a refusal. His chief business was to hate the human race. He was implacable in this hatred. Having satisfied himself that human life is a dreadful thing; having observed the superposition of evils, — kings on the people, war on kings, the plague on war, famine on the plague, folly on everything; having proved a certain degree of chastisement in the mere fact of existence; having recognized that death is a deliverance, — when they brought him a sick man he cured him; and he had cordials and beverages to prolong the lives of the old. He put lame cripples on their legs again, and hurled this sarcasm at them: "There, you are on your paws once more; may you walk long in this vale of tears!" When he saw a poor man dying of hunger, he gave him

all the pence he had about him, growling out: "Live on, you wretch! eat! last a long time! It is not I who would shorten your penal servitude." After which, he would rub his hands and say, "I do men all the harm I can."

Through the little window at the back, passers-by could read on the ceiling of the van these words, written within in big letters, but visible from without, —
"URSUS, PHILOSOPHER."

II.

THE COMPRACHICOS.

I.

WHO ever hears the word "Comprachicos" now, and who knows its meaning?

The Comprachicos, or Comprapequeños, were a hideous and nondescript association of wanderers, famous in the seventeenth century, forgotten in the eighteenth, unheard of in the nineteenth. The Comprachicos are like the "succession powder," an ancient social characteristic detail. They are part of old human ugliness. To the great eye of history, which sees everything collectively, the Comprachicos are closely connected with the colossal evil of slavery. Joseph sold by his brethren is one chapter in their history. The Comprachicos have left their traces in the penal laws of Spain and England. You find here and there in the dark confusion of English laws the impress of this horrible truth, like the footprint of a savage in a forest.

Comprachicos, the same as Comprapequeños, is a compound Spanish word signifying "Child-buyers." The Comprachicos traded in children. They bought and sold them. They did not steal them; the kidnapping of children is another branch of industry. And what did they make of these children? Monsters. Why monsters? To laugh at. The populace must needs laugh; and kings too. The mountebank is wanted in the

streets; the jester at the Louvre. The first is called a Clown; the other, a Fool. The efforts of man to provide himself with amusement are at times worthy of the attention of the philosopher.

What are we sketching in these few preliminary pages? A chapter in the most terrible of books,— a book which might be entitled, "The Farming of the Unhappy by the Happy."

II.

A CHILD destined to be a plaything for men, — such a thing has existed; such a thing exists even now. In simple and savage times such a thing constituted a special trade. The seventeenth century, called the great century, was of those times. It was a century very Byzantine in tone. It combined corrupt simplicity with delicate ferocity, — a curious variety of civilization; a tiger with a simper. Madame de Sévigné minces on the subject of the fagot and the wheel. That century traded a good deal in children. Flattering historians have concealed the sore, but have divulged the remedy, — Vincent de Paul.

In order that a human toy should prove a success, he must be taken in hand early. The dwarf must be fashioned when young. We play with childhood. But a well-formed child is not very amusing; a hunchback is better fun.

Hence grew an art. There were trainers who took a man and made him an abortion; they took a face and made a muzzle; they stunted growth; they distorted the features. The artificial production of teratological cases had its rules. It was quite a science; what one can imagine as the antithesis of orthopedy. Where God had

put a look, their art put a squint; where God had made harmony, they made discord; where God had made a perfect picture, they made a caricature; and in the eyes of connoisseurs it was the caricature that was perfect. They debased animals as well; they invented piebald horses. Turenne rode a piebald horse. In our own days do we not dye dogs blue and green? Nature is our canvas. Man has always wished to add something to God's work. Man retouches creation, sometimes for better, sometimes for worse. The Court buffoon was nothing but an attempt to lead man back to the monkey. It was a move in the wrong direction; a masterpiece in retrogression. At the same time they tried to make a man of the monkey. Barbara, Duchess of Cleveland and Countess of Southampton, had a marmoset for a page. Frances Sutton, Baroness Dudley, eighth peeress in the bench of barons, had tea served by a baboon clad in gold brocade, which her ladyship called My Black. Catherine Sedley, Countess of Dorchester used to go and take her seat in parliament in a coach with armorial bearings, behind which stood, with muzzles high up in the air, three Cape monkeys in grand livery. A Duchess of Medina-Celi, at whose toilet Cardinal Pole assisted, had her stockings put on by an ourang-outang. These monkeys thus raised in the social scale were a counterpoise to men brutalized and bestialized. This promiscuousness of man and beast, desired by the great, was especially prominent in the case of the dwarf and the dog. The dwarf never quitted the dog, which was always bigger than himself; the dog was the pair of the dwarf, — it was as if they were coupled with a collar. This juxtaposition is authenticated by a mass of historic records; and notably by the portrait of Jeffrey Hudson, dwarf of Henrietta of France, daughter of Henri IV., and wife of Charles I.

To degrade man tends to deform him. The degradation of his condition was completed by disfigurement. Certain vivisectors of that period succeeded marvellously well in effacing from the human face the divine effigy. Doctor Conquest, member of the Amen-street College, and judicial visitor of the chemists' shops of London, wrote a book in Latin on this pseudo-surgery, the processes of which he describes. If we are to believe Justus of Carrickfergus, the inventor of this branch of surgery was a monk named Avonmore, — an Irish word signifying Great River.

The dwarf of the Elector Palatine, Perkeo, whose effigy (or ghost) springs from a magical box in the cave of Heidelberg, was a remarkable specimen of this science, which was very varied in its applications. It fashioned beings the law of whose existence was hideously simple; it permitted them to suffer, and commanded them to amuse.

III.

THE manufacture of monstrosities was practised on a large scale, and comprised various branches. The Sultan wanted them; so did the Pope, — the one to guard his women, the other to say his prayers. These were of a peculiar kind, incapable of reproduction. Scarcely human beings, they were useful to voluptuousness and to religion. The seraglio and the Sistine Chapel utilized the same species of monsters; fierce in the former case, mild in the latter.

They knew how to produce things in those days which are not produced now; they had talents which we lack, and it is not without reason that some good folk cry out that the decline has come. We no longer know how to

sculpture living human flesh ; this is consequent on the loss of the art of torture. Men were once virtuosos in that respect, but are so no longer ; the art has become so simplified that it will soon disappear altogether. In cutting off the limbs of living men, in opening their bellies and dragging out their entrails, phenomena were grasped on the moment and discoveries made. We are obliged to renounce these experiments now, and are thus deprived of the progress which surgery made by the aid of the executioner.

The vivisection of former days was not limited to the manufacture of phenomena for the market-place, of buffoons for the palace, and eunuchs for sultans and popes. It abounded in varieties. One of its triumphs was the manufacture of cocks for the King of England.

It was the custom, in the palace of the kings of England, to have a sort of watchman who crowed like a cock. This watcher, awake while all others slept, ranged the palace, and raised from hour to hour the cry of the farmyard, repeating it as often as was necessary, and thus supplying the place of a clock. This man had in childhood undergone an operation of the pharynx, which was part of the art described by Dr. Conquest. Under Charles II. the salivation caused by the operation having disgusted the Duchess of Portsmouth, the appointment was indeed preserved, so that the splendour of the crown should not be impaired ; but they got an un-mutilated man to represent the cock. A retired officer was generally selected for this honourable employment. Under James II. the functionary was named William Sampson, Cock, and received for his crow 9*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.* annually.¹ The memoirs of Catherine II. inform us that at St. Petersburg, scarcely a hundred years since,

¹ See Chamberlayne's "Present State of England," part i. chap. xiii., p. 179. 1688.

whenever the czar or czarina was displeased with a Russian prince, he was forced to squat down in the great ante-chamber of the palace, and to remain in that posture a certain number of days, mewing like a cat or clucking like a sitting hen, and pecking his food from the floor. These fashions have passed away; but not so much, perhaps, as one might imagine. Nowadays, courtiers slightly modify their intonation in clucking to please their masters. More than one picks up from the ground — we will not say from the mud — what he eats.

It is very fortunate that kings cannot err. Hence their contradictions never perplex us. In approving always, one is sure to be always right, — which is pleasant. Louis XIV. would not have liked to see at Versailles either an officer acting the cock, or a prince acting the turkey. That which enhanced the royal and imperial dignity in England and Russia would have seemed to Louis the Great incompatible with the crown of St. Louis. We know how intense was his displeasure when Madame Henriette forgot herself so far as to see a hen in a dream, — which was, indeed, a grave breach of good manners in a lady of the Court. When one is of the Court, one should not dream of the courtyard. Bossuet, it may be remembered, was nearly as much scandalized as Louis XIV.

IV.

THE traffic in children in the seventeenth century, as we have already explained, was connected with a trade. The Comprachicos engaged in the traffic and carried on the trade. They bought children, worked a little on the raw material, and re-sold them afterwards.

The vendors were of all kinds, — from the wretched father, getting rid of his family, to the master, utilizing

his stud of slaves. The sale of men was a simple matter. In our own time we have had fighting to maintain this right. Remember that it is less than a century ago that the Elector of Hesse sold his subjects to the King of England, who required men to be killed in America. Kings went to the Elector of Hesse as we go to the butcher to buy meat. The Elector had food for powder in stock, and hung up his subjects in his shop: "Come, buy! they are for sale!" In England, under Jefferies, after the tragical episode of Monmouth, there were many lords and gentlemen beheaded and quartered. Those who were executed left wives and daughters, widows and orphans, whom James II. gave to the queen, his wife; the queen sold these ladies to William Penn. Very likely the king had so much per cent on the transaction. The extraordinary thing is, not that James II. should have sold the women, but that William Penn should have bought them. Penn's purchase is excused, or explained, by the fact that having a wilderness to sow with men, he needed women as farming implements. Her Gracious Majesty made a handsome sum out of these ladies. The young sold dear. We can imagine, with the uneasy feeling which a complicated scandal arouses, that probably some old duchesses were thrown in cheap.

The Comprachicos were also called the Cheylas, — a Hindoo word, which conveys the idea of harrying a nest. For a long time the Comprachicos made only a pretence of concealing themselves. There is sometimes a favouring shadow thrown over iniquitous trades, in which they thrive. In our own day we have seen an association of this kind in Spain, under the direction of the ruffian Ramon Selles, continue from 1834 to 1866, and keep three provinces in terror for thirty years, — Valencia, Alicante, and Murcia. Under the Stuarts, the Com-

prachicos were by no means in bad odour at Court. On occasions they were used for reasons of State. For James II. they were almost an *instrumentum regni*. It was a time when families, which were refractory or in the way, were dismembered; when a descent was cut short; when heirs were suddenly suppressed. At times one branch was defrauded for the profit of another. The Comprachicos had a genius for disfigurement which recommended them to State policy. To disfigure is better than to kill. There was, indeed, the Iron Mask, but that was a dangerous measure. Europe could not be peopled with iron masks, while deformed mountebanks ran about the streets without creating any surprise. Besides, the iron mask is removable; not so the mask of flesh. You are masked forever by your own flesh: what can be more ingenious?

The Comprachicos worked on man as the Chinese work on trees. They had their secrets, as we have said; they had tricks which are now lost arts. A sort of fantastic stunted thing left their hands; it was ridiculous and wonderful. They could touch up a little being with such skill that its father would not have recognized it. Sometimes they left the spine straight and remade the face. Children destined for tumblers had their joints dislocated in a masterly manner; you would have said they had been boned. Thus gymnasts were made. The Comprachicos not only deprived a child of his natural lineaments, not only took away his face from the child, but they also took away his memory. At least they took away all they could of it; the child had no consciousness of the mutilation to which he had been subjected. The frightful operation left its traces on his countenance, but not on his mind. The most he could recall was that one day he had been seized by men; that next he had fallen asleep; and then that he had been

cured. Cured of what, he did not know. Of burnings with sulphur and incisions with the iron he remembered nothing. The Comprachicos deadened the little patient by means of a stupefying powder which was thought to be magical, and which suppressed all pain. This powder has been known from time immemorial in China, and is still employed there. The Chinese have been in advance of us in all our inventions, — printing, artillery, aërostation, chloroform. The difference is that the discovery which at once takes life in Europe and becomes a prodigy and a wonder, in China remains a chrysalis and is preserved in a deathlike state. China is a museum of embryos.

As we are in China, let us linger a moment to note another peculiarity. In China, from time immemorial, they have displayed a marvellous refinement in industry and art. It is the art of moulding a living man. They take a child two or three years old, put him in a more or less grotesque porcelain vase, which is made without top or bottom to allow egress for the head and feet. During the day the vase is set upright, and at night is laid down to allow the child to sleep. Thus the child thickens without growing taller, filling up with his compressed flesh and distorted bones the depressions in the vase. This development in a bottle continues many years. After a certain time it becomes irreparable. When they consider that this is accomplished, and the monster made, they break the vase. The child comes out, — and, behold, there is a man in the shape of a mug!

This is convenient; by ordering your dwarf betimes, you are able to have him of any shape you wish.

V.

JAMES II. tolerated the Comprachicos for the very good reason that he found them useful; at least it happened that he did so more than once.

We do not always disdain to use what we despise. This low trade, an excellent substitute sometimes for the higher one which is called State policy, was censured but not persecuted. There was no surveillance, but a certain amount of attention. Sometimes the king went so far as to avow his complicity; such is the audacity of monarchical terrorism. The disfigured one was marked with the *fleur-de-lis*; they took from him the mark of God, and put on him the mark of the king. Jacob Astley, knight and baronet, lord of Melton Constable, in the county of Norfolk, had in his family a child who had been sold, upon whose forehead the dealer had branded a *fleur-de-lis* with a hot iron. In certain cases in which it was considered desirable to record for some reason the royal origin of the new position made for the child, they used such means. England has always done us the honour to utilize the *fleur-de-lis* for her personal use.

The Comprachicos, allowing for the shade of difference which distinguishes a trade from a fanaticism, were analogous to the Stranglers of India. They lived in gangs, and to facilitate their operations affected somewhat of the Merry-Andrew. They encamped here and there, but were grave and religious, bearing no affinity to other nomads, and were incapable of theft. The people for a long time wrongly confounded them with the Moors of Spain and the Moors of China. The Moors of Spain were counterfeiters; the Moors of China were thieves. There was nothing of the sort about the Com-

prachicos; they were honest folk. Whatever you may think of them, they were sometimes sincerely scrupulous. They pushed open a door, entered, bargained for a child, paid, and departed. All was done with propriety.

They were of all nationalities. English, French, Castilians, Germans, Italians fraternized under the name of Comprachicos. A unity of idea, a unity of superstition, and the pursuit of the same calling make such fusions. In this roving fraternity those of the Mediterranean seaboard represented the East, those of the Atlantic seaboard the West. Many Basques held converse with many Irishmen. The Basque and the Irishman understand each other, they speak the old Punic jargon; add to this the intimate relations of Catholic Ireland with Catholic Spain, — relations such that they resulted in bringing to the gallows in London one who was almost King of Ireland, the Celtic Lord de Brany.

The Comprachicos were rather a fellowship than a tribe; rather a residuum than a fellowship. They were all the riff-raff of the universe, having a crime for their trade. They were a sort of harlequin people, all composed of rags. To gain a recruit was to sew on another tatter. To appear and disappear, to wander about, was the Comprachicos' law of existence. What is barely tolerated cannot take root. Even in kingdoms where their business supplied the Courts, and occasionally served as an auxiliary to the royal power, they were often ill-treated. Kings made use of their art and then sent the artists to the galleys. These inconsistencies belong to the ebb and flow of royal caprice, — "For such is our good will and pleasure."

A rolling stone and a roving trade gather no moss. The Comprachicos were poor. They might have said

what the lean and ragged witch said, when she saw them setting fire to the stake: "Le jeu n'en vaut pas la chandelle." It is possible, nay probable (their chiefs remaining unknown), that the wholesale contractors in the trade were rich. After the lapse of two centuries it would be difficult to throw any light on this point.

They were, as we have said, a fellowship. They had their laws, their oaths, their formulæ, — almost their cabala. Any one nowadays wishing to know all about the Comprachicos, need only go into Biscaya or Galicia; there were many Basques among them, and it is in those mountains that one hears their history. To this day the Comprachicos are spoken of at Oyarzun, at Urbis-tondo, at Leso, at Astigarraga. "Aguardate niño, que voy a llamar al Comprachicos" (Take care, child, or I'll call the Comprachicos) is the cry with which mothers frighten their children in that country.

The Comprachicos, like the Zigeuner and the Gipsies, had appointed places for periodical meetings. Their leaders conferred together from time to time. In the seventeenth century they had four principal points of rendezvous, — one, the pass of Pancorbo in Spain; one, the glade called the Wicked Woman, near Diekirsch, in Germany, where there are two strange bas-reliefs, representing a woman with a head and a man without one; one in France, the hill where the colossal statue of Massue-la-Promesse stood in the old sacred wood of Borvo Tomona, near Bourbonne les Bains; and one in England, behind the garden wall of William Challoner, Squire of Gisborough in Cleveland, Yorkshire.

VI.

THE laws against vagabonds have always been very rigorous in England. In her Gothic legislation England seemed to be inspired with this principle, *Homo errans fera errante peior*. One of the special statutes classifies the man without a home as "more dangerous than the asp, dragon, lynx, or basilisk" (*atrocior aspide, dracone, lynce, et basilico*). For a long time England troubled herself as much concerning the Gipsies, of whom she wished to be rid, as about the wolves of which she had been cleared. In that the Englishman differed from the Irishman, who prayed to the saints for the health of the wolf, and called him "my god-father."

Nevertheless, in the same way that English law (as we have just seen) tolerated the wolf, which was tamed, domesticated, and become in some sort a dog, so it tolerated the regular vagabond, become in some sort a subject. It did not trouble itself about either the mountebank or the travelling barber, the quack doctor, the peddler, or the open-air scholar, as long as they had a trade to live by. Further than this, and with these exceptions, the kind of freedom which exists in the wanderer terrified the law. A tramp was a possible public enemy. That modern thing, the loafer, was then unknown; that ancient thing, the vagrant, was alone understood. A suspicious appearance, that indescribable something which all understand and none can define, was sufficient reason why society should seize a man by the collar and demand, "Where do you live? How do you get your living?" And if he could not answer, harsh penalties awaited him. Iron and fire were in the code: the law practised the cauterization of vagrancy. Hence, throughout English territory a veritable *loi des suspects* was

applicable to vagrants (who, it must be owned, readily became malefactors), and particularly to Gipsies, whose expulsion has erroneously been compared to the expulsion of the Jews and the Moors from Spain, and the Protestants from France. As for us, we do not confound a *battue* with a persecution.

The Comprachicos, we insist, had nothing in common with the Gipsies. The Gipsies were a nation; the Comprachicos were a compound of all nations, — the lees of a horrible vessel full of filthy waters. The Comprachicos had not, like the Gipsies a vernacular of their own; their jargon was a promiscuous collection of idioms; all languages were mixed together in their language; they spoke a medley. Like the Gipsies, they had come to be a people winding through the peoples; but their common tie was association, not race. At all epochs in history one finds in the vast liquid mass which constitutes humanity some of these streams of venomous men exuding poison around them. The Gipsies were a tribe; the Comprachicos, a freemasonry, — a masonry having not a noble aim, but a hideous handicraft. Finally, their religions differed: the Gipsies were Pagans; the Comprachicos were Christians, and more than that, good Christians, as became an association which, although a mixture of all nations, owed its birth to Spain, a devout land. They were more than Christians, they were Catholics; they were more than Catholics, they were Romanists; and they were so devoted in their faith, and so pure, that they refused to associate with the Hungarian nomads of the comitat of Pesth, commanded and led by an old man, having for sceptre a wand with a silver ball, surmounted by the double-headed Austrian eagle. It is true that these Hungarians were schismatics, to the extent of celebrating the Assumption on the 29th of August, which is an abomination.

In England, so long as the Stuarts reigned, the confederation of the Comprachicos was (for motives of which we have already given a glimpse) to a certain extent protected. James II., a devout man, who persecuted the Jews and trampled out the Gipsies, was a good prince to the Comprachicos. We have seen why. The Comprachicos were buyers of the human wares in which he was a dealer. They excelled in disappearances. Disappearances are occasionally necessary for the good of the State. An inconvenient heir of tender age whom they took in hand lost his original shape. This facilitated confiscation; the transfer of titles to favourites was simplified. The Comprachicos were, moreover, very discreet, and very taciturn. They bound themselves to silence and kept their word, which is very necessary in affairs of State. There is scarcely an instance of their having betrayed the secrets of the king. This was, it is true, greatly to their interest; for if the king had lost confidence in them, they would have been in great danger. They were thus of use in a political point of view. Moreover, these artists furnished singers for the Holy Father. The Comprachicos were useful for the "Miserere" of Allegri. They were particularly devoted to the Virgin Mary. All this pleased the Stuarts. James II. could not be hostile to men who carried their devotion to the Virgin to the extent of manufacturing eunuchs. In 1688 there was a change of dynasty in England: Orange supplanted Stuart; William III. replaced James II.

James II. went away to die in exile; miracles were performed on his tomb, and his relics cured the Bishop of Autun of fistula, — a worthy recompense for the Christian virtues of the prince.

William, having neither the same ideas nor the same practices as James, was severe to the Comprachicos. He did his best to crush out the vermin. A statute of the

early part of William and Mary's reign hit the association of child-buyers hard. It was as the blow of a club to the Comprachicos, who were from that time pulverized. By the terms of this statute, those of the fellowship taken and duly convicted were to be branded with a red-hot iron, imprinting "R" on the shoulder, signifying rogue; on the left hand "T," signifying thief; and on the right hand "M," signifying man-slayer. The chiefs, "supposed to be rich, although beggars in appearance," were to be punished in the *collistrigium*, that is, the pillory,—and branded on the forehead with a "P," besides having their goods confiscated and the trees in their woods rooted up. Those who did not inform against the Comprachicos were to be punished by confiscation and imprisonment for life, as for the crime of misprision. As for the women found among these men, they were to be punished by the cucking-stool. This is a sort of see-saw, the name of which is derived from the French word *coquine*, and the German *stuhl*. English law being endowed with remarkable longevity, this punishment for quarrelsome women still exists in English legislation. The cucking-stool is suspended over a river or a pond; the woman is seated upon it. The chair is then allowed to drop into the water, and then pulled out. This dipping of the woman is repeated three times, "to cool her anger," says the commentator, Chamberlayne.

BOOK I.

NIGHT NOT SO BLACK AS MAN.



CHAPTER I.

PORTLAND BILL.

A STRONG north wind blew continuously over the mainland of Europe, and yet more roughly over England, during the entire month of December, 1689, and also the month of January, 1690. Hence the terrible cold weather which caused that winter to be noted as "memorable to the poor" on the margin of the old Bible in the Presbyterian chapel of the Non-jurors in London. Thanks to the lasting qualities of the old monarchical parchment employed in official registers, long lists of poor persons, found dead of famine and cold, are still legible in many local repositories, — particularly in the archives of the Liberty of the Clink, in the borough of Southwark, of Pie Powder Court (which signifies Dusty Feet Court), and in those of Whitechapel Court, held in the village of Stepney by the bailiff of the Lord of the Manor. The Thames was frozen over, — a thing which does not happen once in a century, as ice forms on it with difficulty owing to the action of the sea. Coaches rolled over the frozen river, and a fair was held upon it with booths, bear-baiting and bull-baiting.

An ox was roasted whole on the ice. This thick ice lasted two months. The year 1690 exceeded in severity even the famous winters at the beginning of the seventeenth century so minutely observed by Dr. Gideon Delane, — the same who was, in his quality of apothecary to King James, honoured by the city of London with a bust and a pedestal.

One evening, towards the close of one of the most bitter days of the month of January, 1690, something unusual was going on in one of the numerous inhospitable coves of the Bay of Portland, which caused the sea-gulls and wild geese to scream and circle round its mouth, not daring to re-enter. In this cove, the most dangerous of all which line the bay during the continuance of certain winds, and consequently the most lonely (well suited, by reason of its very danger, for ships in hiding), a little vessel, almost touching the cliff, so deep was the water, was moored to a point of rock. We are wrong in saying, "The night falls;" we should say "The night rises," for it is from the earth that darkness comes. It was already night at the bottom of the cliff; it was still day at the top. Any one approaching the vessel's moorings would have recognized a Biscayan hooker. The sun, concealed all day by the mist, had just set. That deep and sombre melancholy which might be called longing for the absent sun already pervaded the scene. As there was no breeze from the sea, the water of the creek was calm. This was, especially in winter, a lucky exception. Almost all the Portland creeks have sand-bars; and in heavy weather the sea becomes very rough, and, to pass in safety, much skill and practice are necessary. These little ports (ports more in appearance than fact) are of small advantage. They are hazardous to enter, dangerous to leave. This evening, for a wonder, there was no danger.

The Biscay hooker is of an ancient model, now fallen into disuse. This kind of craft, which has done service even in the navy, was stoutly built in its hull, — a boat in size, a ship in strength. It figured in the Armada. Sometimes the war-hooker attained to a high tonnage; thus the "Great Griffin," bearing a captain's flag, and commanded by Lopez de Medina, measured six hundred and fifty good tons, and carried forty guns. But the merchant and contraband hookers were very feeble specimens. Sea-folk held them at their true value, and considered the model a very sorry one. The rigging of the hooker was made of hemp, sometimes with wire inside, which was probably intended as a means, however unscientific, of obtaining indications, in the case of magnetic tension. The lightness of this rigging did not exclude the use of heavy tackle, the *cabrias* of the Spanish galleon, and the *cameli* of the Roman triremes. The helm was very long, which gives the advantage of a long arm of leverage, but the disadvantage of a small arc of effort. Two wheels in two pulleys at the end of the tiller corrected this defect, and compensated to some extent for the loss of strength. The compass was well housed in a perfectly square case, and well balanced by its two copper frames placed horizontally, one inside the other, on little bolts, as in Cardan's lamps. There were both science and cunning in the construction of the hooker, but untutored science and barbarous cunning. The hooker was primitive, like the praam and the canoe; was akin to the praam in stability and to the canoe in swiftness; and, like all vessels born of the instinct of the pirate and fisherman, it had remarkable sea-going qualities, and was equally well suited to land-locked and to open waters. Its system of sails, complicated in stays and very peculiar, allowed of its navigating the close bays of Asturias (which are little more than

enclosed basins, as Pasages for instance) as well as the open sea. It could sail round a lake, and sail round the world, — a strange craft, as good for a pond as for a storm. The hooker is among vessels what the wagtail is among birds, — one of the smallest and yet one of the boldest. The wagtail perching on a reed scarcely bends it, and flying away crosses the ocean.

The hooker of the poorest Biscayan was gilded and painted. Tattooing was also one of the accomplishments of these people, who are still to some extent savage in their tastes. The superb colouring of their mountains, varied by dazzling snows and emerald meadows, teaches them the wonderful charm that ornamentation exerts. They are poverty-stricken and yet magnificent; they put coats-of-arms on their cottages; they have huge asses, which they bedizen with bells, and huge oxen, on which they put gay head-dresses of feathers. Their coaches, the wheels of which you can hear creaking two leagues off, are illuminated, carved, and decked with ribbons. A cobbler has a bas-relief on his door; it is only St. Crispin and an old shoe, but it is in stone. They trim their leathern jackets with lace. They do not mend their rags, but they embroider them. The Basques are like the Greeks, children of the sun; while the Valencian wraps himself, bare and sad, in his mantle of russet wool, with a hole to pass his head through, the natives of Galicia and Biscay delight in fine linen shirts, bleached in the dew. Their thresholds and their windows teem with fair and fresh faces, laughing under garlands of maize; a joyous and proud serenity shines out in their ingenious arts, in their trades, in their customs, in the dress of their maidens, in their songs. The mountain, that colossal ruin, is all aglow in Biscay: the sun's rays penetrate every nook and crevice. The wild *jaizquivel* is full of idylls. Biscay

is Pyrenean grace as Savoy represents Alpine grace. With dangerous bays, with storms, with clouds, with flying spray, with the raging of the waves and winds, with terror, with uproar, are mingled boat-women crowned with roses. He who has seen the Basque country once longs to see it again. It is a favoured land, — two harvests a year; villages resonant and gay; a stately poverty; all Sunday the sound of guitars, dancing, castanets, love-making; houses clean and bright; storks in the belfries.

But let us return to Portland, that rugged mountain in the sea.

The peninsula of Portland, viewed geometrically, presents the appearance of a bird's head, of which the bill is turned towards the ocean, the back of the head towards Weymouth; the isthmus is its neck. Portland exists now only for trade. The value of the Portland stone was discovered by quarrymen and plasterers about the middle of the seventeenth century. Ever since that period what is called Roman cement has been made of the Portland stone, — a useful industry, enriching the district but disfiguring the bay. Two hundred years ago these coasts were being eaten away as a cliff; to-day, as a quarry. The pick bites meanly, the wave grandly; hence a diminution of beauty. To the magnificent ravages of the ocean have succeeded the measured strokes of men. These measured strokes have annihilated the creek where the Biscay hooker was moored. To find any vestige of the little anchorage, now destroyed, the eastern side of the peninsula should be searched, towards the point beyond Folly Pier and Dirdle Pier, beyond Wakeham even, between the place called Church Hope and the place called Southwell.

The creek, walled in on all sides by cliffs much taller than its width, was becoming more and more veiled in

shadow. The misty gloom, usual at twilight, became thicker; it was like the growth of darkness at the bottom of a well. The opening of the creek seaward, a narrow passage, traced on the almost night-black interior a pallid rift where the waves were moving. You must have been quite close to perceive the hooker moored to the rocks, and, as it were, hidden by the great mantle of shadow. A plank extending to a low and level projection of the cliff, the only point on which a landing could be made, placed the vessel in communication with the land. Dark figures were passing and repassing one another on this tottering gangway, and in the shadow beyond several persons could be dimly discerned standing on the deck.

It was less cold in the creek than out at sea, thanks to the screen of rock rising to the north of the basin, which did not, however, prevent the people from shivering. They were hurrying. The effect of the twilight defined the forms as though they had been punched out with a tool. Certain indentations in their clothes were visible, and showed that they belonged to the class called in England, "The ragged." The windings of the pathway could be vaguely distinguished on the side of the cliff. This pathway, full of curves and angles, almost perpendicular, and better adapted for goats than men, terminated at the platform where the plank was placed. The pathways of cliffs ordinarily imply a not very inviting declivity; they plunge downward rather than slope. This one — probably some ramification of a road on the plain above — was disagreeable to look at, so steep was it. From below you saw it attain by a series of zig-zags the summit of the cliff where it passed out on to the high plateau through a cut in the rock; and the passengers for whom the vessel was waiting must have come by this path.

No step, no noise, no breath was heard except the stir of embarkation which was being made in the creek. At the other side of the roads, at the entrance of Ringstead Bay, you could just distinguish a fleet of shark-fishing boats, which were evidently out of their reckoning. These polar boats had been driven from Danish into English waters by the whims of the sea. Northerly winds play these tricks on fishermen. They had just taken refuge in the anchorage of Portland, — a sign of bad weather expected and danger out at sea. They were now engaged in casting anchor. The principal boat was placed in front after the old custom in Norwegian flotillas, all her rigging standing out black, above the sea; while in front might be seen the iron rack, loaded with all kinds of hooks and harpoons destined for the Greenland shark, the dog-fish, and the spinous shark, as well as the nets to pick up the sun-fish. Except a few other craft, all driven into the same corner, the eye beheld nothing on the vast horizon. Not a house, not a ship. The coast in those days was not inhabited, and the roads, at that season, were not safe.

In spite of the ominous indications of the weather, the persons who were going to sail away in the Biscayan *urca*, hastened on the hour of departure. They formed a busy and confused group. To distinguish one from another was difficult; to tell whether they were old or young was impossible. The dim evening light intermixed and blurred them; the mask of shadow was over their faces. There were eight of them, and there were apparently one or two women among them whom it was hard to distinguish under the rags and tatters in which the group was attired, — clothes which were no longer either man's or woman's. Rags have no sex. A smaller shadow, flitting to and fro among the large ones, indicated either a dwarf or a child. It was a child.

CHAPTER II.

LEFT ALONE.

A CLOSE observer might have noticed that all wore long cloaks, torn and patched, but covering them, and if need be concealing them up to the very eyes, — useful alike against the north wind and curiosity. They moved with ease under these cloaks. The greater number wore a handkerchief tied round the head, — a sort of rudiment which marks the commencement of the turban in Spain. This head-dress was nothing unusual in England. At that time the South was in fashion in the North; perhaps this was connected with the fact that the North was beating the South. It conquered and admired. After the defeat of the Armada, Castilian was considered in the halls of Elizabeth as the court language. To speak English in the palace of the Queen of England was deemed almost an impropriety. To adopt partially the manners of those upon whom we impose our laws is very common. It was thus that Castilian fashions penetrated into England; while as an offset, English interests crept into Spain.

One of the men in the group embarking appeared to be a chief. He had sandals on his feet, and was bedizened with gold-lace tatters and a tinsel waistcoat, shining under his cloak like the belly of a fish. Another pulled down over his face a huge piece of felt, cut like a sombrero; this felt had no hole for a pipe, thus indicating the wearer to be a man of letters.

On the principle that a man's vest is a child's cloak, the child was clad in a sailor's jacket, which reached to his knees. By his height you would have supposed him to be a boy of ten or eleven; his feet were bare.

The crew of the hooker was composed of a captain and two sailors. The hooker had apparently come from Spain, and was about to return thither. She was beyond a doubt engaged in a stealthy service from one coast to the other. The persons embarking in her whispered among themselves. The whisperings interchanged by these creatures was a composite sound,—now a word of Spanish, then of German, then of French, then of Gaelic, at times of Basque. It was either a patois or a slang. They appeared to be of all nationalities, and yet to belong to the same band. The motley group appeared to be a company of comrades, perhaps a gang of accomplices. The crew probably belonged to the same brotherhood.

If there had been a little more light, and if one could have seen more distinctly, one might have perceived under the rags of these people rosaries and scapulars half-hidden. One of the women in the group had a rosary almost equal in the size of its beads to that of a dervish, and easy to recognize for an Irish one made at Llanymthefry, which is also called Llanandriffy. One might also have seen, had it not been so dark, a gilded figure of Our Lady and Child on the bow of the hooker. It was probably that of the Basque Notre Dame,—a sort of Panagia of the old Cantabri. Under this image, which occupied the position of a figurehead, was a lantern, which at this moment was not lighted,—an excess of caution which implied an extreme desire of concealment. This lantern was evidently for two purposes: when lighted, it burned before the Virgin, and at the same time illumined the sea,—a beacon doing

duty as a taper. Under the bowsprit the cut-water, long, curved, and sharp, projected in front like the horn of a crescent. At the top of the cut-water, and at the feet of the Virgin, a kneeling angel, with folded wings, leaned her back against the stem, and gazed out through a spy-glass at the horizon. The angel was gilded like Our Lady. In the cut-water were holes and openings to let the waves pass through, which afforded an opportunity for more gilding and arabesques. Under the figure of the Virgin was written, in gilt capitals, the word "Matutina," — the name of the vessel, invisible just now on account of the darkness.

Amid the confusion of departure there were thrown down in disorder, at the foot of the cliff, the goods which the voyagers were to take with them, and which, by means of the plank serving as a bridge across, were being passed rapidly from the shore to the boat. Bags of biscuit, a cask of fish, a case of portable soup, three barrels (one of fresh water, one of malt, one of tar), four or five bottles of ale, an old portmanteau buckled up by straps, trunks, boxes, a ball of tow for torches and signals, — such was the lading. These ragged people had valises, which seemed to indicate a roving life. Wandering rascals are obliged to own something; at times they would prefer to fly away like the birds, but they cannot do so without abandoning the means of earning a livelihood. They necessarily possess boxes of tools and instruments of labour, whatever their trade may be. Those of whom we speak were taking their baggage with them. No time was lost; there was one continued passing to and fro from the shore to the vessel, and from the vessel to the shore. Each one did his share of the work; one carried a bag, another a chest. Those of the promiscuous company who were possibly or probably women, worked like the rest. They overloaded the child.

It was doubtful if the child's father or mother were in the group, for no sign of interest was vouchsafed him. They made him work; but that was all. He appeared not a child in a family, but a slave in a tribe. He waited on every one, and no one even spoke to him. Still he laboured diligently, and like all the other members of this strange party he seemed to have but one thought, — to embark as quickly as possible. Did he know why? Probably not; he hurried mechanically because he saw the others hurry.

The stowing of the cargo in the hold was soon finished, and the moment to put off arrived. The last case had been carried over the gangway, and nothing was left on shore but the men. The two persons in the group who seemed to be women were already on board; six persons, the child among them, were still on the low platform of the cliff. Preparations for immediate departure were apparent on the vessel; the captain seized the helm, a sailor took up an axe to cut the hawser: to cut is an evidence of haste; when there is time it is unknotted.

"Andamos," said, in a low voice, he who appeared to be chief of the six, and who had the spangles on his tattered clothes. The child rushed towards the plank in order to be the first aboard. As he placed his foot on it, two of the men hurried by, at the risk of throwing him into the water, got in before him, and passed on; the fourth drove him back with his fist, and followed the third; the fifth, who was the chief, bounded into rather than sprang aboard the vessel, and as he jumped in kicked the plank, which fell into the sea; a stroke of the hatchet cut the moorings, the helm was put up, the vessel left the shore, and the child remained on land.

CHAPTER III.

ALONE.

THE child remained motionless on the rock, with his eyes fixed; no calling out, no appeal. Though this was unexpected by him, he uttered not a word. The same silence reigned in the vessel. No cry from the child to the men; no farewell from the men to the child. There was on both sides a mute acceptance of the widening distance between them. It was like a separation of ghosts on the banks of the Styx. The child, as if nailed to the rock, up which the tide was beginning to creep, watched the departing bark. It seemed as if he realized his position. What did he realize? Darkness.

A moment more, and the vessel had reached the mouth of the creek, and entered it. Against the clear sky the masthead was visible, rising above the split blocks between which the strait wound as between two walls. Then it was seen no more; all was over; the bark had reached the sea.

The child watched its disappearance; he was astonished but thoughtful. His stupefaction was increased by a sense of the grim reality of existence. It seemed as if there were experience in this youthful being. Did he, perchance, already exercise judgment? Experience coming too early constructs, sometimes, in the depths of a child's mind some dangerous balance, in which the poor little soul weighs God. Feeling himself innocent,

he submitted. There was no complaint; the irreproachable does not reproach. His rough expulsion drew from him no sign; he suffered a sort of internal stiffening. The child did not bow under this sudden blow of fate, which seemed to put an end to his existence ere it had well begun; he received the thunderstroke standing. It would have been evident to any one who could have seen his astonishment unmixed with dejection, that, in the group which abandoned him, there was no one who loved him, and no one whom he loved.

Brooding, the child forgot the cold. Suddenly the wave wetted his feet, — the tide was flowing; a gust passed through his hair, — the north wind was rising. He shivered. There came over him, from head to foot, the shudder of awakening. He glanced about him. He was alone. Up to this time there had never existed for him any other men than those who were now in the hooker, — those men who had just stolen away. Strange to say, those men, the only ones he knew, were really strangers to him. He could not have told who they were. His childhood had been passed among them, without his having the consciousness of being one of them. He was in juxtaposition to them, nothing more. He had just been forgotten by them. He had no money about him, no shoes on his feet, scarcely a garment on his body, not even a piece of bread in his pocket. It was winter; it was night. It would be necessary to walk several miles before a human habitation could be reached. He did not know where he was. He knew nothing, unless it was that those who had come with him to the brink of the sea had gone away without him. He felt himself put outside the pale of life. He felt that man had failed him. He was ten years old.

The child was in a desert, between heights from which he saw the night descending, and depths where

he heard the waves murmuring. He stretched out his little thin arms and yawned. Then, suddenly, with the agility of a squirrel, or perhaps of an acrobat, he turned his back on the creek, and set to work to climb the cliff. He escalated the path, left it, then returned to it, quick and venturesome. He was hurrying inland, as though he had a destination marked out; nevertheless he was going nowhere. He hastened on without an object,—a fugitive before Fate. To climb is the function of a man; to crawl is that of an animal; he did both.

As the cliffs of Portland face southward, there was scarcely any snow on the path; the intensity of cold had, however, frozen that snow into dust very troublesome to the walker. The child freed himself of it. His jacket, which was much too big for him, complicated matters, and got in his way. Now and then on an overhanging crag or in a declivity he came upon a little ice, which caused him to slip. Then, after hanging some moments over a precipice, he would catch hold of a dry branch or projecting stone. Once he came on a vein of slate, which suddenly gave way under him, letting him down with it. Crumbling slate is treacherous. For some seconds the child slid like a tile on a roof; he rolled to the extreme edge of the chasm; a tuft of grass which he clutched at the right moment saved him. He was as mute on the verge of the abyss as he had been in the company of the men; he gathered himself up and re-ascended silently. The slope was steep; so he had to zig-zag in ascending. The precipice seemed to grow in the darkness, and the summit to recede farther and farther in proportion as the child ascended; but at last he reached the top. He had scarcely set foot on the summit when he began to shiver. The wind cut his face like a whip-lash, for the bitter northwester was blowing. He tightened his rough sailor's jacket

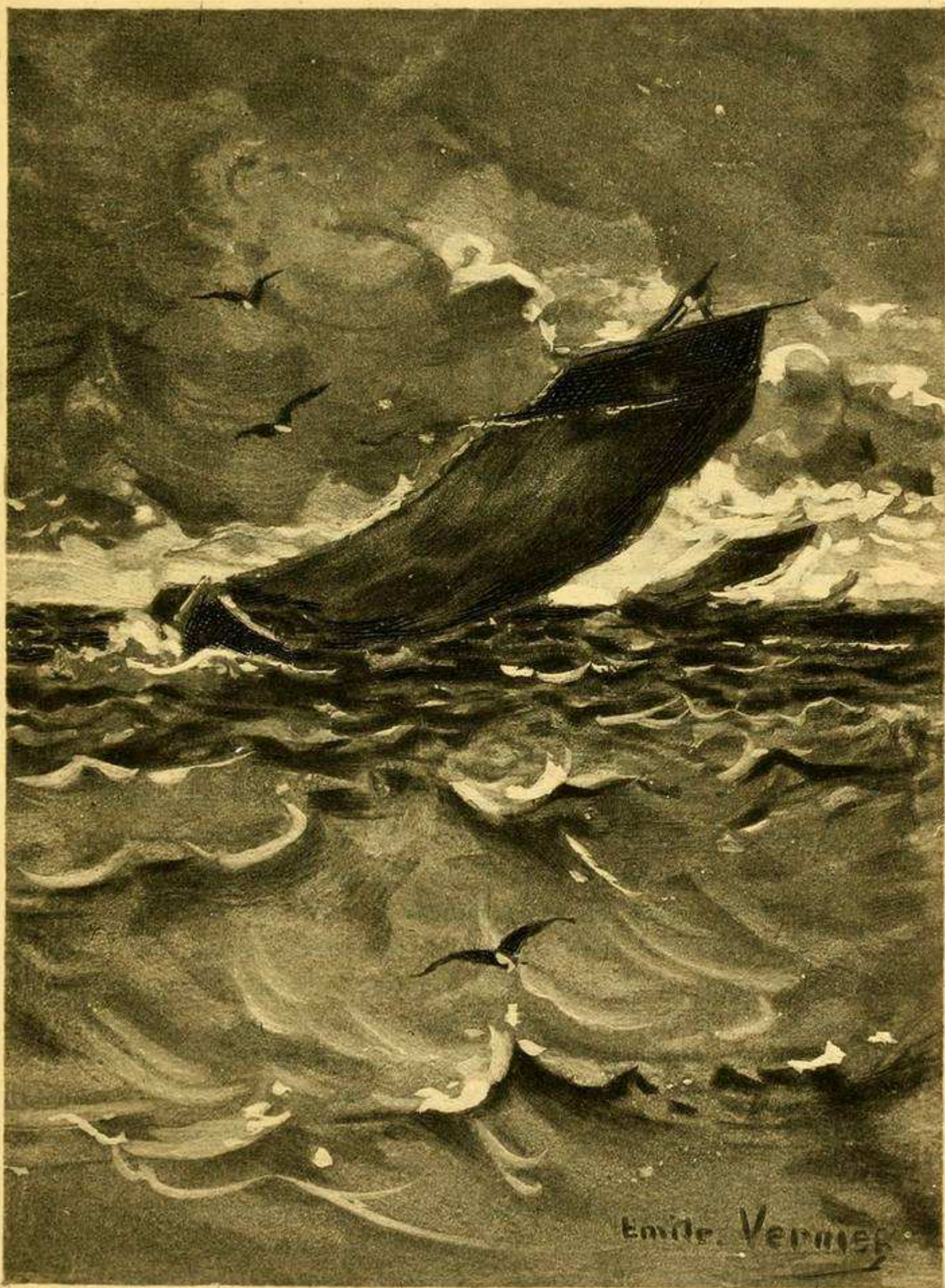
about his chest. It was a good coat, called in ship-language a "sou'-wester," because made of a sort of stuff that allows little of the south-westerly rain to penetrate.

The child, having gained the table-land, stopped, planted his feet firmly on the frozen ground and looked about him. Behind him was the sea; in front the land; above, the sky, — but a sky without stars; an opaque mist hid the zenith. On reaching the summit of the rocky wall he found himself facing the interior, and he gazed at it attentively. It stretched before him far as the eye could reach, flat, frozen, and covered with snow. A few tufts of heather shivered in the wind. No roads were visible, — no dwelling, not even a shepherd's cot. Here and there, pale, spiral vortices might be seen, which were whirls of fine snow, snatched from the ground by the wind and blown away. Successive undulations of ground suddenly became misty and disappeared from view. The great dull plains were lost in the white fog. A deep silence reigned, far-reaching as infinity, hushed as the tomb.

The child turned again towards the sea. The sea, like the land, was white, — the one with snow, the other with foam. There is nothing so melancholy as the light produced by this double whiteness. The sea was like steel, the cliff like ebony. From the height where the child was, the bay of Portland appeared almost like a geographical map in a semicircle of hills. There was something dreamlike in that nocturnal landscape, — a wan disk belted by a dark crescent; the moon sometimes has a similar appearance. From cape to cape, along the whole coast, not a single spark indicated a hearth with a fire; not a lighted window, not an inhabited house, was to be seen. On earth as in heaven there was no light, — not a lamp below, not a star above. Here and there came sudden elevations in the broad ex-

The Storm.

Photogravure by Goupil et Cie. — From Painting
by Emile Vernier.



Peint par Emile Vernier

Photographe Goupil & C^{ie}

panse of water, as the wind disturbed and wrinkled the vast sheet. The hooker was still visible in the bay, looking like a black triangle gliding over the water. The "Matutina" was making rapid headway; she seemed to grow smaller every minute. Nothing can compare in rapidity with the flight of a vessel disappearing in the distance. Suddenly she lighted the lantern at her prow. Probably the darkness closing in around her made those on board uneasy, and the pilot thought it necessary to throw light on the waves. This luminous point, a spark seen from afar, clung like a spectral light to the tall black form.

There was a storm in the air; the child took no notice of it, but a sailor would have trembled. It was one of those moments when it seems as if the elements were changing into persons, and that one was about to witness the mysterious transformation of the wind into the windgod. The sea becomes Ocean; its power reveals itself as Will: hence the terror. The soul of man fears to be thus confronted with the soul of Nature. Chaos was about to appear. The wind rolled back the fog, and making a stage of the clouds behind set the scene for that fearful drama of wave and winter, which is called a snow-storm. Vessels putting back hove in sight. For some minutes past the roads had no longer been deserted; every moment anxious barks hastening towards an anchorage appeared from behind the capes; some were doubling Portland Bill, the others St. Alban's Head. From afar ships were running in. It was a race for life. Southwards the darkness had thickened, and clouds full of menace bordered the sea. The weight of the tempest hanging overhead made a dreary lull on the waves. It certainly was no time to set sail.

Yet the hooker had sailed. She was steering due south. She was already out of the gulf, and in the

open sea. Suddenly there came a gust of wind. The "Matutina," which was still clearly in sight, put on all sail, as if resolved to profit by the hurricane. It was the nor'-wester, a wind sullen and angry. Its weight was felt instantly. The hooker, caught broadside on, staggered, but recovering held her course to sea. This indicated a flight rather than a voyage, less fear of sea than of land, and greater dread of pursuit from man than from the wind. The hooker, passing through every degree of diminution, sank into the horizon. The little star which she carried paled into shadow, then disappeared, — this time for good and all.

At least the child seemed to understand it so, for he ceased to look at the sea. His gaze reverted to the plains, the moor, the hills, where it might be possible to find some living creature. Towards this unknown region he now directed his steps.

CHAPTER IV.

QUESTIONS.

WHAT kind of a band was it that had left the child behind in its flight. Were those fugitives Comprachicos?

We have already noted the measures taken by William III., and passed by Parliament against the malefactors, male and female, called Comprachicos, otherwise Comprapequeños, otherwise Cheylas. There are laws which scatter people to the four corners of the earth. The law enacted against the Comprachicos determined, not only the Comprachicos, but vagabonds of all sorts on a general flight. It was the devil take the hindmost. A large number of Comprachicos returned to Spain, many of them, as we have said, being Basques. The law for the protection of children had at first this strange result, — it caused many children to be abandoned. The immediate effect of the penal statute was to produce a crowd of children, found, or rather lost. The reason is evident. Every wandering gang containing a child was liable to suspicion. The mere fact of the child's presence was in itself a denunciation. "They are probably Comprachicos." This was the very first idea of the sheriff, of the bailiff, and of the constable. Hence arrest and inquiry. People simply unfortunate, reduced to wander and to beg, were seized with a terror of being taken for Comprachicos, although they were

nothing of the kind; for the weak have grave fears of possible errors in justice. Besides, these vagabonds are very easily scared.

The charge against the Comprachicos was that they traded in other people's children. But the promiscuousness caused by poverty and indigence is such that at times it might have been difficult for a father and mother to prove a child their own. How came you by this child? How were they to prove that they had received it from God? The child became a danger: they got rid of it; to fly unencumbered was easier. The parents resolved to leave it, — now in a wood, now on a beach, now down a well. Many children were found drowned in cisterns.

Let us add that in imitation of England all Europe henceforth hunted down the Comprachicos. The impulse of pursuit was given. There is nothing like belling the cat. From that time on the desire to capture Comprachicos caused much rivalry between the police of the different countries, and the alguazil was no less watchful than the constable.

One could still see, twenty-three years ago, on a stone of the gate of Otero, an untranslatable inscription, — the words of the code outraging propriety. In it, however, the difference which existed between the buyers and kidnapers of children is very strongly marked. Here is part of the inscription in somewhat rough Castilian: "Aqui quedan las orejas de los Comprachicos, y las bolsas de los robaniños, mientras que se van ellos al trabajo de mar." The confiscation of ears, etc., did not prevent their owners from going to the galleys. Hence ensued a general rout among all vagabonds. They started frightened; they arrived trembling. On every shore in Europe their furtive advent was closely watched. It was impossible for such a band to em-

bark with a child, since to disembark with one was so dangerous. To lose the child was a much easier matter.

And this child, of whom we first caught a glimpse in the shadow of the Portland cliffs, by whom had he been abandoned? To all appearance by Comprachicos.

CHAPTER V.

THE TREE OF HUMAN INVENTION.

IT was about seven o'clock in the evening. The wind was diminishing, — a sign, however, of a violent recurrence later on. The child was on the table-land at the extreme south end of Portland.

Portland is a peninsula; but the child did not know what a peninsula was, and had never even heard the name of Portland. He knew only one thing; that was that one could walk until one drops. An idea is a guide; but he had no idea. They had brought him there, and left him there. *They* and *there*. These two enigmas represented his doom. *They* were humankind; *there* was the universe. For him in all creation there was absolutely no basis to rest upon but the little piece of hard, frozen ground where he set his naked feet. In the great twilight world, open on all sides, what was there for him? Nothing. Around him was the vastness of human desertion.

The child crossed the first plateau diagonally, then a second, then a third. At the end of each plateau the child came to a break in the ground. The slope was sometimes steep, but always short; the high, bare plains of Portland resemble great flagstones overlapping one another. The south side seems to enter under the protruding slab, the north side laps over the next one; this made ascents, which the child stepped over nimbly. From time to time he stopped, and seemed

to hold counsel with himself. The night was becoming very dark; his radius of sight was contracting. He could now see only a few steps before him. Suddenly he stopped and listened for an instant; then with an almost imperceptible nod of satisfaction he turned quickly and directed his steps towards an eminence of moderate height, which he dimly perceived on his right, at the end of the plain nearest the cliff. There was on the eminence a shape which in the mist looked like a tree. The child had just heard a noise in this direction, which was neither the noise of the wind nor of the sea; nor was it the cry of an animal. He thought that some one was there, and a few strides brought him to the foot of the hillock.

Some one was there. That which had been indistinct on the top of the eminence was now plainly visible. It looked something like a great arm thrust straight out of the ground; at the upper extremity of the arm a sort of forefinger, supported from beneath by the thumb, pointed out horizontally; the arm, the thumb, and the forefinger formed a triangle against the sky. At the point of junction of this peculiar finger and this peculiar thumb there was a line, from which hung something black and shapeless. The line moving in the wind sounded like a chain.

This was the noise the child had heard. Seen closely, the line proved to be that which the sound indicated, — a chain; a single chain cable. By that mysterious law which throughout Nature causes appearances to exaggerate realities, the place, the hour, the mist, the mournful sea, the angry clouds on the distant horizon, added to the effect of this figure, and made it seem enormous. The mass appended to the chain presented the appearance of a huge scabbard. There was a round knot at the top, about which the end of the chain was fastened.

The scabbard was riven asunder at the lower end, and long shreds hung between the rents. A faint breeze stirred the chain, and that which was appended to it swayed gently to and fro.

It was altogether an object to inspire indescribable dread. Horror, which disproportioned everything, increased its dimensions, without changing its shape. It was a condensation of darkness into a definite form. Twilight and moon-rise, stars setting behind the cliff, the clouds and winds, seemed to have entered into the composition of this visible nonentity. The sort of log hanging in the wind partook of the impersonality diffused over sea and sky, and the darkness completed this phase of the thing which had once been man. It was that no longer.

To be naught but a remainder!—such a thing it is beyond the power of language to express. To exist no more, yet to persist in existing; to be in the dread abyss, yet out of it; to reappear after death as if indissoluble,—all this makes it inexpressible. There is a certain amount of impossibility mixed with such a reality. This being,—was it a being? This black witness was a remainder, and an awful remainder. A remainder of what? Of Nature first, and then of society; zero, and yet total. The wild inclemency of the weather held it at its will; the deep oblivion of solitude environed it. It was given up to unknown chances; it was without defence against the darkness, which did with it what it willed. It was forever the patient; it submitted; the hurricane (that ghastly conflict of winds) was upon it. The spectre was given over to pillage. It underwent the horrible outrage of rotting in the open air; it was an outlaw of the tomb. There was no peace for it even in annihilation; in the summer it fell away into dust, in the winter into mud. Death should be veiled, the grave

should have its reserve. Here was neither veil nor reserve, but cynically avowed putrefaction. It is effrontery in death to display its work; it offends all the calmness of shadow when it does its task outside its laboratory, the grave.

This dead thing had been stripped. To strip one already stripped, — relentless act! His marrow was no longer in his bones; his entrails were no longer in his body; his voice was no longer in his throat. A corpse is a pocket which death turns inside out, and empties. If he ever was an I, where was that I? There still, perchance; and this was fearful to think of. Something wandering about something in chains, — can one imagine a more mournful lineament in the darkness?

Realities exist here below which serve as issues to the unknown, which seem to facilitate the egress of speculation, and at which hypothesis snatches. Conjecture has its *compelle intrare*. In passing by certain places and before certain objects one cannot help stopping, — a prey to dreams into the realms of which the mind enters. In the invisible there are dark portals ajar. No one could have met this dead man without meditating. In the vastness of dispersion he was wearing silently away. He had had blood which had been drunk, skin which had been eaten, flesh which had been stolen. Nothing had passed him by without taking somewhat from him. December had borrowed cold of him; midnight, horror; the iron, rust; the plague, miasma; the flowers, perfume. His slow disintegration was a toll paid to all, — a toll of the corpse to the storm, to the rain, to the dew, to the reptiles, to the birds. All the dark hands of night had rifled the dead. He was, indeed, an inexpressibly strange tenant, — a tenant of the darkness. He was on a plain and on a hill, and *he was not*; he was palpable, yet vanished; he was a shadow accruing to the

night. After the disappearance of day into the vast of silent obscurity, he became in lugubrious accord with all around him; by his mere presence he increased the gloom of the tempest and the calm of the stars. The unutterable which is in the desert was condensed in him; waif of an unknown fate, he commingled with all the wild secrets of the night. There was in his mystery a vague reverberation of all enigmas; about him life seemed sinking to its lowest depths; certainty and confidence appeared to diminish in his environs. The shiver of the brushwood and the grass, a desolate melancholy, an anxiety in which a conscience seemed to lurk, appropriated with tragic force the whole landscape to that black figure suspended by the chain. The presence of a spectre in the horizon is an aggravation of solitude.

This spectre was a Sign. Having unappeasable winds around him, he was implacable. Perpetual shuddering made him terrible. Fearful to say, he seemed to be a centre in space, with something immense leaning on him, — perhaps that equity, half seen and set at defiance, which transcends human justice. There was in his unburied continuance the vengeance of men and his own vengeance. He was a testimony in the twilight and the waste; he was in himself a disquieting substance, since we tremble before the substance which is the ruined habitation of the soul. For dead matter to trouble us, it must once have been tenanted by spirit. He denounced the law of earth to the law of heaven. Placed there by man, he there awaited God. Above him floated, blended with all the vague distortions of the cloud and the wave, boundless dreams of shadow.

Who could tell what sinister mysteries lurked behind this phantom? The illimitable circumscribed by naught — nor tree, nor roof, nor passer-by — was around the

dead man. When the unchangeable broods over us, when heaven, the abyss, the life, grave, and eternity appear patent, then it is we feel that all is inaccessible, all is forbidden, all is sealed. When infinity opens to us, terrible indeed is the closing of the gate behind.

CHAPTER VI.

STRUGGLE BETWEEN DEATH AND NIGHT.

THE child stood before this thing with staring eyes, dumb and wondering. To a man it would have been a gibbet; to the child it was an apparition. Where a man would have seen a corpse, the child saw a spectre. Besides, he did not understand.

The attractions of mysterious horrors are manifold. There was one on the summit of that hill. The child took one step, then another; he ascended, wishing all the while to descend; and he approached, wishing all the while to retreat. When he got close under the gibbet, he looked up and examined the spectre. It was tarred, and here and there it shone. The child could distinguish the face. That too was coated with pitch; and this mask, which appeared viscous and sticky, varied its aspect even in the night shadows. The child saw the mouth, which was a hole; the nose, which was a hole; the eyes, which were holes.

The body was wrapped, and apparently corded up, in coarse canvas, soaked in naphtha. The canvas was mouldy and torn. A knee protruded through it; a rent disclosed the ribs. The face was the colour of earth; slugs, wandering over it, had traced across it vague ribbons of silver. The skull, cracked and fractured, gaped like a huge rotten apple. The teeth were still human, for they retained a laugh; the remains of a cry seemed to linger in the open mouth. There were a few

hairs of beard on the cheek. The inclined head had an air of attention. Some repairs had recently been made; the face had been tarred afresh, as well as the ribs and the knee which protruded from the canvas. The feet hung out below. Just underneath, in the grass, were two shoes, which snow and rain had rendered shapeless. These shoes had fallen from the dead man's feet. The barefooted child looked at the shoes.

The wind, which had become more and more restless, was now and then interrupted by those pauses which foretell the approach of a storm. For the last few minutes it had altogether ceased to blow. The corpse no longer stirred; the chain was as motionless as a plumb line. Like all new-comers into life, and taking into account the peculiar influences of his fate, the child no doubt felt within him that awakening of ideas characteristic of early years, which endeavours to open the brain and which resembles the pecking of the young bird in the egg. But all that there was in his little consciousness just then was resolved into stupor. Excess of sensation has the effect of too much oil, and ends by putting out thought. A man would have put himself questions; the child put himself none; he only looked. The tar gave the face a wet appearance; drops of pitch, congealed in what had once been the eyes, produced the effect of tears. However, thanks to the pitch, the ravages of death, if not annulled, had been greatly retarded. That which hung before the child was a thing of which great care was taken. The man was evidently precious; and though they had not cared to keep him alive, they had cared to preserve him dead. The gibbet was old and worm-eaten, although strong, and had been in use many years.

It was the custom in England to tar smugglers. They were hanged on the seaboard, coated over with

pitch an left swinging. Examples must be made in public, and tarred examples last longest. The tar was a fine thing; by renewing it they were spared the necessity of making too many fresh examples. In those days they placed gibbets from point to point along the coast, as nowadays they do beacons. The hanged man did duty as a lantern. After his fashion, he guided his comrades, the smugglers, who from far out at sea perceived the gibbets. There is one, first warning; another, second warning. It did not however stop smuggling; but public order is made up of such things. The fashion lasted in England up to the beginning of the present century. In 1822 three men could still be seen hanging in front of Dover Castle. But, for that matter, the preserving process was employed not with smugglers alone. England treated robbers, incendiaries, and murderers in the same way. Jack Painter, who set fire to the government storehouses at Portsmouth, was hanged and tarred in 1776. L'Abbé Coyer, who calls him Jean le Peintre, saw him in 1777; Jack Painter was still hanging above the ruin he had made, and was re-tarred from time to time. His corpse lasted (I had almost said lived) nearly fourteen years. It was still doing good service in 1788; in 1790, however, they were obliged to replace it by another. The Egyptians used to value the mummy of the king; a plebeian mummy can also be of service, it seems.

The wind, having great power on the hill, had cleared it of all snow. Herbage was now reappearing on it, interspersed here and there with a few thistles; the hill was covered with that close, short grass which grows by the sea, and makes the tops of cliffs resemble green cloth. Under the gibbet, on the very spot over which hung the feet of the executed criminal, was a long thick tuft, uncommon on such poor soil. Corpses, crumbling

there for centuries past, accounted for the beauty of the grass. Earth feeds on man.

A dreary fascination held the child spell-bound. He only dropped his head a moment when a nettle, which felt like an insect, stung his leg; then he looked up again, — looked up at the face which was looking down on him. It appeared to regard him the more steadfastly because it had no eyes. It was a comprehensive glance, having an indescribable fixedness, in which there was both light and darkness, and which emanated from the skull and teeth as well as from the empty arches of the brow. The whole head of a dead man seems to have vision, and this is awful; no eyeball, yet we feel that we are being looked at.

Little by little the child himself was becoming petrified. He no longer moved. A deadly torpor was stealing over him. He did not even perceive that he was losing consciousness, though he was becoming benumbed and lifeless. Winter was silently delivering him over to night. There is something of the traitor in winter. The child was all but a statue. The coldness of stone was penetrating his bones; darkness, that insidious reptile, was creeping over him. The drowsiness resulting from snow steals over one like a dim tide. The child was being slowly invaded by a stagnation resembling that of the corpse. He was on the point of falling under the gibbet. He no longer knew whether he was standing upright or not.

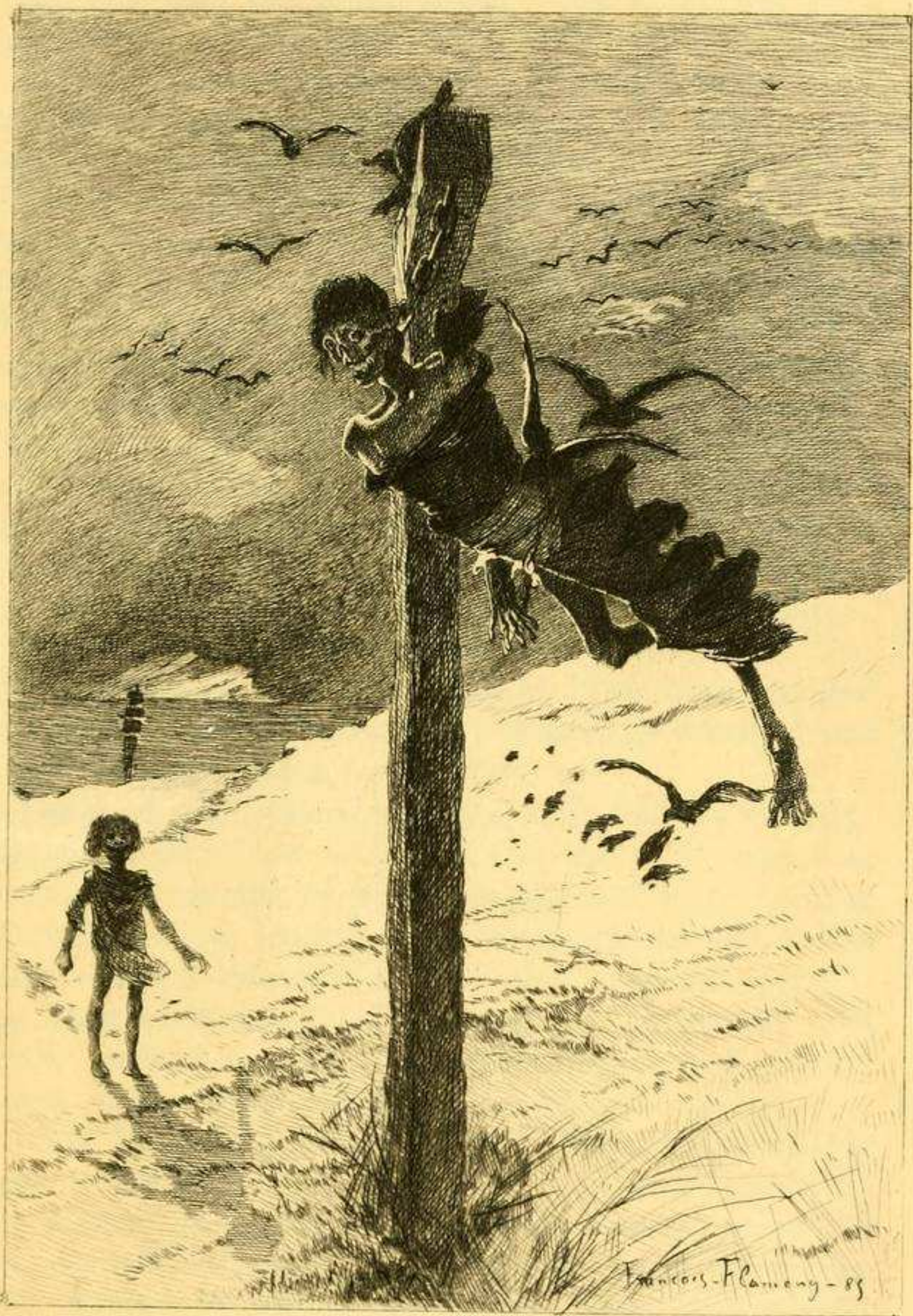
The end always impending, no transition between to be and not to be, the return to the crucible, the slip possible every minute, — such is life! Another instant, and the child and the dead would be victims of the same obliteration.

The spectre seemed to understand this, and not to wish it. Suddenly it moved: one would have said it

was warning the child. The wind was beginning to blow again. Nothing stranger than this dead man in motion could be conceived of. The corpse at the end of the chain, swayed by the invisible gust, assumed an oblique position; rose on the left, then fell back; re-ascended on the right, and then fell and rose with slow and mournful precision. A weird game of see-saw; it seemed as though one saw in the darkness the pendulum of the clock of Eternity.

This continued some time. The child felt himself waking up at the sight; for even through his increasing numbness he experienced a keen sensation of fear. The chain with every oscillation made a creaking sound, with hideous regularity. It seemed to take breath, and then to resume. This creaking was like the cry of a grasshopper. An approaching squall is heralded by sudden gusts of wind; all at once the breeze increased into a gale. The corpse quickened its dismal oscillations; it no longer swung, it tossed. The chain, which had been creaking, now shrieked; it seemed as if its shriek was heard. If it was a call, it was obeyed. From the depths of the horizon came a rushing sound: it was the sound of wings.

An incident now occurred, one of the weird incidents peculiar to graveyards and solitudes. It was the arrival of a flock of ravens. Black flying specks pricked the clouds, pierced the mist, increased in size, came nearer, all hastening towards the hill and uttering shrill cries. It was like the approach of a Legion. The winged vermin of darkness alighted on the gibbet; the child drew back in terror. The birds crowded on the gibbet; not one was on the corpse. They were talking among themselves; the croaking was frightful. The howl, the whistle, and the roar are signs of life; the croak is a pleased announcement of putrefaction; in it you can



fancy you hear the grave speak. The child was even more overcome with terror than with cold.

Then the ravens were silent. Finally one of them flew down upon the skeleton. This was the signal: they all precipitated themselves upon it. There was a cloud of wings, then their ranks closed up, and the skeleton disappeared under a swarm of black objects struggling in the darkness. Just then the corpse moved. Was it the corpse, or was it the wind? It made a frightful bound. The hurricane, which was increasing, came to its aid. The skeleton fell into convulsions. The squall, already blowing fiercely, seized hold of it, and dashed it about in all directions. It became horrible; it began to struggle, — an awful puppet, with a gallows' chain for a string. It seemed as if some one had seized the string, and was playing with the mummy; it leaped about as if it would fain dislocate itself. The birds frightened, flew off; it was as if an explosion had scattered the unclean creatures. Then they returned and a fresh struggle began.

The dead man seemed endowed with hideous vitality. The winds lifted him as though they meant to carry him away. He seemed to be struggling and to be making efforts to escape, but his iron collar held him fast. The birds adapted themselves to all his movements, retreating, then striking again, — scared but desperate. The corpse, moved by every gust of the wind, had shocks, starts, fits of rage: it went, it came, it rose, it fell, driving back the scattered swarm. The fierce, assailing flock would not let go their hold, and grew stubborn; the spectre, as if maddened by their attacks, redoubled its blind chastisement of space. At times the corpse was covered by talons and wings; then it was free. There were disappearances of the horde; then sudden furious returns. The birds seemed frenzied. Thrust-

ing of claws, thrusting of beaks, croakings, rendings of shreds which were no longer flesh, creakings of the gibbet, shudderings of the skeleton, rattlings of the chain, the voices of the storm and tumult,— what conflict more fearful? A hobgoblin warring with devils, a combat with a spectre!

At times, the storm redoubling its violence, the hanged man revolved as if upon a pivot, turning every way at once, as if trying to run after the birds. The wind was on his side, the chain against him. It was as if dark-skinned deities were mixing themselves up in the fray. The hurricane took part in the battle. As the dead man turned himself about, the flock of birds wound round him spirally. It was a whirl in a whirlwind. A great roar was heard from below,— it was the sea.

As the child was gazing at this nightmare, he suddenly trembled in every limb; a shiver traversed his frame; he staggered, tottered, nearly fell; recovered himself, pressed both hands to his forehead, as if he felt his forehead a support. Then, with hair streaming in the wind, he descended the hill with long strides, his eyes closed, himself almost a phantom, leaving that horror of the night behind him.

CHAPTER VII.

THE NORTH POINT OF PORTLAND.

THE child ran until he was breathless, at random, desperate, over the plain into the snow, into space. His flight warmed him. He needed it. Without the run and the fright he would have died. When his breath failed him, he stopped, but he dared not look back. He fancied that the birds would pursue him, that the dead man had undone his chain and was perhaps hurrying after him, that possibly the very gibbet itself was descending the hill, running after the dead man; he feared that he should see these things if he turned his head. When he had somewhat recovered his breath, he resumed his flight.

To account for facts does not belong to childhood. This child had received impressions which were magnified by terror, but he did not link them together in his mind, nor form any conclusion on them. He was going on, no matter how or where; he ran in agony and difficulty as one in a dream. During the three hours or so since he had been deserted, his onward progress, still vague, had changed in character. At first it was a search; now it was a flight. He was no longer conscious of hunger or cold; he felt only fear. One instinct had given place to another. To escape was now his one desire, — to escape. From what? From everything. On all sides life seemed to enclose him like a horrible wall. If he could have fled from everything, he would

have done so. But children know nothing of that breaking from prison which is called suicide. He was running; he ran on for an indefinite time. But fear dies with lack of breath.

All at once, as if seized by a sudden accession of energy and intelligence, he stopped. One would have said he was ashamed of running away. He drew himself up, stamped his foot, and with head erect looked round him. There was no hill, no gibbet, no flying crows visible now. The fog had resumed possession of the horizon. The child continued his way; but now he no longer ran, but walked. To say that this meeting with a corpse had made a man of him was not far from the truth. The gibbet which had so terrified him still seemed to him an apparition; but terror overcome is strength gained, and he felt himself stronger. Had he been of an age to probe self, he would have discovered a thousand other germs of meditation; but the reflection of children is shapeless, and the most they feel is the bitter aftertaste of that which, obscure to them, the man later on calls indignation. Let us add that a child has the faculty of promptly accepting the conclusions of a sensation; the distant boundaries which amplify painful subjects escape him. A child is protected by the very limit of his understanding from emotions which are too complex. He sees the fact, and little else. The difficulty of being satisfied with half-formed ideas does not exist so far as he is concerned. It is not until later that experience comes, with its brief, to conduct the lawsuit of life. *Then* he confronts groups of facts which have crossed his path; the understanding, cultivated and enlarged, draws comparisons; the memories of youth reappear like the traces of a palimpsest after erasure; these memories form the bases of logic, and that which was a vision in the child's brain becomes a syllogism in

the man's. Experience is varied, however, and leads to good or evil according to natural disposition.

The child had run quite a quarter of a league, and walked another quarter, when suddenly he felt the cravings of hunger. A thought which altogether eclipsed the hideous apparition on the hill occurred to him, — that he must eat. Happily there are in man brute instincts which serve to lead him back to reality. But what to eat, where to eat, how to eat? He felt in his pockets mechanically, well knowing that they were empty. Then he quickened his pace, without knowing whither he was going. He was hastening towards a possible shelter. This faith in a shelter is one of the convictions rooted by God in man; to believe in a shelter is to believe in God.

On that snow-clad plain, however, there was nothing resembling a roof. Yet the child went on, and the waste continued bare as far as eye could reach. There had never been a human habitation on the table-land. It was at the foot of the cliff, in holes in the rocks, that the aboriginal inhabitants had dwelt long ago, — men who had slings for weapons, dried cow-dung for fuel, for a god the idol Heil standing in a glade at Dorchester, and for a trade the fishing of that grey coral which the Gauls called *plin*, and the Greeks *Isidis plocamos*. The child made his way along as best he could. Destiny is made up of cross-roads; an option of path is sometimes dangerous. This little creature had an early choice of doubtful chances. He continued to advance, but although the muscles of his thighs seemed to be of steel, he began to tire. There were no tracks in the plain, or if there were any the snow had obliterated them. Instinctively he directed his course eastwards. Sharp stones had wounded his heels; had it been daylight, blood-stains might have been seen in the

foot-prints he left in the snow. He recognized no landmarks; for he was crossing the plain from south to north, and it is probable that the band with which he had come, to avoid meeting any one, had crossed it from east to west. They had probably sailed in some fisherman's or smuggler's boat from a point on the coast of Uggescombe (such as St. Catherine's Cape), or Swancry, to Portland, to find the hooker which awaited them; and they must have landed in one of the creeks of Weston, and re-embarked in one of the creeks of Easton. That route intersected the one the child was now following; but it was impossible for him to recognize the road.

On the plain of Portland there are here and there occasional strips of elevated land, ending abruptly at the shore, where they plunge straight down into the sea. The wandering child had now reached one of these culminating points and stopped on it, hoping that a broader view might furnish some helpful indications. He tried to see around him. Before him, in place of an horizon, was a vast livid opacity. He looked at this attentively, and under the intentness of his gaze objects became less indistinct. At the base of a distant eminence to the eastward (a moving and wan sort of precipice, which resembled a cliff of the night) crept and floated some dim black specks, some mere shreds of vapour. The pale opacity was fog, the black shreds were smoke. Where there is smoke there must be men. The child turned his steps in that direction. He saw some distance off a descent, and at the foot of the descent, among shapeless conformations of rock, blurred by the mist, what seemed to be either a sandbank or a tongue of land, probably connecting the plains in the horizon with the table-land he had just crossed. It was evident he must pass that way. He had, in fact, arrived at the Isthmus of Portland, a diluvian alluvium which is called Cheshil.

The child began now to descend the side of the plateau. The descent was difficult and rough. It was (with less ruggedness, however) the reverse of the ascent he had made on leaving the creek. Every ascent is balanced by a decline; after having clambered up, he now crawled down. He leaped from one rock to another at the risk of a sprain, and at the risk of falling into the vague depths below. To save himself when he slipped on the rock or on the ice, he caught hold of tufts of weeds and furze, thick with thorns, the points of which ran into his fingers. Sometimes he came to an easier declivity, where he took breath as he descended; then came to a precipice again, where each step was fraught with peril. In descending precipices every movement is a problem. One must be skilful under penalty of death. These problems the child solved with an instinct which would have won him the admiration of apes and mountebanks. The descent was steep and long. Nevertheless he was nearing the Isthmus, of which from time to time he caught a glimpse. Now and then, as he bounded or dropped from rock to rock, he pricked up his ears, his head erect the while like a listening deer. He was hearkening to a diffused and faint uproar, far away to the left, like the deep note of a clarion. It was the roar of the winds, preceding that fearful northern blast, which is heard rushing from the pole, like an invasion of trumpets. At the same time the child felt on his brow, on his eyes, and on his cheeks something which was like the palms of cold hands being placed on his face. These were large frozen flakes, sown at first softly in space, then eddying wildly and heralding a snow-storm. The child was soon covered with them. The snow-storm, which for the last hour had been raging on the sea, had now reached the land, and was slowly invading the plains.

BOOK II.

THE HOOKER AT SEA.



CHAPTER I.

SUPERHUMAN LAWS.

THE snow-storm is one of the greatest mysteries of the ocean. It is the most obscure of things meteorological; obscure in every sense of the word. It is a mixture of fog and storm; and even in our own day we cannot well account for the phenomenon. Hence many disasters.

We try to explain all things by the action of wind and wave; yet in the air there is a force which is not the wind, and in the waters a force which is not the wave. That force, both in the air and in the water, is effluvium. Air and water are two nearly identical liquid masses, entering into the composition of each other by condensation and dilatation, so that to breathe is to drink. Effluvium alone is fluid. The wind and the wave are only impulses; effluvium is a current. The wind is visible in clouds, the wave is visible in foam; effluvium is invisible. From time to time, however, it says, "I am here." Its "I am here" is a clap of thunder.

The snow-storm offers a problem analogous to the dry fog. If the solution of the *callina* of the Spaniards, and the *quobar* of the Ethiopians be possible, assuredly that

solution will be achieved by attentive observation of magnetic effluvium.

But for effluvium a host of circumstances would remain unexplained. Strictly speaking, the changes in the velocity of the wind, varying from three feet per second to two hundred and twenty feet, would explain the variations of the waves rising from three inches in a calm sea to thirty-six feet in a raging one. Strictly speaking, the horizontal direction of the winds, even in a squall, enables us to understand how it is that a wave thirty feet high can be fifteen hundred feet long. But why are the waves of the Pacific four times higher near America than near Asia; that is to say, higher in the East than in the West? Why is the contrary true of the Atlantic? Why, at the Equator, are they highest in the middle of the sea? Wherefore these deviations in the swell of the ocean? This is something which magnetic effluvium, combined with terrestrial rotation and sidereal attraction, can alone explain.

Is not this mysterious complication needed to explain an oscillation of the wind veering, for instance, by the west from southeast to northeast, then suddenly returning in the same great curve from northeast to southeast, so as to make in thirty-six hours a prodigious circuit of five hundred and sixty degrees? Such was the preface to the snow-storm of March 17, 1867.

The storm-waves of Australia reach a height of eighty feet; this fact is connected with close proximity of the Pole. Storms in those latitudes result less from disorder of the winds than from submarine electrical disturbances. In the year 1866 the transatlantic cable was disturbed at regular intervals in its workings for two hours in the twenty-four, — from noon to two o'clock, — by a sort of intermittent fever. Certain compositions and decompositions of forces produce certain phenomena

which force themselves on the calculations of the seaman under penalty of shipwreck. The day that navigation, now a routine, shall become a branch of mathematics; the day we shall, for instance, seek to know why it is that hot winds sometimes come from the north, and cold winds from the south; the day when we shall understand that diminutions of temperature are proportionate to oceanic depths; the day when we shall realize that the globe is a vast load-stone polarized in immensity, with two axes (an axis of rotation, and an axis of effluvium, intersecting each other at the centre of the earth), and that the magnetic poles turn the geographical poles; when those who risk life will choose to risk it scientifically; when the captain shall be a meteorologist, and the pilot a chemist, — then will many catastrophes be avoided. The sea is as magnetic as it is aquatic; a host of unknown forces float in its liquid waves. To behold in the sea only a mass of water is not to behold it at all. The sea is an ebb and flow of fluid, complicated by magnetic and capillary attractions even more than by hurricanes. Molecular adhesion manifested among other phenomena by capillary attraction, although microscopic, takes in the ocean its place in the grandeur of immensity; and the wave of effluvium sometimes aids, sometimes counteracts, the wave of the air and the wave of the waters. He who is ignorant of electric law is ignorant of hydraulic law; for the one intermixes with the other. It is true there is no study more difficult nor more obscure; it verges on empiricism, just as astronomy verges on astrology; and yet without this study there is no such thing as real navigation. Having said this much, we will pass on.

One of the most dangerous components of the sea is the snow-storm. The snow-storm is above all things magnetic; the pole produces it as it produces the aurora

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borealis. Storms are the nervous attacks and delirious frenzies of the sea. The sea has its ailments. Tempests may be compared to maladies. Some are fatal, others are not; some may be escaped, others cannot. A snow-storm is considered extremely dangerous on the sea. Jarabija, one of the pilots of Magellan, termed it "a cloud issuing from the devil's sore side."¹ Surcouf said: "Il y a du trousse-galant dans cette tempête-la." The old Spanish navigators called this kind of squall, *la nevada* when it came with snow; *la helada*, when it came with hail. According to them, bats fell from the sky with the snow. Snow-storms are characteristic of polar latitudes; nevertheless, at times they glide, one might almost say tumble, into our climates.

The "Matutina," as we have seen, plunged resolutely into the perils of the night,—perils greatly increased by the impending storm. She braved them with a sort of tragic audacity, for it must be remembered that she had received due warning.

¹ Una nube salida del malo lado del diablo.



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CHAPTER II.

OUR FIRST ROUGH SKETCHES FILLED IN.

WHILE the hooker was in the gulf of Portland, there was very little sea; the ocean, though gloomy, was almost still, and the sky was yet clear. The wind was very little felt on the vessel, for the hooker hugged the cliff as closely as possible, it serving as a screen to her.

There were ten on board the little Biscayan felucca, three men in the crew, and seven passengers, two of whom were women. In the light of the open sea (which changes twilight into day) all the figures on board were clearly visible. Besides, they were not hiding now; they were all at ease; each one resumed his natural manner, spoke in his own voice, showed his face: departure was to them a deliverance.

The motley nature of the group was apparent. The women were of an uncertain age. A wandering life produces premature old age, and indigence is made up of wrinkles. One of the women was a Basque of the Dry-ports; the other, with the large rosary, was an Irish woman. They wore that air of indifference common to the wretched. They had squatted down close to each other when they got on board, on chests at the foot of the mast. They talked to each other. Irish and Basque are, as we have said, kindred languages. The Basque woman's hair was scented with onions and basil. The

skipper of the hooker was a Basque of Guipuzcoa. One sailor was a Basque from the northern slope of the Pyrenees; the other was from the southern slope, — that is to say, they were of the same race, although the first was French and the latter Spanish. The Basques acknowledge no official country. “My mother is called the mountain,”¹ as Zalareus, the muleteer, used to say. Of the five men on the hooker, one was a Frenchman of Languedoc, one a Frenchman of Provence, one a Genoese; one, the old man who wore a sombrero without a hole for a pipe, appeared to be a German. The fifth, the chief, was a Basque of the Landes from Biscarrosse. It was he who had with a kick of his heel cast the plank into the sea just as the child was going aboard the hooker. This man, robust, agile, quick in movement, covered, as may be remembered with trimmings, slashings, and glistening tinsel, could not keep still, but sat down, rose up, and continually walked to and fro from one end of the vessel to the other, as if debating uneasily on what had been done and what was going to happen.

This chief of the band, the captain, and the two sailors, all four Basques, spoke sometimes Basque, sometimes Spanish, sometimes French, — these three languages being common on both slopes of the Pyrenees. But generally speaking, all except the women talked something like French, which was the foundation of their slang. The French language, about this period, began to be chosen by the peoples as a happy medium between the excess of consonants in the north and the excess of vowels in the south. In Europe, French was the language of commerce, and also of felony. It will be remembered that Gibby, a London thief, understood Cartouche.

The hooker, a fine sailer, was making rapid progress;

¹ Mi madre se llama Montaña.

still, ten persons, besides their baggage, were a heavy cargo for a vessel of such light draught.

The fact of the vessel's aiding the escape of a band did not necessarily imply that the crew were accomplices. It was sufficient that the captain of the vessel was a Vascongado, and that the chief of the band was another. Among that race mutual assistance is a duty which admits of no exception. A Basque, as we have said, is neither Spanish nor French; he is a Basque, and always and everywhere he must succour a Basque. Such is Pyrenean fraternity.

While the hooker was in the gulf, the sky, although threatening, did not frown enough to cause the fugitives any uneasiness. They were flying swiftly along, they were escaping, and they were noisily gay. One laughed, another sang; the laugh was dry but free, the song was low but careless. The Languedocian cried, "Caoucagno!"¹ He was a longshore-man, a native of the waterside village of Gruissan, on the southern side of the Clappe, — a bargeman rather than a mariner, but accustomed to navigate the inlets of Bages, and to draw the drag-net full of fish over the salt sands of St. Lucie. He was of the race that wears a red cap, makes complicated signs of the cross after the Spanish fashion, drinks wine out of goat-skins, eats scraped ham, kneels down to blaspheme, and adjures his patron saint with threats: "Great saint! grant me what I ask, or I'll throw a stone at thy head, — *ou té feg un pic!*" He might at need prove a useful addition to the crew.

The Provençal in the caboose was punching a turf fire under an iron pot, and making broth. The broth was a kind of *puchero*, in which fish took the place of meat, and into which the Provençal threw peas, little bits of bacon cut in squares, and pods of red pimento, — con-

¹ *Cocagne* expresses the highest pitch of satisfaction in Narbonne.

cessions made by the eaters of *bouillabaisse* to the eaters of *olla podrida*. One of the bags of provisions lay beside him unpacked. Over his head he had lighted an iron lantern, glazed with talc, which swung on a hook from the ceiling; near it from another hook swung the weather-cock halcyon.¹ While he made the broth, the Provençal put the neck of a gourd into his mouth, and now and then swallowed a draught of aguardiente. It was one of those gourds covered with wicker, broad and flat, with handles, which used to be hung at the side by a strap, and which were then called hip-gourds. Between each gulp he mumbled one of those country songs about nothing in particular. One needs, to make such a song, no more than to see (even in imagination) a hollow road, a hedge; in a meadow, through a gap in the bushes, the shadow of a horse and cart, elongated in the sunset, and from time to time, above the hedge, the end of a fork loaded with hay appearing and disappearing.

According to the state of one's mind, a departure is either a relief or the reverse. All seemed lighter in spirits except the old man of the party. This old man, who looked more German than anything else, although he had one of those unfathomable faces in which nationality is lost, was bald; and he was so grave that his baldness might have been a tonsure. Every time he passed the Virgin on the prow he raised his felt hat, so that you could see the swollen and senile veins of his skull. A sort of full gown, torn and threadbare, of brown Dorchester serge, half hid his closely fitting coat, tight, compact, and hooked up to the neck like a cassock. His hands seemed inclined to cross each other, as

¹ There was a popular belief in those days that a dead halcyon hung by the beak always turned its breast to the quarter whence the wind was blowing.

if habituated to an attitude of prayer. He had what might be called a wan countenance; for the countenance is above all things a reflection, and it is an error to believe that an idea is colourless. That countenance was evidently the reflection of a strange mental state, the result of a composition of contradictions, — some tending to drift away in good, others in evil; and to an observer it was the revelation of one who was less and more than human, capable of falling below the scale of the tiger or of rising above that of man. Such chaotic souls exist. There was something inscrutable in this old man's face. In his impassibility, which was perhaps only on the surface, there was portrayed a twofold petrification, — the petrification of heart proper to the hangman, and the petrification of mind proper to the mandarin. One might have said (for the monstrous has its mode of being complete) that all things were possible to him, even emotion. In every savant there is something of the corpse, and this man was a savant. One saw science imprinted in the gestures of his body and in the folds of his dress. His was a fossil face, the serious cast of which was counteracted by that wrinkled mobility of the polyglot which verges on grimace. But he was a severe man withal, — nothing of the hypocrite, nothing of the cynic; a tragic dreamer also. He was one of those men whom crime leaves pensive. He had the brow of an incendiary tempered by the eyes of an archbishop; his sparse grey locks had turned to white over his temples. The Christian was evident in him, complicated with the fatalism of the Turk. Chalkstones deformed his fingers, which were skeleton-like in their thinness. The stiffness of his tall frame was grotesque. He had his sea-legs on; he walked slowly about the deck, not looking at any one, with an air at once stern and sinister. His eyeballs were filled with the fixed

stare of a soul groping in darkness and afflicted with violent compunctions of conscience. From time to time the chief of the band, abrupt and alert, and making sudden turns about the vessel, came to the old man and whispered in his ear. He answered with a nod. It might have been the lightning consulting the night.

CHAPTER III.

TROUBLED MEN ON THE TROUBLED SEA.

TWO men on board the craft were absorbed in thought, —the old man, and the captain of the hooker, who must not be mistaken for the chief of the band. The captain was occupied by the sea; the old man by the sky. The former did not lift his eyes from the waters; the latter kept close watch of the firmament. The captain's anxiety was the state of the sea; the old man seemed to distrust the heavens. He scanned the stars through every break in the clouds.

It was the hour when day still lingers, but when a few stars begin to pierce the twilight. The horizon was singular, the mist upon it varied. A haze predominated on land, clouds at sea. The captain, noting the rising billows, had everything made taught before he got outside Portland Bay. He would not delay so doing until he should pass the headland. He examined the rigging closely, and satisfied himself that the lower shrouds were well set up, and that they supported firmly the futtock-shrouds, —precautions of a man who means to carry a press of sail at all hazards. The hooker was not trimmed, being two foot by the head; this was her weak point. The captain passed every minute from the binnacle to the standard compass, taking the bearings of objects on shore. The "Matutina" had at first a wind which was not unfavourable, though she could not lie within five points of her course. The captain took the

helm as often as possible, trusting no one but himself to prevent her from dropping to leeward, the effect of the rudder being influenced by the steerage-way.

The difference between the true and apparent course being considerable, the hooker seemed to lie closer to the wind than she really did. The breeze was not a-beam, nor was the hooker close-hauled; but one cannot ascertain the true course made, except when the wind is abaft. When one perceives long streaks of clouds meeting in a point on the horizon, one may be sure that the wind is in that quarter. But this evening the wind was variable; the needle fluctuated. The captain distrusted the erratic movements of the vessel. He steered carefully but resolutely, luffed her up, watched her coming-to, prevented her from yawing and from running into the winds' eye; noted the leeway, the little jerks of the helm; was observant of every roll and pitch of the vessel, of the difference in her speed, and of the variable gusts of wind. For fear of accidents, he was constantly on the lookout for squalls from off the land he was hugging; and above all he was cautious to keep her sails full, — the indications of the compass being uncertain from the small size of the instrument. The captain's eyes, frequently lowered, remarked every change in the waves. Once, however, he raised them towards the sky, and tried to make out the three stars of Orion's belt. These stars are called the three magi, and an old proverb of the ancient Spanish pilots declares that, "He who sees the three magi is not far from the Saviour."

This glance of the captain tallied with an aside growled out, at the other end of the vessel, by the old man: "We don't even see the pointers, nor the star Antares, red as he is. Not one of them is visible."

No fears troubled the other fugitives. Still, when the first hilarity they felt at their escape had passed away,

they could not help remembering that they were at sea in the month of January, and that the wind was freezing cold. It was impossible to establish themselves in the cabin; it was much too narrow and too encumbered with bales and baggage. The baggage belonged to the passengers, the bales to the crew; for the hooker was no pleasure-boat, and was engaged in smuggling. The passengers were obliged to remain on deck, a state of things to which these wanderers easily resigned themselves. Open-air habits make it easy for vagabonds to settle themselves for the night. The open air (*la belle étoile*) is their friend, and the cold helps them to sleep, — sometimes to die. But to-night, as we have seen, there was no *belle étoile*.

The Languedocian and the Genoese, while waiting for supper, rolled themselves up near the women, at the foot of the mast, in some tarpaulins which the sailors had thrown them. The old man remained at the bow motionless, and apparently insensible to the cold. The captain of the hooker, from the helm where he was standing, uttered a sort of guttural call somewhat like the cry of the American bird called the Exclaimer. At his call the chief of the band drew near, and the captain addressed him thus:—

“Etcheco jaüna.” These two words, which mean “tiller of the mountain,” form with these old Cantabri a solemn preface to any subject which should command attention. Then, the captain having pointed the old man out to the chief, the dialogue continued in Spanish; though it was not a very correct dialect, being that of the mountains. Here are the questions and answers:

“Etcheco jaüna, que es este hombre?”

“Un hombre.”

“Que lenguas habla?”

“Todas.”

“ Que cosas sabe ? ”

“ Todas. ”

“ Qual país ? ”

“ Ningun, y todos. ”

“ Qual dios ? ”

“ Dios. ”

“ Como le llamas ? ”

“ El tonto. ”

“ Como dices que le llamas ? ”

“ El sabio. ”

“ En vuestre tropa que esta ? ”

“ Esta lo que esta. ”

“ El gefe ? ”

“ No. ”

“ Pues que esta ? ”

“ La alma. ”¹

The chief and the captain parted, each to continue his own meditation, and a little while afterwards the “ Matutina ” left the gulf.

¹ “ Tiller of the mountain, who is that man ? ”

“ A man. ”

“ What tongue does he speak ? ”

“ All. ”

“ What things does he know ? ”

“ All. ”

“ What is his country ? ”

“ None and all. ”

“ Who is his God ? ”

“ God. ”

“ What do you call him ? ”

“ The madman. ”

“ What do you say you call him ? ”

“ The wise man. ”

“ In your band, what is he ? ”

“ He is what he is. ”

“ The chief ? ”

“ No. ”

“ Then what is he ? ”

“ The soul. ”

Now came the great rolling of the open sea. The ocean in the spaces between the foam was slimy in appearance. The waves seen through the twilight in indistinct outline somewhat resembled splashes of gall. Here and there a level space between the waves showed cracks and stars, like a pane of glass broken by stones; and in the centre of these stars, as in a revolving orifice, trembled a phosphorescent gleam, like that feline reflection of vanished light which shines in the eyeballs of owls.

Proudly, like a strong, bold swimmer, the "Matutina" crossed the dangerous Shambles shoal. This bank, a hidden obstruction at the entrance of Portland roads, is not a barrier but an amphitheatre, its benches cut out by the circling of the waves. An arena, round and symmetrical, as high as a Jungfrau, only submerged; an oceanic coliseum, seen by the diver in the vision-like transparency which ingulfs him,— such is the Shambles shoal. There hydras fight, leviathans meet. There, says the legend, at the bottom of the gigantic shaft, are the wrecks of ships, seized and sunk by the huge Kraken, also known as the devil-fish. These spectral realities, unknown to man, are indicated at the surface only by a slight ripple.

In this nineteenth century the Shambles bank is in ruins; the breakwater recently constructed has overthrown and mutilated, by the force of its surf, that high submarine structure, just as the jetty built at the Croisic in 1760 changed, by a quarter of an hour, the courses of the tides. And yet the tide is eternal. But eternity is more subservient to man than man imagines.

CHAPTER IV.

A CLOUD DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHERS ENTERS ON THE SCENE.

THE old man whom the chief of the band had called first the Madman, then the Sage, now never left the forecastle. Since they crossed the Shambles shoal, his attention had been divided between the heavens and the waters. He looked down, he looked upwards, and above all watched the northeast. The captain gave the helm to a sailor, stepped over the aft hatchway, crossed the gangway, and went on to the forecastle. He approached the old man, but not from the front; he passed a little behind him, with elbows resting on his hips, with outstretched hands, his head on one side, with open eyes and arched eyebrows, and a smile in the corners of his mouth, — an attitude of curiosity hesitating between mockery and respect. The old man, either because it was his habit to talk to himself, or because hearing some one behind him incited him to speech, began to soliloquize while he looked into space:—

“The Meridian from which the right ascension is calculated is marked in this century by four stars, — the Polar, Cassiopeia’s Chair, Andromeda’s Head, and the star Algenib, which is in Pegasus. But not one of them is visible.”

These words followed one another mechanically, and were scarcely articulated, as if he did not care to pronounce them. They floated out of his mouth and dispersed. Soliloquy is the smoke exhaled by the inmost fires of the soul.

The captain broke in : " Señor ! "

The old man, perhaps rather deaf as well as very thoughtful, went on : " Too few stars, and too much wind. The breeze continually changes its direction and blows inshore ; thence it rises perpendicularly. This results from the land being warmer than the water. Its atmosphere is lighter. The cold, dense wind of the sea rushes in to replace it. From this cause, in the upper regions the wind blows towards the land from every quarter. It would be advisable to make long tacks between the real and apparent parallel. When the latitude by observation differs from the latitude by dead reckoning, by not more than three minutes in thirty miles or by four minutes in sixty miles, you are in the true course. "

The captain bowed, but the old man saw him not. The latter, who wore what resembled an Oxford or Göttingen university gown, did not relax his haughty and rigid attitude. He observed the waters as a critic of waves and of men. He studied the billows, but almost as if he was about to demand his turn to speak amidst their turmoil, and teach them something. There was in him both pedagogue and soothsayer. He seemed an oracle of the deep. He continued his soliloquy, which was perhaps intended to be heard :—

" We might try, if we had a wheel instead of a helm. With a speed of twelve miles an hour, a force of twenty pounds exerted on the wheel produces three hundred thousand pounds' effect on the course. And more, too ; for in some cases, with a double block and runner, they can get two more revolutions. "

The captain bowed a second time, and said, " Señor ! "

The old man's eye rested on him ; he had turned his head without moving his body. " Call me Doctor. "

" Master Doctor, I am the captain. "

"Just so," said the doctor. The doctor, as henceforward we shall call him, appeared willing to converse: "Captain, have you an English sextant?"

"No."

"Without an English sextant you cannot take an altitude at all."

"The Basques," replied the captain, "took altitudes before there were any English."

"Be careful you are not taken aback."

"I keep her away when necessary."

"Have you tried how many knots she is running?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"Just now."

"How?"

"By the log."

"Did you take the trouble to look at the triangle?"

"Yes."

"Did the sand run through the glass in exactly thirty seconds?"

"Yes."

"Are you sure that the sand has not worn the hole between the globes?"

"Yes."

"Have you proved the sand-glass by the oscillations of a bullet?"

"Suspended by a rope-yarn drawn out from the top of a coil of soaked hemp? Undoubtedly."

"Have you waxed the yarn lest it should stretch?"

"Yes."

"Have you tested the log?"

"I tested the sand-glass by the bullet, and checked the log by a round shot."

"Of what size was the shot?"

"One foot in diameter."

“ Heavy enough ! ”

“ It is an old round shot of our war-hooker, ‘ La Casse de Par-Grand. ’ ”

“ Which was in the Armada ? ”

“ Yes. ”

“ And which carried six hundred soldiers, fifty sailors, and twenty-five guns ? ”

“ Shipwreck knows it. ”

“ How did you compute the resistance of the water to the shot ? ”

“ By means of a German scale. ”

“ Have you taken into account the resistance of the rope supporting the shot to the waves ? ”

“ Yes. ”

“ What was the result ? ”

“ The resistance of the water was one hundred and seventy pounds. ”

“ That’s to say, she is running four French leagues an hour. ”

“ And three Dutch leagues. ”

“ But that is the difference merely of the vessel’s way and the rate at which the sea is running ? ”

“ Undoubtedly. ”

“ Whither are you steering ? ”

“ For a creek I know, between Loyola and St. Sebastian. ”

“ Make the latitude of the harbour’s mouth as soon as possible. ”

“ Yes, as near as I can. ”

“ Beware of gusts and currents. The first cause the second. ”

“ Yes: the traitors ! ”

“ No abuse ! The sea understands. Insult nothing ; be satisfied with watching. ”

“ I have watched, and I am still watching. Just now

the tide is running against the wind; by-and-by, when it turns, we shall be all right."

"Have you a chart?"

"No; not for this channel."

"Then you sail by rule of thumb?"

"Not at all. I have a compass."

"The compass is one eye, the chart the other."

"A man with one eye can see."

"How do you compute the difference between the true and apparent course?"

"I've got my standard compass, and I make a guess."

"To guess is all very well. To know for a certainty is better."

"Christopher¹ guessed."

"When there is a fog and the needle revolves treacherously, you can never tell on which side you should look out for squalls; and the end of it is that you know neither the real nor apparent day's work. An ass with his chart is better off than a wizard with his oracle."

"There is no fog yet, and I see no cause for alarm."

"Ships are like flies in the spider's web of the sea."

"Just now both winds and waves are tolerably favourable."

"Black specks quivering on the billows, — such are men on the ocean."

"I dare say there will be nothing wrong to-night."

"You may get into a mess that you will find it hard to get out of."

"Yes; but all goes well at present."

The doctor's eyes were fixed on the northeast. The captain continued:—

"Let us once reach the Gulf of Gascony, and I can answer for our safety. Ah, I am at home there! I know it well, my Gulf of Gascony! It is a little basin,

¹ Columbus.

often very boisterous; but there I know every sounding and the nature of the bottom, — mud opposite San Cipriano, shells opposite Cizarque, sand off Cape Peñas, little pebbles off Boncaut de Mimizan; and I know the colour of every pebble.”

The captain broke off; the doctor was no longer listening. He was gazing at the northeast. Over that icy face passed an extraordinary expression. All the agony of terror possible to a mask of stone was depicted there. From his mouth escaped the word, “Ha!”

His eyes were dilated with horror as he perceived a speck on the horizon. Then he added, under his breath, “It is well. As for me, I do not object.”

The captain looked at him.

The doctor went on talking to himself, or to some one in the deep: “Yes, I say.” Then he was silent, and fixed his eyes with renewed attention on that which he was watching, and said: “It is coming from afar off, but it will come none the less surely.”

The arc of the horizon which engrossed the visual orbs and thoughts of the doctor, being opposite to the west, was illuminated by the transcendent reflection of twilight, as if it were day. This arc, limited in extent, and surrounded by streaks of greyish vapour, was uniformly blue, but of a leaden rather than cerulean blue. The doctor pointed to this atmospheric arc, and said:

“Captain, do you see?”

“What?”

“That.”

“What?”

“Out there.”

“A blue spot? Yes.”

“What is it?”

“An opening in the heavens.”

“For those who go to heaven; for those who go else-

where it is another affair," — and the doctor emphasized these enigmatical words with an appalling expression which was unseen in the darkness.

A silence ensued. The captain, remembering the two names given by the chief to this man, asked himself the question: "Is he a madman, or is he a sage?"

The stiff and bony finger of the doctor continued to point, like a sign-post, to the dark spot in the sky.

The captain looked at this spot. "In truth," he growled out, "it is not sky, but clouds."

"A blue cloud is worse than a black cloud," said the doctor; "and it's a snow-cloud," he added.

"La nube de la nieve," said the captain, as if trying to understand the word better by translating it.

"Do you know what a snow-cloud is?" asked the doctor.

"No."

"You'll know by-and-by."

The captain again turned his attention to the horizon. Continuing to observe the cloud, he muttered between his teeth: —

"One month of squalls, another of wet; January with its gales, February with its rains, — that's all the winter we Asturians get. Our rain even is warm. We've no snow but on the mountains. Ay, ay, look out for the avalanche. The avalanche is no respecter of persons; the avalanche is a brute."

"And the water-spout is a monster," said the doctor, adding, after a pause, "here it comes." He continued: "Several winds are getting together, — a strong wind from the west, and a gentle wind from the east."

"That last is a deceitful one," said the captain.

The blue cloud was growing larger. "If the snow," said the doctor, "is appalling when it slips down the mountain, think what it is when it falls from the Pole!" His eye was glassy. The cloud seemed to spread over

his face and almost simultaneously over the horizon. He continued, in musing tones: "Every minute the fatal hour draws nearer. The will of Heaven is about to be manifested."

The captain again asked himself this question, "Is he a madman?"

"Captain," began the doctor, without taking his eyes off the cloud, "have you often crossed the Channel?"

"This is the first time."

"How is that?"

"Master Doctor, my usual cruise is to Ireland. I sail from Fontarabia to Black Harbour, or to the Achill Islands. I go sometimes to Braich-y-Pwll, a point on the Welsh coast. But I always steer outside the Scilly Islands. I do not know this sea at all."

"That's unfortunate. Woe to him who is inexperienced on the ocean! One ought to be familiar with the Channel: the Channel is the Sphinx. Look out for shoals."

"We are in twenty-five fathoms of water here."

"We ought to get into fifty-five fathoms to the west, and avoid even twenty fathoms to the east."

"We'll sound as we get on."

"The Channel is not an ordinary sea. The water rises fifty feet with the spring tides, and twenty-five with neap tides. Here we are in slack water. I thought you looked scared."

"We'll sound to-night."

"To sound you must heave-to, and that you cannot do."

"Why not?"

"On account of the wind."

"We'll try."

"The squall is close upon us."

"We'll sound, Master Doctor."

"You could not even bring-to."

“ Trust in God. ”

“ Take care what you say. Do not utter that dread name lightly. ”

“ I will sound, I tell you. ”

“ Be sensible ; you will have a gale of wind presently. ”

“ I say that I will try for soundings. ”

“ The resistance of the water will prevent the lead from sinking, and the line will break. Ah, so this is your first experience in these waters ? ”

“ My first. ”

“ Very well ; in that case listen, Captain. ”

The tone of the word “ listen ” was so commanding that the captain made an obeisance : “ Master Doctor, I am all attention. ”

“ Port your helm, and haul up on the starboard tack. ”

“ What do you mean ? ”

“ Direct your course westward. ”

“ *Caramba !* ”

“ Direct your course westward. ”

“ Impossible ! ”

“ As you will. What I tell you is for the sake of the others. As for myself, I am indifferent. ”

“ But, Master Doctor, steer west ? ”

“ Yes, Captain. ”

“ The wind will be dead against us. ”

“ Yes, Captain. ”

“ She 'll pitch like the devil. ”

“ Moderate your language. Yes, Captain. ”

“ The vessel would be in irons. ”

“ Yes, Captain. ”

“ That means very likely the mast will go. ”

“ Possibly. ”

“ And yet you wish me to steer westward ? ”

“ Yes. ”

“ I cannot. ”

“ In that case settle your reckoning with the sea. ”

“ The wind ought to change. ”

“ It will not change to-night. ”

“ Why not ? ”

“ Because it is a wind twelve hundred leagues in length. ”

“ Make headway against such a wind ? Impossible ! ”

“ Steer westward, I tell you. ”

“ I ’ll try ; but in spite of everything she will fall off. ”

“ That ’s the danger. ”

“ The wind is driving us towards the east. ”

“ Don’t go to the east. ”

“ Why not ? ”

“ Captain, do you know what is sure death for us ? ”

“ No. ”

“ Death is *the east*. ”

“ I ’ll steer west. ”

This time the doctor, having turned right round, looked the captain full in the face, and with his eyes resting on him, as though to implant the idea in his head, pronounced slowly, syllable by syllable, these words : “ If to-night out at sea we hear the sound of a bell, the ship is lost. ”

The captain pondered in amaze : “ What do you mean ? ”

The doctor did not answer. His countenance so expressive a moment before was now reserved. His eyes became vacuous ; he did not seem to hear the captain’s wondering question. He was now engrossed by his own thoughts. His lips let fall, as if mechanically, in a low murmuring tone, these words : “ The time has come for sullied souls to purify themselves. ”

The captain elevated his chin scornfully. “ He is more madman than sage, ” he growled, as he moved off. Nevertheless he steered westward.

But both the wind and the sea were increasing.

CHAPTER V.

HARDQUANONNE.

THE appearance of the clouds was becoming ominous. In the west as in the east the sky was now nearly covered with dark, angry clouds, which were rapidly advancing in the teeth of the wind. These contradictions are part of the wind's vagaries. The sea, which had been clothed in scales a moment before, now wore a skin, — for such is the nature of this aquatic monster. It was no longer a crocodile, it was a boa-constrictor. Its lead-coloured skin looked immensely thick, and was crossed by heavy wrinkles. Here and there, on its surface, bubbles of froth, like pustules, gathered and then burst. The foam was like leprosy. It was at this moment that the hooker, still seen from afar by the child, lighted her signal.

A quarter of an hour elapsed. The captain looked around for the doctor; he was no longer on deck. Directly the captain left him, the doctor bent his somewhat ungainly form and entered the cabin, where he sat down near the stove, on a block. He took a shagreen ink-bottle and a cordwain pocket-book from his pocket; extracted from the pocket-book a parchment folded four times, old, stained, and yellow; opened the sheet, took a pen out of his ink-case, laid the pocket-book flat on his knee and the parchment on the pocket-book, and by the rays of the lantern, which was lighting the cook, set to writing on the back of the parchment. Though

the rolling of the waves inconvenienced him, he wrote on thus for some time.

As he wrote, the doctor noticed the gourd of aguardiente, which the Provençal tasted every time he added a grain of pimento to the puchero, as if he were consulting with reference to the seasoning. The doctor noticed the gourd, not because it was a flask of brandy, but because of a name which was plaited in the wicker-work, with red rushes on a white background. There was light enough in the cabin to permit of his reading the name. The doctor paused and spelled it in a low voice: "Hardquanonne." Then he addressed the cook:—

"I never observed this gourd before; did it belong to Hardquanonne?"

"Yes," the cook answered, — "to our poor comrade, Hardquanonne."

"To Hardquanonne, the Fleming of Flanders?"

"Yes."

"The same who is in prison?"

"Yes."

"In the dungeon at Chatham?"

"Yes, it is his gourd," replied the cook. "He is a friend of mine, and I keep it in remembrance of him. When shall we see him again? It is the bottle he used to wear slung over his hip."

The doctor took up his pen again, and continued laboriously tracing somewhat straggling lines on the parchment. He was evidently anxious that his hand-writing should be very legible. At last, notwithstanding the tremulousness of the vessel and the tremulousness of age, he finished what he wanted to write.

It was time; for suddenly a sea struck the craft, a mighty rush of waters besieged the hooker, and they felt her break into that fearful dance in which ships lead off with the tempest.

The doctor rose and approached the stove, meeting the ship's motion with his knees dexterously bent, dried as best he could, at the stove where the pot was boiling, the lines he had written, refolded the parchment in the pocket-book, and replaced the pocket-book and the ink-horn in his pocket.

The stove was not the least ingenious piece of interior economy in the hooker. It was judiciously isolated, yet the pot oscillated wildly. The Provençal watched it closely.

"Fish broth," said he.

"For the fishes," replied the doctor, as he went on deck again.

CHAPTER VI.

THEY THINK THAT HELP IS AT HAND.

THROUGH his growing pre-occupation, the doctor dreamily reviewed the situation; and any one near him might have heard these words drop from his lips: "Too much rolling, and not enough pitching." Then he again relapsed into thought, as a miner into his shaft. His meditation in nowise interfered with his watch of the sea. The contemplation of the sea is in itself a reverie.

The travail of the eternally tortured waters was commencing. A wail of lamentation arose from the whole main. Confused and ominous preparations were going on in space. The doctor noted each detail, though there was no sign of scrutiny in his face. One does not scrutinize hell. A vast commotion, as yet half latent, but visible through the turmoils in space, increased and irritated the winds, the vapours, and the waves more and more. Nothing is so logical and yet nothing appears so erratic as the ocean. Self-dispersion is the essence of its sovereignty, and one of the elements of its redundancy. The sea is ever for or against. It knots, that it may unravel itself; one of its waves attacks, the other relieves. There is nothing so truly wonderful as the waves. Who can paint the alternating hollows and elevations, the heaving bosoms, the majestic outlines? Who can describe the thickets of foam, the blendings of mountains and dreams? The indescribable is every-

where there, in the rending, in the frowning, in the anxiety, in the perpetual contradiction, in the chiar-oscuro, in the pendants of the clouds, in the ever-changing curves, in the disaggregation without rupture, in the mighty uproar caused by all that overhanging tumult!

The wind had just veered around to the north, and its violence was so favourable and useful in driving them away from England that the captain of the "Matutina" had made up his mind to set all sail. The hooker dashed through the foam at a gallop, bounding from wave to wave in a gay frenzy. The fugitives were delighted, and laughed; they clapped their hands; applauded the surf, the sea, the wind, the sails, the swift progress, the flight, all unmindful of the future. The doctor seemed not to see them, and dreamed on.

Every vestige of day had faded away. This was the moment when the child, watching from the distant cliff, lost sight of the hooker. Up to that time his gaze had been riveted upon the vessel. Did that look exert any influence over the vessel's fate? When the hooker was lost to sight in the distance, and when the child could no longer see aught of it, he went north and the ship went south. Both were plunged in darkness.

CHAPTER VII.

SUPERHUMAN HORRORS.

IT was with wild rejoicing and delight that those on board the hooker saw the hostile land recede and lessen behind them. By degrees the dark ring of ocean rose higher, dwarfing in the twilight Portland, Purbeck, Tineham, Kimmeridge, the Matravers, the long lines of dim cliffs, and the coast dotted with lighthouses. England disappeared. The fugitives had now nothing around them but the sea.

All at once the darkness became frightful. There was no longer space; the sky became as black as ink, and closed in round the vessel. The snow began to fall slowly, only a few flakes at first. They might have been ghosts. Nothing else was visible. A snare lurked in every possibility.

It is in this cavernous darkness that in our climate the Polar water-spout makes its appearance. A great muddy cloud, resembling the belly of a hydra, hung over the ocean, its livid base adhering to the waves in some places. Some of these adherences resembled pouches with holes, pumping up the sea, disgorging vapour, and refilling themselves with water. Here and there these suction raised cones of foam on the sea.

The boreal storm hurled itself on the hooker; the hooker rushed to meet it. The squall and the vessel met as though to insult each other. In the first mad shock not a sail was reefed, not a jib lowered; the mast

creaked and bent back as if in fear. Cyclones in our northern hemisphere circle from left to right, in the same direction as the hands of a watch, with a velocity which is sometimes as much as sixty miles an hour. Although she was entirely at the mercy of the storm, the hooker behaved as if she were out in moderate weather, without any further precaution than keeping her head to the billows, with the wind broad on the bow so as to avoid being caught broadside on. This prudential measure would have availed her nothing in case of the wind's shifting and taking her aback.

A deep rumbling sound was audible in the distance. The roar of ocean, — what can be compared to it? It is the great brutish howl of the universe. What we call matter, — that unsearchable organism, that amalgamation of incommensurable energies, in which can occasionally be detected an almost imperceptible degree of intention which makes us shudder; that blind, benighted cosmos; that enigmatical Pan, — has a cry, a strange cry, prolonged, obstinate, and continuous, which is between speech and thunder. That cry is the hurricane. Other and different voices, songs, melodies, clamours, tones, proceed from nests, from broods, from pairings, from nuptials, from homes. This trumpet-blast comes out of the Naught, which is All. Other voices express the soul of the universe; this expresses its brute power. It is the howl of the formless; it is the inarticulate uttered by the indefinite; it is a thing full of pathos and of terror. Those clamours resound above and beyond man. They rise, fall, undulate; form waves of sound; constitute all sorts of wild surprises for the mind; now burst close to the ear with the importunity of a peal of trumpets, now assail us with the rumbling hoarseness of distance, — giddy uproar which resembles a language, and which in fact is a language.

It is the effort which the world makes to speak; it is the lisping of the wonderful. In this wail is manifested vaguely all that the vast, dark palpitation endures, suffers, accepts, rejects. For the most part it talks nonsense; it is like an attack of chronic sickness. We fancy that we are witnessing the descent of supreme evil into the infinite. At moments we seem to discern a reclamation of the elements, some vain effort of chaos to re-assert itself over creation. At times it is a despairing moan; the void bewails and justifies itself. It is the pleading of the world's cause: we can fancy that the universe is engaged in a law-suit; we listen, we try to grasp the reasons given, the redoubtable for and against. Such a moaning among the shadows has the tenacity of a syllogism. Here is a vast field for thought; here is the *raison d'être* of mythologies and polytheisms. To the terror of these wild murmurs are added superhuman outlines melting away as they appear, — Eumenides which are almost distinct, throats of furies shaped in the clouds, Plutonian chimeras almost defined. No horrors can equal those sobs, those laughs, those tricks of tumult, those inscrutable questions and answers, those appeals to unknown aid. Man is utterly bewildered in the presence of that awful incantation; he bows under the enigma of those Draconian intonations. What latent meaning have they; what do they signify; what do they threaten; what do they implore? It would seem as though all bonds were loosened. Vociferations from precipice to precipice, from air to water, from wind to wave, from rain to rock, from zenith to nadir, from stars to foam; the abyss unmuzzled, — such is this tumult, complicated by some mysterious contest with evil consciences.

The loquacity of night is not less lugubrious than its silence. One feels in it the wrath of the unknown.

Night is a presence. The presence of what? For that matter we must distinguish between night and the shadowy. In the night there is the absolute; in the shadowy, the multiple. The night is one, the shadowy is made up of many. In this infinite and indefinite shadowy lives something or some one; but that which lives there forms part of our death. After our earthly career, when the shadowy will be clear to us, the life which is beyond will seize us; meanwhile it appears to touch and try us. Obscurity is a pressure. Night is, as it were, a hand placed on our soul; at certain hideous and solemn hours we feel that which is beyond the wall of the tomb encroaching on us.

Never does this proximity of the unknown seem more imminent than in storms at sea. The horrible combines with the fantastic. The possible interrupter of human actions, the old Cloud-compeller, has it in his power to mould, in whatsoever shape he chooses, the changing elements, the wild incoherence, and aimless force. That mystery the tempest is ever accepting and executing some unknown change of real or apparent will. Poets in all ages have called the waves capricious; but there is no such thing as caprice. The disconcerting enigmas in Nature which we call caprice, and in human life chance, are the results of unseen and incomprehensible laws.

CHAPTER VIII.

NIX ET NOX.

THE chief characteristic of the snow-storm is its blackness. Nature's habitual aspect during a storm, the earth or sea black and the sky pale, is reversed: the sky is black, the ocean white; foam below, darkness above, — an horizon walled in with smoke; a zenith roofed with crape. The tempest resembles a cathedral hung with mourning; but there is no light in that cathedral, — no phantom lights on the crests of the waves, no spark, no phosphorescence, naught but a dense shadow. The polar cyclone differs from the tropical cyclone, inasmuch as the one sets fire to every light, and the other extinguishes them all. The world is suddenly converted into a vaulted cave. Out of the night falls a dust of pale spots, which hesitate between sky and sea. These spots, which are flakes of snow, slip, wander, and float. It is like the tears of a winding-sheet putting themselves into life-like motion. A mad wind mingles with this dissemination. Blackness crumbling into whiteness, the furious into the obscure, all the tumult of which the sepulchre is capable, a whirlwind under a catafalque, — such is the snow-storm. Underneath trembles the ocean, forming and reforming over portentous depths. In the polar wind, which is electrical, the flakes turn suddenly into hailstones, and the air becomes filled with projectiles; the water crackles, shot with grape. There are no thunder-claps; the light-

ning of boreal storms is silent. What is sometimes said of the cat, "It swears," may be applied to this lightning. It is a menace proceeding from a mouth half open, and strangely inexorable. The snow-storm is a storm blind and dumb; when it has passed, the ships also are often blind and the sailors dumb.

To escape from such danger is difficult. It would be wrong, however, to consider shipwreck inevitable. The Danish fishermen of Disco and the Balesin; the seekers of black whales; Hearn, steering towards Behring Strait to discover the mouth of Coppermine River; Hudson, Mackenzie, Vancouver, Ross, Dumont d'Urville, — all underwent almost at the pole itself the wildest hurricanes, and escaped out of them.

It was into this description of tempest that the hooker had entered, triumphant and under full sail. Frenzy against frenzy. When Montgomery, escaping from Rouen, drove his galley, with all the force of its oars, against the chain barring the Seine at La Bouille, he showed similar effrontery. The "Matutina" sailed on fast; she keeled over so much under her sails that at times she was at an angle of fifteen degrees with the sea; but her well-rounded keel adhered to the water as if glued to it. The keel resisted the grasp of the hurricane; the lantern at the prow still cast its light ahead. The clouds settled down more and more upon the sea around the hooker. Not a gull, not a sea-mew, was to be seen, — nothing but snow. The expanse of waves was becoming contracted and terrible; only three or four gigantic billows were visible. Now and then a tremendous flash of copper-coloured lightning broke out from behind the heavy masses of clouds on the horizon and in the zenith. This sudden burst of vermilion-flame showed the immense size and blackness of the clouds; while the brief illumination of ocean to which the first layer of

clouds and the distant boundaries of celestial chaos seemed to adhere plainly revealed the horrors of their immediate surroundings. Against this fiery background, the snow-flakes looked so black that they reminded one of dark butterflies darting about in a furnace; then, everything was once more veiled in gloom. The first explosion over, the squall, still in mad pursuit of the hooker, began a savage, continuous roar. Nothing could be more appalling than this sort of monologue of the tempest. The gloomy recitative seems intended to serve as a momentary rest for the contending forces, — a sort of truce maintained in the mighty deep.

The hooker held wildly on her course. Her two mainsails especially were doing wonderful work. The sky and sea were like ink compared with the jets of foam running higher than the mast. Every instant masses of water swept the deck like a deluge, and at each roll of the vessel the hawse-holes — now to starboard, now to larboard — became so many open mouths vomiting back foam into the sea. The women had taken refuge in the cabin, but the men remained on deck; the blinding snow eddied round, the surge mingling with it.

At that moment the chief of the band, standing abaft and holding with one hand to the shrouds, and with the other taking off the kerchief he wore round his head and waving it in the light of the lantern, gay and arrogant, with pride in his face, and his hair in wild disorder, cried out, —

“ We are free ! ”

“ Free, free, free ! ” echoed the fugitives, and the band, seizing hold of the rigging, rose up on deck.

“ Hurrah ! ” shouted the chief.

And the band shouted in the storm, “ Hurrah ! ”

Just as this clamour was dying away in the tempest

a loud, solemn voice rose from the other end of the vessel, saying, "Silence!"

All turned their heads. The darkness was thick, and the doctor was leaning against the mast, so that he seemed part of it, and they could not see him.

The voice spoke again: "Listen!"

All were silent. They distinctly heard through the darkness the tolling of a bell.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CHARGE CONFIDED TO A RAGING SEA.

THE captain, at the helm, burst out laughing: "A bell, that's good! We are on the larboard tack. What does the bell prove? Why, that we have land to starboard."

The firm and measured voice of the doctor replied: "You have not land to starboard."

"But we have!" shouted the captain.

"No!"

"But that bell tolls from the land."

"That bell," said the doctor, "tolls from the sea."

A shudder passed over these daring men; the haggard faces of the two women appeared above the companion-way like two hobgoblins conjured up; the doctor took a step forward, separating his tall form from the mast. From the gloomy depths of night again resounded the dreary tolling of the bell.

The doctor resumed: "Half-way between Portland and the Channel Islands there is in the midst of the sea a buoy, placed there as a warning. The buoy is moored by chains to a rock, and floats on the top of the water. To the buoy is affixed an iron trestle, and across the trestle is hung a bell. In bad weather heavy seas toss the buoy, and the bell rings. That is the bell you hear."

The doctor, after pausing to allow an unusually violent gust of wind to subside, continued: "To hear that bell in a storm, when a nor'-wester is blowing, is to be lost."

Wherefore? For this reason: you hear the bell because the wind brings the sound to you. The wind is blowing from the northwest, and the rocks of Alderney lie to the east of us. You hear the bell only because you are between the buoy and the breakers. It is upon those rocks that the wind is driving you. You are on the wrong side of the buoy. If you were on the right side, you would be out at sea on a safe course, and you would not hear the bell; the wind would not convey the sound to you, — you might pass close to the buoy without knowing it. We are out of our course. That bell is shipwreck sounding the tocsin. Listen!”

As the doctor spoke, the bell, soothed by a lull of the storm, rang out slowly, stroke by stroke; and its dismal voice seemed to testify to the truth of the old man's words. It was perhaps their death-knell. All listened breathlessly, — now to the voice, now to the bell.

CHAPTER X.

THE COLOSSAL SAVAGE, THE STORM.

IN the mean time the captain had caught up his speaking-trumpet: "*Cargate todo, hombres!* Let go the sheets, man the down-hauls, lower ties and brails! Let us steer to the west, let us regain the high sea! Head for the buoy, steer for the bell; there 's an offing down there. We 've yet a chance."

"Try," said the doctor.

Let us remark here, by the way, that this buoy, a kind of bell-tower on the deep, was removed in 1802. There are yet alive very aged mariners who remember hearing it. It forewarned, but rather too late.

The orders of the captain were obeyed. The Languedocian made a third sailor. All bore a hand. Not satisfied with brailing up, they furled the sails; secured the clew-lines, bunt-lines, and leech-lines; clapped preventor-shrouds on the block-straps, which thus might serve as back-stays. They braced the mast; they battened down the ports and bulls' eyes, which is a method of walling up a ship. These evolutions, though executed in a lubberly fashion were nevertheless thoroughly effective. The hooker was stripped to bare poles. But in proportion as the vessel, stowing every stitch of canvas, became more helpless, the havoc of both winds and waves increased. The billows ran mountains high.

The hurricane, like an executioner hastening to his victim, began to dismember the craft. There came, in the twinkling of an eye, a dreadful crash; the top-sails were blown from the bolt-ropes, the chess-trees were hewn asunder, the deck was swept clear, the shrouds were carried away, the mast went by the board; all the lumber of the wreck was flying in shivers. The main shrouds also succumbed, although they were turned in and strongly stoppered. The magnetic currents common to snow-storms hastened the destruction of the rigging; it broke as much from the effects of these as from the violence of the wind. Most of the chain gear, fouled in the blocks, ceased to work. The bows and stern quivered under the terrific shocks. One wave washed overboard the compass and its binnacle; a second carried away the boat, which like a box slung under a carriage had been, in accordance with the quaint Asturian custom, lashed to the bowsprit; a third breaker wrenched off the sprit-sail yard; a fourth swept away the figure-head and signal-light. The rudder only was left. To replace the ship's bow-lantern they set fire to, and suspended at the stem, a large block of wood covered with oakum and tar. The broken mast, all bristling with splinters, ropes, blocks, and yards, cumbered the deck; in falling, it had stove in a plank of the starboard gunwale. The captain, still firm at the helm, shouted: "While we can steer, we have a chance! The lower planks hold good. Axes, axes! Overboard with the mast! Clear the decks!"

Both crew and passengers worked with the excitement of despair. A few strokes of the hatchets, and it was done. They pushed the mast over the side; the deck was cleared.

"Now," continued the captain, "take a rope's end and lash me to the helm."

They bound him to the tiller. While they were fastening him he laughed, and shouted, —

“ Bellow, old hurdy-gurdy! bellow! I ’ve seen your equal off Cape Machichaco!”

And when secured, he clutched the helm with that strange hilarity which danger awakens, crying out, —

“ All goes well, my lads! Long live our Lady of Buglose! Let us steer west.”

An enormous wave came down abeam, and dashed against the vessel’s side. There is always in storms a tiger-like wave, a billow fierce and decisive, which after attaining a certain height creeps horizontally over the surface of the waters for a time, then rises, roars, rages, and falling on the distressed vessel tears it limb from limb. A cloud of foam covered the entire deck of the “ Matutina.” A loud noise was heard above the confusion of darkness and waters. When the spray cleared off, and the stern again rose to view, the captain and the helm had disappeared. Both had been swept away. The helm and the man they had but just secured to it had passed with the wave into the hissing turmoil of the hurricane.

The chief of the band, gazing intently into the darkness, shouted: “ Te burlas de nosotros?”

To this defiant exclamation there followed another cry: “ Let go the anchor! Save the captain!”

They rushed to the capstan and let go the anchor. Hookers carry but one. In this case the anchor reached the bottom, but only to be lost; the bottom was of the hardest rock. The billows were raging with resistless force. The cable snapped like a thread; the anchor lay at the bottom of the sea. At the cutwater there remained only the cable end protruding from the hawse-hole. From this moment the hooker became a wreck. The “ Matutina ” was irrevocably disabled. The vessel,

just before in full sail and almost formidable in her speed, was now helpless; all her evolutions were uncertain and executed at random; she yielded passively and like a log to the capricious fury of the waves.

The howling of the wind became more and more frightful. The bell on the sea rang despairingly, as if tolled by a weird hand. The "Matutina" drifted like a cork at the mercy of the waves. She sailed no longer, — she merely floated; every moment she seemed about to turn over on her back, like a dead fish. The good condition and perfectly water-tight state of the hull alone saved her from this disaster. Below the water-line not a plank had started; there was not a cranny, chink, nor crack; and she had not a single drop of water in the hold. This was lucky, as the pump, being out of order, was useless. The hooker pitched and rolled frightfully in the seething billows. The vessel had throes as of sickness, and seemed to be trying to belch forth the unhappy crew. Helpless they clung to the rigging, to the transoms, to the shank painters, to the gaskets, to the broken planks (the protruding nails of which tore their hands), to the warped riders, and to all the rugged projections on the stumps of the masts. From time to time they listened: the tolling of the bell came over the waters fainter and fainter, — one might have supposed that too was in distress. Finally the sound died away altogether.

Where were they, — at what distance from the buoy? The sound of the bell had frightened them; its silence terrified them. The northwester drove them forward in perhaps a fatal course. They felt themselves wafted on by maddened and ever-recurring gusts of wind. The wreck sped forward in the darkness. There is nothing more fearful than being hurried forward blindfold.

They felt the abyss before them, over them, under them. It was no longer a run, it was a rush. Suddenly, through the appalling density of the snow-storm, there loomed a red light.

“ A lighthouse ! ” cried the crew.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CASKETS.

IT was the Caskets Light.

A lighthouse of the nineteenth century is a high cylinder of masonry, surmounted by scientifically constructed machinery for throwing light. The Casket lighthouse in particular is a white tower supporting three light-rooms. These three chambers revolve on clock-wheels, with such precision that the man on watch who sees them from sea can invariably take ten steps during their irradiation, and twenty-five during their eclipse. Everything is based on the focal plan and on the rotation of the octagon drum, which is formed of eight wide simple lenses in range, having above and below it two series of dioptric rings; it is protected from the violence of the winds and waves by glass a millimetre thick, yet sometimes broken by the sea-eagles, which dash themselves like great moths against these gigantic lanterns. The building which encloses and sustains this mechanism, and in which it is set, is also mathematically constructed. Everything about it is plain, exact, bare, precise, correct. A lighthouse is a mathematical figure.

In the seventeenth century a lighthouse was a sort of ornament to the sea-shore. The architecture of a lighthouse tower was magnificent and extravagant. It was covered with balconies, balusters, lodges, alcoves,

weather-cocks, — nothing but masks, statues, foliage, volutes, reliefs, figures large and small, medallions with inscriptions. “Pax in bello,” said the Eddystone lighthouse. (We may as well observe, by the way, that this declaration of peace did not always disarm the ocean. Winstanley repeated it on a lighthouse which he constructed at his own expense, on a wild spot near Plymouth. The tower being finished, he shut himself up in it to have it tried by the tempest. The storm came, and carried off the lighthouse and Winstanley in it.) Such excessive adornment afforded too great a hold to the hurricane; as generals too brilliantly equipped in battle, draw the enemy’s fire. Besides whimsical designs in stone, they were loaded with whimsical designs in iron, copper, and wood. On the sides of the lighthouse there jutted out, clinging to the walls among the arabesques, engines of every description, useful and useless, — windlasses, tackles, pullies, counterpoises, ladders, cranes, grapnels. On the pinnacle around the light, delicately wrought iron-work held great iron chandeliers, in which were placed pieces of rope steeped in resin, — wicks which burned doggedly, and which no wind extinguished; and from top to bottom the tower was covered by a complication of sea standards, banderoles, banners, flags, and pennons, which rose from stage to stage, from story to story, — a medley of all hues, all shapes, all heraldic devices, all signals, all confusion, up to the light-chamber, making in the storm a gay riot of colour about the blaze. This insolent light on the brink of the abyss seemed to breathe defiance, and inspired shipwrecked men with a spirit of daring.

But the Caskets Light was not one of this kind. It was at that period a primitive sort of lighthouse. Henry I. built it after the loss of the “White Ship.” It was an unpretending tower perched upon a rock and

surmounted with a brazier enclosed by an iron railing, — a head of hair flaming in the wind. The only improvement made in this lighthouse since the twelfth century was a pair of forge-bellows worked by a pendulum and a stone weight, which had been added to the light-chamber in 1610.

The fate of the sea-birds that chanced to fly against these old lighthouses was more tragic than those of our days. The birds dashed against them, attracted by the light, and fell into the brazier, where they could be seen struggling like black spirits in a hell; at times they would fall back again between the railings upon the rock, smoking, lame, blind, like half-burnt flies out of a lamp.

To a full-rigged ship in good trim, answering readily to the pilot's handling, the Caskets Light is useful; it cries, "Look out!" It warns her of the shoal. To a disabled ship it is simply terrible. The hull, paralyzed and inert, with no defence against the fury of the storm or the mad heaving of the waves, — a fish without fins, a bird without wings, — can but go where the wind wills. The lighthouse reveals the end, points out the spot where it is doomed to disappear, and casts a ghastly light upon the place of burial. In short, it is but a funeral torch to illumine the yawning chasm, to warn against the inevitable. What more tragic mockery!

CHAPTER XII.

FACE TO FACE WITH THE ROCK.

THE wretched people on board the "Matutina" soon understood the derisive character of this warning. The sight of the lighthouse raised their spirits at first, then overwhelmed them with despair. Nothing could be done, nothing attempted. What has been said of kings, we may say of the waves, — we are their people, we are their prey. All their raving must be borne.

The nor'-wester was driving the hooker on the Caskets. They were nearing them; escape was impossible. They were drifting rapidly towards the reef; they felt that they were getting into shallow waters; the lead, if they could have thrown it to any purpose, would not have shown more than three or four fathoms. They heard the dull sound of the waves being sucked within the submarine caves of the steep rock. They made out, near the lighthouse, a deep cut between two granite walls, — the narrow passage leading into the ugly, wild-looking little harbour, supposed to be full of the skeletons of men and carcasses of ships. It looked like the mouth of a cave, rather than the entrance of a port. They could hear the crackling of the flames high up within the iron grating. A ghastly purple illuminated the storm; the collision of the rain and hail disturbed the mist. The black cloud and the red flame fought, serpent against serpent; live ashes, reft by the wind, flew from the fire, and the sudden assaults of the sparks

seemed to drive the snow-flakes before them. The ledge, blurred at first in outline, now stood out in bold relief, — a medley of rocks with peaks, crests, and vertebræ. As they neared it, the appearance of the reef became more and more forbidding. One of the women, the Irishwoman, told her beads wildly.

The chief was now acting as captain; for the Basques are equally at home on the mountain and the sea; they are bold on the precipice, and inventive in catastrophes. They were nearing the cliff. They were about to strike. Suddenly they came so close to the great rock north of the Caskets that it shut out the lighthouse from their view. They saw nothing but the rock and a red glare behind it. The huge rock looming in the mist was like a gigantic black woman with a hood of fire. This ill-famed rock is called the Biblet. It faces the north side of the reef, which on the south is faced by another ridge, L'Etacq-aux-giulmets. The chief looked at the Biblet and shouted, —

“A man with a will to take a rope to the rock! Who can swim?”

No answer. No one on board knew how to swim, not even the sailors, — an ignorance not uncommon among seafaring people. A beam nearly freed from its lashings was swinging loose. The chief seized it with both hands, crying, —

“Help me!”

They unlashd the beam. They had now at their disposal the very thing they wanted. Abandoning the defensive they assumed the offensive. It was a long beam of solid oak, sound and strong, useful either as a support or as a weapon, as a lever for a burden or a battering ram against a tower.

“Ready!” shouted the chief.

All six getting foothold on the stump of the mast,

threw their weight on the spar projecting over the side, and aimed straight as a lance towards a projection of the cliff. It was a dangerous manœuvre. To strike at a mountain is audacious indeed; the six men might have been thrown into the water by the shock. There is variety in struggles with storms. After the hurricane, the shoal; after the wind, the rock: first the intangible, then the immovable, to be encountered. Several minutes passed, such minutes as whiten men's hair. The rock and the vessel were about to come in collision; the rock awaited the blow like a culprit. A relentless wave rushed in; it ended the respite. It caught the vessel underneath, raised it, and swayed it for an instant as the sling swings its projectile.

"Steady!" cried the chief, "it is only a rock, and we are men!"

The beam was couched; the six men were one with it; its sharp bolts tore their arm-pits, but they did not feel them. The wave dashed the hooker against the rock. Then came the shock. It came under the cloud of foam which always hides such catastrophes. When the spray fell back into the sea, when the waves rolled back from the rock, the six men were rolling about the deck, but the "Matutina" was floating alongside the rock, clear of it. The beam had stood fast and turned the vessel aside. The sea was running so fast that in a few seconds the hooker had left the Caskets behind.

Such things sometimes occur. It was a straight stroke of the bowsprit that saved Wood of Largo at the mouth of the Tay. In the wild neighbourhood of Cape Winterton, and under the command of Captain Hamilton, it was the appliance of such a lever against the dangerous rock Branodu-um that saved the "Royal Mary" from shipwreck, although she was but a Scotch-built frigate. The force of the waves can be so abruptly

decomposed that changes in direction can be easily effected, or at least are possible even in the most violent collisions. The whole secret of avoiding shipwreck, is to try and pass from the secant to the tangent. Such was the service the beam rendered to the hooker; it had done the work of an oar, had taken the place of a rudder. But the manœuvre once performed could not be repeated. The beam was overboard; the shock of the collision had wrenched it out of the men's hands, and it was lost in the waves. To loosen another beam would have been to dismember the hull.

The hurricane swept the "Matutina" on. The light paled in the distance, faded, and disappeared. There was something mournful in its extinction. Layers of mist gradually sank down upon the now uncertain light; its rays died in the waste of waters; the flame floated, struggled, sank, and lost its form. It might have been a drowning creature. The brazier dwindled to the snuff of a candle; then naught remained save a faint uncertain glimmer. It was like the quenching of light in the pit of night.

The bell which had threatened was dumb; the lighthouse which had threatened had melted away. And yet it was more awful now that they had ceased to threaten. One was a voice, the other a torch. There was something human about them. They were gone, and naught remained but the mighty deep.

CHAPTER XIII.

FACE TO FACE WITH NIGHT.

A GAIN was the hooker running with the shadow into immeasurable darkness. The "Matutina," escaped from the Caskets, sank and rose from billow to billow, a respite, but in chaos. Spun around by the wind, tossed by all the thousand motions of the wave, she reflected every mad oscillation of the sea. She scarcely pitched at all, — a terrible symptom in a ship in distress. Wrecks merely roll; pitching is a sign of strife. The helm alone can turn a vessel to the wind.

Mists, whirlwinds, gales, motion in all directions, no shelter, gulf succeeding gulf, no horizon visible, intense blackness for background, — through all these the hooker drifted. To have got free of the Caskets, to have escaped the rock, was a victory for the shipwrecked men; but it was a victory which left them in a sort of stupor. They had raised no cheer; at sea such an impudence is not repeated twice. To throw down a challenge where they could not cast the lead, would have been too serious a jest. The shipwreck averted was an impossibility achieved; they were petrified by it. By degrees, however, they began to hope again. Such are the mirages of the soul! There is no distress so complete but that even in the most critical moments the inexplicable sunrise of hope is seen in its depths. These poor wretches were ready to declare to themselves that they were saved. The words were almost on their lips.

But suddenly something terrible appeared before them in the darkness. On the port bow arose a tall, perpendicular, opaque mass, a square tower as it were. They gazed at it, open-mouthed. The storm was driving them straight towards it. They knew not what it was. It was the Ortach rock emerging from the depths of ocean.

CHAPTER XIV.

ORTACH.

DANGER was imminent again. After the Caskets comes Ortach. The storm is no artist; brutal and all-powerful, it never varies its appliances. The darkness is inexhaustible; its snares and perfidies never come to an end. As for man, he soon comes to the end of his resources. Man exhausts his strength, the abyss never. The shipwrecked men turned towards the chief, their hope. He could only shrug his shoulders. Dismal contempt of helplessness.

The Ortach, a single huge rock, rises in a straight line eighty feet above the angry beating of the waves. Waves and ships break against it. An immovable cube, it plunges its rectilinear planes into the numberless serpentine curves of the sea. At night it looks like an enormous block resting on the folds of a huge black sheet. In time of storm it awaits the stroke of the axe, — that is, the thunderbolt. But there is never a thunderbolt during a snow-storm. True, the ship has a bandage over her eyes; she is like one prepared for the scaffold. As for the lightning-bolt which puts one quickly out of one's misery, that is not to be hoped for.

The "Matutina," little better now than a log upon the waters, drifted towards this rock, as she had drifted towards the other. The poor wretches on board, who had for a moment believed themselves saved, relapsed into misery. The destruction they thought they had

left behind them confronted them again. The reef reappeared from the bottom of the sea. Nothing had been gained.

The Caskets are a goffering iron with a thousand subdivisions; the Ortach is a solid wall. To be wrecked on the Caskets is to be cut into ribbons; to strike on the Ortach is to be crushed into powder. Nevertheless there was one chance. On a straight frontage like that of the Ortach, neither the wave nor the cannon-ball can ricochet. The operation is simple,—first the flux, then the reflux; a wave advances, a billow returns. In such cases the question of life and death is balanced thus: if the wave carries the vessel on the rock, she breaks on it and is lost; if the billow retires before the ship has touched, she is carried back,—she is saved.

It was a moment of intense anxiety. Those on board saw through the gloom the great decisive wave bearing down on them. How far was it going to drag them? If the wave broke upon the ship, they would be carried on the rock and dashed to pieces. If it passed under the ship— The wave *did* pass under. They breathed again.

But what of the recoil? What would the surf do with them? The surf carried them back. A few minutes later the "Matutina" was out of the breakers. The Ortach faded from their view, as the Caskets had done. It was their second victory. For the second time the hooker had verged on destruction, and had drawn back in time.

CHAPTER XV.

PORTENTOSUM MARE.

MEANWHILE a thickening mist had descended on the drifting wretches. They were ignorant of their whereabouts, they could scarcely see a cable's length around. Despite a furious storm of hail which forced them to bow their heads, the women had obstinately refused to go below again. No one, however hopeless, but wishes, if shipwreck be inevitable, to meet it in the open air. When so near death, a ceiling above one's head seems like the first outline of a coffin.

They were now in a short and chopping sea. A turgid sea indicates its constraint. Even in a fog the entrance to a strait may be known by the boiling appearance of the waves. And it was so in this case, for they were unconsciously skirting the coast of Alderney. Between the Caskets and Ortach on the west and Alderney on the east, the sea is cramped and hemmed in. In this uncomfortable position the sea suffers like anything else; and when it suffers, it is irritable. Consequently, that channel is a thing to fear. The "Matutina" was in that channel now.

Imagine under the sea a tortoise shell as big as Hyde Park or the Champs Elysées, of which every striature is a shoal, and every embossment a reef. Such is the western approach of Alderney. The sea covers and conceals this shipwrecking apparatus. On this conglomeration of submarine breakers the cloven waves leap and

foam; in calm weather a chopping sea, in storms a chaos reigns. The shipwrecked men observed this new complication without endeavouring to explain it to themselves. Suddenly they understood it. A pale vista broadened in the zenith; a wan tinge overspread the sea; the livid light revealed on the port side a long shoal stretching eastward, towards which the power of the rushing wind was driving the vessel. What was that shoal? They shuddered. They would have shuddered even more had a voice answered them, "Alderney!"

No other isle is so well defended against man's approach as Alderney. Below and above water it is protected by a savage guard, of which Ortach is the outpost. To the west are Burhou, Sauteriaux, Anfroque, Niangle, Fond du Croc, Les Jumelles, La Grosse, La Clanque, Les Eguillons, Le Vrac, La Fosse-Malière; to the east, Sauquet, Hommeau Floreau, La Brinebetais, La Queslingue, Croquelihou, La Fourche, Le Saut, Noire Pute, Coupie, Orbue. These are hydra-headed monsters of the protecting reef. One of these reefs is called Le But, — the Goal, — as if to imply that every voyage ends there. This obstruction, simplified by night and sea, looked to the shipwrecked men like a single dark belt of rocks, a sort of blot on the horizon.

Shipwreck is the height of helplessness. To be near land, and unable to reach it; to float, yet not to be able to do so in any desired direction; to rest the foot on what seems firm and is fragile; to be full of life, and yet o'ershadowed by death; to be a prisoner in space; to be walled in between sky and ocean; to have the infinite overhead like a dungeon; to be encompassed by the treacherous winds and waves; to be seized, bound, paralyzed, — such a load of misfortune stupefies and crushes us. We imagine that in it we catch a glimpse of the sneer of the opponent who is beyond our reach.

That which holds you fast is that which releases the birds and sets the fishes free. It seems nothing, and is everything. We are dependent on the air which is ruffled by our mouths; we are dependent on the water which we catch in the hollow of our hands. Draw a glassful from the storm, and it is but a cup of bitterness; a mouthful is nausea, a waveful is extermination. The grain of sand in the desert, the foam-flake on the sea, are fearful symptoms. Omnipotence takes no care to hide its atom; it changes weakness into strength; and it is with the infinitely little that the infinitely great crushes you. It is with its drops that the ocean overwhelms you. You feel you are a plaything. A plaything: ghastly epithet!

The "Matutina" was a little above Alderney, which was not an unfavourable position; but she was drifting towards its northern point, which was fatal. As a bent bow discharges its arrow, the nor'-wester was shooting the vessel towards the northern cape. Off that point, a little beyond the harbour of Corbelets, is that which the seamen of the Norman archipelago call a "singe," — that is, a current. The "singe" is a furious kind of current. A wreath of funnels in the shallows produces a wreath of whirlpools on the surface. You escape one only to fall into another. A ship caught hold of by the "singe" whirls round and round until some sharp rock cleaves her hull; then the shattered vessel stops, her stern rises from the waves, the bow completes the revolution in the abyss, the stern sinks in, and the entire wreck is sucked down. The circle of foam broadens, and nothing is seen on the surface of the waves but a few bubbles here and there.

The three most dangerous currents in the whole Channel are — one close to the well-known Girdler Sands; one at Jersey between the Pignonnet and the Point of Noirmont; and that of Alderney.

Had a local pilot been on board the "Matutina," he could have warned them of their fresh peril. In place of a pilot, they had their instinct. In situations of extreme danger men are endowed with second sight. Without knowing exactly what awaited them, they approached the spot with horror. How could they double that cape? They had no means of doing it. Just as they had seen, first the Caskets, then Ortach, loom up before them, they now saw the point of Alderney, all of steep rock. It was like a number of giants rising up one after another to offer them battle. Charybdis and Scylla make but two; the Caskets, Ortach, and Alderney make three. The phenomenon of the horizon, invaded by the rocks, was again repeated with the grand monotony of the deep. The battles of the ocean have the same sublime tautology as the combats of Homer. Each wave, as they neared it, added twenty cubits to the apparent cape, already greatly magnified by the mist; the fast decreasing distance seemed to render destruction more and more inevitable. They were on the edge of the seething current already! The first ripple that seized them would drag them in; another wave surmounted, and all would be over!

Suddenly the hooker was driven back, as if by a blow from a Titan's fist. The wave reared up under the vessel and fell back, throwing the waif back in its mane of foam. The "Matutina," thus impelled, drifted away from Alderney. She was again on the open sea. Whence had come the succour? From the wind. The breath of the storm had changed its direction. The wave had made them its toy; now it was the wind's turn. They had saved themselves from the Caskets. Off Ortach it was the wave which had been their friend; now it was the wind. The wind had suddenly veered from north to south. A sou'-wester had succeeded the nor'-wester.

The current is the wind in the waters; the wind is the current in the air. These two forces had just counteracted each other, and it had been the wind's will to snatch its prey from the current.

The whims of ocean are incomprehensible; they are, perhaps, an embodiment of the perpetual. When one is at their mercy one can neither hope nor despair. They do and then undo. The ocean amuses itself. Every shade of wild, untamed ferocity is phased in the vast and cunning sea, which Jean Bart used to call "that big brute." To its claws and their gashings succeed soft intervals of velvet paws. Sometimes the storm hurries on a wreck, at others it works out the problem with care; it might almost be said that it lingers over it. The sea can afford to take its time, as its victims learn to their cost.

We must own that occasionally these lulls in the torture announce deliverance. Such cases are rare. However this may be, men in extreme peril are quick to believe in rescue; the slightest cessation in the storm's threats is sufficient,—they tell themselves that they are out of danger. After believing themselves as good as buried, they announce their resurrection. It appears that their luck has turned; they declare themselves satisfied; they are saved; they cry quits with God.

The sou'-wester set in with a whirlwind. Shipwrecked men have never any but rough helpers. The "Matutina" was dragged rapidly out to sea by the remains of her rigging, like a dead woman trailed by the hair. It was like the freedom granted by Tiberius, at the price of violation. The wind treated with brutality those whom it saved; it rendered service with fury; it gave help without pity. The wreck was breaking up under the severity of its deliverers. Hailstones, big and hard enough to charge a blunderbuss, smote the vessel;

at every rise and fall of the waves these hailstones rolled about the deck like marbles. The hooker, whose deck was almost even with the water was being beaten out of shape by the heavy sea and its clouds of spray. On board it each man was for himself. They clung on as best they could. As each sea swept over them, it was with a sense of surprise that they saw that all were still there. Several had their faces torn by splinters. Happily despair makes stout hands. In terror a child's hand has the grasp of a giant; agony makes a vice of a woman's fingers; a girl in her fright can almost bury her rose-coloured fingers in a piece of iron. With hooked fingers they hung on somehow, as the waves dashed over them; but each wave increased their fear of being swept away.

But their fears were suddenly relieved.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PROBLEM SUDDENLY WORKS IN SILENCE.

THE hurricane ended as abruptly as it began. In a minute or two there was no longer sou'-wester or nor'-wester in the air. The fierce clarions of space were mute. The whole of the water-spout had poured from the sky without any sign of diminution, as if it had slid perpendicularly into a gulf beneath. Snow-flakes took the place of hailstones; the snow began to fall slowly. There was no more swell; the sea quieted down.

Such sudden cessations are peculiar to snow-storms. The electric influence exhausted, everything becomes still,—even the sea, which in ordinary storms often remains agitated for a long time. In snow-storms it is not so. There is then no prolonged disturbance in the deep. Like a weary worker it becomes drowsy directly,—thus almost giving the lie to the laws of statics, but not astonishing old seamen, who know that the sea is full of unforeseen surprises. The same phenomenon takes place, although very rarely, in ordinary storms. Thus, in our own time, on the occasion of the memorable hurricane of July 27, 1867, at Jersey the wind, after fourteen hours' fury, suddenly relapsed into a dead calm.

In a few minutes the hooker was floating on sleeping waters. At the same time (for the last phase of these storms resembles the first) the crew could distinguish nothing; all that had been made visible in the convul-

sions of the meteoric cloud was again dark. Pale outlines were fused in vague mist, and the gloom of infinite space closed in around the vessel. Walls of inky blackness surrounded the "Matutina," and with the grim deliberation of an encroaching iceberg were slowly but surely closing in around her. In the zenith nothing was visible; a lid of fog seemed to be closing down upon the vessel. It was as if the hooker were at the bottom of an unfathomable abyss. The sea was like a puddle of molten lead. No movement was perceptible in the waters,—ominous immobility! The ocean is never less tame than when it is still as a pool. All was silence, stillness, darkness. Perchance the silence of inanimate objects is taciturnity. The deck was horizontal, with an insensible slope to the sides. A few broken planks were sliding about. The block on which they had lighted the tow steeped in tar, in place of the signal-light which had been washed away, no longer swung at the prow, and no longer let fall burning drops into the sea. What little breeze remained in the clouds was noiseless. The snow fell thickly, softly, and almost perpendicularly. No sound of breakers could be heard. The quiet of midnight was over all.

This profound peace succeeding such terrific tempests and frenzied efforts was, for these poor creatures so long tossed about, an unspeakable comfort; it was as though the punishment of the rack had ceased. It seemed an assurance that they would be saved. They regained confidence. All that had been fury was now tranquillity. It appeared to them a pledge of peace. Their wretched hearts swelled with hope. They were able to let go the end of rope or beam to which they had clung, to rise, straighten themselves up, stand erect, and move about. They felt inexpressibly relieved. There are in the depths of darkness such phases of paradise, preparations for

other things. It was evident that they were delivered from the storm, from the foam, from the wind, from the uproar. Henceforth all the chances were in their favour. In three or four hours it would be sunrise. They would be seen by some passing ship; they would be rescued. The worst was over, they were re-entering life. The important feat was to have been able to keep afloat until the cessation of the tempest. They said to themselves, "It is all over now."

Suddenly they found that all was indeed over. One of the sailors, the northern Basque, Galdeazun by name, going down into the hold to look for a rope, came hurriedly up again and exclaimed, —

"The hold is full!"

"Of what?" asked the chief.

"Of water," answered the sailor.

"What does that mean?" cried the chief.

"It means," replied Galdeazun, "that in half an hour we shall be at the bottom of the sea."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE LAST RESOURCE.

THERE was a hole in the keel. A leak had been sprung. When it happened no one could tell. Was it when they touched the Caskets? Was it off Ortach? Was it when they were whirled about on the shoal west of Alderney? It was most probable that they had struck against some hidden rock, the shock of which they had not felt in the midst of the convulsive fury of the wind which was tossing them about. When one has tetanus who would feel a pin-prick?

The other sailor, the southern Basque, whose name was Ave Maria, also went down into the hold, and returning to the deck said: "There are six feet of water in the hold;" and added, "In less than forty minutes we shall sink."

Where was the leak? They could not find it. It was hidden by the water which was filling the hold. The vessel had a hole in her hull somewhere below the water-line, quite forward in the keel. Impossible to find it, impossible to check it. They had a wound which they could not stanch. The water, however, was not rising very fast.

The chief called out: "We must work the pump!"

Galdeazun replied: "We have no pump left."

"Then," said the chief, "we must make for land."

"Where is the land?"

"I don't know."

"Nor I."

"But it must be somewhere."

"True enough."

"Let some one steer for it."

“ We have no pilot. ”

“ Take the tiller yourself. ”

“ We have lost the tiller. ”

“ Let 's rig one out of the first beam we can lay hands on. Nails — a hammer — quick — some tools. ”

“ The carpenter's box went overboard; we have no tools. ”

“ We 'll steer all the same; no matter where. ”

“ The rudder is lost. ”

“ Where is the boat? We 'll get in that and row. ”

“ The boat is gone too. ”

“ We 'll row the wreck. ”

“ We have lost all our oars. ”

“ We 'll have to depend upon our sails then. ”

“ We have lost our sails, and the mast as well. ”

“ We 'll rig one up with a pole and a tarpaulin. Let 's get out of this, and trust to the wind. ”

“ There is no wind. ”

The wind, indeed, had deserted them, the storm had fled, and its departure, which they had believed to mean safety, meant in fact destruction. Had the sou'-wester continued, it might have driven them wildly on some shore, might have beaten the leak in speed, might perhaps have carried them to some propitious sandbank, and cast them on it before the hooker foundered. The fury of the storm, bearing them onward, might have enabled them to reach land; but no wind now meant no hope. They were going to die because the hurricane was over. The end was near!

Wind, hail, the hurricane, the whirlwind,— these are wild combatants that may be overcome; the storm can be taken in the weak point of its armour; there are resources against the violence which is often off its guard, and often hits wide of the mark. But nothing can be done against a calm; there is nothing tangible which

you can lay hold upon. The winds are like Cossacks: stand your ground and they will disperse. Calms remind one of an executioner's pincers.

The water crept up higher and higher in the hold; and as it rose, the vessel sank, — slowly but surely. Those on board the wreck of the "Matutina" felt that most hopeless of catastrophes, — an inert catastrophe undermining them. The grim certainty of their fate petrified them. No stir in the air, no movement on the sea. The motionless is the inexorable. Absorption was sucking them down silently. Through the depths of the silent waters — without anger, without passion, not willing, not knowing, not caring — the fatal centre of the globe was drawing them downwards. It was no longer the wide-open mouth of the sea, the fierce jaws of the wind and the wave, that threatened them; it was as if the wretched beings had under them the black gulf of the infinite. They felt themselves slowly sinking into oblivion. The distance between the deck and the water was lessening, — that was all. They could calculate her disappearance to the moment. It was the exact reverse of submersion by the rising tide. The water was not rising towards them, they were sinking into it. They were digging their own grave. Their own weight was their sexton. Their fate was sealed, not by the laws of man, but by the laws of Nature.

The snow continued to fall, and as the wreck was now perfectly motionless, it was covered as with a winding-sheet. The hold was becoming fuller and deeper. There was no way of getting at the leak. They struck a light and fixed three or four torches in holes as best they could. Galdeazun brought some old leathern buckets, and they tried to bale the hold out, standing in a row to pass the buckets from hand to hand; but the buckets were past use; the leather of some was unstitched, there

were holes in the bottoms of others, and the buckets emptied themselves on the way. The difference in quantity between the water which was making its way in and that which they returned to the sea was ludicrous; for a hogshead that entered, a glassful was baled out; so they did not improve their condition. It was like a miser trying to spend a million, half-penny by half-penny.

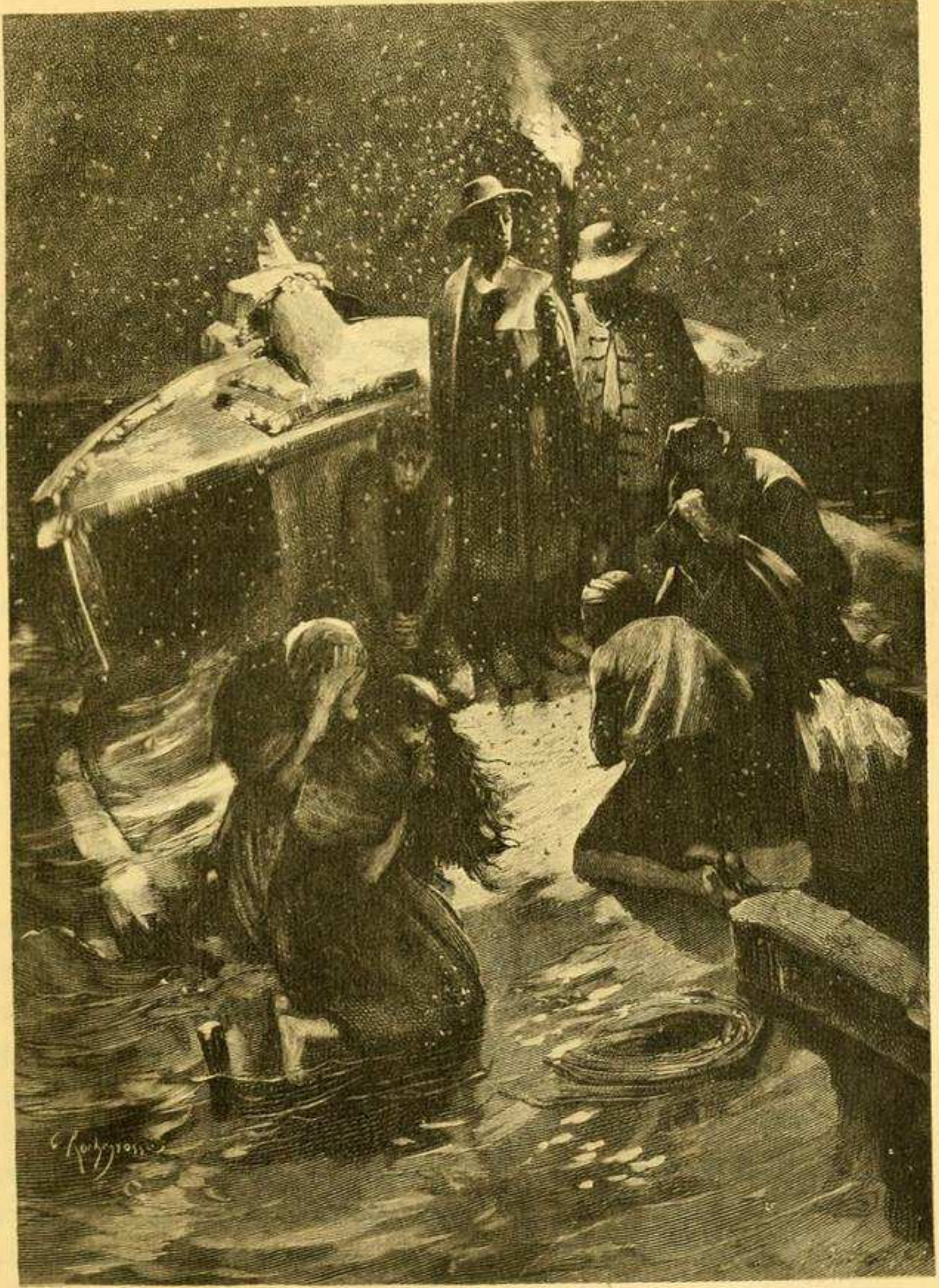
The chief said, "Let us lighten the wreck."

During the storm they had lashed together the few chests which were on deck. These remained tied to the stump of the mast. They undid the lashings, and rolled the chests overboard through a breach in the gunwale. One of these trunks belonged to the Basque woman, who could not repress a groan as she saw it going, exclaiming.—

"Oh, my new cloak lined with scarlet! Oh, my poor open-work stockings! Oh, my silver earrings to wear at Mass on May-day!"

The deck cleared, the cabin had next to be seen to. It was greatly encumbered, as the reader may remember, by the luggage belonging to the passengers, and by the bales belonging to the sailors. They took the luggage, and threw it over the gunwale. They carried up the bales, and cast them into the sea. The lantern, the barrels, the sacks of provisions, the bales, and the water-butts, even the pot of soup, — all went over into the waves. They unscrewed the nuts of the iron stove, in which the fire had long since gone out, hoisted it on deck, dragged it to the side of the vessel, and threw it overboard. They cast overboard everything they could pull out of the deck, — chains, shrouds, and torn rigging.

From time to time the chief took a torch, and throwing its light on the figures painted on the prow looked to see how much the wreck had settled down.



CHAPTER XVIII.

THE HIGHEST RESOURCE.

THE wreck being lightened was sinking more slowly, but none the less surely. The hopelessness of their situation was without mitigation; they had exhausted their last resource.

“Is there anything else we can throw overboard?” asked one.

The doctor, whom every one had forgotten, rose from the companion-way and answered: “Yes.”

“What?” asked the chief.

“Our crime,” replied the doctor.

They shuddered, and all cried out: “Amen.”

The doctor standing up, pale as death, raised his hand to heaven, saying: “Kneel down.”

They all prepared to kneel.

The doctor went on. “Let us throw our crimes into the sea, they weigh us down; it is they that are sinking the ship. Let us cease to think of safety; let us think only of salvation. Our last crime, — the crime which we committed, or rather completed, just now, — O wretched beings who are listening to me, it is that which is overwhelming us! For those who leave intended murder behind them, it is the height of audacity to tempt the mighty deep. He who sins against a child, sins against God. True, we were obliged to put to sea, but it was certain perdition. The storm, warned by the shadow of our crime, came upon us. It is well.

Regret nothing, however. There, not far off in the darkness, are the sands of Vauville and Cape La Hogue on the coast of France. There was but one possible shelter for us, — that was Spain. France was no less dangerous to us than England. Our deliverance from the sea would have led only to the gibbet. We had no alternative but to be hanged or drowned. God has chosen for us; let us give him thanks. He has vouchsafed us the grave which cleanses. Brethren, the hand of God is in it. Remember that we just now did our best to send that child on high, and that at this very moment, as I speak, there is, perhaps, in the world above a soul accusing us before a Judge whose eye is upon us. Let us make the best use of this last respite; let us make an effort, if time be granted us, to repair, as far as possible, the evil that we have done. If the child survives us, let us do what we can to aid him; if he is dead, let us seek his forgiveness. Let us cast our sins from us. Let us ease our consciences of this load. Let us pray that our souls be not cast out from the presence of Almighty God, for that is the worst of shipwrecks. Bodies go to the fishes, souls to the Evil One. Have pity on yourselves. Kneel down, I tell you. Repentance is the only bark which never sinks. You have lost your compass; you have gone sadly astray; but you can still pray."

The wolves had become lambs: such transformations often occur at the hour of death. Even tigers lick the crucifix. When the dark portals of the grave yawn, to believe is difficult, not to believe is impossible. However unsatisfactory the different religious creeds of mankind may be, no matter how little they correspond with his conception of the life hereafter, the boldest soul quails when the moment of final dissolution comes. There *must* be something that begins when this life

ends. This thought impresses itself upon the mind of the dying.

Death is the end of each man's term of probation. In that fatal hour he realizes the burden of responsibility that rests upon every human soul. That which has been decides what is to be. The past returns, and enters into the future. The known becomes as terrifying as the unknown; it is the confusion of the two which so terrifies the dying man.

These poor wretches had abandoned all hope so far as this life was concerned, so they turned their thoughts to the other. Their only remaining chance was in its dark shadow, and they understood this fact perfectly. "Speak, speak!" they cried out to the doctor; "there is no one else to tell us. We will obey thee. What must we do! Speak!"

The doctor answered: "The question is how to pass over the unknown precipice and reach the shores of the unknown world beyond the tomb. Being the wisest among you, my danger is greater than yours. You do well to leave the choice of the bridge to him whose burden is the heaviest. For knowledge only increases one's responsibility. How much time have we left?"

Galdeazun looked at the water-mark, and answered: "A little more than a quarter of an hour."

"Good," said the doctor.

The low roof of the companion-way on which he was leaning served as a sort of table. The doctor took from his pocket his inkhorn and pen, and drew from his pocket-book a piece of parchment, the same on which he had written, a few hours before, some twenty cramped and crooked lines. "A light," he said.

The snow, falling like the spray of a cataract, had extinguished the torches one after another; there was but one left. Ave Maria took it out of the place where

it had been stuck, and holding it in his hand, came and stood by the doctor's side.

The doctor replaced his pocket-book in his pocket, set the pen and inkhorn on the top of the companion-way, unfolded the parchment, and said: "Listen."

Then in the midst of the sea, on the sinking deck (a sort of quaking flooring of the tomb), the doctor began a solemn reading, to which all the shadows seemed to listen. The doomed men bowed their heads around him. The flickering light of the torch intensified their pallor. What the doctor read was written in English. Now and then, when one of those woe-begone looks seemed to ask an explanation, the doctor would stop, and repeat, either in French, Spanish, Basque, or Italian, the passage he had just read. Stifled sobs and hollow beatings of the breast were heard. The wreck was sinking more and more.

The reading over, the doctor placed the parchment flat on the companion-way, seized his pen, and on a clear margin which he had carefully left at the bottom of what he had written, he signed himself: "Gerhadus Geestemunde: Doctor."

Then turning towards the others, he said: "Come, and sign."

The Basque woman approached, took the pen, and signed herself, "Asuncion." She handed the pen to the Irish woman, who, not knowing how to write, made a cross. The doctor, by the side of this cross, wrote, "Barbara Fermoy, of Tyrrif Island, in the Hebrides." Then he handed the pen to the chief of the band. The chief signed, "Gaizdorra: Captal." The Genoese signed himself under the chief's name, "Giangirate." The Languedocian signed, "Jacques Quartourze: *alias* the Narbonnais." The Provençal signed, "Luc-Pierre Capgaroupe, of the Galleys of Mahon."

Under these signatures the doctor added a note: "Of the crew of three men, the captain having been washed overboard by a sea, but two remain, and they have signed."

The two sailors affixed their names underneath the note. The northern Basque signed himself, "Galdeazun." The southern Basque signed, "Ave Maria: Thief."

Then the doctor said: "Capgaroupe."

"Here," said the Provençal.

"Have you Hardquanonne's flask?"

"Yes."

"Give it me."

Capgaroupe drank off the last mouthful of brandy, and handed the flask to the doctor.

The water was rising in the hold; the wreck was sinking deeper into the sea. The sloping edges of the ship were covered by a thin wave, which was rising. All were crowded on the centre of the deck.

The doctor dried the ink on the signatures by the flame of the torch, and folding the parchment into a narrower compass than the diameter of the neck, put it into the flask, and called for the cork.

"I don't know where it is," said Capgaroupe.

"Here is a piece of rope," said Jacques Quartourze.

The doctor corked the flask with a bit of rope, and asked for some tar. Galdeazun went forward, extinguished the signal-light, took the vessel which had held it from the stern, and brought it, half full of burning pitch, to the doctor. The flask containing the parchment which they had all signed was carefully corked and tarred over.

"It is done," said the doctor.

And from every mouth, faltered in every language, came as if from the tomb such dismal utterances as:

"Ainsi soit-il!"

“ Meâ culpâ ! ”

“ Asi sea ! ”

“ Aro raï ! ”

“ Amen ! ”

It was as though the gloomy voices of Babel were resounding through the shadows as Heaven uttered its awful refusal to hear them.

The doctor turned away from his companions in crime and distress, and took a few steps towards the gunwale. Reaching the side, he looked into space, and said, in a deep voice: “ Bist du bei mir ? ” Perchance he was addressing some phantom.

The wreck was sinking. All the others stood as in a dream. Prayer mastered them by main force. They not only knelt, they cowered. There was something involuntary in their contrition; they wavered as a sail flaps when the breeze fails. And the haggard group took by degrees, with clasping of hands and prostration of foreheads, various attitudes expressive of profound humiliation. Some strange reflection of the deep seemed to soften their villainous features.

The doctor returned towards them. Whatever his past may have been, the old man was truly great in the presence of the catastrophe. He was not a man to be taken unawares. Brooding over him was the calm of a silent horror; on his countenance was the majesty of God's will comprehended. This old and thoughtful outlaw unconsciously assumed the air of a pontiff.

“ Listen to me, ” he said solemnly. He contemplated the waste of water for a moment, and added: “ We are about to die ! ”

Then he took the torch from the hands of Ave Maria, and waved it. A spark broke from it and flew into the night. Then the doctor cast the torch into the sea. It was extinguished: every glimmer of light had disap-

peared. Nothing remained but the dense, unfathomable gloom. It was like the very grave itself.

In the darkness, the doctor was heard saying: "Let us pray."

All knelt down. It was no longer on the snow, but in the water, that they knelt. They had but a few minutes more to live. The doctor alone remained standing. The flakes of snow falling on him had sprinkled him as if with white tears, and made him plainly visible against the background of darkness. He made the sign of the cross and raised his voice, while beneath his feet he felt that almost imperceptible oscillation which precedes the moment in which a wreck is about to founder. He said:—

"Pater noster qui es in cœlis."

"Notre Père qui êtes aux cieux," the Provençal repeated in French.

"Ar nathair ata ar neamh," repeated the Irish woman in Gaelic, understood by the Basque woman.

"Sanctificetur nomen tuum," continued the doctor.

"Que votre nom soit sanctifié," said the Provençal.

"Naomhthar hainm," said the Irish woman.

"Adveniat regnum tuum," continued the doctor.

"Que votre règne arrive," said the Provençal.

"Tigeadh do rioghachd," said the Irish woman.

As they knelt, the water had risen to their shoulders.

"Fiat voluntas tua," the doctor went on.

"Que votre volonté soit faite," stammered the Provençal.

"Deuntar do thoil ar an Hhalàmb," cried the Irish woman and Basque woman.

"Sicut in cœlo, sicut in terra," said the doctor.

No voice answered him. He looked down. Every head was under water. They had allowed themselves to be drowned on their knees.

The doctor took in his right hand the flask which he had placed on the companion-way and raised it high above his head. The wreck was going down. As he sank, the doctor murmured the rest of the prayer. For an instant his shoulders were above water; then his head; then nothing remained but his arm holding up the flask, as if he were showing it to the Infinite. Then his arm disappeared; there was no more of a ripple on the sea than there would have been on a cask of oil. The snow continued to fall.

One thing floated, and was carried by the waves into the darkness. It was the tarred flask, kept afloat by its osier cover.

BOOK III.

THE CHILD IN THE SHADOW.

CHAPTER I.

CHESIL.

THE storm was no less severe on land than on sea. The same wild strife among the elements had taken place around the abandoned child. The weak and innocent become their sport in the exhibitions of frantic rage in which they sometimes indulge. Shadows see not, and inanimate things have not the clemency they are supposed to possess.

On the land there was but little wind; yet there was an inexplicable dumbness in the cold. There was no hail; but the thickness of the falling snow was fearful. Hail-stones strike, harass, bruise, stun, crush; snow-flakes do worse. Soft and inexorable, the snow-flake does its work in silence. Touch it, and it melts. It is pure, even as the hypocrite is candid. It is by tiny particles slowly heaped one upon another that the snow-flake becomes an avalanche and the knave a criminal.

The child continued to advance in the mist: mist, like snow, is full of treachery. Though ill-fitted to cope with all these perils, he had succeeded in reaching the bottom of the descent, and had gained Chesil. Without knowing it he was on an isthmus, with water on

either side; so that he could not lose his way in the fog, in the snow, or in the darkness, without falling into the deep waters of the gulf on the right hand, or into the raging billows of the sea on the left. He was travelling on, in blissful ignorance, between these two abysses.

The Isthmus of Portland was at that time extremely sharp and rugged. No sign of its former configuration remains to-day. Since the idea of manufacturing Portland stone into cement was first conceived, the cliffs have been subjected to operations which have completely changed their original appearance. Calcareous lias, slate, and trap are still to be found there, rising from layers of conglomerate like teeth out of a gum. But the pickaxe has broken up and levelled those bristling, rugged peaks which were once the homes of the eagles. The summits no longer exist where the labbes and the skua gulls used to flock, soaring, like the envious, to sully high places. In vain you seek the tall monolith called Godolphin, — an old British word signifying “white eagle.” In summer you may still gather on these cliffs (pierced and perforated like a sponge) rosemary, pennyroyal, wild hyssop, and sea-fennel, which when infused makes a good cordial, and that herb full of knots, which grows in the sand and from which they make matting; but you no longer find grey amber or black tin, or that triple species of slate, — one sort green, one blue, and the third the colour of sage-leaves. The foxes, the badgers, the otters, and the martens have taken themselves off; on the cliffs of Portland, as well as at the extremity of Cornwall, where there were at one time chamois, none remain. The people still fish in some inlets for plaice and pilchards; but the shy salmon no longer ascend the Wey, between Michaelmas and Christmas, to spawn. Nor can one see there, as

during the reign of Elizabeth, those nameless birds as large as hawks, who cut an apple in two, but ate only the pips. You never meet those crows with yellow beaks, called in English Cornish choughs (*pyrrocorax* in Latin), who mischievously drop burning twigs on thatched roofs; nor that magic bird the fulmar, a wanderer from the Scottish archipelago, dropping from his bill an oil which the islanders used to burn in their lamps. Nor do you ever find in the evening, in the splash of the ebbing tide, that ancient, legendary neitse, with the feet of a hog and the bleat of a calf. The tide no longer throws up the whiskered seal, with its curled ears and sharp jaws, dragging itself along on its nailless paws. On the Portland cliffs, so changed nowadays as to be scarcely recognizable the absence of forests precluded nightingales; and now the falcon, the swan, and the wild goose have fled. The sheep of Portland, nowadays, are fat and have fine wool; the few scattered ewes which nibbled the salt grass there two centuries ago were small and tough, and coarse of fleece, as became Celtic flocks brought there by garlic-eating shepherds who lived to a hundred, and who at the distance of half a mile could pierce a cuirass with their yard-long arrows. Uncultivated land makes coarse wool.

The Chesil of to-day resembles in no particular the Chesil of the past, so much has it been disturbed by man and by those furious winds which disintegrate the very stones. The Isthmus of Portland two hundred years ago was a huge mound of sand, with a vertebrated spine of rock. At present this tongue of land bears a railway, terminating in a pretty cluster of houses, called Chesilton, and there is a Portland station. Railway carriages roll where seals used to crawl.

The child's danger had now assumed a different form. What he had had to fear in the descent of the cliff was

falling to the bottom of the precipice; in the isthmus, his fear was of falling into the holes. After contending with the precipice, he had now to contend with pitfalls. Everything on the sea-shore is a trap; the rock is slippery, the strand is full of quicksands. Resting-places are but snares. It is walking on ice which may suddenly crack and yawn with a fissure, through which you will disappear. The ocean has false stages below, like a well-arranged theatre.

The long backbone of granite, from which both sides of the isthmus slope, is difficult of access. It is hard to find there what, in scene-shifters' language, are termed "practicables." Man need expect no hospitality from the ocean,—from the rock no more than from the wave; the sea is kind to the bird and the fish alone. Isthmuses are especially bare and rugged; the wave, which wears and undermines them on either side, reduces them to the simplest form. Everywhere there were sharp ridges, cuttings, frightful fragments of torn stone yawning with many points like the jaws of a shark, breakneck places of wet moss, rapid slopes of rock ending in the sea. Whosoever undertakes to cross an isthmus encounters at every step huge blocks of stone as large as houses, in the shape of shin-bones, shoulder-blades, and thigh-bones,—the hideous anatomy of dismembered rocks. It is not without reason that these *striae* of the sea-shore are called ribs. The wayfarer must escape as he best can out of the confusion of these ruins. It is like journeying over the bones of an enormous skeleton.

Imagine a child put to this Herculean task! Broad daylight might have aided him; but it was night. A guide was necessary; but he was alone. All the vigour of manhood would not have been too much; but he had only the feeble strength of a child. In default of a

guide, a footpath might have aided him; but there was none. By instinct he avoided the sharp ridge of rock, and kept as near the strand as possible. It was there that he met with the pitfalls. They were multiplied before him under three forms,—the pitfall of water, the pitfall of snow, and the pitfall of sand. This last is the most dangerous of all, because the most deceptive. To know the peril we face is alarming; to be ignorant of it is terrible. The child was fighting against unknown dangers; he was groping his way through something which might perhaps prove to be his grave. But he did not hesitate. He went round the rocks, avoided the crevices, guessed at the pitfalls, and followed the twistings and turnings caused by such obstacles; yet he went on. Though unable to advance in a straight line, he walked with a firm tread. He patiently retraced his steps if necessary; he managed to tear himself in time from the horrid bird-lime of the quicksands; he shook the snow off him; more than once he entered the water up to the knees, and directly he left it his wet knees were frozen by the intense cold of the night; he walked rapidly in his stiffened garments, yet he took care to keep his sailor's coat dry and warm on his chest. He was still tormented by hunger.

The chances of the abyss are illimitable. Everything is possible in it, even salvation; an issue may be found, though it be invisible. How the child, wrapped in a smothering winding-sheet of snow, lost on a narrow elevation between two jaws of an abyss, managed to cross the isthmus is something he could not himself have explained. He slipped, climbed, rolled, searched, walked, persevered,—that is all; that, indeed, is the secret of all triumphs. At the end of less than half an hour he felt that the ground was rising. He had reached the other shore. Leaving Chesil, he had gained *terra*

firma. The bridge which now unites Sandford Castle with Smallmouth Sands did not then exist. It is probable that in his gropings he had re-ascended as far as Wyke Regis, where there was then a tongue of sand, a natural road crossing East Fleet.

The isthmus lay behind the child now; but he found himself still face to face with the tempest, with the cold, and with the night. Before him stretched the plain, shrouded in impenetrable gloom. He examined the ground, seeking a footpath. Suddenly he bent down: he had discovered in the snow something that looked like a track. It was indeed a track, — the imprint of a foot. The print was clearly cut in the whiteness of the snow, which rendered it distinctly visible. He examined it. It was a naked foot; too small for that of a man, too large for that of a child. It was probably the foot of a woman. Beyond that mark was another, then another and another. The footprints followed one another at the distance of a step, and struck across the plain to the right. They were still fresh, and but slightly covered with snow. A woman had just passed that way. This woman was walking in the direction where the child had seen the smoke. With his eyes fixed on the footprints, he set to work to follow them.

CHAPTER II.

THE EFFECT OF SNOW.

THE child followed in this track for some time ; but unfortunately the footprints became more and more indistinct, for the snow was falling thick and fast. It was at the very same time that the hooker was encountering the furious snow-storm at sea. The child, in distress like the vessel, but in a different fashion, had, in the inextricable confusion of shadows that rose up before him, no guide but the footsteps in the snow, and he held to it as the thread of the labyrinth.

Suddenly, whether the snow had filled them up entirely, or for some other reason, the footsteps ceased. All became even, level, smooth, without a stain, without an irregularity. There was now nothing but a white mantle drawn over the earth, and a black one over the sky. It seemed as if the pedestrian must have flown away. The child, in despair, bent down and searched ; but in vain. As he arose he fancied that he heard some indistinct sound, but he could not be sure of it. It resembled a voice, a breath, a shadow ; it was more human than animal, more sepulchral than living. It was not a sound, but rather the shadow of a sound. He looked, but saw nothing. Solitude, wide and naked, stretched before him. He listened : that which he had thought he heard had faded away. Perhaps it had been only fancy. He still listened : all

was silent. He went on his way again, walking on at random, with nothing thenceforth to guide him.

As the child moved away the noise began again. This time he could doubt no longer. It was a groan, almost a sob. He turned and peered eagerly into the darkness, but saw nothing. The sound arose once more. It was the most penetrating and piercing, yet feeble voice imaginable, for it certainly was a voice. It arose from a soul. There was a strange palpitation in the murmur; nevertheless, it seemed uttered almost unconsciously. It was an appeal from some one in suffering, and yet from some one who was scarcely conscious of that suffering or the appeal for relief. The cry — perhaps a first breath, perhaps a last sigh — was equally removed from the rattle which ends life and the wail with which it commences. It breathed a gloomy supplication from the depths of night. The child gazed intently everywhere, — far, near, on high, below. There was no one in sight. He listened. The voice arose again; he heard it distinctly. The sound somewhat resembled the bleating of a lamb. Then he was frightened, and thought for an instant of flight. The sound arose again; this was the fourth time. It was strangely miserable and plaintive; one felt that after that last effort, which was more mechanical than voluntary, the cry would probably be extinguished. It was an expiring exclamation, instinctively appealing to the amount of aid lying dormant in space. It was an agonized appeal to a possible Providence.

The child advanced in the direction from which the sound seemed to proceed. Still he saw nothing. He advanced again, watchfully. The wail continued; inarticulate and confused as it was, it had become clear, almost vibrating. The child was near the voice; but where was it? While he was hesitating between an

impulse which urged him to fly and an instinct which commanded him to remain, he perceived in the snow at his feet, a few steps before him, a sort of undulation of the dimensions of a human body, a little eminence, low, long, and narrow, like the mound over a grave, — a sepulchre in a white church-yard. At the same time the voice cried out again. It was from beneath the undulation that it proceeded. The child crouched down beside the undulation, and with both his hands began to clear it away. Beneath the snow which he removed the lines of a human form soon became visible, and suddenly in the hollow he had made a pale face appeared.

The cry had not proceeded from this face, for the eyes were shut, and the mouth, though open, was full of snow. The form remained motionless; it stirred not under the benumbed hands of the child. He shuddered when he touched it. It was a woman's form. Her dishevelled hair was mingled with the snow; she was dead.

Again the child set to work to brush away the snow. The neck of the dead woman appeared; then her shoulders, clothed in rags. Suddenly he felt something move feebly under his touch. It was something small that was buried, and that stirred. The child swiftly cleared away the snow, revealing a wretched little body — thin, and icy cold, but still alive — lying naked on the dead woman's naked breast. It was a little girl.

It had been swaddled up, but in rags so scanty that in its struggles it had freed itself from its tatters. Its attenuated limbs, which yet contained a little warmth, and its feeble breath, had somewhat melted the snow. A nurse would have said that the baby was five or six months old; but perhaps it might be a year old, for growth, in poverty, suffers deplorable drawbacks, which

sometimes even produce rachitis. When the baby's face was exposed to the air it gave a cry, the continuation of its moan of distress. For the mother not to have heard that sob proved her irrevocably dead. The child took the infant in his arms.

The stiffened body of the mother was a fearful sight. A spectral light seemed to proceed from her face. Her parted, breathless lips seemed to be forming in the mysterious language of shadows her answer to the questions put to the dead by the Invisible. The ghastly reflection of the icy plains was on her countenance. There was a youthful forehead under the brown hair, an almost indignant knitting of the eyebrows, pinched nostrils, closed eyelids, the lashes glued together by the rime, and from the corners of the eyes to the corners of the mouth extended a channel of frozen tears. The snow lighted up the corpse. Winter and death are not unlike; the corpse is a human circle. The nakedness of the dead woman's breasts was pathetic. They had fulfilled their purpose. On them was a sublime blight of the life infused into one being by another from whom life has fled, and maternal majesty was there instead of virginal purity. At the point of one of the nipples was a white pearl. It was a drop of frozen milk.

Let us explain at once. On the plain over which the deserted boy was passing a beggar woman, nursing her infant and searching for a refuge, had lost her way a few hours before. Benumbed with cold she had fallen on the snow, and was unable to rise again. The falling snow covered her. As long as she was able she had clasped her little girl to her bosom; and thus she died.

The infant had tried to suck the marble breast of the mother. Blind trust, inspired by Nature; for it seems that it is possible for a woman to suckle her child even

after her last sigh. But the lips of the infant had been unable to find the breast where the drop of milk had frozen, while under the snow the child, more accustomed to the cradle than the tomb, had wailed despairingly. The deserted child had heard the cry of the dying child. He disinterred it. He took it in his arms.

When the infant found herself in his arms she ceased crying. The faces of the two children touched each other, and the purple lips of the infant sought the cheek of the boy, as it had been a breast. The little girl had nearly reached the moment when the congealed blood stops the action of the heart. Her mother had touched her with the chill of death, for a corpse communicates death; its numbness is infectious. The infant's feet, hands, arms, knees, seemed paralyzed by cold. The boy felt the terrible chill. He had on him one garment dry and warm,—his pilot jacket. He placed the infant on the breast of the corpse, took off his jacket, wrapped the infant in it, which he took up again in his arms; and then, almost naked, under the blast of the north wind which covered him with eddies of snow-flakes, carrying the infant, he continued his journey. The little one having succeeded in again finding the boy's cheek, again applied her lips to it; and, soothed by the warmth, she fell asleep. First kiss of those two souls in the darkness!

The mother lay there on her back upon the snow, her face turned up to the night; but perhaps at the moment when the boy stripped himself to clothe the little girl, the mother saw him from the depths of infinity.

CHAPTER III.

A BURDEN MAKES A ROUGH ROAD ROUGHER.

IT was little more than four hours since the hooker sailed from the creek of Portland, leaving the boy on the shore. During the long hours since he had been deserted, and had been journeying onwards, he had met but three persons of that human society into which he was, perchance, about to enter,—a man (the man on the hill), a woman (the woman in the snow), and the little girl whom he was carrying in his arms. He was exhausted by fatigue and hunger, yet advanced more resolutely than ever, though with less strength and an added burden. He was now almost naked. The few rags which remained upon him, hardened by the frost, were sharp as glass, and cut his skin. He was colder, but the infant was warmer. That which he lost was not thrown away, but was gained by her. He found that the poor infant enjoyed the comfort, which to her was a renewal of life. He continued to advance. From time to time, still holding his burden securely, he bent down, and taking a handful of snow rubbed his feet with it, to prevent their being frost-bitten. At other times, his throat feeling as if it were on fire, he put a little snow in his mouth and sucked it; this for a moment assuaged his thirst, but later changed it into fever,—a relief which proved only an aggravation.

The storm had become appalling in its violence. Deluges of snow are possible; this was one. The tem-

pest scourged the shore at the same time that it up-tore the depths of ocean. This was, perhaps, the very moment when the distracted hooker was going to pieces in its battle with the breakers.

The boy travelled on in this cutting north wind, still towards the east, over wide surfaces of snow. He knew not how the hours passed. For a long time he had ceased to see the smoke. Such indications are soon effaced in the night; besides, it was long past the hour when fires are put out. He had, perhaps, made a mistake, and it was possible that neither town nor village existed in the direction in which he was travelling. Doubting, he yet persevered. Two or three times the little infant cried, at which times he adopted in his gait a rocking movement, and the girl was soothed and silenced; she ended by falling into a sound sleep. Shivering himself, he felt to see if she were warm, and frequently tightened the folds of the jacket round her neck, so that the frost could not get in through any opening, and so that no melted snow should drop between the garment and the child. The plain was unequal; in the declivities into which it sloped, the snow, drifted by the wind, was so deep that it almost engulfed him, and he had to struggle through it, half buried. He walked on, however, working away the snow with his knees. Having passed the ravine, he reached the high lands swept by the winds, where the snow was thin. There he found the surface a sheet of ice. The little girl's lukewarm breath, playing on his face, warmed it for a moment, then froze in his hair, stiffening it into icicles.

The boy now felt the approach of another danger. He did not dare to sit down and rest; for he knew that if he did so he would never rise again. He was overcome by fatigue, and even the weight of the snow would, as

in the case of the dead woman, have held him to the ground, while the ice would have glued him alive to the earth. He had tripped on the sides of precipices, and had recovered himself; he had stumbled into holes, and got out again,—but now the slightest fall would be death; a false step would prove fatal. He *must not slip*; yet everything was slippery; everywhere there was rime and frozen snow. The little creature whom he carried made his progress fearfully difficult; she was not only a burden which his weariness and exhaustion made excessive, but was also an encumbrance in that she occupied both his arms,—and to him who walks over ice, arms serve as a natural and necessary balancing-pole. The boy was obliged to do without this balance-pole. He did do without it and advanced, bending under his burden, not knowing what would become of him. The infant that he carried was the drop causing the cup of distress to overflow; yet he advanced, reeling at every step, and accomplishing, without spectators, miracles of equilibrium.

Without spectators? We repeat that unseen eyes perhaps watched him on this perilous path,—the eyes of the mother and the eyes of God!

The boy staggered, slipped, recovered himself, tightened his hold on the infant, and drawing the jacket closer about her covered her head with it, and staggered on again. He was, to all appearance, on the plains where Bingleaves Farm was afterwards established, between what are now called Spring Gardens and the Parsonage House. Homesteads and cottages now stand upon what was then a barren waste. Sometimes less than a century changes a steppe into a city.

Suddenly, a lull having occurred in the icy blast which was blinding him, the boy perceived, at a short distance in front of him, a cluster of roofs and of

chimneys, the reverse of a silhouette, — a city painted in white on a black horizon, something like what we call nowadays a negative proof. Roofs! dwellings! shelter! He had arrived somewhere at last; he felt the ineffable encouragement of hope. The watch of a ship which has wandered from her course feels some such emotion when he cries, "Land ho!" He quickened his pace. He would soon be among living creatures; there was no longer anything to fear. There glowed within him a sudden warmth, — security; his terrible ordeal was nearly over; thenceforward there would be neither night nor winter nor tempest. It seemed to him that he had left all such misery behind him. The infant was no longer a burden; he almost ran. His eyes were fixed on the roofs: there was life there; he never took his eyes off them. A dead man might gaze thus on what was visible through the half-open cover of his sepulchre. There were the chimneys of which he had seen the smoke; no smoke arose from them now.

It was not long before the boy reached the houses. He came to the outskirts of a town, — an open street. At that period the barring of streets at night had been nearly abandoned. The street began by two houses. In those two houses neither candle nor lamp was visible; nor in the whole street, nor in the whole town, as far as eye could reach. The house to the right was a roof rather than a house; nothing could be more squalid. The walls were of mud, the roof was of straw, and there was more thatch than wall. An immense nettle, springing from the bottom of the wall, reached up to the roof. The hovel had but one door, which was like that of a dog-kennel, and a window which was but a hole. Both were shut up; but at the side an inhabited pig-sty told that the house also was inhabited. The house on the left was large, high, and built entirely

of stone, with a slated roof. That too was closed; it was the rich man's home, opposite that of the pauper.

The boy did not hesitate; he approached the great mansion. The double door of massive oak, studded with large nails, was of the kind that leads one to expect that behind it there is an armory of bolts and locks. An iron knocker was attached to it. He raised the knocker with some difficulty, for his benumbed hands were stumps rather than hands, and knocked once. No answer. He knocked again, — twice this time; no movement was heard in the house. He knocked a third time; still there was no sound. He saw that they were all asleep, or did not mean to get up. Then he turned to the hovel. He picked a small stone out of the snow, and knocked with it against the low door; there was no answer. He raised himself on tiptoe, and knocked with his stone against the pane, — too softly to break the glass, but loud enough to be heard; no voice was heard, no step moved, no candle was lighted. He saw that there, as well, they did not care to awake. The house of stone and the thatched hovel were equally deaf to the appeal of the wretched.

The boy decided to push on farther, and make his way down the street in front of him, — a street so dark that it seemed more like a gulf between two cliffs than the entrance to a town.

CHAPTER IV.

ANOTHER KIND OF DESERT.

IT was Weymouth which the boy had just entered. Weymouth then was not the respectable and fine Weymouth of to-day.

Ancient Weymouth could not boast, like the present one, of an irreproachable rectangular quay, with an inn and a statue in honour of George III.,— and this owing to the fact that George III. had not then been born. For the same reason, they had not yet fashioned on the side of the green hill to the east, by cutting away the turf and leaving the chalky soil exposed to the view, the “White Horse,” an acre long, bearing the king upon his back,— still another work of art in honour of George III. These honours, however, were deserved. George III., having lost in his old age the mind he had never possessed in his youth, was not responsible for the calamities of his reign. He was little better than an idiot. So why not erect statues to him?

Weymouth, a hundred and eighty years ago, was about as symmetrical as a game of spillikins in confusion. In legends it is said that Astaroth travelled about the world, carrying on her back a wallet which contained everything, even good women in their houses. A goodly number of sheds thrown pell-mell from her bag would give an idea of quaint old Weymouth,— the good women in the sheds included. The Music Hall remains as a specimen of the buildings of that day.

The whole town was composed of shapeless, overhanging buildings,—some with pillars, leaning one against the other for support against the sea-wind, and leaving between them narrow and winding lanes and passages, often flooded by the equinoctial tides. A heap of grandmother houses crowded round a grandfather church, such was Weymouth; a sort of old Norman village washed ashore on the coast of England. The traveller who entered the tavern, now replaced by the hotel, instead of paying his twenty-five francs for a fried sole and a bottle of wine, had to suffer the humiliation of eating a pennyworth of soup made of fish,—which soup, by-the-bye, was very good. Wretched fare!

The deserted child, carrying the foundling, passed through the first street, then the second, then the third. He raised his eyes, seeking in the upper stories and in the roofs a lighted window-pane; but all were closed and dark. At intervals he knocked at the doors. No one answered. Nothing so hardens the heart as for its owner to be snug and warm in bed. The noise and the shaking had at last awakened the infant. The boy knew this because he felt her suck his cheek. She did not cry, believing him her mother. He was about to turn and wander through the Scrambridge lanes, where there were then more cultivated plots than dwellings, more thorn-hedges than houses; but fortunately he struck into a passage which exists to this day near the Trinity schools. This passage led him to the water's edge, where there was a roughly built quay with a parapet, and on the right he made out a bridge. It was the bridge over the Wey, connecting Weymouth with Melcombe Regis, and under the arches of which the Backwater communicates with the harbour.

Weymouth, a hamlet, was then a suburb of Melcombe Regis, a city and port; now Melcombe Regis is a parish

of Weymouth. The village has absorbed the city. It was the bridge which did the work. Bridges are strange instruments of suction, which absorb a population, and often swell one river-bank at the expense of its opposite neighbour.

The boy went to the bridge, which at that period was a covered wooden structure. He crossed it. Thanks to its roofing, there was no snow on the planks; his bare feet had a moment's comfort as they crossed them. Having passed over the bridge, he was in Melcombe Regis. There were fewer wooden houses than stone ones there. He was no longer in the village, he was in the city. The bridge opened on a rather fine street called St. Thomas's Street; he entered it. Here and there were high carved gables and shop-fronts. He set to knocking at the doors again: he had no strength left to call or shout.

At Melcombe Regis, as at Weymouth, no one was stirring. The doors were all carefully locked and barred; the windows were covered with shutters. Every precaution had been taken to avoid being aroused by disagreeable surprises. The little wanderer was suffering the indefinable depression caused by a sleeping town. Sleep has gloomy associates beyond this life: the decomposed thoughts of the sleepers float above them in a mist and combine with the possible, which perhaps has also the power of thought, as it floats in space. Hence comes bewilderment. Dreams, which may be compared to clouds, interpose their folds and their transparencies over that star, the mind. Above those closed eyelids, where vision has taken the place of sight, a sepulchral disintegration of outlines and appearances dilates itself into impalpability. Mysterious and diffused existences amalgamate themselves with life in sleep, that counterpart of death. Even he who sleeps not, feels a medium full of sinister

life press upon him. The surrounding chimera, in which he suspects a reality, impedes him. The waking man, wending his way amidst the sleep-phantoms of others, has, or imagines that he has, a vague fear of contact with the invisible, and feels at every moment the obscure pressure of a hostile encounter which immediately dissolves. A sleeping town has something of the effect of a forest.

This is what is called being afraid without cause. Very naturally, a child is even more susceptible to this feeling than a man. The uneasiness of nocturnal fear, increased by the spectral houses, increased the weight of the burden under which the boy was struggling. He entered Conycar Lane, and perceived at the end of that passage the Backwater, which he mistook for the ocean; he no longer knew in what direction the sea lay. He retraced his steps, struck to the left by Maiden Street, and returned as far as St. Alban's Row. There he knocked violently at any house that he happened to pass. His blows, on which he was expending his last energies, were faint and irregular,—now ceasing for a time, now renewed as if in irritation. One voice answered,—that of Time. Three o'clock tolled slowly behind him from the old belfry of St. Nicholas. Then silence reigned again.

That no inhabitant should have opened his lattice may appear surprising. But we must remember that in January, 1790, they were just over a severe outbreak of the plague in London, and that the fear of receiving sick vagabonds caused a diminution of hospitality everywhere. People would not even open their windows for fear of inhaling the poison.

The boy felt the coldness of men more deeply than the coldness of the night. The coldness of men is intentional. He felt a sinking of heart which he had not

experienced on the plain. Now he had entered into the midst of life, and yet remained alone. This was the height of misery. He had understood the pitiless desert, but the unrelenting town was too much to bear. The hour, the strokes of which he had just counted, had been another blow. It seemed to be a declaration of indifference, and as if Eternity were saying, "What does it matter to me?" He stopped, and it is probable that in that miserable minute he asked himself whether it would not be better to lie down there and die; but the little girl leaned her head against his shoulder, and fell asleep again. This blind confidence drove him on once more. He whom all supports were failing felt that he was himself a basis of support. Irresistible summons of duty! Neither such ideas nor such a situation belonged to his age. It is probable that he did not well understand them; it was merely a matter of instinct. He set out in the direction of Johnstone Row. But now he no longer walked; he dragged himself along. He left St. Mary's Street to the left, made zig-zags through lanes, and at the end of a winding passage found himself in a rather wide, open space. It was a piece of unimproved land,—probably the spot where Chesterfield Place now stands. The houses ended there. He perceived the sea on his right, and scarcely anything more of the town on his left.

What *would* become of him? Here was the country again! To the east great inclined planes of snow indicated the wide slopes of Radipole. Should he continue his journey; should he advance and re-enter the solitude; or should he turn back and re-enter the town. How was he to choose between the mute plain and the deaf city? The poor little despairing wanderer cast a piteous glance around him.

Suddenly he heard an ominous sound.

CHAPTER V.

MISANTHROPY PLAYS ITS PRANKS.

A STRANGE and alarming grinding of teeth reached the boy through the darkness. It was enough to drive one back; but he advanced. To those to whom silence has become dreadful, even a howl is comforting. That fierce growl reassured him; that threat was a promise. There must be some creature alive and awake there, though it might be a wild beast. He advanced in the direction whence the snarl had come.

The boy turned the corner of a wall, and, behind it, in the sepulchral light made by the reflection of snow and sea, he saw a thing placed as if for shelter. It was a cart; that is, unless it was a hovel. It had wheels, so it was a carriage; it had a roof, so it was a dwelling. From the roof arose a funnel, and out of the funnel came smoke. This smoke was red, and seemed to imply a good fire in the interior. Behind, projecting hinges indicated a door; and in the centre of this door a square opening revealed a light inside the van.

The boy approached. The creature that had growled evidently perceived his approach, and became furious. It was no longer a growl which he had to encounter, it was a roar. He heard a sharp sound, as of a chain violently pulled to its full length; and suddenly under the door, between the hind wheels, two rows of sharp white teeth appeared. At the same instant a head was put through the window.

Be quiet there!" said the head.

The mouth was silent. The head began again:—

"Is anybody there?"

"Yes," the child answered.

"Who is it?"

"Me."

"You? Who are you? Where did you come from?"

"I am tired," said the child.

"What time is it?"

"I am cold."

"What are you doing here?"

"I am hungry."

"Every one cannot be as happy as a lord," the head replied. "Go away."

The head was withdrawn and the window closed.

The boy folded the sleeping infant closer in his arms, and summoned up all his strength to resume his journey; he had already taken a few steps, and was hurrying away. But as the window of the wagon closed, the door opened; a step was let down, and the voice which had spoken to the boy cried out angrily from the interior of the van,—

"Well! why don't you come in?"

The boy turned back.

"Come in," resumed the voice. "Who ever heard of a fellow like this,—a fellow who is hungry and cold, and yet who does not come in?"

The boy, at once repulsed and invited, stood motionless.

"You are told to come in, you young rascal," the voice continued.

The boy made up his mind, and placed one foot on the lowest step. There was a loud growl from under the van. The boy drew back; the gaping jaws had reappeared.

“Be quiet!” cried the voice of the man.

The jaws retreated, the growling ceased.

“Come up!” continued the man.

The boy with some difficulty climbed up the three steps, his movements being impeded by the infant that was so completely enveloped in the jacket that nothing could be distinguished of her, and she was little more than a shapeless bundle. He ascended the three steps; and having reached the threshold, stopped. There was no light in the van except that which proceeded from the opening at the top of the stove, in which sparkled a peat fire. On the stove stood a porringer and a saucepan, apparently containing something to eat, for a savory odour was perceptible. The inside was furnished with a chest, a stool, and an unlighted lantern which hung from the ceiling. There were also a number of hooks on the walls, from which all sorts of things hung; and there were shelves upon which stood rows of glasses and bottles, a granulator, an alembic, and other chemical instruments, as well as cooking utensils. The van was oblong in shape, the stove being in front. It was not even a little room into which the boy entered,—it was only a big box. There was more light outside from the snow than inside from the stove. Everything in the van was indistinct and misty; nevertheless, the reflection of the fire on the ceiling enabled the spectator to read in large letters,—

URSUS, PHILOSOPHER.

The boy, in fact was entering the abode of Homo and Ursus. It was the former that he had just heard growling. Having reached the threshold, he perceived near the stove a tall, smooth-faced, thin old man dressed in grey, whose head, as he stood erect, touched the roof.

The man could not have raised himself on tiptoe. The van was just his height.

"Come in!" said the man, who was Ursus. The boy entered.

"Put down your bundle."

The boy placed his burden carefully on the top of the chest, for fear of awakening and terrifying his charge.

The man continued: "How gently you put it down! You could not be more careful if it were a case of relics. Are you afraid of tearing a hole in your rags? What are you doing in the streets at this hour, you vagabond? Who are you? Answer! But, no; I forbid you to answer. You are cold; warm yourself as quick as you can," and he shoved him by the shoulders in front of the fire.

"How wet you are! You're frozen through! A nice state you are in to enter a man's house! Take off those rags, you villain!" and as he hastily tore off the boy's rags with one hand, with the other he took down from a nail a man's shirt, and one of those knitted jackets which are up to this day called kiss-me-quicks. "Here are some clothes," he added gruffly. He picked up a woollen rag, and chafed before the fire the limbs of the exhausted and bewildered child, who at that moment felt as if he were seeing and touching heaven. The limbs having been rubbed, the man next wiped the boy's feet.

"You're all right!" he exclaimed. "I was fool enough to fancy you had frozen your hind-legs or fore-paws. You will not lose the use of them this time. Dress yourself!"

The boy put on the shirt, and the man slipped the knitted jacket over it.

"Now —" The man pushed the stool forward and made the boy sit down; then he pointed with his finger

to the porringer which was smoking upon the stove. What the child saw in the porringer was again heaven to him,—namely, a potato and a bit of bacon.

“You are hungry—eat!” said the man; and he took from the shelf a crust of bread and an iron fork, and handed them to the child.

The boy hesitated.

“Perhaps you expect me to lay the cloth,” said the man, as he placed the porringer on the child’s lap. “Gobble that up!” he exclaimed imperiously.

Hunger overcame astonishment. The boy began to eat. He devoured rather than ate the food.

“Not so fast, you horrid glutton!” grumbled the man. “Isn’t he a greedy scoundrel? When such scum are hungry, they eat in a revolting fashion. You should see a lord sup. In my time, I have seen dukes eat; they don’t eat like the common herd. They drink, however. Come, you pig! stuff yourself!”

The deafness which is the concomitant of a hungry stomach caused the child to take little heed of these violent epithets, tempered as they were by such beneficent charity of action. For the moment he was absorbed by two ecstasies,—food and warmth.

Ursus continued his imprecations, muttering to himself: “I have seen King James supping *in propria personâ*, in the Banqueting House, adorned with the paintings of the famous Rubens. His Majesty touched nothing. This beggar here gorges himself. What put it into my head to come to this Weymouth, seven times devoted to the infernal deities? I have sold nothing since morning; I have harangued the snow; I have played the flute to the hurricane; I have not pocketed a farthing; and now, to-night, beggars drop in. Horrid place! There is battle, struggle, competition between the fools in the street and myself. They try to give

me nothing but farthings. I try to give them nothing but drugs. Well! to-day I've made nothing,—not an idiot on the highway; not a penny in the till. Eat away, hell-born boy! tear and crunch! We have fallen on times when nothing can equal the cynicism of spongers. Fatten at my expense, parasite! This wretched boy is more than hungry; his is not appetite, it is ferocity. Perhaps he has the plague. Have you the plague, you thief? Suppose he were to give it to Homo! No, never! Let the populace die, but not my wolf. By-the-bye, I am hungry myself. I declare, all this is very disagreeable. I have worked far into the night. There are times in a man's life when he is hard pressed; I was to-night, by hunger. I was alone. I made a fire. I had but one potato, one crust of bread, a mouthful of bacon, and a drop of milk, and I put it to warm. I said to myself, 'How good it smells!' I fancy I am going to eat, when lo and behold! this crocodile drops in at the very moment; he installs himself between my food and myself. See how my larder is devastated! Eat, pike! eat, you shark! How many teeth have you in your jaws? Guzzle, wolf-cub!—no, I withdraw that word; I respect wolves. Swallow up my food, you boa! I have worked all day, and far into the night, on an empty stomach; my throat is sore; my pancreas is in distress; my entrails are torn; and my reward is to see another eat! 'Tis all one, though. We will divide. He shall have the bread, the potato, and the bacon, but I will have the milk."

Just then a wail, touching and prolonged, arose in the hut. The man listened. "You cry, sycophant! Why do you cry?"

The boy turned towards him; it was evident that it was not he who had cried. He had his mouth full. Yet the cry continued. The man went to the chest.

“ So it is your bundle that wails! Vale of Jehoshaphat! Who ever heard of a screeching parcel! What the devil has your bundle got to croak about? ”

He unrolled the jacket; an infant's head appeared, the mouth open and crying.

“ Well! Who goes there? ” said the man. “ Here is another of them. When is this to end? Who is this! To arms! Corporal, call out the guard! Here is another intruder in the camp! What have you brought me, thief? Don't you see it is thirsty? The little one must have a drink. So, now, I shall not even have the milk! ”

He took down from the things lying in disorder on the shelf a roll of linen, a sponge, and a phial, muttering savagely, “ What an infernal scrape this is! ” Then he looked at the infant. “ 'T is a girl! one can tell that by her scream; and she too is drenched to the skin! ”

He dragged off as he had done from the boy the tatters in which the infant was tied up rather than dressed, and swathed her in a rag, which though of coarse linen was clean and dry. This rough and hurried toilet made the infant angry. “ How atrociously she screeches! ” he exclaimed.

He bit off a long narrow piece of sponge, tore from the roll a square piece of linen, took the saucepan containing the milk from the stove, filled the bottle with milk, pushed the sponge half-way down into its neck, covering the protruding end with linen, tied it with a bit of thread, applied his cheeks to the phial to be sure that it was not too hot, and then seizing under his left arm the bewildered infant which was still crying, said:

“ Come! take your supper, creature! Let me suckle you, ” at the same time putting the neck of the bottle to its mouth.

The little infant drank greedily. He held the phial at the necessary incline, grumbling,—

“ They are all the same, the cowards! While they get all they want they are quiet! ”

The child drank so ravenously, and seized so eagerly this breast offered by a cross-grained Providence, that she was taken with a violent fit of coughing.

“ You are going to choke! ” growled Ursus. “ A fine gobbler this one is too! ”

He drew away the sponge which she was sucking, allowed the cough to subside, and then replaced the phial to her lips, saying, “ Suck! you little wretch! ”

In the mean time the boy had laid down his fork. Seeing the infant drink made him forget to eat. The moment before, while he ate, the expression on his face was satisfaction; now it was gratitude. He watched the infant's renewal of life; and the completion of the restoration begun by himself filled his eyes with an ineffable brilliancy. Ursus went on muttering angry words between his teeth. The boy now and then lifted to him eyes moist with the deep emotion which the poor little being felt, but was unable to express.

“ Eat, eat, I tell you! ” Ursus said to the boy, savagely.

“ And you? ” said the boy, trembling all over, and with tears in his eyes,— “ you will have nothing! ”

“ Will you be kind enough to eat it all up, you cub? As there was not enough for me, there cannot be too much for you. ”

The boy took up his fork, but did not eat.

“ Eat! ” shouted Ursus. “ What have you to do with me? Who speaks of me? Wretched little barefooted clerk of Poverty Parish! eat it all up, I tell you! You are here to eat, drink, and sleep; eat, or I will kick you out, both of you. ”

The boy, at this threat, began to eat again. He had not much trouble in finishing what was left in the porringer.

Ursus muttered to himself now: "This building is badly constructed. The cold comes in through that window-pane."

A pane had indeed been broken in front, either by a jolt of the van or by a stone thrown by some mischievous boy. Ursus had placed a piece of paper over the fracture, but it had become unpasted, letting in the wind again. He was seated on the chest; the infant, cradled in his arms, was sucking rapturously at the bottle, in the blissful somnolency of cherubim before their Creator and infants at their mothers' breast.

"She is surfeited!" said Ursus; and he added: "After this, preach sermons on temperance!"

The wind tore from the pane the plaster of paper, and blew it across the van; but this mattered little to the children who were entering life anew. While the little girl drank, and the little boy ate, Ursus grumbled to himself:—

"Intemperance begins in the infant in swaddling clothes. What useless trouble Bishop Tillotson gives himself, thundering against excessive drinking!—What an odious draught of wind! and then my stove is old, and allows enough smoke to escape to give you trichiasis. Fire has its inconveniences as well as cold; one cannot see clearly.—That creature over there abuses my hospitality. Well, I have not been able to distinguish the animal's face yet.—Comfort is wanting here. By Jove! I am a great admirer of exquisite banquets in well closed rooms! I have missed my vocation; I was born to be a sensualist. The greatest of sages was Philoxenus, who wished to possess the neck of a crane, in order to enjoy the pleasures of the table longer.—Receipts to-day, naught; nothing sold all day. Inhabitants, servants, and tradesmen, here is the doctor, here are the drugs! You are losing your time, old friend; pack up

your physic,— every one is well, down here. Accursed town, where everybody is well! The skies alone have diarrhœa! How it snows! Anaxagoras taught that the snow was black; and he was right, cold being blackness: ice is night. What a hurricane! I can fancy the delight of those at sea. A hurricane is like the passage of demons; it is the row the tempest-fiends make in galloping and rolling head-over-heels over our bone-boxes. In the cloud this one has a tail, that one has horns, another a flame for a tongue, another claws to its wings, another a lord chancellor's paunch, another an academician's pate: each new gust is a fresh demon. Zounds! there are folks at sea, that is certain. My friends, get through the storm as best you can; I have enough to do to get through life.— Come now, do I keep an inn, or do I not? Why should I harbour these travellers? The universal distress sends its spatterings even as far as my poverty; into my cabin fall hideous drops of the far-spreading scum of mankind. I am the victim of the voracity of travellers; I am a prey,— the prey of those dying of hunger. Winter, night, a pasteboard hut, an unfortunate friend below and without, the storm, a potato, a fire as big as my fist, the wind penetrating through every cranny, not a half-penny, — and bundles are brought to me which set to howling! I open them, and find beggars inside! Is this fair? Besides, the laws are violated. See, a vagabond with a vagabond child! Mischievous pick-pocket, evil-minded abortion!, so you walk the streets after curfew? If our good king only knew it, would he not have you thrown into the bottom of a ditch, just to teach you better? My lord walks out at night with my lady, with the thermometer at fifteen degrees below the freezing-point, bare-headed and bare-footed. You should understand that such things are forbidden. There are rules and regulations,

you lawless wretches! Vagabonds are punished; honest folks who have houses are guarded and protected. Kings are the fathers of their people. I have my own house. You would have been whipped in the public street had you chanced to have been met; and quite right, too. Order must be maintained in a city. For my own part, I did wrong not to denounce you to the constable. But I am such a fool! I understand what is right and do what is wrong. Oh, the ruffian! to come here in such a state! I did not see the snow upon them when they came in; it has melted, and here's my whole house swamped. I have an inundation in my home. I shall have to burn an incredible amount of coals to dry up this lake,—and coals at twelve farthings, the miners' standard! How am I going to manage to fit three into this van? My career is ended; there is nothing left for me now but to become a wet-nurse. I am going to have on my hands the weaning of the future beggards of England. It seems destined to be my employment, office, and function to bring up the offspring of that colossal Prostitute, Misery; to bring to perfection future gallows' birds, and teach young thieves the forms of philosophy. The tongue of the wolf is the warning of God! And to think that if I had not been eaten up by creatures of this kind for the last thirty years, I should be rich, and Homo would be fat; I should have a medicine-chest full of rarities, as many surgical instruments as Doctor Linacre surgeon to King Henry VIII., divers animals of all kinds, Egyptian mummies and similar curiosities; I should be a member of the College of Physicians, and have the right of using the library built in 1652 by the celebrated Hervey, and of studying in the lantern of that dome whence you can see the whole of London; I could continue my observations of solar obfuscation, and prove that a caliginous vapour arises from the planet.—Such

was the opinion of John Kepler, who was born the year before the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, and who was mathematician to the emperor. — The sun is a chimney which sometimes smokes; so does my stove; hence my stove is as good as the sun. Yes, I should have made my fortune; my career would have been a very different one. I should not be the insignificant fellow I am. I should not degrade science in the highways; for the crowd is not worthy of the doctrine, the crowd being nothing better than a confused mixture of all ages, sexes, humours, and conditions that wise men of all periods have not hesitated to despise, and whose absurdities and passions are detested even by the most charitable. Oh, I am weary of existence! After all, one does not live long; this human life is soon over. But no, — it is long. At intervals, in order that we may not become too discouraged, and that we may have the stupidity to consent to endure existence, and not profit by the magnificent opportunities to hang ourselves which ropes and nails afford, Nature pretends to take a little care of man — not to-night, though! The rogue causes the wheat to spring up, ripens the grape, gives song to the nightingale. From time to time we get a ray of sunshine or a glass of gin, — and that is what we call happiness! It is a narrow border of good round a huge winding-sheet of evil. We have a destiny of which the devil has woven the stuff, and God has sewn the hem. In the mean time, you have eaten all my supper up, you thief!”

The infant, whom he was holding tenderly in his arms all the while he was vituperating it, shut its eyes languidly, — a sign of repletion.

Ursus examined the phial, and grumbled: “She has drunk it all up, the impudent creature!”

He arose, and holding the infant in his left arm,

with his right he raised the lid of the chest and drew out a bear-skin, — the one he called his real skin, as the reader may remember. While he was doing this he heard the other child eating, and glanced at him sideways.

“ I shall have my hands full if I have to feed that growing glutton,” he muttered. “ It will be a worm gnawing at the vitals of my industry.”

He spread out, still with one arm, the bear-skin on the chest, working his elbow and managing his movements so as not to disturb the sleep into which the infant was just sinking. Then he laid her down on the fur, on the side of the chest next the fire. Having done so, he placed the phial on the stove, and exclaimed, “ I’m confoundedly thirsty myself!”

He looked into the pot. There were a few mouthfuls of milk left in it; he raised it to his lips. As he was about to drink, his eye fell on the little girl. He replaced the pot on the stove, took the phial, uncorked it, poured into it all the milk that remained, which was just sufficient to fill it, replaced the sponge and the linen rag over it, and tied it round the neck of the bottle.

“ I’m hungry and thirsty all the same,” he observed. Then he added: “ When one cannot get bread, one must drink water.”

Behind the stove there was a jug with the spout broken off. He took it and handed it to the boy. “ Do you want a drink?”

The boy drank, and then went on eating. Ursus seized the pitcher again, and raised it to his mouth. The temperature of the water which it contained had been greatly modified by the proximity of the stove. He swallowed a mouthful and made a grimace. Then he said:—

“ Water! pretending to be pure, thou resemblest false friends. Thou art warm at the top and cold at the bottom. ”

In the mean time the boy had finished his supper. The porringer was more than empty; it was cleaned out. He picked up and ate pensively a few crumbs caught in the folds of the knitted jacket on his lap.

Ursus turned towards him. “ Now, a word with you. The mouth is not made only for eating; it is made for speaking. Now that you are warmed and stuffed, you beast, give an account of yourself. You are going to answer my questions. Where did you come from? ”

“ I do not know, ” the boy replied.

“ Why do you say you don't know? ”

“ I was abandoned this evening on the sea-shore. ”

“ You little scamp! what's your name? He is so good for nothing that even his relatives desert him. ”

“ I have no relatives. ”

“ Have a care! I don't like people who sing a tune of fibs. You must have relatives, since you have a sister. ”

“ She is not my sister. ”

“ She is not your sister? ”

“ No. ”

“ Who is she then? ”

“ It is a baby that I found. ”

“ Found? ”

“ Yes. ”

“ What! did you pick her up? ”

“ Yes. ”

“ Where? If you lie I'll thrash you within an inch of your life! ”

“ I found her on the breast of a woman who was lying dead in the snow. ”

“ When? ”

"About an hour ago."

"Where?"

"A league from here."

The arched brows of Ursus contracted and assumed that pointed shape which characterizes emotion on the brow of a philosopher. "Dead! Lucky for her! We had better leave her in the snow. She is better off there. In which direction?"

"In the direction of the sea."

"Did you cross the bridge?"

"Yes."

Ursus opened the window at the back of the van and looked out. The weather had not improved. The snow was falling thick and fast. He shut the window. Then he filled the broken pane with a rag, heaped the stove with peat, spread out as far as he could the bear-skin on the chest, took a large book which he had in a corner, placed it under the skin for a pillow, and laid the head of the sleeping infant on it. Then he turned to the boy.

"Lie down here," he said.

The boy obeyed, and stretched himself at full length by the side of the infant. Ursus rolled the bear-skin over the two children, and tucked it under their feet. He took down from a shelf, and tied round his waist, a linen belt with a large pocket containing, no doubt, a case of instruments and bottles of restoratives. Then he took the lantern from where it hung on the ceiling, and lighted it. It was a dark-lantern. When lighted, it still left the children in shadow.

Ursus half opened the door, and said: "I am going out; do not be afraid. I shall return. Go to sleep."

Then letting down the steps, he called Homo. He was answered by a loving growl. Ursus, holding the lantern in his hand, descended. The steps were re-

placed, the door was reclosed. The children were left alone.

From without, a voice, the voice of Ursus, said: "Say, you, boy, who have just eaten up my supper, are you already asleep?"

"No," replied the child.

"Well, if she cries, give her the rest of the milk."

The clanking of a chain was heard, and the sound of a man's footsteps, mingled with the soft patter of an animal's paws, died away in the distance. A few minutes after, both children were sound asleep. Such dreams as are prone to visit beings of that age floated from one to the other; beneath their closed eyelids there shone, perhaps, the light of the spheres. If the word "marriage" were not inappropriate to the situation, they were husband and wife after the fashion of the angels. Such innocence in such darkness, such purity in such an embrace, such foretastes of heaven, are possible only to childhood, and no immensity approaches the greatness of little children. The fearful perpetuity of the dead chained beyond life, the mighty animosity of the ocean to a wreck, the whiteness of the snow over buried bodies, do not equal in pathos two children's mouths meeting divinely in sleep,— a meeting which is not even a kiss: a betrothal perchance; perchance a catastrophe. The unknown overhangs this juxtaposition. It charms, it terrifies, — who knows which? It stays the pulse. Innocence is greater than virtue; innocence is holy ignorance. They slept; they were at peace; they were warm. The nakedness of their interlaced bodies imaged the virginity of their souls. They lay there, as it were, on the bosom of the infinite Father of all.

CHAPTER VI.

THE AWAKING.

A SAD, pale light penetrated the van. It was the frozen dawn. That wan light which throws into relief the mournful reality of objects that are blurred into spectral forms by the night did not waken the children, so soundly were they sleeping. The van was warm. Their breathings alternated like two peaceful waves. There was no longer any hurricane without. The light of dawn was slowly taking possession of the horizon; the constellations were being extinguished, like candles blown out one after the other,—only a few large stars resisted. The deep-toned song of the Infinite was coming from the sea. The fire in the stove was not quite out. The twilight changed gradually into daylight.

The boy slept less heavily than the girl. At length, a ray brighter than the others broke through the pane, and he opened his eyes. The sleep of childhood ends in forgetfulness. He lay in a state of semi-stupor, without knowing where he was or what was around him, and without making any effort to remember, gazing at the ceiling, and setting himself an aimless task as he dreamily surveyed the letters of the inscription, "Ursus, Philosopher," which, as he did not know how to read, he examined without the power of deciphering. The sound of a key grating in the lock of the door caused him to turn his head. The door turned

on its hinges, the steps were let down. Ursus was returning. He ascended the steps, his extinguished lantern in his hand. At the same time the patter of four paws was heard on the steps. It was Homo, following Ursus, who had also returned to his home.

The frightened boy gave a sudden start as the wolf opened his mouth, disclosing two rows of glistening white teeth. The animal stopped when he had got half way up the steps, and placed both fore-paws inside the van, leaning on the threshold, like a preacher with his elbows on the edge of the pulpit. He sniffed at the chest from afar, not being in the habit of finding it occupied as it then was. At last he made up his mind to enter. The boy, seeing the wolf in the van, jumped out of the bear-skin, and placed himself in front of the infant, who was sleeping as soundly as ever.

Ursus had just hung the lantern up on the nail in the ceiling. Silently, and with mechanical deliberation, he unbuckled the belt which held his case, and replaced it on the shelf. He looked at nothing, and seemed to see nothing. His eyes were glassy. Something had evidently moved him deeply. His thoughts at length found vent, as usual, in a rapid flow of words.

"Better off, doubtless! Dead! stone dead!" he soliloquized.

He bent down, and put a shovelful of turf-mould into the stove; and as he poked the peat, he growled out:

"I had great trouble in finding her. She was buried under two feet of snow. Had it not been for Homo, who sees as clearly with his nose as Christopher Columbus did with his mind, I should still be there, digging at the avalanche, and playing hide-and-seek with Death. Diogenes took his lantern and sought for a man; I took my lantern and sought for a woman. He found a sarcasm; I found mourning. How cold she

was! I touched her hand,—it was like stone! What silence in her eyes! How can any one be such a fool as to die and leave a child behind! It will not be convenient to pack three into this box. A pretty family I have now! A boy and a girl!”

While Ursus was speaking, Homo sidled up close to the stove. The hand of the sleeping infant was hanging down between the stove and the chest. The wolf set to licking it. He licked it so softly that he did not wake the little infant.

Ursus turned round. “Well done, Homo! I shall be father, and you shall be uncle.”

Then he betook himself again to mending the fire with philosophical care, without pausing in his soliloquy, however.

“Adoption! It is settled; Homo is willing.” He drew himself up. “I should like to know who is responsible for that woman’s death? Is it man? or—” He raised his eyes, but looked beyond the ceiling, and his lips murmured, “Is it Thou?”

Then his head dropped, as if beneath a burden. Raising his eyes a moment afterwards they met those of the just-awakened boy, who was listening.

“What are you laughing at?” Ursus demanded abruptly.

“I am not laughing,” replied the boy.

Ursus looked at him intently for a few minutes. “Then you are frightful to look upon!” he exclaimed.

The interior of the van, on the previous night, had been so dark that Ursus had not seen the boy’s face at all. The broad daylight revealed it. He placed the palms of his hands on the two shoulders of the boy, and, examining his countenance more and more piercingly, exclaimed, —

“Do not laugh any more!”

"I am not laughing," said the child.

Ursus shuddered from head to foot. "You *are* laughing, I say!" Then seizing the boy with a grasp which would have been one of fury had it not been one of pity, he asked him, roughly: "Who did that to you?"

"I don't know what you mean," the boy replied.

"How long have you had that laugh?"

"I have always been thus," said the child.

Ursus turned away, saying in a low voice, "I thought that work was out of date now."

He took from under the head of the infant, very softly, so as not to awaken her, the book which he had placed there for a pillow. "Let us see Conquest," he murmured!

He turned the pages with his thumb, stopped at a certain one, and read: "'De Denasatis,' it is here." And he continued: "'Bucca fissa usque ad aures, gengivis denudatis, nasoque murdridato, masca eris, et ridebis semper.' There it is for certain."

Then he replaced the book on one of the shelves, growling, "It might not be advisable to inquire too deeply into a case of the kind. We will remain on the surface; laugh on, my boy!"

Just then the little girl awoke. Her good-day was a cry.

"Come, nurse, give her the breast," said Ursus.

The infant sat up. Ursus taking the bottle from the stove, gave it to her to suck. Then the sun rose above the horizon. Its brilliant rays shone through the window straight into the face of the infant, which was turned towards it. Her eyeballs, fixed on the sun, reflected its light like two mirrors. The eyeballs were immovable, the eyelids also.

"Look!" exclaimed Ursus; "she is blind!"

PART II.

BY ORDER OF THE KING.

BOOK I.

THE EVERLASTING PRESENCE OF THE PAST-
MAN REFLECTS MAN.

CHAPTER I.

LORD CLANCHARLIE.

I.

THERE was, in those days, an old tradition. That tradition was Lord Linnæus Clancharlie. Linnæus Baron Clancharlie, a contemporary of Cromwell, was one of the few peers of England who accepted the republic. The reason of his acceptance of it might, for want of a better, be found in the fact that for the time being the republic was triumphant. It was a matter of course that Lord Clancharlie should adhere to the republic as long as the republic was in power; but after the close of the revolution and the fall of the parliamentary government, Lord Clancharlie had persisted in his fidelity to it. It would have been easy for the noble patrician to re-enter the reconstituted upper house, — the repentant being ever gladly welcomed at restorations, and Charles II. being a kind prince enough to those who returned to their allegiance to him; but Lord Clancharlie had quite

failed to understand what one owes to circumstances. While the nation was overwhelming with acclamations the king who had come to resume possession of England; while a united parliament was recording its verdict; while the people were rapturously saluting the monarchy; while the dynasty was rising anew amidst a glorious and triumphant recantation, — at the moment when the past was becoming the future, and the future was becoming the past, that nobleman remained obdurate. He turned his head resolutely away from all these temptations and voluntarily exiled himself. Though he might have been a peer, he preferred being an outlaw. Years had passed, and he had grown old in his fidelity to the dead republic, and was therefore loaded with the ridicule which is the natural reward of such folly.

Lord Clancharlie had retired to Switzerland, where he inhabited a sort of lofty ruin on the banks of Lake Geneva. He had chosen his abode in the most rugged nook of the lake, between Chillon, Bonnivard's dungeon, and Vevay, Ludlow's burial-place. The rugged Alps, filled with winds and clouds, were around him: and he lived there, hidden in the wide shadows cast by the mountains. He was rarely seen by any one. The man was out of his country, almost out of his century. At that time no resistance to the established power was considered justifiable. England was happy. A restoration is like the reconciliation of husband and wife; prince and nation return to each other, — no state of things can be more gracious or more pleasant. Great Britain beamed with joy; to have a king at all was a great deal; but it was a great deal more to have such a charming one. Charles II. was an amiable man, fond of pleasure, yet able to govern; a great man, too, — at least in the opinion of Louis XIV. He was essentially a gentleman. Charles II. was greatly admired by his sub-

jects. He made war upon Hanover for reasons best known to himself; at least, no one else knew them. He sold Dunkirk to France, — a piece of State policy. The Whig peers, concerning whom Chamberlain says, "The cursed republic had infected with its stinking breath several of the high nobility," had had the good sense to bow to the inevitable, to conform to the times, and to resume their seats in the House of Lords. To do so, it sufficed that they should take the oath of allegiance to the king. When one thinks of all this, the glorious reign, the excellent king, the august princes given back by divine mercy to the people's love; when one remembers that such persons as Monk, and later on Jetteries, had rallied round the throne; that they had been suitably rewarded for their loyalty and zeal by the most splendid appointments and the most lucrative offices; that Lord Clancharlie could not be ignorant of this, and that it only depended on himself to be seated by their side, glorious in his honours; that England had, thanks to her king, risen again to the summit of prosperity; that London was all banquets and carousals; that everybody was rich and enthusiastic; that the court was gallant, gay, and magnificent, — if by chance, far from these splendours, in some melancholy, indescribable half-light, like nightfall, that old man, clad in the same garb as the common people, was observed standing on the shore of the lake, pale, absent-minded, heedless of the storm and of the winter's cold, walking as if at random, his eye fixed on the ground, his white hair waving in the wind, silent, pensive, solitary, who could forbear to smile? Was not such a being nothing more or less than a madman?

Thinking of Lord Clancharlie, of what he might have been and what he was, one proved oneself very charitable if one only smiled. Many persons laughed aloud,

others could not restrain their wrath. It is easy to understand how greatly men of sense were shocked by the insolence which his isolation evinced. There was one extenuating circumstance: Lord Clancharlie had never had any brains. Every one agreed on that point.

II.

It is disagreeable to see one's fellow-creature obstinate. Imitations of Regulus are not popular, and public opinion holds them in some derision. Stubborn people are so many reproaches, and we have a right to laugh at them. Besides, to sum up, are these perversities, these rugged notches, really virtues? Is there not a good deal of ostentation in these excessive parades of self-abnegation and honour? Are they not mere show and pretence? Why this pretence of solitude and exile? To carry nothing to extremes is the wise man's maxim. Oppose if you choose, blame if you will, but decently, — crying out all the while, "Long live the King!" The greatest of virtues is common-sense. What falls ought to fall, what succeeds ought to succeed. Providence acts advisedly; it crowns him who deserves the crown. Do you pretend to know better than Providence? When matters are settled; when one *régime* has replaced another; when success is the scale in which truth and falsehood are weighed, — then doubt is no longer possible. The honest man goes over to the winning side; and although it may happen to serve his fortune and his family, he does not allow himself to be influenced by that consideration, but thinking only of the public weal, holds out his hand heartily to the conqueror.

What would become of the State if no one consented to serve it? Would not everything come to a standstill?

To keep his place is the duty of a good citizen. Learn to sacrifice your secret preferences. Appointments must be filled, and some one must sacrifice himself. To yield prompt obedience to the powers that be is truly laudable. The retirement of public officials would paralyze the State. What, banish yourself? How weak! Set yourself up as an example? What vanity! Defy established authority? What audacity! What do you set yourself up to be, I wonder? Learn that we are just as good as you. If we chose, we also could be intractable and untamable, and do worse things than you; but we prefer to be sensible people. Because I am a Trimalcion, do you think that I could not be a Cato? What nonsense!

III.

NEVER was a situation more clearly defined or more decisive than that of 1660. Never had a course of conduct been more plainly indicated to a well-ordered mind. England was out of Cromwell's grasp. Under the republic many irregularities had been committed. British preponderance had been created. With the aid of the Thirty-Years' war, Germany had been overcome; with the aid of the Fronde, France had been humiliated; with the aid of the Duke of Braganza, the power of Spain had been lessened. Cromwell had tamed Mazarin; in signing treaties the Protector of England wrote his name above that of the King of France. The United Provinces had been forced to pay a fine of eight millions; Algiers and Tunis had been attacked, Jamaica conquered, Lisbon humbled; French rivalry had been encouraged in Barcelona, and Masaniello in Naples; Portugal had been made fast to England; the seas had been cleared of Barbary pirates from Gibraltar to Crete; maritime dom-

ination had been established under two forms, Victory and Commerce. On the 10th of August, 1653, the man of thirty-three victories, — the old Admiral who called himself the sailors' grandfather, Martin Happertz Tromp, who had beaten the Spanish, — was defeated by the English fleet. The Atlantic had been cleared of the Spanish navy, the Pacific of the Dutch, the Mediterranean of the Venetian; and by the Navigation Act, England had taken possession of the sea-coast of the world. Through the ocean she commanded the world. At sea the Dutch flag humbly saluted the British flag; France, in the person of the Ambassador Mancini, bent the knee to Oliver Cromwell; and Cromwell played with Calais and Dunkirk as with two shuttlecocks on a battledore. The continent had been taught to tremble, peace had been dictated, war declared, the British Ensign raised on every pinnacle. A single regiment of the Protector's Ironsides excited as much terror in Europe as an entire army. Cromwell used to say, "I mean the Republic of England to be respected, as the Republic of Rome was respected. Delusions were no longer held sacred; speech was free, the press was free. In the public street men said what they listed; they printed what they pleased without control or censorship. The equilibrium of thrones had been destroyed. The whole order of European monarchy, of which the Stuarts formed a link, had been overturned.

But at last England had escaped from this odious order of things, and had won forgiveness for it. The indulgent Charles II. had issued the proclamation of Breda; he had kindly consented to ignore the period of English history in which the son of the Huntingdon brewer placed his foot on the neck of Louis XIV. England said its *meâ culpâ*, and breathed again. The cup of joy was, as we have just said, full; gibbets for the regi-

cides adding to the universal delight. A restoration is charming, but a few gibbets are not out of place, and it is necessary to satisfy the public conscience. To be good subjects was thenceforth the people's sole ambition. The spirit of lawlessness had been expelled. Loyalty was re-established. Men had recovered from the follies of politics; they sneered at revolution, they jeered at the republic; and as to those times when such strange words as *Right, Liberty, Progress*, had been in every one's mouth, why, they laughed at such bombast! How admirable this return to common-sense was! England had been in a dream. What joy to be free from such errors! Was ever anything so mad? Where should we be if every one had his rights? Fancy every one's having a hand in the government! Can you imagine a city ruled by its citizens? Why, the citizens are the team, and the team cannot act as driver. To put to the vote is to throw to the winds. Would you have States driven like clouds? Disorder cannot build up order. With chaos for an architect, the edifice would be a Babel. Besides, how tyrannical this pretended liberty is! As for me, I wish to enjoy myself, not to govern. It is a bore to have to vote; I want to dance. How providential that we have a prince to take care of us all! How kind the king is to take so much trouble for our sakes! Besides, he is to the manner born; he knows what's what; it's his business. Peace, war, legislation, finance, — what have the people to do with such things. Of course the people have to pay, of course the people have to serve; but that should suffice. They have a place in policy; from them come two essential things, — the army and the budget. To be liable to contribute, and to be liable to serve, — is not that enough? What more can they want? They are the military and the financial arm, — a magnificent *rôle*. The king reigns for

them, and they must reward him accordingly. Taxation and the civil list are the salaries paid by the people and earned by the prince. The people give their blood and their money, in return for which they are governed. To wish to govern themselves, — what an absurd idea! They require a guide; being ignorant, they are blind. Has not the blind man his dog? Only the people have a lion, the king, who consents to play the dog. How kind of him! Why are the people ignorant? Because it is good for them to be ignorant. Ignorance is the guardian of Virtue. Where there are no possibilities of improvement there is no ambition. The ignorant man is in useful darkness, which, suppressing sight, suppresses covetousness: hence innocence. He who reads, thinks, he who thinks, reasons. But not to reason is duty and happiness as well. These truths are incontrovertible; society is based on them.

These sound social doctrines had been re-established in England. At the same time a correct taste in literature was reviving. Shakspeare was despised, Dryden admired. "Dryden is the greatest poet of England, and of the century," said Atterbury, the translator of "Achi-tophel." This was about the time when M. Huet, Bishop of Avranches, wrote to Saumaise, who had done the author of "Paradise Lost" the honour to refute and abuse him: "How can you trouble yourself about so mean a thing as that Milton?" Everything was falling into its proper place: Dryden above, Shakspeare below; Charles II. on the throne, Cromwell on the gibbet. England was raising herself out of the shame and the excesses of the past. It is a great happiness for nations to be led back by monarchy to good order in the State and good taste in letters.

It is hard to believe that such benefits should not be appreciated. To turn the cold shoulder to Charles II.,

to reward with ingratitude the magnanimity which he displayed in ascending the throne, — was not such conduct abominable? Lord Linnæus Clancharlie had inflicted this vexation upon honest men. To sulk at his country's happiness, — alack, what folly! We know that in 1650 Parliament had drawn up this form of declaration: "I promise to remain faithful to the republic, without king, sovereign, or lord." Under pretext of having taken this monstrous oath, Lord Clancharlie was living out of the kingdom, and in the face of the general rejoicing thought that he had the right to be sad. He had a profound esteem for that which was no more, and was absurdly attached to the former state of things. To excuse him was impossible; even the most charitably disposed abandoned him. Some had done him the honour to believe that he had entered the republican ranks only to observe more closely the flaws in the republican armour, and to smite it the more surely when the day should come to strike for the sacred cause of the king. These lurkings in ambush for the convenient hour to stab the enemy in the back are attributes of loyalty. Such a line of conduct had been expected of Lord Clancharlie, so strong was the wish to judge him favourably; but, in the face of his strange persistence in republicanism, people were obliged to lower their estimate of him. Evidently Lord Clancharlie was confirmed in his convictions; that is to say, he was an idiot!

The explanation given by the indulgent wavered between puerile stubbornness and senile obstinacy. The severe and the just went much further; they cursed the name of the renegade. Folly has its rights, but it has also its limits. A man may be a brute, but he has no right to be a rebel. And, after all, who was this Lord Clancharlie? A deserter. He had left his camp, that

of the aristocracy, for that of the enemy, the people. This faithful man was a traitor. It is true that he was a traitor to the stronger side and faithful to the weaker; it is true that the camp repudiated by him was the camp of the conqueror, and the camp adopted by him the camp of the vanquished; it is true that by his treason he lost everything, — his political privileges and his home, his title and his country. He gained nothing but ridicule, he attained no benefit but exile. But what does all this prove? Merely that he was a fool. Plainly a fool and a traitor in one. Let a man be as great a fool as he likes, provided he does not set a bad example. Fools need only be civil, and in consideration thereof they may aim at being the basis of monarchies.

The narrowness of Clancharlie's mind was incomprehensible. His eyes were still dazzled by the phantasmagoria of the revolution. He had allowed himself to be taken in by the republic, — yes, and cast out. He was a disgrace to his country; the attitude he assumed was downright felony. Absence was an insult. He held aloof from the public happiness as from the plague. In his voluntary banishment he merely sought a refuge from the national rejoicing. Over the widespread gladness at the revival of the monarchy, denounced by him as a lazaretto, he was the black flag. What! could he thus look askance at order re-established, a nation exalted, and a religion restored? Why cast a shadow over such serenity? Take umbrage at England's contentment! Must he be the one blot in the clear blue sky? Protest against a nation's will; refuse his Yes to the universal consent, — it would be disgusting, if it were not the part of a fool.

Clancharlie could not have taken into account the fact that it did not matter if one had taken the wrong turn with Cromwell, so long as one found one's way

back into the right path with Monk. Take Monk's case. He is in command of the republican army. Charles II., having been informed of his honesty, writes to him. Monk, who combines virtue with tact, dissimulates at first; then suddenly at the head of his troops dissolves the rebel parliament, and re-establishes the king on the throne. Monk is created Duke of Albemarle, has the honour of having saved society, becomes very rich, sheds a glory over his time, and is created Knight of the Garter, with a prospect of being buried in Westminster Abbey. Such is the reward of British fidelity!

Lord Clancharlie could never rise to a sense of duty thus carried out. He had the infatuation and obstinacy of an exile, he contented himself with hollow phrases; he was tongue-tied by pride. The words "conscience" and "dignity" are but words, after all; one must penetrate to the depths. These depths Lord Clancharlie had not reached. His "eye was single," and before committing an act, he wished to observe it so closely as to be able to judge of it in more senses than one. Hence arose absurd disgust to the facts examined. No man can be a statesman who gives way to such overstrained delicacy. Excess of conscientiousness degenerates into an infirmity. Distrust scruples; they drag you too far. Exaggerated fidelity is like a ladder leading into a cavern, — one step down, another, then another; and there you are in the dark. The clever re-ascend; fools remain there. Conscience must not be allowed to practise such austerity. If it is, it is sure to relapse eventually into the depths of political prudery, as in Lord Clancharlie's case. Such principles result in one's ruin. He was walking, with his hands behind him, along the shores of the Lake of Geneva. A fine way of getting on!

In London they sometimes spoke of the exile. He

was tried before the tribunal of public opinion. They pleaded for and against him. The cause having been heard, he was acquitted on the ground of stupidity. Many zealous friends of the former republic had given their adherence to the Stuarts; for this they deserve praise. They naturally calumniated him a little. The obstinate are repulsive to the compliant. Men of sense, anxious for good places at court, and weary of his disagreeable attitude, took pleasure in saying, "If he has not rallied to the throne, it is because he has not been sufficiently paid," etc. "He wanted the chancellorship which the king has given to Hyde." One of his old friends even went so far as to whisper, "He told me so himself."

Remote as was the solitude of Linnæus Clancharlie, a little of this talk reached him now and then through other outlaws whom he met, and through that old regicide, Andrew Broughton, who lived at Lausanne. Clancharlie confined himself to an imperceptible shrug of the shoulders, a sign of profound disgust with him. On one occasion he added to the shrug these few words, uttered in a low voice, "I pity those who believe such things."

IV.

CHARLES II., good man! scorned him. The happiness of England under Charles II. was more than happiness, it was enchantment. A restoration is like an old oil painting re-varnished. All the past reappeared, good old manners returned, beautiful women reigned and governed. Evelyn notices it. We read in his journal, "Luxury, profaneness, contempt of God! I saw the king on Sunday evening with his courtesans, Portsmouth, Cleveland, Mazarin, and two or three others, all nearly naked, in the gaming-room." We feel that there is ill-

nature in this description, for Evelyn was a grumbling Puritan, tainted with republican notions. He did not appreciate the profitable example set by kings in those grand Babylonian gaieties, which, after all, provide employment for the poor. He did not understand the utility of vice. Here is a maxim: Do not extirpate vice, if you want to have charming women; if you do, you are like idiots who destroy the chrysalis while they delight in the butterfly.

Charles II., as we have said, scarcely remembered that a rebel called Clancharlie existed; but James II. was more mindful of him. Charles II. governed gently, it was his way; we may add that he did not govern the worse on that account. A sailor sometimes makes, on a rope intended to baffle the wind, a slack knot which he leaves to the wind to tighten. Such is the stupidity of the storm and of a nation. The slack knot soon becomes a tight one. So did the government of Charles II.

Under James II. the throttling began, — a necessary throttling of what remained of the revolution. James II. had a laudable ambition to be an efficient king. The reign of Charles II. was, in his opinion, but an attempt at restoration. James wished for a still more complete restoration of the old order of things. In 1660, he deplored that they had confined themselves to the hanging of ten regicides. He was a more genuine reconstructor of authority. He infused vigour into serious principles. He installed true justice, which is superior to sentimental declamations, and attends, above all things, to the interests of society. In his protecting severities we recognize the father of the State. He intrusted the hand of justice to Jefferies and its sword to Kirke. That useful colonel one day hung and rehung the same man, a republican; asking him each time: "Will you renounce the republic?" The villain, having each time

said "No," was finally despatched. "I hanged him four times," said Kirke, complacently. The renewal of executions is a sure sign of power in the executive authority. Lady Lisle, who, though she had sent her son to fight against Monmouth, had concealed two rebels in her house, was executed; another rebel, having been honourable enough to declare that an anabaptist female had given him shelter, was pardoned, and the woman was burned alive. Kirke, on another occasion, gave a town to understand that he knew its principles to be republican, by hanging nineteen burgesses.

These reprisals were certainly legitimate, for it must be remembered that under Cromwell they cut off the noses and ears of the stone saints in the churches. James II., who had had the good sense to choose Jefferies and Kirke, was a prince imbued with true religion; he practised mortification in the ugliness of his mistresses; he listened to le Père la Colombière, a preacher almost as unctuous as le Père Cheminai, but with more fire, who had the glory of being, during the first part of his life, the counsellor of James II., and during the latter part the ideal of Marie Alacoque. It was probably due to this strong religious nourishment that later on James II. was enabled to bear exile with dignity, and to exhibit, in his retirement at Saint Germain, the spectacle of a king rising superior to adversity, calmly touching for king's evil, and conversing with Jesuits.

It will be readily understood that such a king would trouble himself to a considerable extent about such a rebel as Lord Linnæus Clancharlie. Hereditary peerages have a certain hold on the future, and it was evident that if any precautions were necessary with regard to that lord, James II. was not the man to hesitate.

CHAPTER II.

LORD DAVID DIRRY-MOIR.

I.

LORD LINNÆUS CLANCHARLIE had not always been old and proscribed; he had had his period of youth and passion. We know from Harrison and Pride that Cromwell, when young, loved women and pleasure, — a taste which generally (another aspect of the “woman question”) betrays a seditious man. Distrust the loosely clasped girdle (*Male præcinctum juvenem cavete*). Lord Clancharlie, like Cromwell, had had his wild hours and his irregularities. He was known to have had a natural child, a son. This son was born in England in the last days of the republic, just as his father was going into exile; hence he had never seen his father. This illegitimate son of Lord Clancharlie had grown up as page at the court of Charles II. He was styled Lord David Dirry-Moir: he was a lord by courtesy, his mother being a woman of quality.

The mother, while Lord Clancharlie was playing the owl in Switzerland, made up her mind, being a beauty, to give up sulking, and was forgiven for that Goth her first lover, by one who was undeniably a polished gentleman, and at the same time a royalist, — no less a person, in fact, than the king himself. She had been the mistress of Charles II. but a short time, sufficiently long, however, to have made his Majesty (who was delighted to have won so pretty a woman from the republic) bestow on the little Lord David, the son of his divinity,

the office of keeper of the stick, — which made that young man, boarded at the king's expense, by a natural revulsion of feeling an ardent adherent of the Stuarts. Lord David was for some time one of the hundred and seventy sword-bearers; afterwards, entering the corps of pensioners, he became one of the forty who bear the gilded halberd. He had, besides being one of the noble company instituted by Henry VIII. as a body-guard, the privilege of placing the dishes on the king's table. Thus it was that while his father was growing grey in exile, Lord David was prospering under Charles II. After which he prospered under James II. The king is dead: Long live the king! It is the *non deficit alter, aureus*.

It was on the accession of the Duke of York that the young man obtained permission to call himself David Lord Dirry-Moir, from an estate which he inherited from his mother (who had just died) in that great forest of Scotland, where lives the krag, a bird which scoops out a nest with its beak in the trunk of the oak.

II.

JAMES II. was a king, and pretended to be a great general. He loved to surround himself with young officers. He showed himself frequently in public on horseback, in a helmet and cuirass, with a huge projecting wig hanging below the helmet and over the cuirass, — a sort of equestrian statue of imbecile war. He took a fancy to young Lord David; he liked the royalist for being the son of a republican. A renegade father does not injure the foundation of a court fortune. The king made Lord David gentleman of the bedchamber, at a salary of a thousand a year. It was a fine promotion. A gentleman of the bedchamber sleeps near the king

every night, on a bed which is made up for him. There are twelve gentlemen, who relieve one another.

Lord David, while he held that post, was also head of the king's granary, giving out corn for the horses and receiving a salary of £260. Under him were the five coachmen of the king, the five postilions of the king, the five grooms of the king, the twelve footmen of the king, and the four chair-bearers of the king. He had the management of the race-horses which the king kept at Newmarket, and which cost his Majesty £600 a year. He worked his will on the king's wardrobe, from which the knights of the garter are furnished with their robes of ceremony. The usher of the black rod bowed down to the earth before him. That usher, under James II., was the Chevalier Duppa. Mr. Baker, who was clerk of the crown, and Mr. Brown, who was clerk of the Parliament, also bowed low before Lord David. The court of England, which is magnificent, is a model of hospitality. Lord David presided, as one of the twelve, at banquets and receptions. He had the glory of standing behind the king on offertory days, when the king gives to the church the golden *byzantium*; on collar-days, when the king wears the collar of his order; on communion days, when no one takes the sacrament except the king and the princes. It was he who, on Holy Thursday, introduced into his Majesty's presence the twelve poor men to whom the king gives as many silver pence as he is years old, and as many shillings as the years of his reign. The duty devolved on him, when the king was ill, to call to the assistance of his Majesty the two grooms of the almonry, who are priests, and to prevent the approach of doctors without permission from the council of State. Besides, he was lieutenant-colonel of the Scotch Regiment of Guards, the one which plays the Scottish march. As such, he made several cam-

paigns, and with glory ; for he was a gallant soldier. He was a brave lord, well-made, handsome, generous, and majestic in look and in manner. His person was like his quality. He was tall in stature, as well as exalted in birth. At one time he stood a chance of being made groom of the stole, which would have given him the privilege of putting the king's shirt on his Majesty : but to hold that office it was necessary to be either prince or peer. Now, to create a peer is a serious thing, inasmuch as it is first necessary to create a peerage ; and that makes many people jealous. It is a favour, — but a favour that gains the king one friend and one hundred enemies, without taking into account that the one friend becomes ungrateful. James II. was not inclined to create peerages, but he transferred them freely. The transfer of a peerage produces no sensation ; it is simply the continuation of a name. The friendly monarch had no objection to raising Lord David Dirry-Moir to the upper house, provided he could do so by means of a substituted peerage. Nothing would have pleased his Majesty better than to transform Lord David Dirry-Moir lord by courtesy into a lord by right.

III.

THE opportunity occurred. One day it was announced that several things had happened to the old exile Lord Clancharlie, the most important of which was that he had died. Death does men this much good, — it makes them the subject of conversation for a time. People told what they knew, or what they thought they knew, about the last years of Lord Linnæus. What they said was probably a mixture of hearsay and conjecture. If these tales were to be credited, Lord Clancharlie's republicanism was intensified towards the end of his days to the

extent of marrying (strange obstinacy on the part of the exile!) Ann Bradshaw, the daughter of a regicide: they were precise about the name. This lady had died, it was said, in giving birth to a boy. If these details should prove to be correct, this child would, of course, be the legitimate and rightful heir of Lord Clancharlie. These reports, however, were extremely vague in form, and were rumours rather than facts. Circumstances which happened in Switzerland in those days were as remote from the England of that period as those which take place in China from the England of to-day. Lord Clancharlie must have been fifty-nine at the time of his marriage, they said, and sixty at the birth of his son, and must have died shortly after, leaving his infant bereft both of father and mother. This was possible, perhaps, but improbable. They added that the child was beautiful as the day, — just as we read in all the fairy tales.

King James put an end to these rumours (which must have been entirely without foundation) by declaring, one fine morning, Lord David Dirry-Moir sole and positive heir *in default of legitimate issue*, and by his royal pleasure, of Lord Linnæus Clancharlie, his natural father, *the absence of all other issue and descent being established*; and patents of this grant were duly registered in the House of Lords. By these patents the king instated Lord David Dirry-Moir in all the titles, rights, and prerogatives of the late Lord Linnæus Clancharlie, on the sole condition that Lord David should wed, when she attained a marriageable age, a certain girl who was at that time a mere infant a few months old, and whom the king in her cradle had created a duchess, no one knew exactly why, — or, rather, every one knew why. This little infant was called the Duchess Josiana. Spanish names were then all the rage in England. One

of Charles II.'s bastards was called Carlos Earl of Plymouth. It is likely that Josiana was a contraction for Josefa-y-Ana. Josiana, however, may have been a name, — the feminine of Josias. One of Henri III.'s gentlemen was called Josias du Passage. It was to this little duchess that the king granted the peerage of Clancharlie. She was a peeress till there should be a peer; the peer was to be her husband. The peerage was founded on a double castleward, the barony of Clancharlie and the barony of Hunkerville; besides, the barons of Clancharlie were, as a reward for some ancient deed of prowess, and by royal license, Marquises of Corleone in Sicily.

Peers of England cannot bear foreign titles. There are, nevertheless, exceptions; thus Henry Arundel, Baron Arundel of Wardour, was, as well as Lord Clifford, a Count of the Holy Roman Empire, of which Lord Cowper is a prince. The Duke of Hamilton is Duke of Chatelherault, in France; Basil Fielding, Earl of Denbigh, is Count of Hapsburg, of Lauffenberg, and of Rheinfelden, in Germany. The Duke of Marlborough was Prince of Mindelheim in Suabia, just as the Duke of Wellington was Prince of Waterloo in Belgium. This same Lord Wellington was also a Spanish Duke of Ciudad Rodrigo, and Portuguese Count of Vimiera.

There were in England, and there are still, both entailed and unentailed estates. The lands of the Lords of Clancharlie were all entailed. These lands, burghs, bailiwicks, fiefs, rents, freeholds, and domains, adherent to the peerage of Clancharlie-Hunkerville, now belonged provisionally to Lady Josiana; and the king declared that, once married to Josiana, Lord David Dirry-Moir should be Baron Clancharlie. Besides the Clancharlie inheritance, Lady Josiana had her own private fortune. She possessed great wealth, much of

which was derived from the gifts of *Madame sans queue* — in other words, Madame — to the Duke of York. Henrietta of England, Duchess of Orleans, the lady of highest rank in France after the queen, was called *Madame sans queue*.

IV.

HAVING prospered under Charles and James, Lord David continued to prosper under William. His Jacobite feelings did not reach to the extent of following James into exile. While he continued to love his legitimate king, he had the good sense to serve the usurper; he was, moreover, although sometimes disposed to rebel against discipline, an excellent officer. He exchanged from the land to the sea forces, and distinguished himself in the White Squadron; he rose in it to be what was then called captain of a light frigate. Altogether he was a very fine fellow, extremely elegant in his vices; a bit of a poet, like everybody else at that epoch; a good servant of the State and a good servant to the prince; assiduous at feasts, at ladies' receptions, at ceremonies, and in battle; servile in a gentlemanly way, and yet haughty in the extreme; with eyesight dull or keen, according to the object examined; in manner obsequious or arrogant, as occasion required; frank and sincere on first acquaintance, with the power of assuming the mask afterwards; very observant of the smiles and frowns of his royal master; careless before a sword's point; always ready with heroism and complacency to risk his life at a sign from his Majesty; capable of any insult but of no impoliteness; a man of courtesy and etiquette, proud of kneeling at great regal ceremonies; of a gay valour; a courtier on the surface, a paladin below; and young at forty-five. Lord David sang French songs charm-



ingly, — an elegant accomplishment which had delighted Charles II. He loved eloquence and fine speaking, and was a great admirer of those celebrated discourses which are called the funeral orations of Bossuet. From his mother he had inherited almost enough to live on, — about £10,000 a year. He managed to get on with it, by running into debt. In magnificence, extravagance, and novelty he was without a rival. Directly he was copied, he changed his fashion. On horseback he wore loose boots of cow-hide, which turned over, with spurs. He had hats like nobody else's, unheard-of lace, and bands of which he alone had the pattern.

CHAPTER III.

THE DUCHESS JOSIANA.

I.

IN 1705, although Lady Josiana was twenty-three and Lord David forty-four, the wedding had not yet taken place, and that for the best reason in the world. Did they hate each other? Far from it; but what cannot escape you inspires you with no haste to obtain it. Josiana wanted to remain free; David, to remain young. To have no tie until as late as possible seemed to him to be a prolongation of youth. Middle-aged young men abounded in those rakish times; they grew grey as young fops. The wig was an accomplice; later on, powder became the auxiliary. At fifty-five Lord Charles Gerrard, Baron Gerrard, one of the Gerrards of Bromley, filled London with his successes; the young and pretty Duchess of Buckingham, Countess of Coventry, made a fool of herself for love of the handsome Thomas Bellasys, Viscount Fauconberg, who was sixty-seven. Men quoted the famous verses of Corneille, the septuagenarian, to a girl of twenty, beginning, "Marquise, si mon visage." Women, too, had their successes in the autumn of life, — witness Ninon and Marion. Such were the models of the day.

Josiana and David were carrying on a flirtation of a peculiar kind. They did not love, they pleased, each other. To be in each other's society sufficed them: why hasten the conclusion? The novels of those days carried lovers and engaged couples only to that stage which was the most becoming. Besides, Josiana, while she knew

herself to be a bastard, felt herself a princess, and carried her authority over him with a high hand in all their arrangements. She had a fancy for Lord David. He was handsome; but she cared very little about that. She considered him elegant: that was the all-important thing. To be fashionable is everything. Caliban, fashionable and magnificent, would distance Ariel poor. Lord David was handsome; so much the better. The danger in being handsome is being insipid; and that he was not. He betted, boxed, ran into debt. Josiana was proud of his horses, his dogs, his losses at play, and especially of his mistresses. Lord David, on his side, bowed down before the fascinations of the Duchess Josiana, — a maiden without spot or scruple, haughty, inaccessible, and audacious. He addressed sonnets to her, which Josiana sometimes read. In these sonnets he declared that to possess Josiana would be to mount to the stars; but this did not prevent him from postponing the ascent until the following year. He waited patiently in the ante-chamber outside Josiana's heart; and this suited both of them. Every one at court commended the good taste of this delay. Lady Josiana said, "It is a pity that I should be obliged to marry Lord David, — I, who would desire nothing better than to be in love with him!"

Josiana was "the flesh" personified. It would be difficult to conceive of a more magnificent creature. She was very tall, — too tall. Her hair was of that tint which might be called red gold. She was plump, fresh, strong, and rosy, and possessed of immense boldness and wit. She had eyes which were too eloquent. She had neither lovers nor chastity. She walled herself around with pride. Men! fie! a god alone would be worthy of her, — a god or a monster. If virtue consists in impregnability, then Josiana was the most virtuous

of women, though by no means the most innocent. She disdained intrigues; but she would not have been displeased had she been suspected of some, provided that they had been of a brilliant character proportionate to the merits of one so exalted as herself. She thought little of her reputation, but a great deal of her glory. To appear yielding, and yet be unapproachable, is perfection. Josiana felt herself majestic and material. Hers was a cumbrous type of beauty. She usurped rather than charmed; she trod upon hearts; she was of the earth earthy. She would have been as much astonished to find a soul in her bosom as to see wings on her back. She discoursed learnedly on Locke; she was polite; she was even suspected of knowing Arabic.

To be flesh and to be a woman are two very different things. Where a woman is vulnerable, — on the side of pity for instance, which so readily turns to love, — Josiana was not. Yet she was not unfeeling. The old comparison of flesh with marble is absolutely false. The beauty of flesh consists in not being marble. Its beauty is to palpitate, to tremble, to blush, to bleed; to have firmness without hardness; to be white without being cold; to have its sensations and its infirmities. Its beauty is to be life, and marble is death. Flesh, when it attains a certain degree of beauty, has almost a claim to the right of nudity; it conceals itself in its own dazzling charms as in a veil. He who looked upon Josiana nude, would have perceived her outlines only through a sort of halo. She would have shown herself without hesitation to a satyr or a eunuch. She had the self-possession of a goddess. To have made her nudity a torment to an ever-pursuing Tantalus, would have been a delight to her.

The king had made her a duchess, and Jupiter a Nereid. In admiring her you felt yourself becoming at once a

pagan and a lackey. She seemed to have emerged from the foam of the ocean. In her there was something of the wave, of chance, of the patrician, and of the tempest. She was well read and accomplished. Never had a passion approached her, yet she had sounded them all. She felt an instinctive loathing of their realization, and at the same time a longing for them. If she had stabbed herself, it would, like Lucretia, not have been until afterwards. She was a virgin stained with every defilement of an imaginary sort. She was a possible Astarte embodied in a real Diana. She was, in the insolence of her high birth, at once tempting and inaccessible. Nevertheless, she might find it amusing to plan a fall for herself. She dwelt in a halo of glory, half wishing to descend from it, and perhaps feeling curious to know what a fall was like. She was a little too heavy for her cloud. To err is a diversion. Princely unconstraint has the privilege of experiment; and what is frailty in a plebeian, is only frolic in a duchess. Josiana was in everything — in birth, in beauty, in irony, in brilliancy — almost a queen. She had felt a momentary infatuation for Louis de Boufflers, who used to break horse-shoes between his fingers. She regretted that Hercules was dead. She lived in some undefined expectation of a voluptuous and supreme ideal. Morally, Josiana brought to one's mind the line of Horace, *Desinit in piscem*, —

“Un beau torse de femme en hydre se termine.”

Hers was a noble neck, a splendid bosom, tranquilly heaving over a proud and arrogant heart, a glance full of life and light, a countenance pure and haughty; but (who knows?) below the surface was there not, in a semi-transparent and misty depth, an undulating, supernatural prolongation, perchance deformed and dragon-like, — proud virtue ending in vice in the depths of dreams?

II.

WITH all that she was a prude. It was the fashion. Remember Elizabeth. Elizabeth was of a type that prevailed in England for three centuries, — the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth. Elizabeth was more than English, she was Anglican. Hence the deep respect of the Episcopalian Church for that queen, — a respect resented by the Church of Rome, which counterbalanced it with a dash of excommunication. In the mouth of Sixtus V., when anathematizing Elizabeth, malediction turned to madrigal: "Un gran cervello di principessa," he says. Mary Stuart, less concerned with the church and more with the woman part of the question, had little respect for her sister Elizabeth, and wrote to her as queen to queen and coquette to prude: "Your disinclination to marriage arises from your not wishing to lose the liberty of being made love to." Mary Stuart toyed with the fan, Elizabeth with the axe. An uneven match. They were rivals, besides, in literature. Mary Stuart composed French verses; Elizabeth translated Horace. The ugly Elizabeth decreed herself beautiful; liked quatrains and acrostics; had the keys of towns presented to her by cupids; bit her lips, after the Italian fashion, rolled her eyes after the Spanish style; had in her wardrobe three thousand dresses and costumes, of which several were for the character of Minerva and Amphitrite; esteemed the Irish for the width of their shoulders; covered her farthingale with braids and spangles; loved roses; cursed, swore, and stamped; struck her maids of honour with her clinched fists; used to send Dudley to the devil, beat Burleigh the Chancellor, who would cry (poor old fool!), spat on Mathew, collared Hatton, boxed the ears of Essex, showed her legs to

Bassompierre, — and was a virgin. What she did for Bassompierre the Queen of Sheba had done for Solomon; ¹ consequently she was right, Holy Writ having created the precedent. That which is Biblical may well be Anglican. Biblical precedent even goes so far as to speak of a child who was called Ebnehaquem, or Melilechet; that is to say, “the Wise Man’s son.”

Why object to such manners? Cynicism is at least as good as hypocrisy. Nowadays England, whose Loyola is named Wesley, casts down her eyes a little at the remembrance of that past age; she is vexed at the memory, yet proud of it.

Amidst such manners as these, a taste for deformity existed, especially among women, more especially among beautiful women. What was the use of being beautiful if one did not possess a baboon? What was the charm of being a queen if one could not bandy words with a dwarf? Mary Stuart had “been kind” to the bandy-legged Rizzio. Maria Theresa of Spain had been “somewhat familiar” with a negro; hence the “black abbess.” In the alcoves of the great century a hump was the fashion: witness the Marshal of Luxembourg; and before Luxembourg, Condé, “such a pretty little man!” Beauties themselves might be ill-made without detriment; that was admitted. Anne Boleyn had one breast bigger than the other, six fingers on one hand, and a projecting tooth; La Vallière was bandy-legged, — which did not hinder Henry VIII. from going mad for the one, and Louis XIV. for the other.

Morals were equally awry. There was not a woman of high rank who was not a sort of monster. Every Agnes was a Melusina at heart. They were women by day and ghouls by night. They sought the scaffold to

¹ Regina Saba coram rege crura denudavit. — Schicklardus in *Proæmio Tarich Jersici*, f. 65.

kiss the heads of the newly beheaded on their iron stakes. Marguerite de Valois, the grandmother of prudes, wore, fastened to her belt, the hearts of her dead lovers in tin boxes, padlocked. In the eighteenth century the Duchess de Berry, daughter of the Regent, was herself an obscene and royal type of all these creatures.

These fine ladies, moreover, knew Latin. From the sixteenth century this had been accounted a feminine accomplishment. Lady Jane Grey had carried the fashion to the extent of knowing Hebrew. The Duchess Josiana Latinized. Then (another fine thing) she was secretly a Catholic, — after the manner of her uncle, Charles II., rather than her father, James II. James II. had lost his crown by reason of his Catholicism, and Josiana did not care to risk her peerage. Thus it was that while she was a Catholic among her intimate friends and the refined of both sexes, she was outwardly a Protestant for the benefit of the riff-raff. This is a pleasant view to take of religion. You enjoy all the good things connected with the Episcopalian Church, and later on you die, like Grotius, in the odour of Catholicity, with the glory of having a mass said for you by le Père Petau.

Although plump and healthy, Josiana was, we repeat, a perfect prude. At times, her sleepy and voluptuous way of dragging out the end of her phrases was like the creeping of a tiger's paws in the jungle. When one has not got Olympus, one must be content with the Hotel de Rambouillet. Juno resolves herself into Araminta. A pretension to divinity not admitted, creates affectation. Instead of thunder-claps there is impertinence. The temple shrivels into the boudoir. Unable to be a goddess, one becomes a graven image. Besides, there is in prudery a certain pedantry which is pleasing to

women. The coquette and the pedant are near neighbours. Their kinship is visible in the fop. The subtle is derived from the sensual. Gluttony affects delicacy; a grimace of disgust conceals cupidity. And then woman feels her weak point guarded by all that casuistry of gallantry which takes the place of scruples in prudes. It is a line of circumvallation with a ditch. Every prude puts on an air of repugnance; it is a protection. She will consent eventually, but she disdains — for the present.

Josiana had an uneasy conscience. She felt such a leaning towards immodesty that she was a prude. The very pride which causes us to shrink from certain vices leads us into others of an entirely different character. It was the excessive effort to be chaste which made Josiana a prude. To be too much on the defensive evinces a secret desire for attack; the truly modest woman is not strait-laced. Josiana shut herself up in the arrogance of the exceptional circumstances of her rank, meditating, perhaps, all the while some sudden lapse from it.

It was the dawn of the eighteenth century. England was a sketch of what France was during the regency. Walpole and Dubois were not unlike. Marlborough was fighting against his former king, James II., to whom it was said he had sold his sister, Miss Churchill. Bolingbroke was in the height and Richelieu in the dawn of his glory. Gallantry found a certain medley of ranks convenient. Men were made equal by their vices as they were later on, perhaps, by their ideas. Degradation of rank, an aristocratic prelude, began what the revolution was to complete. It was not very far from the time when Jélyotte was seen sitting publicly in broad daylight, on the bed of the Marquise d'Épinay. It is true (for manners re-echo each other) that in the

sixteenth century Smeton's nightcap had been found under Anne Boleyn's pillow.

If the word woman signifies frailty, never was woman so womanly as then. Never, covering her frailty by her charms, and her weakness by her omnipotence, has she claimed absolution more imperiously. In making the forbidden the permitted fruit, Eve fell; in making the permitted the forbidden fruit, she triumphs. That is the climax. In the eighteenth century the wife bolts out her husband. She shuts herself up in Eden with Satan. Adam is left outside.

III.

ALL Josiana's instincts impelled her to yield herself wantonly rather than to give herself legally. To surrender one's self thus, is considered a sure indication of genius, recalls Menalcas and Amaryllis, and is almost a literary act. Mademoiselle de Scudéry, aside from the charm of ugliness (for ugliness has its charm), could have had no other motive for yielding to Péliçon.

The maiden a sovereign, the wife a subject, — such was the old English notion. Josiana was deferring the hour of subjection as long as she could. She must eventually marry Lord David, since such was the royal pleasure. It was a necessity, doubtless; but what a pity! Josiana appreciated Lord David, and showed him off. There was between them a tacit agreement neither to conclude nor to break off the engagement. They eluded each other. This method of making love — one step in advance, and two back — is expressed in the dances of the period, the minuet and the gavotte.

It is unbecoming to be married; it fades one's ribbons, and makes one look old. An espousal is a dreary ab-

sorption of brilliancy. A woman handed over to you by a notary, how commonplace! The brutality of marriage creates definite situations, suppresses the will, kills choice; has a syntax, like grammar; replaces inspiration by orthography; makes love a dictation; disperses all Life's mysteries; diminishes the rights both of sovereign and subject; by a turn of the scale destroys the charming equilibrium of the sexes: the one robust in bodily strength, the other all-powerful in feminine weakness, — strength on one side, beauty on the other; makes one a master, and the other a servant. While before marriage man is the slave, woman the queen. To make Love prosaically decent, how gross! to deprive it of all impropriety, how dull!

Lord David was no longer young. Forty is an age that tells upon a man. He was not conscious of the fact, however, and really looked only a little over thirty. He considered it more amusing to desire Josiana than to possess her. He possessed others; he had mistresses. On the other hand, Josiana had dreams.

The Duchess Josiana had a peculiarity which is less rare than is generally supposed. One of her eyes was blue and the other black. Her pupils were made for love and hate, for happiness and misery. Night and day were mingled in her look. Her ambition was this: to show herself capable of impossibilities. One day she said to Swift: "You people fancy that you know what scorn is." "You people," meant the human race. She was a skin-deep Papist; her Catholicism did not exceed the amount necessary for fashion. She would have been a Puseyite at the present day. She wore great dresses of velvet, satin, or moire, some composed of fifteen or sixteen yards of material, with embroideries of gold and silver, and round her waist many knots of pearls, alternating with other precious stones. She

was extravagant in gold lace. Sometimes she wore an embroidered cloth jacket, like a bachelor. She rode on a man's saddle, notwithstanding the invention of side-saddles introduced into England in the fourteenth century by Anne, wife of Richard II. She washed her face, arms, shoulders, and neck in sugar dissolved in white of egg, after the Castilian fashion. There came over her face when any one talked cleverly in her presence an appreciative smile of singular grace. She was free from malice, and rather good-natured than otherwise.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LEADER OF FASHION.

JOSIANA was bored. The fact is so natural as to be scarcely worth mentioning.

Lord David held the position of judge in the gay life of London. He was looked up to by the nobility and gentry. Let us mention one feat of Lord David: he was daring enough to wear his own hair. The reaction against the wig was beginning. Just as in 1824 Eugène Devéria was the first to allow his beard to grow, so in 1702 Price Devereux was the first to risk wearing his own hair in public disguised by artful curling; for to risk one's hair was almost to risk one's head. The indignation was universal, although Price Devereux was Viscount Hereford, and a peer of England. He was insulted; but the deed was well worth the insult. In the hottest part of the row Lord David suddenly appeared without his wig and in his own hair. Such conduct shakes the foundations of society. Lord David was insulted even more grossly than Viscount Hereford; yet he held his ground. Price Devereux was the first, Lord David Dirry-Moir was the second to do this. It is sometimes more difficult to be the second than the first. It requires less genius, but more courage. The first, intoxicated by the novelty, may ignore the danger; the second sees the abyss, and rushes into it. Lord David flung himself into the abyss of no longer wearing a wig. Later on these gentlemen found many imitators.

Following the examples of these two revolutionists, men summoned up sufficient courage to wear their own hair, and powder was introduced as an extenuating circumstance.

In order to establish an important period of history before we pass on, we should remark that the first blow in the war of wigs was really struck by a Queen, — Christina of Sweden, who wore man's clothes, and who appeared in 1680, with her hair of golden brown, powdered, and brushed up from her head. She had besides, says Misson, a slight beard. The Pope, in his turn, by a bull issued in March, 1694, had lessened the popularity of the wig, by taking it from the heads of bishops and priests, and by ordering churchmen to let their hair grow.

Lord David, then, did not wear a wig, and he did wear cow-hide boots. Such deeds of prowess made him a mark for public admiration. There was not a club of which he was not the leader; not a boxing-match in which he was not desired as referee. The referee is the arbitrator. He had drawn up the rules of several aristocratic clubs. He founded several resorts of fashionable society, — of which one, the Lady Guinea, was still in existence in Pall Mall, in 1772. The Lady Guinea was a club in which all the youth of the peerage congregated. They gambled there; the lowest stake allowed was a rouleau of fifty guineas, and there was never less than twenty thousand guineas on the table. By the side of each player was a little stand, on which to place his cup of tea and a gilt bowl in which to put the rouleaux of guineas. The players, like servants when cleaning knives, wore leather sleeves to save their lace, breast-plates of leather to protect their ruffles, and on their heads, to shelter their eyes from the glare of the lamps and to keep their curls in order, broad-brimmed hats covered with flowers. They were masked

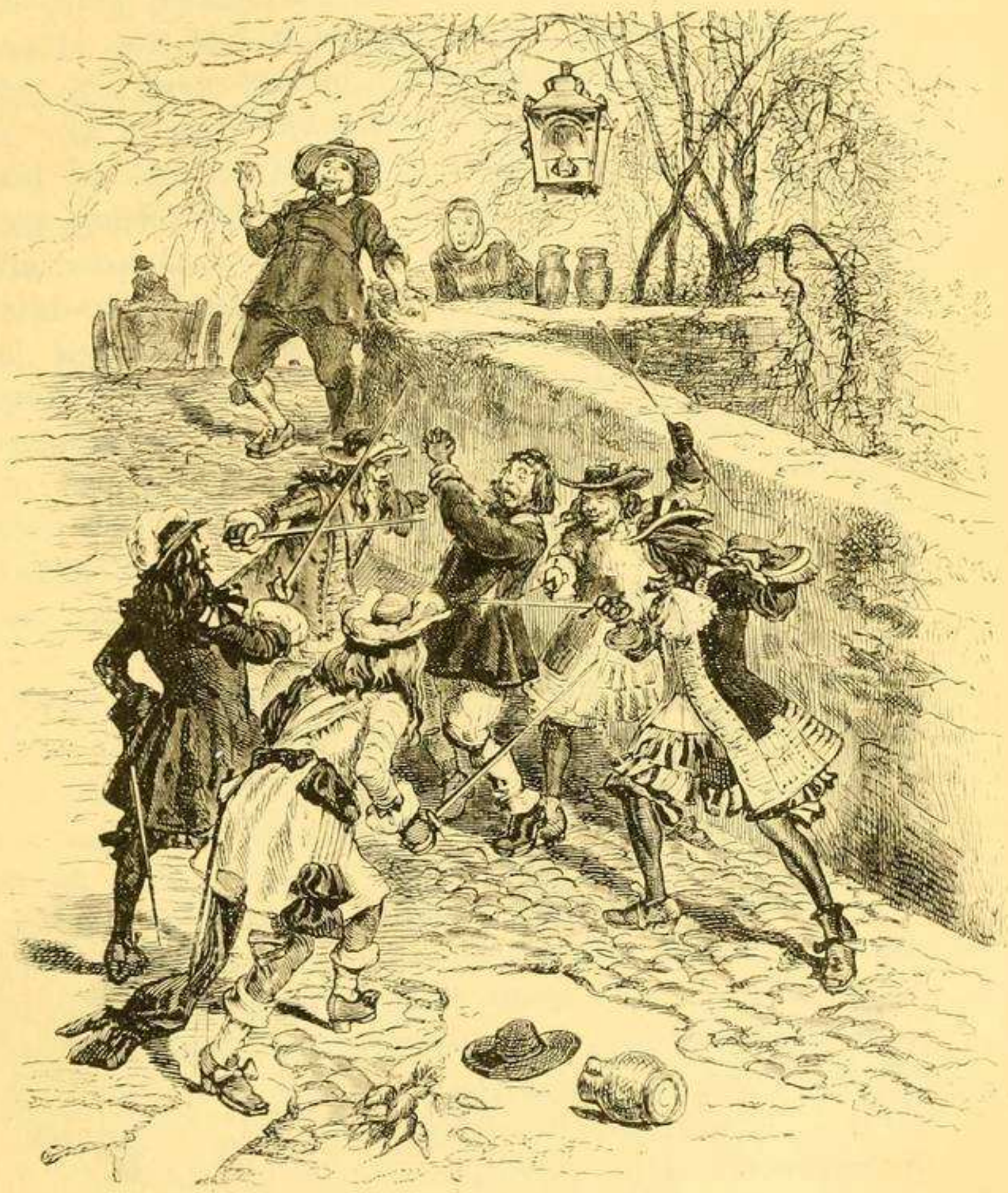
to conceal their excitement, especially when playing the game of *quinze*. All, moreover, wore their coats hind-side before, for luck.

Lord David was a member of the Beefsteak Club, the Surly Club, and of the Splitfarthing Club; of the Cross Club, and the Scratchpenny Club; of the Sealed Knot, a Royalist Club; and of the Martinus Scribblerus, founded by Swift, to take the place of the Rota, founded by Milton. Though handsome, he belonged to the Ugly Club. This club was dedicated to deformity. The members agreed to fight, not about a beautiful woman, but about an ugly man. The hall of the club was adorned by hideous portraits,—Thersites, Triboulet, Duns, Hudibras, Scarron; over the chimney was Æsop, between two men,—Cocles and Camoëns,—each blind in one eye (Cocles being blind in the left, and Camoëns in the right eye), so arranged that the two profiles without eyes were turned to each other. The day that the beautiful Mrs. Visart caught the smallpox, the Ugly Club toasted her. This club was still in existence in the beginning of the nineteenth century, and Mirabeau was elected an honorary member.

Since the restoration of Charles II., revolutionary clubs had been abolished. The tavern in the little street by Moorfields where the Calf's Head Club was held, had been pulled down; it was so called because on the 30th of January, the day on which the blood of Charles I. flowed on the scaffold, the members had drunk to the health of Cromwell out of the skull of a calf. To republican clubs had succeeded monarchical clubs. In them people amused themselves with decency. There was the Hell-fire Club, where they played at being impious. It was a joust of sacrilege; hell was put up at auction there to the highest bidder in blasphemy. There was the Butting Club, so called from its

members butting folks with their heads. They found some street porter with a wide chest and a stupid countenance; they offered him, and compelled him if necessary, to accept a pot of porter, in return for which he was to allow them to butt him with their heads four times in the chest; and on this they betted. One day a man, a big, stalwart Welshman named Gogangerdd, expired at the third butt. This looked serious. An inquest was held, and the jury returned the following verdict: "Died of enlargement of the heart, caused by excessive drinking." Gogangerdd had certainly drunk the contents of the pot of porter.

There was the Fun Club. *Fun* is like *cant*, and like *humour*, — a word which is untranslatable. Fun is to farce what pepper is to salt. To get into a house and break a valuable mirror, slash the family portraits, poison the dog, put the cat in the aviary, is called "having a bit of fun." To give bad news which is untrue, whereby people put on mourning by mistake, is fun. It was fun to cut a square hole in the Holbein at Hampton Court. A member of the Fun Club would have deemed it a grand achievement to have broken the arm of the Venus of Milo. Under James II. a young millionaire nobleman who had during the night set fire to a thatched cottage, — a feat which made all London shriek with laughter, — was proclaimed the King of Fun. The poor devils in the cottage were saved in their night-clothes. The members of the Fun Club, all men of the highest rank, used to run about London during the hours when the citizens were asleep, pulling shutters off their hinges, cutting the pipes of pumps, filling up cisterns, digging up cultivated plots of ground, putting out lamps, sawing through the beams which supported houses, and breaking window-panes, especially in the poor quarters of the town. It was the rich who acted thus towards



the poor. For this reason, no complaint was possible; that was the best of the joke. These manners have not altogether disappeared. In many places in England and in English possessions (at Guernsey, for instance) your house is now and then somewhat damaged during the night, or a fence broken, or the knocker twisted off your door. If it were the poor who did these things, they would be sent to jail; but they are done by pleasant young gentlemen.

The most fashionable of the clubs was presided over by a so-called emperor, who wore a crescent on his forehead, and was called the Grand Mohawk. The Mohawk surpassed the Fun. "Do evil for evil's sake" was the programme. The Mohawk Club had one great object, — to injure. To accomplish this object, all sorts of means were resorted to. In becoming a Mohawk, the members took an oath to that effect. To injure at any price, no matter when, no matter whom, no matter where, was a matter of duty. Every member of the Mohawk Club was bound to possess some accomplishment. One was "a dancing master;" that is to say, he made the rustics frisk about by pricking the calves of their legs with the point of his sword. Others knew how to make a man sweat; that is to say, a circle of gentlemen with drawn rapiers would surround a poor wretch, so that it was impossible for him not to turn his back upon some one of them; the gentleman he turned his back upon chastised him for it by a prick of his sword, which made him spring round; another prick in the back warned the fellow that a person of noble blood was behind him, — and so on, each one wounding him in turn; when the man, hemmed in by the circle of swords and covered with blood, had turned and danced about enough, they had him beaten by their servants in order to divert his mind. Others "punched the lion;"

that is, they gaily stopped a passer-by, broke his nose with a blow of the fist, and then shoved both thumbs into his eyes; if his eyes were gouged out, he was paid for them.

Such were the pastimes of the rich idlers of London about the beginning of the eighteenth century. The idlers of Paris also had theirs. About that time M. de Charolais was firing his gun at a citizen who chanced to be standing on his own threshold. Youth has had its amusements from time immemorial.

Lord David Dirry-Moir would gleefully set fire to a cottage of wood and thatch, just like the others, and scorch the inmates a little; but he always rebuilt their houses in stone. He assaulted two ladies. One was unmarried, — he gave her a portion; the other was married, — he had her husband appointed chaplain. Many praiseworthy improvements were due to him in cock-fighting. It was marvellous to see Lord David dress a cock for the pit. Cocks lay hold of each other by the feathers, as men seize each other by the hair. Lord David, therefore, made his cock as bald as possible. With a pair of scissors he cut off all the tail feathers, and all the feathers on the head and shoulders as well as those on the neck. "So much less for the enemy's beak," he used to say. Then he extended the cock's wings, and cut each feather, one after another, to a point, and thus the wings were furnished with darts. "That is for the enemy's eyes," he would say. Then he scraped its claws with a penknife, sharpened its nails, fitted steel gaffs on its spurs, spat on its head and spat on its neck, — anointing it with spittle, as they used to rub oil over athletes; then set it down in the pit, a formidable opponent, exclaiming, "That's the way to make a cock an eagle; a bird of the poultry-yard a bird of the mountain."

Lord David attended prize-fights, and was their living law. On great occasions it was he who had the stakes driven in and ropes stretched, and who fixed the number of feet for the ring. When he was a second, he followed his man step by step, a bottle in one hand, a sponge in the other; crying out to him to *strike fair*, but suggesting all sorts of stratagems; advising him as he fought, wiping away the blood, raising him when overthrown, placing him on his knee, putting the mouth of the brandy bottle between his teeth, and from his own mouth, filled with water, blowing a fine rain into his eyes and ears, — a thing which revives even a dying man. If he was referee, he saw that there was no foul play; prevented any one, whomsoever he might be, from assisting the combatants, excepting the seconds; declared the man beaten who did not fairly face his opponent; saw that the time between the rounds did not exceed half a minute; prevented butting, declaring whoever resorted to it beaten; and forbade a man's being hit when down. All this scientific knowledge, however, did not make him a pedant, or destroy his ease of manner in society.

When Lord David was referee, rough, pimple-faced, unshorn friends of either combatant never dared to come to the aid of the failing man; nor in order to upset the chances of the betting jump over the barrier, enter the ring, break the ropes, pull down the stakes, or interfere in any way in the contest. He was one of the few referees they dared not attempt to bully.

No one could train like him. The pugilist whose trainer he consented to become was sure to win. Lord David would choose a Hercules, — massive as a rock, tall as a tower, — and make a child of him. The problem was to turn that human rock from a defensive to an offensive state. In this he excelled. Having once

adopted the Cyclops, he never left him. He became his nurse; he measured out his wine, weighed his meat, and counted his hours of sleep. It was he who invented the athlete's admirable rules, afterwards reproduced by Morely: in the morning, a raw egg and a glass of sherry; at twelve, some slices of a leg of mutton, almost raw, with tea; at four, toast and tea; in the evening, pale ale and toast; after which he undressed his man, rubbed him, and put him to bed. In the street, he never lost sight of him, keeping him out of every danger, — runaway horses, carriage-wheels, drunken soldiers, and pretty girls. He watched over his virtue. This maternal solicitude was continually adding some new accomplishment to the pupil's education. He taught him the blow with the fist which breaks the teeth, and the twist of the thumb which gouges out the eye. What could be more touching than this devotion? In this way he was also preparing himself for the public life to which he would be called later on. It is no easy matter to become an accomplished gentleman.

Lord David Dirry-Moir was passionately fond of open-air exhibitions, of shows, of circuses with wild beasts, of the caravans of mountebanks, of clowns, tumblers, merry-men, open-air farces, and the wonders of a fair. The true noble is he who smacks of the people. Therefore it was that Lord David frequented the taverns and low haunts of London and the Cinque Ports. In order to be able at need, and without compromising his rank in the white squadron, to be cheek-by-jowl with a top-man or a calker, he used to wear a sailor's jacket when he went into the slums. For such disguise his not wearing a wig was convenient; for even under Louis XIV. the people clung to their hair like the lion to his mane. This gave him great freedom of action. The low people whom Lord David used to meet, and with

whom he mixed, held him in high esteem, without ever dreaming that he was a lord. They called him Tom-Jim-Jack. Under this name he was quite famous and very popular among the dregs of the people. He played the blackguard in a masterly style, and did not hesitate to use his fists if necessary. This phase of his fashionable life was highly appreciated by Lady Josiana.

CHAPTER V.

QUEEN ANNE.

I.

ABOVE this couple there was Anne, Queen of England. A very ordinary woman was Queen Anne. She was gay, benevolent, august — to a certain extent. No quality of hers amounted either to a virtue or to a vice. Her flesh was bloated, her wit heavy, her good-nature stupid. She was at once stubborn and weak. As a wife, she was both faithless and faithful, — having favourites to whom she gave her heart, and a husband for whom she kept her bed. As a Christian, she was at once a heretic and a bigot. She had one beauty, — the well-developed neck of a Niobe; the rest of her person was indifferently formed. She was a clumsy coquette, and a chaste one. Her skin was white and fine; she displayed a great deal of it. It was she who introduced the fashion of necklaces of large pearls clasped round the throat. She had a narrow forehead, sensual lips, fleshy cheeks, large eyes, short sight. Her short sight extended to her mind. Beyond a burst of merriment now and then, almost as ponderous as her anger, she lived in a sort of taciturn grumble and a grumbling silence. Words escaped from her which had to be guessed at. She was a mixture of a good woman and a mischievous devil. She liked surprises, which is extremely woman-like. She drank. She had fits of rage; she was violent, a brawler. Anne was a pattern, roughly

sketched, of the universal Eve. Her husband was a Dane, thoroughbred.

A Tory, Anne governed through the Whigs. Nobody could have been more awkward than Anne in directing affairs of State. She let things happen as they would. Her entire policy was hare-brained. She excelled in bringing about great catastrophes from little causes. When a desire to rule seized her, she called it giving "a stir with the poker." She would say with an air of profound thought, "No peer can keep his hat on before the king except De Courcy, Baron Kingsale, an Irish peer." Or, "It would be an injustice if my husband were not to be Lord High Admiral, since my father was." And she made George of Denmark Lord Admiral of England and of all her Majesty's plantations. She was incessantly exhaling bad humour; she did not explain her thought, she exuded it. There was something of the Sphinx in this goose.

Anne rather liked rough fun, teasing, and practical jokes. Could she have made Apollo a hunchback, it would have delighted her; but she would have left him a god. Good-natured, her plan was to allow no one to despair, and yet to worry everybody. She often had a rough word in her mouth; a little more, and she would have sworn like Elizabeth. From time to time she would take from a pocket which she wore in her skirt a little round box of chased silver, on which was her portrait in profile, between the two letters Q. A.; she would open this box, and take from it on her finger a little pomade, with which she reddened her lips; and having coloured her mouth, she would laugh. She was greedily fond of the flat Zealand ginger-bread cakes; she was proud of being fat.

More of a Puritan than anything else, Anne would nevertheless have liked to devote herself to stage plays.

She had an absurd academy of music, copied after that of France. In 1700, a Frenchman named Forteroche wanted to build a royal circus at Paris, at a cost of four hundred thousand francs, which scheme was opposed by D'Argenson. This Forteroche went over to England, and proposed to Queen Anne to build in London a theatre finer than that of the King of France, — with which idea the queen was immediately charmed. Like Louis XIV., she liked to be driven at a gallop. Her teams and relays would sometimes do the distance between London and Windsor in less than an hour and a quarter.

II.

IN Anne's time, no meeting was allowed without the permission of two justices of the peace. The convening of twelve persons, even if it were only to eat oysters and drink porter, was a felony. Under her reign, comparatively mild in other respects, impressing for the navy was carried on with extreme violence, — a gloomy evidence that the Englishman is a subject rather than a citizen. For centuries England suffered under this kind of tyranny, which gave the lie to all the old charters of liberty, and which France considered a good cause for triumph and indignation. What in some degree diminishes the triumph is, that while sailors were being impressed in England, soldiers were being impressed in France. In every great town of France, any able-bodied man, going through the streets about his business, was liable to be shoved by the crimps into a house called "the oven." There he was shut up with others in the same plight; those fit for service were picked out, and the recruiters sold them to the officers. In 1695 there were thirty of these "ovens" in Paris.

The laws against Ireland, emanating from Queen Anne, were atrocious. Anne was born in 1664, two years before the great fire in London, and the astrologers (there were some left; witness Louis XIV., who was born with the assistance of an astrologer, and swaddled in a horoscope) predicted that being the elder sister of fire she would be queen. And so she was, thanks to astrology and the revolution of 1688. She had the humiliation of having only Gilbert, Archbishop of Canterbury, for god-father. To be the god-child of the Pope was no longer possible in England; a mere primate is but a poor sort of god-father. Anne had to put up with it, however. It was her own fault; why was she a Protestant?

Denmark had paid for Anne's virginity (*virginitas emptā*, as the old charters expressed it) by a dowry of £6,250 a year, secured on the bailiwick of Wardinburg and the island of Fehmarn. She followed, without conviction and by routine, the traditions of William. The English under this *régime* born of a revolution enjoyed as much liberty as they could lay hands on between the Tower of London, in which the orators were incarcerated, and the pillory, in which the writers were placed. Anne spoke a little Danish in her private chats with her husband, and a little French in her private chats with Bolingbroke. Wretched gibberish; but the height of English fashion, especially at court, was to talk French. There was never a *bon mot* but in French. Anne paid a deal of attention to the coinage of the realm, especially to the copper coins, which are the common and popular ones; she wanted to cut a great figure on them. Six different farthings were struck during her reign. On the back of the first three she had merely a throne struck; on the back of the fourth she ordered a triumphal chariot; and on the back of the

sixth a goddess holding a sword in one hand and an olive branch in the other, with the scroll, *Bello et pace*. Her father, James II. was blunt and cruel; she was brutal. At the same time she was really mild *au fond*, — a contradiction which only appears such. A fit of anger metamorphosed her. Heat sugar, and it will boil.

Anne was popular. England likes female rulers. France excludes them. Why? One reason is apparent at once; perhaps there is really no other. With English historians Elizabeth embodies grandeur; Anne, good-nature. As they will; be it so. But there is nothing delicate in the reigns of these women. The lines are heavy. It is gross grandeur and gross good-nature. As to their immaculate virtue, England is tenacious of it, and we are not going to oppose the idea. Elizabeth was a virgin tempered by Essex; Anne, a wife complicated by Bolingbroke.

III.

ONE idiotic habit of the people is to attribute to the king what they do themselves. They fight: whose is the glory? The king's. They pay: whose is the generosity? The king's. Then the people love him for being so rich. The king receives a crown from the poor, and gives them back a farthing. How generous he is! The colossus which is really only the pedestal contemplates the pygmy which is really the statue. How great this myrmidon is! He is on my back. A dwarf has an excellent way of making himself taller than a giant: it is to perch himself on his shoulders. But that the giant should allow it, there is the wonder; and that he should admire the height of the dwarf, there is the folly. Ah, the simplicity of mankind!

The equestrian statue, reserved for kings alone, is an excellent figure of royalty: the horse is the people. Only, the horse becomes transfigured by degrees. It begins as an ass; it ends as a lion. Then it throws its rider; and you have 1642 in England and 1789 in France. Sometimes it devours him; and you have 1649 in England, and 1793 in France. That the lion should relapse into the donkey is astonishing; but it is so. This was occurring in England. It had resumed the pack-saddle; namely, idolatry of the crown.

Queen Anne, as we have just observed, was popular. What was she doing to make herself so? Nothing. Nothing!—that is all that is asked of the sovereign of England. He receives for that nothing £1,250,000 a year. In 1705, England, which had had but thirteen men-of-war under Elizabeth and thirty-six under James I., counted a hundred and fifty in her fleet. The English had three armies,—five thousand men in Catalonia, ten thousand in Portugal, fifty thousand in Flanders; and besides, was paying £1,666,666 a year to monarchical and diplomatic Europe, — a sort of prostitute which the English people has always had in keeping. Parliament having voted a patriotic loan of thirty-four million francs of annuities, there had been a rush to the exchequer to subscribe it. England was sending a squadron to the East Indies, and a squadron to the West of Spain under Admiral Leake, without mentioning the reserve of four hundred sail under Admiral Sir Cloudesley Shovel. England had lately annexed Scotland. It was the interval between Hochstadt and Ramillies, and the first of these victories was foretelling the second. England, in its cast of the net at Hochstadt, had made prisoners of twenty-seven battalions and four regiments of dragoons, and deprived France of one hundred leagues of country,—France, who was drawing back dismayed

from the Danube to the Rhine. England was stretching out her hand towards Sardinia and the Balearic Islands; she was bringing into her ports in triumph ten Spanish line-of-battle ships, and many a galleon laden with gold. Hudson's Bay and Straits were already partially relinquished by Louis XIV. It was believed that he was about to give up his hold on Acadia, St. Christopher's, and Newfoundland; and that he would be only too happy if England would but allow the King of France to catch a few cod off Cape Breton. England was about to inflict upon him the mortification of compelling him to demolish the fortifications of Dunkirk. Meanwhile, she had taken Gibraltar, and was taking Barcelona. What great things accomplished! How was it possible to refuse Anne admiration for taking the trouble of living at the period?

From a certain point of view, the reign of Anne seems to be a reflection of the reign of Louis XIV. In that great race called "history," Queen Anne certainly bears some resemblance to the French monarch. Like him, she played at a great reign; she had her monuments, her arts, her victories, her captains, her men of letters, her privy purse to pension celebrities, her gallery of *chefs-d'œuvre*, side by side with those of his Majesty. Her court, too, was a *cortége*, with the features of a triumph, an order, and a march. It was a miniature copy of all the great men of Versailles, who were not giants themselves. In it there is enough to deceive the eye; add "God save the Queen," which might have been taken from Lulli, and the *ensemble* becomes an illusion. Not a personage is missing. Christopher Wren is a very passable Mansard; Somers is as good as Lamoignon; Anne has a Racine in Dryden, a Boileau in Pope, a Colbert in Godolphin, a Louvois in Pembroke, and a Turenne in Marlborough. Heighten the wigs and lower the

foreheads: the whole effect is solemn and pompous, and the Windsor of the time bears a faded resemblance to Marly. Still, the whole was effeminate, and Anne's Père Tellier was called Sarah Jennings. However, there is an outline of incipient irony, which fifty years later was to turn to philosophy, in the literature of the age; and the Protestant Tartuffe is unmasked by Swift just in the same way as the Catholic Tartuffe is denounced by Molière. Although the England of that period quarrels and fights with France, she imitates her and draws enlightenment from her; and the light on the façade of England is French light. It is a pity that Anne's reign lasted but twelve years, or the English would not hesitate to call it the century of Anne, — as we say the century of Louis XIV. Anne appeared in 1702, as Louis XIV. declined. It is one of the curiosities of history that the rise of this pale planet coincides with the setting of the purple planet, and that at the very time France had the Sun king England should have had the Moon queen.

One fact is well worthy of note. Louis XIV., although they waged war upon him, was greatly admired in England. "He is just the kind of a king they need in France," said the English. The love of the English for their own liberty is mingled with a certain acceptance of servitude for others. Their favourable opinion of the chains which bind their neighbours sometimes amounts to enthusiasm for the despot next door.

To sum up, Anne rendered her people *hureux*, as the French translator of Beeverell's book repeats three times, with graceful reiteration, in the sixth and ninth page of his dedication and the third of his preface.

IV.

QUEEN ANNE bore the Duchess Josiana a slight grudge, — for two reasons. Firstly, because she thought the Duchess Josiana handsome. Secondly, because she thought the Duchess Josiana's betrothed handsome. Two reasons for jealousy are sufficient for a woman; one is sufficient for a queen. Let us add that she bore her a grudge for being her sister.

Anne did not like women to be pretty. She considered it contrary to good morals. As for herself, she was ugly, — not from choice, however. She derived a part of her religion from that ugliness. Josiana, beautiful and philosophical, was a cause of vexation to the queen. A pretty duchess is not a desirable sister to an ugly queen.

There was another grievance, — Josiana's "improper" birth.

Anne was the daughter of Anne Hyde, a simple gentlewoman, lawfully but vexatiously married by James II. when Duke of York. Anne, having this inferior blood in her veins, felt herself but half royal; and Josiana, having come into the world irregularly, drew closer attention to the incorrectness, less great, but really existing, in the birth of the queen. The daughter of a *mésalliance* disliked to see the daughter of bastardy so near her. It was an unpleasant reminder. Josiana had a right to say to Anne, "My mother was at least as good as yours." Of course at court no one said so, but they evidently thought it. This was a bore for her Royal Majesty. Why did this Josiana exist? What had put it into her head to be born? What good was a Josiana? Some relationships are detrimental.

Nevertheless, Anne smiled on Josiana. Perhaps she might even have liked her, had she not been her sister.

CHAPTER VI.

BARFILPHEDRO.

IT is well to know what people are doing, and a certain surveillance is wise.

Josiana had Lord David watched by a creature of hers, whom she thought she could trust, and whose name was Barkilphedro. Lord David had Josiana secretly watched by a creature of his, of whom he felt sure, and whose name was Barkilphedro. Queen Anne, for her part, kept herself secretly informed of the actions and conduct of the Duchess Josiana her bastard sister, and of Lord David her future brother-in-law (on the left hand), by a creature of hers whom she trusted implicitly, and whose name was Barkilphedro.

Barkilphedro had not always held the magnificent position of whisperer into three ears. He was an old servant of the Duke of York. He had tried to be a clergyman, but had failed. The Duke of York, an English and Roman prince, compounded of royal Popery and legal Anglicanism, had his Catholic household and his Protestant household, and might have pushed Barkilphedro in one or the other hierarchy; but he did not judge him to be Catholic enough to make him almoner, or Protestant enough to make him chaplain, — so that between two religions Barkilphedro found himself with his soul on the ground. Not a bad posture, either, for certain reptile souls; and some roads are impracticable, so that one must crawl flat on one's belly.

An obscure but fattening servitude had long made up Barkilphedro's existence. Service is something; but he wanted power besides. He was, perhaps, about to attain it when James II. fell; then he had to begin all over again. There was no chance for him under William III., a sullen prince, exercising in his mode of reigning a prudery which he believed to be probity. Barkilphedro, when his protector James II. was dethroned, did not lapse at once into rags. There is a something which survives deposed princes, and which feeds and sustains their parasites. The remains of the exhaustible sap causes leaves to live on for two or three days on the branches of the uprooted tree; then, all at once, the leaf yellows and dries up: and thus it is with the courtier. Thanks to that embalming process which is called legitimacy, the prince himself, although fallen and cast away, is preserved; it is not so with the courtier, who is much more dead than the king. The king over yonder is a mummy; the courtier here is a phantom. To be the shadow of a shadow is leanness indeed. Hence Barkilphedro became famished; then he took up the character of a man of letters. But he was thrust out even from the kitchens. Sometimes he knew not where to sleep. "Who will give me shelter?" he would ask. He struggled on. All that is interesting in patience in distress he possessed. He had, besides, the talent of the termite, — knowing how to bore a hole from the bottom to the top. By dint of making use of the name of James II., of old memories, of anecdotes of fidelity, and of touching stories, he pierced the Duchess Josiana's heart.

Josiana took a liking to this man of poverty and wit, — an interesting combination. She introduced him to Lord Dirry-Moir, gave him a shelter in the servants' hall among her domestics, retained him in her house-

hold, was kind to him, and sometimes even spoke to him. Barkilphedro knew neither hunger nor cold again. Josiana addressed him in the second person; it was the fashion for great ladies to do so to men of letters, who allowed it. The Marquise de Mailly received Roy, whom she had never seen before, in bed, and said to him: "C'est toi qui as fait l'Année galante! Bonjour." Later on, the men of letters returned the custom. The day came when Fabre d'Eglantine said to the Duchesse de Rohan: "N'est-tu pas la Chabot?"

For Barkilphedro to be "thee'd" and "thou'd" was a triumph; he was overjoyed by it. He had aspired to this contemptuous familiarity. "Lady Josiana thees-and-thous me," he would say to himself; and he would rub his hands. He profited by this theeing-and-thouing to make further progress. He became a constant attendant in Josiana's private rooms, — in no way troublesome, unnoticed; in fact, the duchess would almost have changed her shift before him. All this, however, was precarious. Barkilphedro was aiming at an assured position. A duchess is only a half-way house; an underground passage which did not lead to the queen was not worth boring.

One day Barkilphedro said to Josiana: "Would your Grace like to make my fortune?"

"What dost thou want?"

"An appointment."

"An appointment, — for thee?"

"Yes, madam."

"What an idea! — *thou* to ask for an appointment! thou, who art good for nothing."

"That's just the reason."

Josiana burst out laughing. "Among the offices to which thou art unsuited, which dost thou desire?"

"That of cork-drawer of the bottles of the ocean."

Josiana's laughter redoubled. "What meanest thou? Thou art jesting."

"No, madam."

"To amuse myself, I shall answer you seriously," said the duchess. "What dost thou wish to be? Repeat it."

"Uncorker of the bottles of the ocean."

"Everything is possible at court. Is there an appointment of that kind?"

"Yes, madam."

"That is news to me. Go on."

"There is such an appointment, however."

"Swear it by the soul which thou dost not possess."

"I swear it."

"I do not believe thee."

"Thank you, madam."

"Then thou wishest — Say it again."

"To uncork the bottles of the ocean."

"That is a situation which can give you very little trouble. It is like grooming a bronze horse."

"Very nearly."

"Nothing to do. Well, 'tis a situation that would suit thee. Thou art just about equal to it, I should judge."

"You see I am good for something."

"Come! thou art talking nonsense. Is there such an appointment?"

Barkilphedro assumed an attitude of deferential gravity: "Madam, you had an august father, James II. the king, and you have an illustrious brother-in-law, George of Denmark, Duke of Cumberland; your father was, and your brother is, Lord High Admiral of England —"

"Is what thou tellest me any news? I know all that as well as thou?"

"But here is something your Grace does not know."

In the sea there are three kinds of things, — those at the bottom, *lagan*; those which float, *flotsam*; those which the sea casts up on the shore, *jetsam*.”

“ And then ? ”

“ These three things — *lagan*, *flotsam*, and *jetsam* — belong to the Lord High Admiral. ”

“ And then ? ”

“ Your Grace understands. ”

“ No. ”

“ All that is in the sea, all that sinks, all that floats, all that is cast ashore, — all belongs to the Admiral of England. ”

“ Everything! Really? And then ? ”

“ Except the sturgeon, which belongs to the king. ”

“ I should have thought, ” said Josiana, “ that everything would have belonged to Neptune. ”

“ Neptune is a fool. He has given up everything. He has allowed the English to take everything. ”

“ Finish what thou wert saying. ”

“ ‘ Prizes of the sea ’ is the name given to such *treasure trove*. ”

“ Be it so. ”

“ It is boundless. There is always something floating, something being cast up. It is the contribution of the sea, — the tax which the ocean pays to England. ”

“ With all my heart. But pray conclude. ”

“ Your Grace understands that in this way the ocean creates a department. ”

“ Where ? ”

“ At the Admiralty. ”

“ What department ? ”

“ The Sea-Prize Department. ”

“ Well ? ”

“ The department is subdivided into three offices, — Lagan, Flotsam, and Jetsam; and there is an officer in each. ”

“ And then ? ”

“ A ship at sea writes to give notice on any subject to those on land, — that it is sailing in such a latitude, that it has met a sea-monster, that it is in sight of shore, that it is in distress, that it is about to founder, that it is lost, etc. The captain takes a bottle, puts into it a bit of paper on which he has written the information, corks up the flask, and casts it into the sea. If the bottle goes to the bottom, it is in the department of the lagan officer; if it floats, it is in the department of the flotsam officer; if it be cast up on shore, it concerns the jetsam officer.”

“ And wouldst thou like to be the jetsam officer ? ”

“ Precisely so.”

“ And that is what thou callest uncorking the bottles of the ocean ? ”

“ Since there is such an appointment.”

“ Why dost thou wish for the last-named place in preference to both the others ? ”

“ Because it is vacant just now.”

“ In what does the appointment consist ? ”

“ Madam, in 1598 a tarred bottle, picked up by a man conger-fishing on the strand of Epidium Promontorium, was brought to Queen Elizabeth; and a parchment drawn out of it gave information to England that Holland had taken, without saying anything about it, an unknown country, Nova Zembla; that the capture had taken place in June, 1596; that in that country people were eaten by bears; and that the manner of passing the winter was described on a paper enclosed in a musket-case hanging in the chimney of the wooden house built in the island and left by the Dutchmen, who were all dead; and that the chimney was built of a barrel with the end knocked out, sunk into the roof.”

“ I don't understand much of thy rigmarole.”

“ Be it so. Elizabeth understood. A country the more for Holland was a country the less for England. The bottle which had given the information was considered of importance; and thenceforward an order was issued that anybody who should find a sealed bottle on the sea-shore should take it to the Lord High Admiral of England, under penalty of the gallows. The Admiral intrusts the opening of such bottles to an officer, who presents the contents to the Queen, if there be any reason for so doing.”

“ Are many such bottles brought to the Admiralty ? ”

“ But few. But it’s all the same. The appointment exists. There is a room and lodgings at the Admiralty for the official.”

“ And what is one paid for this kind of doing nothing ? ”

“ One hundred guineas a year.”

“ And thou wouldst trouble me for that much ? ”

“ It is enough to live upon.”

“ Like a beggar.”

“ As becomes one of my sort.”

“ One hundred guineas ! It’s a bagatelle.”

“ What keeps you for a minute keeps us for a year. That’s the advantage of being poor.”

“ Thou shalt have the place.”

A week afterwards, thanks to Josiana’s exertions and to the influence of Lord David Dirry-Moir, Barkilphedro was installed at the Admiralty, — safe thenceforward, drawn out of his precarious existence, lodged, and boarded, with a salary of a hundred guineas.

CHAPTER VII.

BARKILPHEDRO GNAWS HIS WAY.

THERE is one essential thing, — that is to be ungrateful. Barkilphedro did not fail in this particular. Having received so many benefits from Josiana, he had naturally but one thought, — to revenge himself upon her. When we add that Josiana was beautiful, great, young, rich, powerful, and illustrious, while Barkilphedro was ugly, little, old, poor, dependent, obscure, — he must necessarily revenge himself for all this as well. When a man is made of darkness, how can he forgive so many beams of light?

Barkilphedro was an Irishman who had denied Ireland, — a bad type. Barkilphedro had but one thing in his favour, — that he had a very big belly. A big belly passes for a sign of kind-heartedness; but this belly was only an addition to Barkilphedro's hypocrisy, for the man was full of malice.

What was Barkilphedro's age? Any age whatever; that is to say, the age necessary for the project of the moment. He was old in his wrinkles and grey hairs, young in the activity of his mind; he was at once active and ponderous, — a sort of hippopotamus-monkey. A royalist, certainly; a republican, — who knows? A Catholic, perhaps; a Protestant, without doubt. For Stuart, probably; for Brunswick, evidently. To be For is a power only on condition of being at the same time Against. Barkilphedro practised this wisdom.

The appointment of drawer of the bottles of the ocean was not as absurd as Barkilphedro had appeared to make out. The complaints (which would in these times be termed denunciations) of Garcia Fernandez, in his "Followers of the Sea," against the stealing of jetsam, called right of wreck, and against the pillaging of wreck by the inhabitants of the sea-coast, had created a sensation in England, and had secured for the shipwrecked this reform, — that their goods, chattels, and property, instead of being stolen by the country-people, were confiscated by the Lord High Admiral. All the *débris* of the sea cast upon the English shore (merchandise, broken hulls of ships, bales, chests, etc.) belonged to the Lord High Admiral; but — and here was revealed the importance of the place solicited by Barkilphedro — the floating receptacles containing messages and information received particular attention at the Admiralty. Shipwrecks excite England's deep solicitude. Navigation being her chief occupation, shipwrecks are one of her greatest causes of anxiety. England is kept in a state of perpetual anxiety by the sea. The little glass bottle cast into the waves from the doomed ship contains intelligence precious from every point of view, — intelligence concerning the ship; intelligence concerning the crew; intelligence concerning the place, the time, the manner of shipwreck; intelligence concerning the winds which broke up the vessel; intelligence concerning the currents which bore the floating flask ashore. The office filled by Barkilphedro has been abolished more than a century, but it had its utility. The last holder was William Hussey, of Doddington in Lincolnshire. The man who held it was a sort of guardian of the sea. All the closed and sealed vessels, bottles, flasks, jars, cast upon the English coast by the tide, were brought to him. He alone had the right to open them; he was the first to

learn the secrets they contained; he put them in order, and ticketed them with his signature. The expression "loger un papier au greffe," still used in the Channel Islands, is thence derived. However, one precaution was certainly taken. Not one of these bottles could be unsealed except in the presence of two examiners of the Admiralty office who were sworn to secrecy, and who signed, conjointly with the holder of the jetsam office, the official report of the opening. But these officials being pledged to secrecy, Barkilphedro was invested with considerable discretionary power. It depended upon him, to a certain extent, to suppress a fact or bring it to light.

These frail floating messages were far from being as rare and insignificant as Barkilphedro had asserted. Some reached land with very little delay; others, after many years. It depended on the winds and the currents. The fashion of casting bottles into the sea is rather out of date now, like that of thank offerings; but in those religious times, those who were about to die were glad thus to despatch their last thoughts to God and men, and at times these messages from the sea were plentiful at the Admiralty. A parchment preserved in the hall at Audlyene (ancient spelling), with notes by the Earl of Suffolk, Grand Treasurer of England under James I., bears witness that in the one year 1615 fifty-two flasks, bladders, and tarred vessels, containing mention of sinking ships, were brought and registered in the records of the Lord High Admiral.

Court appointments are the drop of oil in the widow's cruse, they are ever on the increase. Thus it is that the porter has become chancellor, and the groom constable. The special officer charged with the appointment desired and obtained by Barkilphedro was usually a confidential man; Elizabeth had wished that it should be so. At court, to speak of confidence is to speak of

intrigue; and to speak of intrigue is to speak of advancement. This functionary had come to be a personage of some consideration. He was a clerk, and ranked directly after the two grooms of the almonry. He had the right of entrance into the palace, — at least, what was called the humble entrance (*humilis introitus*), — and even into the bedchamber; for it was the custom that he should inform the monarch, on occasions of importance, of the objects found, which were often very curious, — the wills of men in despair, farewells to fatherland, revelations of falsified logs, bills of lading, crimes committed at sea, legacies to the crown, etc., — and should account from time to time to the king or queen concerning the opening of these ill-omened bottles. It was the Black Cabinet of the ocean. Elizabeth, who was always glad of an opportunity to speak Latin, used to ask Tonfield, of Coley in Berkshire, jetsam officer in her reign, when he brought her one of these papers cast up by the sea: “*Quid mihi scribit Neptunus?*”

The way had been eaten, the insect had succeeded. Barkilphedro had at last reached the queen. This was all he wanted. Was it in order that he might make his fortune? No. It was to destroy that of others. A much greater satisfaction. To destroy affords some persons unspeakable delight. To be imbued with a vague but implacable desire to destroy, and never to lose sight of that desire, is not a characteristic of every one; but Barkilphedro possessed this fixity of purpose in an eminent degree. He clung to his resolve with all the tenacity of a bull-dog. To feel himself inexorable afforded him no end of grim satisfaction. So long as he had a victim in his clutches, or a certainty of injuring him in his soul, he asked nothing more. He shivered content if he knew that his neighbour was suffering with the cold.

Catesby, the colleague of Guy Fawkes, in the Popish powder plot, said: "I would n't miss seeing Parliament blown upside down for a million sterling." Barkilphedro was that meanest and most terrible of things, — an envious man. There is always room for envy at court. Courts abound in impertinent people, in idlers, in rich loungers hungering for gossip; in those who seek for needles in haystacks; in triflers, in banterers bantered; in witty ninnies, who cannot do without converse with an envious man. What a refreshing thing the evil you hear about others is! Envy is good stuff to make a spy of. There is a profound analogy between that natural passion envy and that social function espionage. The spy hunts on some other person's account, like the dog; the envious man hunts on his own account like the cat. The envious man is generally a fierce man; but Barkilphedro was singularly cautious and reserved. He guarded his secret well, and racked himself with his hate. Enormous baseness implies enormous vanity. He was liked by those whom he amused, and hated by all others; but he felt that he was scorned by those who hated him, and despised even by those who liked him. He restrained himself; all his gall simmered noiselessly. He was a silent prey of the Furies. He had a talent for swallowing everything. Paroxysms of internal rage convulsed him, fierce fires smouldered unseen in his breast. He was a *smoke-consuming* man of passion. The surface was serene. He was kind, prompt, easy, amiable, obliging. Never mind to whom, never mind where, he bowed with every breath of wind; he bowed to the earth. What a source of fortune to have such a reed for a spine!

Such crafty and venomous beings are not so rare as is believed. We live surrounded by ill-natured, crawling things. Why are such malevolent creatures allowed to

exist? A natural question! The dreamer continually puts it to himself, and the thinker never solves it. Hence the sad eye of the philosophers ever fixed upon that mountain of darkness which is destiny, and from the top of which the colossal spectre of evil casts handfuls of serpents over the earth.

Barkilphedro's body was obese, and his face lean, — a broad chest and a bony countenance. His nails were grooved and short, his fingers knotty, his thumbs flat, his hair coarse, his temples wide apart; and his broad, low forehead was that of a murderer. His small eyes were nearly hidden by his bushy eyebrows. His long, sharp, and flabby nose nearly met his mouth. Barkilphedro, properly attired as an emperor, would have certainly resembled Domitian. His muddy, sallow face might have been modelled in slimy paste; his immovable cheeks were like putty; he had all kinds of ugly wrinkles; the angle of his jaw was massive, his chin heavy, his ears coarse. In repose, and seen in profile, his upper lip was raised at an acute angle, showing two teeth. Those teeth seemed to glare at you; for the teeth can glare, just as the eye can bite. Patience, temperance, continence, reserve, self-control, amenity, deference, gentleness, politeness, sobriety, chastity, completed and finished Barkilphedro; but he degraded these virtues by possessing them.

In a short time Barkilphedro gained a firm foothold at court.

CHAPTER VIII.

INFERI.

THERE are two ways of gaining a foothold at court, — in the clouds, and one is august; in the mud, and one is powerful. In the first case, you belong on Olympus. In the second case, you belong in the private closet. He who belongs on Olympus has but the thunderbolt to serve him; he who is in the private closet has the police at his command.

The private closet contains all the instruments of government, and sometimes (for it is a traitor) its chastisements as well. Generally it is less tragic. It is there that Alberoni admires Vendôme. Royal personages willingly make it their place of audience; it takes the place of the throne. Louis XIV. receives the Duchess of Burgundy there; Philip V. is shoulder to shoulder there with the queen. The priest penetrates into it. The private closet is sometimes a branch of the confessional; therefore it is that at court there are underground fortunes, — not always the least. If under Louis XI. you would be great, be Pierre de Rohan, Marshal of France; if you would be influential, be Olivier le Daim, the barber. If you would be glorious under Marie de Medicis, be Sillery, the Chancellor; if you would be a person of consideration, be Hannon, the maid. If you would be illustrious under Louis XV., be Choiseul, the minister; if you would be formidable, be

Lebel, the valet. Given Louis XIV., Bontemps who makes his bed is more powerful than Louvois who raises his armies, and Turenne who gains his victories. Take Père Joseph from Richelieu, and you have little left. There is mystery at least; his eminence in scarlet is magnificent, his eminence in grey is terrible. What power in being a worm! All the Narvaez combined with all the O'Donnells achieve less than one Sister Patrocinio. Of course, the condition of this power is littleness. If you would remain powerful, remain petty, — be nothing. The serpent in repose, twisted into a circle, is a figure at the same time of the infinite and of naught.

One of these ignoble opportunities had fallen to Barkilphedro. He had crawled where he wanted. Vermin can get in anywhere. Louis XIV. had bugs in his bed and Jesuits in his policy. There is no incompatibility in this. In this world, to gravitate is to oscillate. One pole is attracted to the other. Francis I. is attracted by Triboulet; Louis XV. is attracted by Lebel. There exists a deep affinity between extreme elevation and extreme debasement. It is the scullion who directs; nothing is easier of comprehension. It is the person below who pulls the string. No position could be more convenient. He is the eye, and he has the ear. He is the eye of the government; he has the ear of the king. To have the ear of the king is to draw and shut at will the bolt of the royal conscience, and to throw into that conscience whatever one wishes. The mind of a king is your cupboard; if you are a rag-picker, it is your basket. The ears of kings are not their own; consequently the poor devils are not altogether responsible for their actions. He who is not master of his own thoughts is not accountable for his own deeds.

A king obeys — what? Any evil spirit buzzing from

outside in his ear; a noisome fly of the slums. This buzzing rules him. A reign is a dictation: the loud voice is the sovereign; the muffled voice is the sovereignty. Those who know how to distinguish this muffled voice in a reign, and to hear its whispers, are the real historians.

CHAPTER IX.

HATE IS AS STRONG AS LOVE.

QUEEN ANNE had several of these ignoble advisers around her. Barkilphedro was one. He also secretly worked, influenced, and plotted upon Lady Josiana and Lord David. As we have said, he whispered in three ears,—one more than Dangeau. Dangeau whispered in but two, in the days when, thrusting himself between Louis XIV., who was in love with Henrietta his sister-in-law, and Henrietta, who was in love with Louis XIV. her brother-in-law, he as Louis's secretary, without the knowledge of Henrietta, and as Henrietta's without the knowledge of Louis, wrote the questions and answers of both the love-making marionettes.

Barkilphedro was so cheerful, so compliant, so incapable of espousing the cause of any one, so ugly, so mischievous, that it was quite natural that a regal personage should soon be unable to do without him. Once Anne had tried Barkilphedro, she would have no other flatterer. He flattered her as they flattered Louis the Great, by disparaging her neighbours. "The king being ignorant," says Madame de Montchevreuil, "one is obliged to sneer at the savants." To poison the sting, from time to time, is the acme of art. Nero loves to see Locusta at work.

Royal palaces are very easily entered; a pretext suffices. Barkilphedro, having found this pretext, his position with the queen soon became the same as that with the

Duchess Josiana, — that of an indispensable domestic animal. A witticism ventured one day immediately led to a perfect understanding of the queen's character, and a correct estimate of her kindness of heart. The queen was greatly attached to her Lord Steward, William Cavendish, Duke of Devonshire, who was very stupid. This lord, who had obtained every Oxford degree and yet did not know how to spell, one fine morning committed the folly of dying. To die is a very imprudent thing at court, for then there is no further restraint in speaking of you. The queen, in the presence of Barkilphedro, lamented the event, finally exclaiming, with a sigh :

“ It is a pity that so many virtues should have been borne and served by so poor an intellect. ”

“ Dieu veuille avoir son âne ! ” whispered Barkilphedro, in a low voice, and in French.

The queen smiled. Barkilphedro noted the smile, and concluded that biting pleased her. Free license had been given to his spite. From that day he thrust his curiosity everywhere, and his malignity with it. No one ventured to oppose him, so greatly was he feared. He who can make the king laugh makes all the others tremble. He was a cunning rascal. Every day he worked his way forward — underground. Barkilphedro became a necessity ; and many great persons honoured him with their confidence, to the extent of intrusting him with their disgraceful commissions. There are wheels within wheels at court. Barkilphedro became the motive power. Have you ever noticed, in certain mechanisms, the smallness of the motive wheel ?

Josiana, in particular, who, as we have explained, made use of Barkilphedro's talents as a spy, trusted him so implicitly that she had not hesitated to intrust him with a pass-key, by means of which he was able to enter her apartments at any hour. This excessive license of

insight into private life was in fashion in the seventeenth century; it was called "giving the key." Josiana had given two of these confidential keys; Lord David had one, Barkilphedro the other. However, to enter straight into a bedchamber was in the old code of manners a thing not in the least out of the way. Thence resulted startling incidents. La Ferté, suddenly drawing back the bed-curtains of Mademoiselle Lafont, found inside Sainson of the Black Musketeers.

Barkilphedro excelled in making those cunning discoveries which place the great in the power of the humble. Like every perfect spy, the cruelty of the executioner and the patience of a micograph entered largely into his composition. He was a born courtier. Every courtier is a noctambulist. The courtier prowls about in the night with a dark-lantern in his hand. He lights up the spot he wishes, and remains in darkness himself. What he is seeking with his lantern is not a man, it is a fool. What he finds is the king. Kings do not like to see those about them aspire. Irony aimed at any one except themselves has a charm for them. The talent of Barkilphedro consisted in a perpetual dwarfing of the peers and princes to the advantage of her Majesty's stature, thereby increased proportionately.

The pass-key held by Barkilphedro was made with a different set of wards at each end, so as to open the private apartments in both Josiana's favourite residences, — Hunkerville House in London, and Corleone Lodge at Windsor. These two houses were part of the Clancharlie inheritance. Hunkerville House was close to Oldgate. Oldgate was a gate of London, which was entered by the Harwich road, and on which was displayed a statue of Charles II., with a painted angel above his head, and a carved lion and unicorn beneath his feet. From Hunkerville House, in an easterly wind,

you could hear the bells of St. Marylebone. Corleone Lodge was a Florentine palace of brick and stone, with a marble colonnade, built on pilework, at Windsor, near the head of the wooden bridge, and having one of the finest courts in England. In this last palace, near Windsor Castle, Josiana was within the queen's reach. Nevertheless, Josiana liked it.

Barkilphedro's influence over the queen, though apparently so insignificant, was deeply rooted. To exterminate these noxious weeds from a court is extremely difficult, for though they have taken a deep root, they offer no hold above the surface. To root out a Roquelaure, a Triboulet, or a Brummel, is almost impossible.

From day to day, and more and more, did the queen take Barkilphedro into her good graces. Sarah Jennings is famous; Barkilphedro is unknown,—his existence remains ignored; the name of Barkilphedro has not reached as far as history. All the moles are not caught by the mole-trapper. Barkilphedro, having once been a candidate for orders, had studied a little of everything. Skimming all things results in naught. One may be a victim of the *omnis res scibilis*. Having the vessel of the Danaïdes in one's head is the misfortune of a legion of learned men, who may be termed the sterile. What Barkilphedro had put into his brain had left it empty.

The mind, like Nature, abhors a vacuum. Into emptiness, where Nature puts love, the mind often puts hate. There is such a thing as hating merely for the sake of hating. A man hates because he must do something. Gratuitous hatred,—what a strange expression! It means hate which is in itself its own reward. The bear lives by licking his claws,—not indefinitely, of course; the claws must be revictualled,—something must be put into them. A hatred of mankind in general is sweet, and suffices for a time; but one must eventually have a

definite object. An animosity diffused over all creation is exhausting, like every solitary pleasure. Hate without an object is like a shooting-match without a target; what lends interest to the game is a heart to be pierced. One cannot hate solely for the honour of it; some seasoning is necessary,—a man, a woman, somebody, to destroy.

This service of making the game interesting, of offering an aim, of adding a zest to hatred by fixing it on an object, of amusing the hunter by the sight of his living prey, of giving the watcher the hope of the smoking and boiling blood about to flow, of amusing the bird-catcher by the credulity of the uselessly winged lark, of being a victim unwittingly reared for murder by a master-mind,—all this exquisite and horrible service, of which the person rendering it is unconscious, Josiana rendered Barkilphedro. Thought is a projectile. Barkilphedro had, from the very first, aimed at Josiana the evil intentions which were in his mind. An intention and a carbine are alike. Barkilphedro aimed at Josiana, directing all his secret malice against the duchess. That astonishes you! What has the bird done at which you fire? You want to eat it, you say; and so it was with Barkilphedro.

Josiana could not be wounded in the heart; the spot where that enigma lies is hard to wound. But she could be wounded in the head; that is, in her pride. It was there that she deemed herself strong, and that she was really very weak. Barkilphedro had found this out. If Josiana had been able to read his mind clearly, if she had been able to distinguish what lay in ambush behind his smile, that proud woman would have trembled. Fortunately for the tranquillity of her sleep, she was in complete ignorance of the man's real character.

The unforeseen lurks one knows not where. There is no such thing as petty hatred; hatred is always dangerous, even in the smallest creature. An elephant hated by even an ant is in danger.

Barkilphedro did not know as yet what he was going to do to Josiana; but he had made up his mind to do something. To have come to this decision was a great step taken. To crush Josiana utterly would have been too great a triumph. He could not hope for that; but to humiliate her, wound her, bring her to grief, redden her proud eyes with tears of rage,—what happiness! He counted on it. Tenacious, diligent, faithful to the torment of his neighbour, not to be moved from his purpose,—Nature had not formed him for nothing. He understood how to find the flaw in Josiana's golden armour, and how to make the blood of this goddess flow.

What benefit, we ask again, would accrue to him in so doing? An immense benefit,—doing evil to one who had done good to him. What is an envious man? An ungrateful one. He hates the sun that lights and warms him. Zoilus hated that benefactor of mankind, Homer. To inflict on Josiana what would nowadays be called vivisection; to have her, all convulsed, on his anatomical table; to dissect her alive, at his leisure, in some surgery; to cut her up, bit by bit, while she shrieked with agony,—this dream delighted Barkilphedro! To arrive at this result it was necessary to suffer some himself; he did so willingly. We may pinch ourselves with our own pincers; the knife as it shuts cuts our fingers,—what does that matter? That he should partake of Josiana's torture was a matter of little moment. The executioner handling the red-hot iron, when about to brand a prisoner, does not mind a little burn. As another suffers so much, he suffers

nothing. To see the victim's writhings makes the inflicter forget his own pain. Destroy, by all means, come what may!

To plot evil against others is mingled with an acceptance of some responsibility. We risk ourselves in the danger which we are bringing upon another, because the chain of events sometimes, of course, brings unexpected accidents. This does not stop the really malicious man. His enjoyment is proportionate to the victim's agony. The malicious man delights only in the sufferings of others; pain reflects itself on him in a sense of welfare. The Duke of Alva used to warm his hands at the stake. The pile was torture, the reflection of it pleasure. That such feelings should be possible makes one shudder. Our dark side is unfathomable. *Supplice exquis*, — "exquisite torture" (the expression is in Bodin¹), — has perhaps this terrible triple sense: search for the torture, suffering of the tortured, delight of the torturer. Ambition, appetite, — all such words signify some one sacrificed for some one's gratification. Can it be that the outpourings of our wishes flow naturally in the direction to which we most incline, that of evil? One of the hardest labours of the just man is to expunge malevolence from his soul. Almost all our desires, when closely examined, contain what we dare not avow. In the thoroughly wicked man this malevolence exists in hideous perfection. So much the worse for others signifies so much the better for himself. Oh, the deep depravity of the human heart!

Josiana, with that sense of security which results from ignorant pride, had a supreme contempt for all danger. The feminine power of disdain is extraordinary. Josiana's was unreasoning, involuntary, and confident. Barkilphedro was in her eyes so contemptible

¹ Book IV. p. 196.

that she would have been astonished had any one hinted at such a thing as danger from that source. So she went and came and laughed before this man who was watching her with evil eyes, biding his time.

In proportion as he waited, his determination to imbitter this woman's life augmented. In the mean time he gave himself excellent reasons for his determination. It must not be supposed that scoundrels are deficient in self-esteem; they enter into details with themselves in their lofty monologues, and they carry matters with a high hand. True, this Josiana had bestowed charity on him! She had thrown some crumbs of her enormous wealth to him, as to a beggar; she had nailed and riveted him to an office which was unworthy him. Yes; that he, Barkilphedro, almost a clergyman, of varied and profound talents, a learned man, with the material in him for a bishop, should have to spend his time registering nasty, patience-trying shards; that he should have to pass his life in the garret of a register-office, gravely uncorking stupid bottles incrustated with all the nastiness of the sea, deciphering musty parchments, dirty wills, and other illegible stuff of the kind, — was all the fault of this Josiana. Worst of all, this creature "thee'd" and "thou'd" him! And should he not revenge himself? Should he not punish such conduct? In that case, there would be no such thing as justice here below!

CHAPTER X.

THE FLAME WHICH WOULD BE SEEN IF MAN WERE TRANSPARENT.

WHAT! this woman; this extravagant thing; this libidinous dreamer; this bold creature under a princess's coronet; this Diana through pride, not yet captured merely because chance had so willed it; this illegitimate daughter of a low-lived king who had not the intellect to keep his place; this duchess by a lucky hit, who being a fine lady played the goddess, but who had she been poor would have been a prostitute, — this appropriator of a proscribed man's goods, this overbearing strumpet, because one day, he, Barkilphedro, had not money enough to buy his dinner, and to get a lodging, had had the impudence to seat him at the corner of a table in her house, and to put him up in some hole in her intolerable palace. Where? Never mind where; perhaps in the barn, perhaps in the cellar, what does it matter? — a little better than her valets, a little worse than her horses. She had taken advantage of his distress (his, Barkilphedro's) in hastening to do him a pretended favour, — a thing which the rich do in order to humiliate the poor, and attach them to their pretended benefactors like curs led by a string. Besides, what had the service she rendered him cost her? A service is worth what it costs, and no more. She had too many rooms in her house, so she came to Barkilphedro's aid! A great boon, indeed! Had she eaten a spoonful the less

of turtle soup for it? Had she deprived herself of any of her superfluous luxuries? No. She had only added another to them, — a good action like a ring on her finger, — the relief of a man of wit, the patronage of a clergyman. She could give herself airs; say, “I lavish kindness; I fill the mouths of men of letters; I am his benefactress. How lucky the wretch was to find me out! What a patroness of the arts I am!” All for having set up a truckle-bed in a wretched garret in the roof.

As for the place in the Admiralty which Barkilphedro owed to Josiana, — by Jove! a petty appointment that! Josiana had made Barkilphedro what he was! She had created him! Be it so. Created nothing, — less than nothing; for in his absurd situation he felt borne down, tongue-tied, disfigured. What did he owe Josiana? The thanks due from a hunchback to the mother who bore him deformed. Behold your privileged ones, your folks overwhelmed with fortune, your parvenus, your favourites of that horrid step-mother, Fortune! And here, Barkilphedro, a man of talent, was obliged to wait on staircases, to bow to footmen, to climb to the top of the house at night, to be courteous, assiduous, pleasant, respectful, and to have a respectful grimace ever on his face! Was it not enough to make him gnash his teeth with rage! And all the while she was putting pearls round her neck, and making amorous poses for that fool Lord David Dirry-Moir, — the hussy!

Never let any one do you a service; he is sure to abuse the advantage it gives him. Never allow yourself to be found in a state of starvation, — some one will relieve you. Because Barkilphedro was starving, this woman had thought it a sufficient pretext to give him bread; from that moment he was her servant! A craving of the stomach, and you are chained for life! To be under obligations is to be a slave. The happy, the

powerful, make use of the moment you stretch out your hand to place a penny in it; and in your hour of need they make you a slave, and a slave of the worst kind, — the slave of an act of charity; a slave forced to love the enslaver. What infamy! what want of delicacy! what a blow to your self-respect! Then all is over. You are condemned for life to consider this man good, that woman beautiful; to approve, to applaud, to admire, to worship; to prostrate yourself; to blister your knees by long genuflections; to sugar your words when you are gnawing your lips with anger, when you are smothering your cries of fury, and when you have within you more savage turbulence and more bitter foam than the ocean! It is thus that the rich make slaves of the poor. The slime of this good action performed towards you bedaubed and bespatters you with mud for evermore.

The acceptance of alms is irremediable. Gratitude is paralyzing. A benefit has a sticky and repugnant adherence which deprives you of free movement. Those odious, opulent, and spoiled creatures whose pity has thus injured you are well aware of this. It is done, — you are their creature; they have bought you! How? By a bone taken from their dog and cast to you! they have flung the bone at your head; you have been stoned as well as fed. It is all one. Have you gnawed the bone, — yes or no? You have had your place in the dog-kennel just the same; then be thankful, — be eternally thankful. Adore your masters; kneel on indefinitely. A benefit implies an understood inferiority accepted by you. It means that you feel them to be gods and yourself a poor devil. Your humiliation increases their importance; your cringing form makes theirs seem more upright; there is an impertinent inflection in the very tones of their voices. Their family matters, their marriages, their baptisms, their child-bearings, their pro-

geny, all concern you. A wolf-cub is born to them; well, you have to compose a sonnet; you are a poet because you are so low. Isn't it enough to make the stars fall? A little more, and they would make you wear their old shoes!

“Whom have you got there, my dear? How ugly he is! Who is that man?” — “I do not know. A sort of scholar, whom I feed.” Thus converse these idiots, without even lowering their voices. You hear, and remain mechanically amiable. If you are ill, your masters will send for the doctor, — not their own; occasionally they may even inquire after you. Being of entirely different clay from you, and so immeasurably far above you, they are affable; their superiority makes them condescending; they know that equality is impossible. At table they give you a little nod; sometimes they absolutely know how your name is spelt! They only show that they are your protectors by walking unconsciously over all the delicacy and susceptibility you possess. They treat you with good-nature. Is all this to be borne?

No doubt Barkilphedro was eager to punish Josiana. He must teach her with whom she had to deal! Oh, my rich lords and ladies! merely because you cannot eat up everything; because opulence causes indigestion, seeing that your stomachs are no bigger than ours; because it is, after all, better to distribute the remainder than to throw it away, — you exalt a morsel flung to the poor into an act of munificence. You give us bread, you give us shelter, you give us clothes, you give us employment; and you carry audacity, folly, cruelty, stupidity, and absurdity to the pitch of believing that we are grateful. The bread is the bread of servitude; the shelter is a footman's bedroom; the clothes are a livery; the employment is ridiculous, paid for, it is true, but brutalizing. Oh, you think you have a right to humili-

ate us with lodging and nourishment, and you imagine that we are your debtors, and count on our gratitude? Very well! we will eat up your substance; we will devour you alive, and tear your heart-strings with our teeth.

This Josiana! was it not absurd? What merit did she possess? She had accomplished the wonderful feat of coming into the world as a testimony to the folly of her father and the shame of her mother. She had done us the favour to exist; and for her kindness in becoming a public scandal, they paid her millions. She had estates and castles, warrens, parks, lakes, forests, and I know not what besides; and with all that she was making a fool of herself, and verses were addressed to her! And Barkilphedro, who had studied and laboured and taken pains, and stuffed his eyes and his brain with great books; who had grown mouldy in old works and in science; who was full of wit; who could command armies; who could, if he would, write tragedies like Otway and Dryden; who was made to be an emperor, — Barkilphedro had been reduced to allowing this nobody to prevent him from dying of hunger! Could the usurpation of the rich, the hateful, spoiled darlings of fortune go further? They put on a semblance of being generous to us, of protecting us, and we smile, — we who would gladly drink their blood and lick our lips afterwards! That this low woman of the court should have the presumption to patronize him, and that such a superior man as himself should be obliged to accept such gifts from such a hand, — what a frightful iniquity! What kind of a social system is this which is founded on such gross injustice? Would it not be best to take it by the four corners, and to throw pell-mell to the ceiling the damask table-cloth, and the festival and the orgies, and the tippling and drunkenness, and the guests, and those with

their elbows on the table, and those with their paws under it, and the insolent who give and the idiots who accept, and fling it all back in the face of Providence! In the mean time let us vent our wrath on Josiana.

Thus mused Barkilphedro; such were the ravings of his soul. It is the habit of the envious man to absolve himself of public wrongs with his own personal grievances. All the wilder forms of hateful passions racked the mind of this ferocious being. In the corners of old maps of the world published in the fifteenth century are big vacant spaces, without shape or name, on which are written these three words: "Hic sunt leones." There is a similar corner in the human soul. Passions rage and growl somewhere within us, and we truly may say of the dark side of our souls that "there are lions here."

Is this chain of reasoning absolutely absurd? Does it lack a certain amount of justice? We must confess it does not. It is fearful to think that the judgment within us is not justice. Judgment is relative; justice is absolute. Think of the difference between a judge and a just man. Wicked men lead conscience astray with authority. There are gymnastics of untruth. A sophist is a forger, and this forger sometimes brutalizes good sense. A certain very supple, very implacable, and very agile logic is at the service of evil, and excels in stabbing truth in the dark. These are blows aimed by the devil at Providence.

The worst of it was that Barkilphedro had a presentiment of failure. He was undertaking a difficult task, and he was afraid that, after all, the evil achieved might not be proportionate to the work. To be as full of corrosion as he was; to possess a will of steel; to be imbued with such an intense hatred and wild longing for the catastrophe, — and yet to burn nothing, to decapitate nothing, to exterminate nothing! To possess

such powers of devastation, such voracious animosity; to have been created (for there is a creator, whether God or devil), Barkilphedro, — and to inflict perhaps after all only a tap of the finger! Could this be possible? Could it be that Barkilphedro would miss his aim? To be a lever powerful enough to heave great masses of rock, and when sprung to the utmost power, to succeed only in giving an affected woman a bump in the forehead; to accomplish the task of Sisyphus, and crush only an ant; to sweat all over with hate, and for nothing, — would not this be humiliating, when he felt himself a murderous engine capable of reducing the world to powder! To put into movement all the wheels within wheels, to work in the darkness all the mechanism of a Marly machine, and perhaps only succeed in pinching the tip of a little rosy finger! He must turn huge blocks of marble over and over, perchance with no other result than ruffling the smooth surface of the court a little! Providence has a way of expending its forces grandly. The movement of a mountain often only displaces a mole-hill!

Besides, when the court is the arena, nothing is more dangerous than to aim at your enemy and miss him. In the first place, it unmasks you and irritates him; but besides and above all, it displeases the master. Kings do not like the unskilful. Let us have no contusions, no ugly gashes; kill anybody, but give no one a bloody nose. He who kills is clever; he who wounds is awkward. Kings do not like to see their servants lamed; they are displeased if you chip a porcelain jar on their chimney-piece, or a courtier in their *cortége*. The court must be kept neat; break and replace, — that does not matter. Besides, all this agrees perfectly with the taste of princes for scandal. Speak evil, do none; or if you do, let it be in grand style. Stab, do not scratch,

unless the pin be poisoned. This would be an extenuating circumstance, and was, we may remember, the case with Barkilphedro.

Every malicious pygmy is a phial in which is enclosed Solomon's dragon. The phial is microscopic in size; the dragon is immense, — a formidable condensation, awaiting the gigantic hour of dilation; *ennui* consoled by the premeditation of explosion! The prisoner is larger than the prison. A latent giant, — how wonderful! a minnow which contains a hydra! To be this fearful magical box, to contain within himself a Leviathan, is to the dwarf both a torture and a delight.

Nor would anything have caused Barkilphedro to let go his hold. He was biding his time. Would it ever come? Who knows? He was certainly watching for it. Self-love is mixed up in the malice of the very wicked man. To make holes and gaps in a fortune higher than your own; to undermine it at all risks and perils, carefully concealed, yourself, the while, — is, we repeat, extremely exciting. The player at such a game becomes eager, even to passion; he throws himself into the work as if he were composing an epic. To be very mean and to attack that which is great, is in itself a brilliant action. It is a fine thing to be a flea on a lion. The noble beast feels the bite, and tries to vent his rage upon the atom; an encounter with a tiger would weary him less. See how the actors exchange their parts: the lion, humiliated, feels the sting of the insect, and the flea can say, "I have in my veins the blood of a lion!"

These reflections, however, only half appeased the cravings of Barkilphedro's pride; they were poor consolation. To annoy is one thing; to torment would be infinitely better. One thought haunted Barkilphedro incessantly: he might not succeed in doing more than

slightly irritate Josiana's epidermis. What more could he hope for, — he being so obscure, and she so far above him! A mere scratch is but little satisfaction to him who longs to see the crimson blood of his flayed victim, and to hear her cries as she lies before him worse than naked, without even the natural covering of her skin! With such a craving, how sad to be powerless! Alas, there is nothing perfect! However, he resigned himself. Not being able to do better, he only dreamed half his dream. To play a treacherous trick is something after all.

What a man is he who revenges himself for a benefit received! Barkilphedro was a giant among such men. Usually, ingratitude is forgetfulness; with this man, steeped in wickedness, it was fury. The ordinary ingrate is full of ashes: what was in Barkilphedro? A furnace, — a furnace walled around with hate, silence, and rancour, awaiting Josiana for fuel! Never had a man abhorred a woman to such an extent without cause. How terrible! He thought of her all day and dreamed of her all night. Perhaps he was a little in love with her.

CHAPTER XI.

BARKILPHEDRO IN AMBUSCADE.

TO find the vulnerable spot in Josiana, and to strike her there, was, for the causes we have just mentioned, the imperturbable determination of Barkilphedro. The wish, however, was not enough; the power to accomplish it was also necessary. How was he to set about it? That was the question.

Vulgar vagabonds set with care the scene of any wickedness they intend to commit. They do not feel themselves strong enough to seize the opportunity as it passes, to take possession of it by fair means or foul, and to constrain it to serve them. Cunning scoundrels disdain preliminary combinations; they start out to perform their villainies alone, after arming themselves thoroughly, prepared to avail themselves of any chances which may occur, and then, like Barkilphedro, await the opportunity. They know that a ready-made scheme runs the risk of fitting ill into the events which may present themselves. It is not thus that a man makes himself master of possibilities, and guides them as one pleases. You can make no arrangements with destiny; to-morrow will not obey you. There is a great want of discipline about chance; therefore they watch for it, and summon it suddenly, authoritatively, on the spot, — no plan, no sketch, no rough model, no ready-made shoe ill-fitting the unexpected; they plunge headlong into the dark. To turn to immediate and rapid profit any

circumstance that can aid him is the quality which distinguishes the able scoundrel, and elevates the villain into the demon. To make yourself master of circumstances, that is true genius. The real scoundrel strikes you with the first stone he can pick up. Clever malefactors count on the unexpected, that strange accomplice in so many crimes; they grasp the incident and leap on it: there is no better *Ars poetica* for this species of talent. Meanwhile be sure with whom you have to deal; survey the ground carefully.

With Barkilphedro the ground was Queen Anne. Barkilphedro approached the queen, and so close that sometimes he fancied he heard the monologues of her Majesty. Sometimes he was present at conversations between the sisters; neither did they forbid his slipping in a word now and then. He profited by this to disparage himself, — a way of inspiring confidence. One day in the garden at Hampton Court, being behind the duchess, who was behind the queen, he heard Anne enunciate this sentiment:—

“Brute beasts are fortunate; they run no risk of going to hell.”

“They are there already,” replied Josiana.

This answer, which bluntly substituted philosophy for religion, displeased the queen. If, perchance, there was any meaning in the observation, Anne felt that she ought to appear shocked.

“My dear,” said she to Josiana, “we talk of hell like a couple of fools. We had better ask Barkilphedro about it. He ought to know all about such things.”

“As a devil?” said Josiana.

“As a beast,” replied Barkilphedro, with a bow.

“Madam,” said the queen to Josiana, “he is cleverer than we.”

For a man like Barkilphedro to approach the queen

was to obtain a hold on her. He could say, "I hold her." Now, he wanted a means of taking advantage of his power for his own benefit. He had a foothold in the court. To be settled there was a fine thing; no chance could now escape him. More than once he had made the queen smile maliciously. This was equivalent to having a license to shoot. But was there any preserved game? Did this license to shoot permit him to break the wing or the leg of one like the sister of her Majesty? The first point to make clear was, did the queen love her sister? One false step would lose all. Barkilphedro watched.

Before he plays, the player examines his cards. What trumps has he? Barkilphedro began by comparing the ages of the two women,—Josiana, twenty-three; Anne, forty-one. So far so good; he held trumps. The moment that a woman ceases to count her age by springs, and begins to count by winters, she becomes cross. A dull rancour possesses her against the age of which she carries the marks. Fresh-blown beauties, perfumes for others, are to such a one but thorns. Of the roses she feels but the prick. It seems as if all the freshness is stolen from her, and that beauty decreases in her because it increases in others.

To profit by this secret ill-humour, to deepen the furrows on the face of this woman of forty, who was a queen, seemed a good game for Barkilphedro. Envy excels in exciting jealousy, as a rat lures the crocodile from its hole. Barkilphedro fixed his wise gaze on Anne. He saw into the queen, as one sees into a stagnant pool. The marsh has its transparency. In dirty water we see vices; in muddy water we see stupidity. Anne's mind was like muddy water. Embryos of sentiments and larvæ of ideas moved sluggishly about in her thick brain. They were not distinct; they had scarcely

any outline, — but they were realities, though shapeless. The queen thought this; the queen desired that, — to decide what, was the difficulty. The confused transformations which go on in stagnant water are difficult to study. The queen though habitually reserved, sometimes made sudden and stupid revelations. It was on these that it was necessary to seize; he must take advantage of them on the moment. How did the queen feel towards the Duchess Josiana? Did she wish her good or evil? This was the problem. Barkilphedro set himself to solve it. This problem solved, he might venture further.

Divers chances served Barkilphedro, — his constant watchfulness above all. Anne was, on her husband's side, slightly related to the new Queen of Prussia, wife of the king with the hundred chamberlains. She had her portrait painted on enamel, after the process of Turquet, of Mayerne. This Queen of Prussia had also a younger illegitimate sister, the Baroness Drika. One day, in the presence of Barkilphedro, Anne asked the Prussian ambassador some question about this Drika.

“ They say she is rich,” the queen remarked.

“ Very rich.”

“ She has palaces?”

“ More magnificent than those of her sister, the queen.”

“ Whom will she marry?”

“ A great lord, the Count Gormo.”

“ Is she pretty?”

“ Charming.”

“ Is she young?”

“ Very young.”

“ As beautiful as the queen?”

The ambassador lowered his voice, and replied,
“ Much more beautiful.”

“How outrageous!” murmured Barkilphedro.

The queen was silent, then she muttered angrily, “These bastards!”

Barkilphedro noticed the plural.

Another time, when the queen was leaving the chapel, Barkilphedro kept close to her Majesty, behind the two grooms of the almonry. Lord David Dirry-Moir, as he passed down between the two lines of ladies created quite a sensation by his lordly appearance. As he passed there was a chorus of feminine exclamations, —

“How elegant! How gallant! What a noble air! How handsome!”

“How disagreeable!” grumbled the queen.

Barkilphedro overheard this; it satisfied him. He could hurt the duchess without displeasing the queen.

The first problem was solved; but now the second presented itself. What could he do to harm the duchess? What means did his wretched appointment offer to attain so difficult an object? Evidently none.

CHAPTER XII.

SCOTLAND, IRELAND, AND ENGLAND.

LET us note a circumstance. Josiana had *le tour*. This is easily understood when we reflect that she was, although illegitimate, the queen's sister, — that is to say, a princely personage.

To have *le tour*, — what does it mean? Viscount St. John, otherwise Bolingbroke, wrote as follows to Thomas Lennard, Earl of Sussex: "Two things mark the great: in England, they have *le tour*; in France, *le pour*." When the king of France travelled, the courier of the court stopped at the halting-place in the evening, and assigned lodgings to his Majesty's suite. Among the gentlemen some had an immense privilege. "They have *le pour*," says the "Journal Historique" for the year 1694, page 6; "which means that the quartermaster who marks the billets puts *pour* before their names, as 'Pour M. le Prince de Soubise;' instead of which, when he marks the lodging of one who is not royal, he does not put, *pour*, but simply the name, as 'Le Duc de Gesvres,' 'Le Duc de Mazarin.'" This *pour* on a door indicated a prince or a favourite. A favourite is worse than a prince. The king granted *le pour*, like a blue ribbon or a peerage.

Avoir le tour in England was less glorious, but more tangible. It was a sign of intimacy with the reigning sovereign. Any persons who, either by reason of birth, or royal favour were likely to receive direct communica-

tions from majesty, had in the wall of their bedchamber a shaft, in which a bell was adjusted. The bell sounded, the shaft opened, a royal missive appeared on a gold plate or on a velvet cushion, and the shaft closed. This was at once secret and solemn, mysterious as well as familiar. The shaft was used for no other purpose; the sound of the bell announced a royal message. No one could see who brought it; it was of course merely a page of the king or queen. Leicester *avait le tour* under Elizabeth; Buckingham under James I. Josiana had it under Anne, though not much in favour. Never was a privilege more envied. This privilege entailed additional servility; the recipient was more of a servant. At court that which elevates, degrades. *Avoir le tour* was said in French, — this circumstance of English etiquette having, probably, been borrowed from some old French play.

Lady Josiana, a virgin peeress as Elizabeth had been a virgin queen, led (sometimes in the city, and sometimes in the country, according to the season) an almost princely life, and kept nearly a court, at which Lord David was courtier, with many others. Not being married, Lord David and Lady Josiana could show themselves together in public without exciting ridicule; and they did so frequently. They often went to plays and race-courses in the same carriage, and sat together in the same box. They were chilled by the impending marriage, which was not only permitted to them, but imposed upon them; but they felt an attraction for each other's society. The privacy permitted to the engaged has a frontier easily passed. From this they abstained: that which is easy is in bad taste.

The best pugilistic encounters then took place at Lambeth, a parish in which the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury has a palace (though the air there is un-

healthy) and a rich library open at certain hours to decent people. One evening in winter there was in a meadow there, the gates of which were locked, a fight, which Josiana, escorted by Lord David, attended.

“Are women admitted?” she had asked.

“Sunt fæminæ magnates!” David had responded.

The free translation of this is, “Plebeian women are not.” The literal translation is, “Great ladies are.” A duchess goes everywhere. This is why Lady Josiana saw a boxing-match.

Lady Josiana made only this concession to propriety, — she dressed like a man, a very common custom at that period; women seldom travelled otherwise. Out of every six persons who travelled by the coach from Windsor one or two were women in male attire, — a certain sign of high birth. Lady Josiana betrayed her quality in one way, — she had an opera-glass, then used by gentlemen only.

Lord David, being in company with a woman, could not take any part in the match himself, and merely assisted as one of the audience. This encounter in the noble science of boxing was presided over by Lord Germaine, great-grandfather, or grand-uncle, of that Lord Germaine who towards the end of the eighteenth century was colonel, ran away in a battle from the regiment which he commanded, but who was afterwards made minister of war, and only escaped from the shells of the enemy to fall by a worse fate, — shot through and through by Sheridan’s sarcasms. Many gentlemen were betting, — Harry Bellew of Carleton, who had claims to the extinct peerage of Bella-aqua, with Henry, Lord Hyde, member of Parliament for the borough of Dunhivid, which is also called Launceston; the Honourable Peregrine Bertie, member for the borough of Truro, with Sir Thomas Colpepper, member for Maidstone; the Laird

of Lamyrbau, which is on the borders of Lothian, with Samuel Trefusis, of the borough of Penryn; Sir Bartholomew Gracedieu, of the borough of Saint Ives, with the Honourable Charles Bodville, who was called Lord Robartes, and who was Custos Rotulorum of the county of Cornwall; besides many others.

Of the two combatants, one was an Irishman, named after his native mountain in Tipperary, Phelem-ghe-Madone; and the other a Scot, named Helmsgail. They represented the national honour of each country. Ireland and Scotland were about to encounter each other; Erin was going to fisticuff Gajothel. So that the bets amounted to over forty thousand guineas, besides the stakes. The two champions were naked, excepting short breeches buckled over the hips, and spiked boots laced as high as the ankles.

Helmsgail, the Scot, was a youth scarcely nineteen, but he had already had his forehead sewn up, for which reason they laid two and one third to one on him. The month before he had broken the ribs and gouged out the eyes of a pugilist, named Sixmileswater; this explained the enthusiasm he created, — he had won his backers twelve thousand pounds. Besides having his forehead sewn up, Helmsgail's jaw had been broken. He was neatly made and active. He was about the height of a small woman, erect, thick set, and of a stature low and threatening. None of the advantages given him by nature had been lost; not a muscle which was not trained to its object, pugilism. His firm chest was compact, and brown and shining like brass. He smiled, and the loss of three teeth added to the effect of his smile.

Phelem-ghe-Madone, the Irishman, was tall and overgrown, — that is to say, weak. He was a man about forty years of age, six feet high, with the chest of a

hippopotamus, and a mild expression of face. A blow from his fist would shatter the deck of a vessel; but he did not know how to use his strength. He was all surface, and seemed to have entered the ring to receive, rather than to give, blows. Only it was felt that he could bear a deal of punishment,—like underdone beef, tough to chew, and impossible to swallow. He was what was termed, in local slang, “raw meat.” He squinted. He seemed resigned.

The two men had passed the preceding night in the same bed, and had slept together. They had each drunk port wine from the same glass, to the three-inch mark. Each had his party of seconds, — men of savage expression, threatening the umpires when it suited their side. Among Helmsgail’s supporters was to be seen John Gromane, celebrated for having carried an ox on his back; and also one called John Bray, who had once carried on his back ten bushels of flour, at fifteen pecks to the bushel, besides the miller himself, and had walked over two hundred yards under the weight. On the side of Phelem-ghe-Madone, Lord Hyde had brought from Launceston a certain Kilter, who lived at Green Castle, and could throw a stone weighing twenty pounds to a greater height than the highest tower of the castle. These three men, Kilter, Bray, and Gromane, were Cornishmen by birth, and did honour to their county. The other seconds were brutal fellows, with broad backs, bowed legs, knotted fists, dull faces; ragged, fearing nothing, nearly all jail-birds. Many of them understood admirably how to get the police drunk; each profession requires its special talents.

The field chosen was farther off than the bear-garden, where they formerly baited bears, bulls, and dogs; it was beyond the line of the farthest houses, by the side of the ruins of the Priory of Saint Mary Overy, dis-

mantled by Henry VIII. The wind was northerly, and biting; a slight rain fell, which was instantly frozen into ice. Some gentlemen present were evidently fathers of families, recognized as such by their putting up their umbrellas.

On the side of Phelem-ghe-Madone was Colonel Moncreif as umpire; and Kilter, as second, to support him on his knee. On the side of Helmsgail, the Honourable Pughe Beaumaris was umpire; with Lord Desertum, from Kilcarry, as bottle-holder, to support him on his knee.

The two combatants stood for a few seconds motionless in the ring, while the watches were being compared; they then approached each other and shook hands.

"I should prefer going home," remarked Phelem-ghe-Madone to Helmsgail.

"The gentlemen must not be disappointed, on any account," Helmsgail answered handsomely.

Naked as they were, they felt the cold. Phelem-ghe-Madone shook. His teeth chattered.

Doctor Eleanor Sharpe, nephew of the Archbishop of York, cried out to them: "Set to, boys! it will warm you."

These friendly words thawed them. They set to. But neither of the two men had his blood up; there were three ineffectual rounds.

The Rev. Doctor Gumdraith, one of the forty Fellows of All Souls' College, cried, "Spirit them up with gin!"

But the two umpires and the two seconds adhered to the rules, although it was exceedingly cold.

First blood was claimed. The combatants were again set face to face. They looked at each other, approached, stretched their arms, touched each other's fists, and then drew back. All at once Helmsgail, the little man,

sprang forward: the real fight had begun. Phelem-ghe-Madone was struck in the face, between the eyes. His whole face streamed with blood.

The crowd cried, "Helmsgail has tapped his claret!"

There was wild applause. Phelem-ghe-Madone, turning his arms like the sails of a windmill, struck out at random. The Honourable Peregrine Bertie said, "Blinded!" but the man was not blind yet.

Then Helmsgail heard on all sides these encouraging words: "Bung up his peepers!"

On the whole, the two champions were really well matched; and notwithstanding the unfavourable weather, it was evident that the fight would be a success. The burly giant, Phelem-ghe-Madone, had to bear the inconvenience of his advantages; he moved heavily. His arms were massive as clubs; but his chest was a mass. His little opponent ran, struck, sprang, gnashed his teeth; redoubling vigour by quickness, from knowledge of the science. On the one side was the primitive blow of the fist, — savage, uncultivated, in a state of ignorance; on the other side was the civilized blow of the fist. Helmsgail fought as much with his nerves as with his muscles, and with far more skill than strength; Phelem-ghe-Madone was a kind of sluggish mauler, — somewhat mauled himself, to begin with. It was art against nature; it was cultivated ferocity against barbarism. It was clear that the barbarian would be beaten, but not very quickly; hence the interest. Put a little man against a big one, and the chances are in favour of the little one. The cat generally has the best of it with a dog. Goliaths are always vanquished by Davids.

A chorus of encouraging exclamations cheered on the combatants: —

"Bravo, Helmsgail!"

“ Good! well done, Highlander! ”

“ Now, Phelem! ”

And the friends of Helmsgail repeated their benevolent exhortation: “ Bung up his peepers! ”

Helmsgail did better. Rapidly bending down and back again, with the undulating movement of a serpent, he struck Phelem-ghe-Madone in the sternum. The Colossus staggered.

“ Foul blow! ” cried Viscount Barnard.

Phelem-ghe-Madone sank down on the knee of his second, saying: “ I am beginning to get warm. ”

Lord Desertum consulted the umpires, and said: “ Five minutes before time is called. ”

Phelem-ghe-Madone was becoming weaker. Kilter wiped the blood from his face and the sweat from his body with a flannel, and placed the neck of a bottle to his mouth. They had come to the eleventh round. Phelem, besides the scar on his forehead, had his breast disfigured by blows, his belly swollen, and the fore part of the head scarified. Helmsgail was untouched.

A kind of tumult arose among the gentlemen.

“ Foul blow! ” repeated Viscount Barnard.

“ Bets void! ” said the Laird of Lamyrbau.

“ I claim my stake! ” replied Sir Thomas Colpepper.

“ Give me back my five hundred guineas, and I will go. Stop the fight! ” added the honourable member for the borough of St. Ives, Sir Bartholomew Gracedieu.

Phelem arose, staggering like a drunken man, and said: “ Let us go on fighting, on one condition, — that I also shall have the right to give one foul blow. ”

They cried, “ Agreed! ” from all parts of the ring. Helmsgail shrugged his shoulders. Five minutes elapsed, and they set to again.

The fighting, which was agony to Phelem, was play to Helmsgail; such are the triumphs of science. The little man found means of putting the big one into chancery; that is to say, Helmsgail suddenly took under his left arm, which was bent like a steel crescent, the huge head of Phelem-ghe-Madone, and held it there under his armpit, the neck bent and twisted, while the Scot used his right fist again and again, like a hammer on a nail, only from below and striking upwards, thus smashing his opponent's face at his ease. When Phelem, released at last, lifted his head, he no longer possessed a face. That which had been a nose, eyes, and a mouth now looked like a black sponge soaked in blood. He spat, and four of his teeth fell to the ground. Then he also fell. Kilter raised him on his knee.

Helmsgail was hardly touched: he had some insignificant bruises, and a scratch on his collar bone.

No one was cold now. They bet sixteen and a quarter to one on Helmsgail. Harry Carleton cried out, —

“It is all over with Phelem-ghe-Madone. I'll bet my peerage of Bella-aqua and my title of Lord Bellew against the Archbishop of Canterbury's old wig, on Helmsgail.”

“Give me your muzzle,” said Kilter to Phelem-ghe-Madone. And stuffing the bloody flannel into the bottle, he washed him all over with gin. The mouth reappeared, and he opened one eyelid. His temples seemed fractured.

“One round more, my friend,” said Kilter; and he added, “for the honour of the low town.”

The Welshman and the Irishman understand each other, though Phelem gave no sign of having any power of understanding left. He arose, supported by Kilter. It was the twenty-fifth round. From the way in which this Cyclops (for he had but one eye) placed himself in

position, it was evident that this was the last round, for no one doubted his defeat. He placed his guard below his chin, with the awkwardness of a failing man.

Helmsgail, with a skin hardly sweating, cried out: "I'll back myself, a thousand to one." Then raising his arm, struck out.

Strange to say, both men went down. A ghastly chuckle was heard. It was Phelem-ghe-Madone's expression of delight. While receiving the terrible blow given him by Helmsgail on the skull, he had given him a foul blow on the navel. Helmsgail, lying on his back, rattled in his throat.

The spectators looked at him as he lay on the ground, and said, "Paid back!" All clapped their hands, even those who had lost. Phelem-ghe-Madone had given foul blow for foul blow, and done what he had a right to do. They carried Helmsgail off on a hand-barrow. The opinion was that he would not recover.

Lord Robartes exclaimed, "I win twelve hundred guineas."

Phelem-ghe-Madone was evidently maimed for life.

As she left, Josiana took the arm of Lord David, — an act which was tolerated among people "engaged," — saying to him, —

"It was very fine; but --"

"But what?"

"I thought it would have driven away my *ennui*; but it has n't."

Lord David stopped, looked at Josiana, shut his mouth, and inflated his cheeks, while he nodded his head, as if to signify, "Indeed?" Then he said, —

"There is but one effectual cure for *ennui*."

"What is that?" asked Josiana.

"Gwynplaine," replied Lord David.

"And who is Gwynplaine?" asked the duchess.

BOOK II.

GWYNPLAINE AND DEA.

CHAPTER I.

WHEREIN WE SEE THE FACE OF HIM OF WHOM WE HAVE
HITHERTO SEEN ONLY THE ACTS.

NATURE had been prodigal in her kindness to Gwynplaine. She had given him a mouth opening to his ears, ears folding over to his eyes, a shapeless nose to support the spectacles of the grimace-maker, and a face that no one could look upon without laughing.

We have just said that Nature had loaded Gwynplaine with her gifts. But was it Nature? Had she not been assisted? Two slits for eyes, a hiatus for a mouth, a snub protuberance with two holes for nostrils, a flattened face,—all producing the effect of violent laughter,—certainly Nature never produced such perfection single-handed. But is laughter a synonym of joy?

If in the presence of this mountebank (for he was one) the first impression of gaiety wore off, and the man's countenance was examined closely, traces of art were recognizable. Such a face could never have been created by chance; it must have been the result of intention. Such perfection of detail is not found in Nature. Man can do nothing to create beauty, but everything to produce ugliness. A Hottentot profile cannot be changed

into a Roman outline, but out of a Grecian nose you may make a Calmuck's; it is only necessary to obliterate the root of the nose, and to flatten the nostrils. The Latin of the Middle Ages had a reason for its creation of the verb *denasare*.

Had Gwynplaine when a child been so worthy of attention that his face had been subjected to a complete transformation? Why not? Was any more powerful motive needed than the profits which would accrue from his future exhibition? According to all appearance, industrious manipulators of children had worked upon his face. It seemed evident that a mysterious and probably occult science (which was to surgery what alchemy was to chemistry) had chiselled his flesh, evidently at a very tender age, and created this countenance intentionally. This science, clever with the knife and skilled in the use of anæsthetics and ligatures, had enlarged the mouth, cut away the lips, laid bare the gums, distended the ears, displaced the eyelids and the cheeks, enlarged the zygomatic muscle, pressed the scars and cicatrices to a level, and turned back the skin over the lesions while the face was thus distorted, — from all which resulted that wonderful and appalling work of art, the *mask* which Gwynplaine wore.

The manipulation of Gwynplaine had succeeded admirably. Gwynplaine was a gift of providence to dispel the sadness of man. Of which providence? Is there a providence of demons as well as of God? We put the question without answering it.

Gwynplaine was a mountebank. He exhibited himself on the platform. No such effect had ever before been produced. Hypochondriacs were cured by the mere sight of him. He was avoided by folks in mourning, because they were compelled to laugh when they saw him, without regard to their decent gravity. One day

the chief executioner came to see him, and Gwynplaine made him laugh. People who saw Gwynplaine were obliged to hold their sides; he spoke, and they rolled on the ground. He was as far removed from sadness as pole is from pole: spleen at the one, Gwynplaine at the other. Consequently on fair-grounds and village-greens he speedily gained the enviable appellation of "that horrible man."

It was Gwynplaine's laugh that so excited the mirth of others; yet he did not laugh himself. His face laughed; his thoughts did not. The extraordinary face which chance, or a special and weird industry, had fashioned for him laughed of itself; Gwynplaine had nothing to do with it. The exterior did not depend on the interior. The laugh which he himself had not placed on brow and eyelids and mouth, he was powerless to remove. It had been stamped indelibly on his face; it was automatic, and the more irresistible because it seemed petrified. No one could escape the powerful effect of this grimace. Two convulsions of the face are infectious, — laughing and yawning. By reason of the mysterious operation to which Gwynplaine had probably been subjected in his infancy, every part of his face contributed to that grin; his whole physiognomy led to that result, as a wheel centres in the hub. All his emotions augmented this strange expression; or, to speak more correctly, aggravated it. Any astonishment which might seize him, any suffering which he might feel, any anger which might take possession of him, any pity which might move him, only increased this hilarity of his muscles. If he wept he laughed; and whatever Gwynplaine was, whatever he wished to be, whatever he thought, the moment that he raised his head the crowd (if crowd there was) had before them one impersonation, — an overwhelming burst of laughter. It was

like a head of Medusa, but Medusa hilarious. Every serious feeling or thought in the mind of the spectator was suddenly put to flight by the unexpected apparition, and laughter was inevitable.

Antique art formerly placed on the exterior of the Greek theatre a joyous brazen face, called Comedy; it laughed and occasioned laughter, but remained pensive. All mirth which borders on folly, all irony which borders on wisdom, were condensed and amalgamated in that face. Intense anxiety, disappointment, disgust, and chagrin were all depicted in the rigid features; but a ghastly smile wreathed the lips, imparting an expression of lugubrious mirth to the entire countenance. One corner of the mouth was curled upward in mockery of the human race; the other, in blasphemy of the gods. Those who eagerly crowded around to gaze at this grim exemplification of the covert sarcasm and irony which dwells in every human breast, nearly died with laughter at the sepulchral immobility of the sneering smile.

One might almost have said that Gwynplaine was that dark, dead mask of ancient comedy, adjusted to the body of a living man; that he supported on his neck that infernal head of implacable hilarity. What a weight for the shoulders of a man, — an everlasting laugh!

An everlasting laugh! That we may be understood we will explain that the Manicheans believed that even the absolute occasionally gave way; that God himself sometimes abdicates for a time. But we do not admit that the will can ever be utterly powerless. The whole of existence resembles a letter modified in the postscript. For Gwynplaine the postscript was this: by force of will, by concentrating all his attention, and allowing no emotion to impair the intentness of his effort, he could manage to suspend the everlasting rictus of his face,

and to throw over it for a moment a kind of tragic veil; and then the spectator no longer laughed, — he shuddered. This exertion Gwynplaine scarcely ever made; it was a terrible effort, and an insupportable tension. Moreover, it happened that on the slightest distraction or change of emotion, the laugh, driven away for a moment, returned like the tide, with an impulse which was irresistible in proportion to the force of the adverse emotion. With this exception Gwynplaine's laugh was everlasting.

On first seeing Gwynplaine, everybody laughed. When they had laughed they turned away their heads. Women especially shrank from him with horror. The man was frightful. The paroxysm of laughter was a sort of spontaneous tribute paid to his deformity; they yielded to it gladly, but almost mechanically. Besides, when once the novelty was over, Gwynplaine was intolerable for a woman to see, and impossible to contemplate long. Yet he was tall, well-made, agile, and in no way deformed except in his face.

This strengthened the presumption that Gwynplaine was rather a creation of art than a work of Nature. Gwynplaine, beautiful in figure, had probably been equally beautiful in face. At his birth he had doubtless resembled other infants, and the body had been left intact, and the face alone been retouched. Gwynplaine had been made to order, — at least, that was probably the case. They had left him his teeth: teeth are necessary to a laugh; the death's head retains them. The operation performed on him must have been frightful. That he had no remembrance of it was no proof that it had never been performed. Surgical sculpture of the kind could never have succeeded except on a very young child, and consequently one who had little consciousness of what happened to him, and who might easily take a wound for an illness. Besides, we must re-

member that they had in those times means of putting patients to sleep, and of suppressing all suffering; only then it was called magic, while now it is called anæsthesia.

Besides this face, those who had brought him up had given him the resources of a gymnast and an athlete. His joints had been skilfully dislocated, and trained to bend the wrong way; so that they could move backward and forward with equal ease, like the hinges of a door. In preparing him for the profession of mountebank nothing had been neglected. His hair had been dyed ochre colour once for all, — a secret which has been rediscovered at the present day. Pretty women avail themselves of it, and that which was formerly considered ugly is now considered an embellishment. Gwynplaine's hair had probably been dyed with some corrosive preparation, for it was very woolly and rough to the touch. The yellow bristles, a mane rather than a head of hair, covered and concealed a lofty brow, evidently made to contain thought. The operation, whatever it had been, which had deprived his features of harmony, and put all their flesh awry, had had no effect on the contour of the head. The facial angle was powerful and symmetrical. Behind his laugh there was a soul, dreaming, as all souls dream. Besides, this laugh was quite a talent to Gwynplaine. He could not prevent it, so he turned it to account. He earned his living by it.

Gwynplaine, as you have probably already guessed, was the child abandoned one winter evening on the coast of Portland, and subsequently sheltered by Ursus at Weymouth.



CHAPTER II.

DEA.

THAT boy was now a man. Fifteen years had elapsed. It was 1705. Gwynplaine was in his twenty-fifth year.

Ursus had kept the two children with him. They formed one family of wanderers. Ursus and Homo had aged. Ursus had become quite bald; the wolf was growing grey. The age of wolves is not known like that of dogs. According to Molière, there are wolves which live to eighty,—among others the little koupara, and the rank wolf, the *Canis nubilus* of Say.

The little girl found on the dead woman was now a tall creature of sixteen, with brown hair, slight, and exceedingly fragile in appearance, but wonderfully beautiful, with eyes full of brilliancy, though sightless. That fatal winter night which threw down the beggar woman and her infant in the snow had struck a double blow,—it had killed the mother, and blinded the child. Amaurosis had dimmed forever the eyes of the girl, now become a woman in her turn. On her face, through which the light of day never passed, the depressed corners of the mouth indicated the bitterness of the privation. Her eyes, large and clear, had this strange characteristic: extinguished forever to her, to others they were brilliant. They were mysterious torches lighting only the outside; they gave light, but possessed it not. These sightless eyes were resplendent. This prisoner of

darkness illumined the dull place she inhabited. From the depths of her incurable darkness, from behind the black wall called blindness, she flung her rays. She saw not the sun without, but her soul was perceptible from within. In her gaze there was a celestial earnestness. She was the spirit of night, and from the irremediable darkness with which she was enshrouded she shone a star.

Ursus, with his mania for Latin names, had christened her Dea. He had taken his wolf into consultation. He had said to him, "You represent man; I represent the beasts. We are of the lower world; this little one shall represent the world above. Such feebleness is all-powerful. So shall the three orders of the universe be represented in our humble abode, — the human, the animal, and the divine." The wolf made no objection. Therefore the foundling was called Dea.

As to Gwynplaine, Ursus had not had the trouble of inventing a name for him. The morning of the day on which he had realized the disfigurement of the little boy and the blindness of the infant, he said to him:—

"Boy, what is your name?"

"They call me Gwynplaine," answered the boy.

"Be Gwynplaine, then," said Ursus.

If there be such a thing as summing up human misery, it seemed to have been summed up in Gwynplaine and Dea. Each seemed to have been born in a sepulchre, — Gwynplaine of the horrors of it, Dea of the gloom. There was something of the phantom in Dea, and something of the spectre in Gwynplaine. For Gwynplaine, who could see, there was a heartrending possibility, to which Dea, who was blind, would never be subjected, — the chance of comparing himself with other men; and to one in Gwynplaine's situation, to compare himself with other men was to understand himself no longer.

It is distressing, indeed, to be devoid of sight like Dea; but it is much more distressing to be an enigma to oneself, to see the universe, and not to be able to see oneself, — as was the case with Gwynplaine. Dea had a veil over her, — darkness; Gwynplaine wore a mask, — his face. And, strange to say, it was with his own flesh that Gwynplaine was masked. What his own face had been like he knew not: that face was gone forever. They had affixed a false self to him. His brain lived, and his face was dead; he did not even remember to have ever seen it. While Dea's isolation was terrible, because she could see nothing, Gwynplaine's isolation was even more terrible because he could see everything. For Dea, creation never exceeded the limits of touch and hearing; for Gwynplaine, life was to have mankind ever before him and — beyond him. Dea was debarred from light of the world; Gwynplaine was debarred from the light of life, — from all that makes life desirable. They were certainly two terribly unfortunate creatures; they seemed to be beyond the pale of hope. No observer could fail to feel boundless pity for them. How terribly they must have suffered! Surely, no such dire misfortunes had ever before befallen two innocent human beings, and conspired to make their life a hell!

And yet these two were perfectly happy. They loved each other. Gwynplaine adored Dea; Dea idolized Gwynplaine. "How handsome you are!" she often remarked to him.

CHAPTER III.

“OCULOS NON HABET, ET VIDET.”

ONLY one woman on earth saw Gwynplaine. That was the blind girl. She had heard what Gwynplaine had done for her, from Ursus, to whom the lad had described his rough journey from Portland to Weymouth, and the many sufferings which he had endured after he was deserted by the gang. She knew that when she was an infant lying upon her dead mother's breast, sucking a corpse, a child very little larger than herself had found her; that this being, exiled and as it were crushed by the refusal of the world to aid him, had heard her cry; that though all the world was deaf to him, he had not been deaf to her; that this child, alone, weak, cast off, without any resting-place here below, dragging himself over the waste, exhausted by fatigue, had accepted from the hands of night a heavy burden, — another child; that he, who had nothing to expect of Fate, had charged himself with another destiny; that naked, in anguish and distress, he had made himself a Providence; that when Heaven failed, he had opened his heart; that though lost himself, he had saved her; that having neither roof-tree nor shelter he had been an asylum; that he had made himself mother and nurse; that he who was thus alone in the world had responded to desertion by adoption; that lost in the darkness he had set an example; that as if not sufficiently burdened already he had added to his load another's misery; that

in this world, which seemed to contain no hope for him, he had found a duty; that where every one else would have hesitated, he had advanced; that where every one else would have drawn back, he had consented; that he had put his hand into the very jaws of the grave and drawn her, Dea, out; that himself half naked, he had given her his rags, because she was cold; that famished, he had thought of giving her food and drink; that for one poor little creature, another little creature had combated death; that he had fought it under every form, — under the form of winter and snow, under the form of solitude, under the form of terror, under the form of cold, hunger, and thirst, under the form of whirlwind; and that for her, Dea, this Titan of ten years had bravely battled with the elements. She knew that as a child he had done all this, and that now as a man he was strength to her weakness, riches to her poverty, healing to her sickness, and sight to her blindness. She was fully conscious of his devotion, self-abnegation, and courage. Moral heroism possesses an even more potent charm than physical heroism; and in the abstraction in which thought lives, when unlighted by the sun, Dea clearly perceived these heroic virtues. In the environment of dark objects set in motion, which was the sole impression the realities of life made upon her; in the uneasy quietude of a creature necessarily passive, yet ever on the watch for possible danger; in the sensation of being ever defenceless, which is the life of the blind, — Dea felt Gwynplaine ever beside her: Gwynplaine, never indifferent, never cold, never gloomy, but always sympathetic, sweet-tempered, and helpful. Dea fairly trembled with happiness and gratitude; her anxiety changed into ecstasy, and with her mind's eye she gazed up from the depths of her abyss to the glad light of his goodness in the zenith.

Kindness is the sunshine of the spiritual world; so it is little wonder that Gwynplaine quite dazzled poor Dea. To the crowd, which has too many heads to have a thought, and too many eyes to have a clear vision,—to the crowd who, superficial themselves, judge only by the surface, Gwynplaine was a clown, a merry-andrew, a mountebank, a grotesque creature, very little more or less than a beast. The crowd knew only the face. For Dea, Gwynplaine was the saviour who had gathered her up in his arms in the tomb, and borne her out of it; the consoler who made life tolerable; the liberator, whose hand guided her through that labyrinth called blindness. Gwynplaine was her brother, friend, guide, support; the personification of heavenly power, the husband, winged and resplendent. Where the multitude saw the monster, Dea recognized the archangel. This was because Dea, being blind, could see the soul.

CHAPTER IV.

WELL-MATCHED LOVERS.

URSUS, being a philosopher, understood all this, and approved of Dea's infatuation. The blind see the invisible. He said, "Conscience is vision." Then, looking at Gwynplaine, he murmured, "Half-monster, but demi-god, nevertheless."

Gwynplaine, on the other hand, was madly in love with Dea. There is the invisible eye, — the spirit; and the visible eye, — the pupil. He saw her with the visible eye. Dea was dazzled by the ideal; Gwynplaine, by the real. Gwynplaine was not ugly; he was frightful. He saw his contrast before him: in proportion as he was terrible, Dea was lovely. He was the personification of the horrible; she was the embodiment of grace. Dea was a dream. She seemed a vision scarcely embodied. In her Grecian form; in her delicate and supple figure, swaying like a reed; in her shoulders, on which might have been invisible wings; in the modest curves which indicated her sex, to the soul rather than to the senses; in her fairness, which amounted almost to transparency; in the earnest and quiet serenity of her look, divinely shut out from earth; in the sacred innocence of her smile, — she was almost an angel, and yet a woman.

Gwynplaine's existence might be compared to the point of intersection of two rays; one from below and one from above, — a black and a white ray. The same

crumb may perhaps be pecked at, at once, by the beaks of evil and good, — one giving a bite, the other a kiss. Gwynplaine was this crumb, — an atom, at once wounded and caressed. Misfortune had laid its hand upon him, and happiness as well. He had on him an anathema and a benediction. He was one of the elect, and one of the accursed. Who was he? He knew not. When he looked at himself, he saw one he knew not; but this unknown was a monster. Gwynplaine lived as it were beheaded, with a face which did not belong to him. This face was frightful, so frightful that it was absurd. It caused as much fear as laughter; it was a hell-concocted absurdity; it was the transformation of a human face into the mask of an animal. Never had there been such a total eclipse of humanity in any human face, never a more complete caricature; never had a more frightful apparition grinned in nightmare; never had everything that is repulsive to woman been more hideously amalgamated in a man. The unfortunate heart, masked and calumniated by the face, seemed forever condemned to solitude under it, as under a tombstone. Yet, no! When unknown malice had done its worst, invisible goodness lent its aid. It had caused a soul to fly with swift wings towards the deserted one; it had sent the dove to console the creature whom the thunderbolt had overwhelmed, and had made beauty adore deformity. For this to be possible it was necessary that beauty should not see the disfigurement. To bring about this good fortune, a misfortune was necessary; so Providence had deprived Dea of sight.

Gwynplaine vaguely felt himself the object of a redemption. Why had he been persecuted? He knew not. Why redeemed? He knew not. All he knew was that a halo had encircled his brand. When Gwynplaine had been old enough to understand, Ursus had read and explained to him the text of Doctor Conquest,

“De Denasatis,” and in another folio, Hugo Plagon, the passage, “Nares habens mutilas;” but Ursus had prudently abstained from “hypotheses,” and had been reserved in his opinion of what it might mean. Suppositions were possible. The probability of violence inflicted on Gwynplaine when an infant was hinted at; but for Gwynplaine there was no proof except the result. It seemed to be his destiny to live under a stigma. Why this stigma? There was no answer. Everything connected with Gwynplaine’s childhood was shrouded in mystery; nothing was certain save the one terrible fact.

In Gwynplaine’s dire despondency Dea had angelically interposed between him and despair, and he perceived, that, horrible as he was, a sort of beautified wonder was softening his monstrous visage. Having been fashioned to create dread, he was, by a miraculous exception to the general rule, admired and adored as an angel of light by one who seemed as far above him as a star. Gwynplaine and Dea made a perfect pair; so these two suffering hearts very naturally adored each other. One nest and two birds,—that was their story. They had begun to obey the universal law,—to please, to seek, and to find.

Thus hatred had made a mistake. The persecutors of Gwynplaine, whoever they might have been, had missed their aim. They had intended to drive him to desperation: they had succeeded in driving him into enchantment. They had affianced him beforehand to a healing wound; they had predestined him to be consoled by an affliction. The pincers of the executioner had softly changed into the delicately moulded hand of a girl. Gwynplaine was horrible,—made horrible by the hand of man. They had hoped to exile him forever,—first, from his family, if his family existed; and then from humanity. When an infant, they had made him a ruin.

Of this ruin Nature had repossessed herself, as she does of all ruins. Nature had consoled this solitary heart, as she consoles all solitudes. Nature comes to the aid of the deserted; when everything fails them she gives them herself. She flourishes and grows green amid ruins; she has ivy for the stones, and boundless sympathy for man.

CHAPTER V.

THE BLUE SKY THROUGH THE BLACK CLOUD.

SO these unfortunate creatures lived on together, — Dea depending, Gwynplaine sustaining. These orphans were all in all to each other; the feeble and the deformed were betrothed. Bliss unspeakable had resulted from their distress.

They were grateful. To whom? To the great Unknown. Be grateful in your own hearts, that suffices. Thanksgiving has wings, and flies to the right destination; your prayer knows its way better than you can. How many men have believed that they were praying to Jupiter, when they were really praying to Jehovah! How many believers in amulets are listened to by the Almighty! How many atheists there are who know not that in the simple fact of being good and sad they pray to God!

Gwynplaine and Dea were grateful. Deformity is exile; blindness is a precipice. The exiled one had been adopted; the precipice was habitable. Gwynplaine had seen a brilliant light descend upon him. As if in a dream he beheld a white cloud of beauty having the form of a woman, a radiant vision endowed with a heart. This phantom, part cloud and part woman, clasped him; the apparition embraced him, and the heart craved him. Gwynplaine was no longer deformed; he was beloved. The rose had demanded the caterpillar in marriage, feel-

ing that within the caterpillar there was a divine butterfly. Gwynplaine the rejected, was chosen.

To have one's desire is everything. Gwynplaine had his, Dea hers. The dejection of the disfigured man was changed to profound gratitude and intoxicating delight. The wretched found a refuge in each other: two blanks, combining, filled each other. They were bound together by what they lacked: in that in which one was poor, the other was rich. The misfortune of the one was the good fortune of the other. If Dea had not been blind, would she have chosen Gwynplaine? If Gwynplaine had not been disfigured, would he have preferred Dea? She would probably have rejected the deformed man, as he would have passed by the afflicted woman. Hence how fortunate it was for Dea that Gwynplaine was hideous; and how fortunate for Gwynplaine that Dea was blind! A mighty need of each other was the foundation of their love. Gwynplaine saved Dea; Dea saved Gwynplaine. Apposition of misery produced adherence. It was the embrace of those swallowed in the abyss, — none closer, none more hopeless, none more exquisite.

“What should I be without her?” Gwynplaine thought.

“What should I be without him?” Dea thought.

The exile of each made a country for both. Two hopeless fatalities, Gwynplaine's hideousness and Dea's blindness, united them. They sufficed to each other; they imagined nothing beyond each other. To speak to each other was a delight; to approach was beatitude. By force of reciprocal intuition they became united in the same reverie, and thought the same thoughts. In Gwynplaine's tread Dea fancied she heard the step of one deified. They tightened their hold upon each other in a sort of sidereal *chiaroscuro*, full of perfumes, of

light, and of music, in the radiant land of dreams. They belonged to each other; they knew themselves to be forever united in the same joy and the same ecstasy, and nothing could be stranger than this construction of an Eden by two of the damned. They were inexpressibly happy. Out of their hell they had created a heaven. Such is thy power, O Love! Dea heard Gwynplaine's laugh; Gwynplaine saw Dea's smile. Thus ideal felicity was created; the perfect joy of life was realized; the mysterious problem of happiness was solved. By whom? By two outcasts.

To Gwynplaine, Dea was splendour; to Dea, Gwynplaine was presence. Presence is that profound mystery which renders the invisible world divine, and from which results that other mystery,—faith. In religions this is the one thing which is irreducible; but this irreducible thing suffices. The great motive power is not seen, it is felt. Gwynplaine was Dea's religion. Sometimes, lost in her sense of love towards him, she knelt, like a beautiful priestess before a gnome in a pagoda, made happy by her adoration. Imagine to yourself an unfathomable abyss; in the centre of this abyss an oasis of light; and on this oasis two creatures shut out of any other life, dazzling each other. No purity could be compared to their loves. Dea did not even know what a kiss might be, though perhaps she desired it; because blindness, especially in a woman, has its dreams, and though trembling at the approaches of the unknown does not fear them all. As for Gwynplaine, his unhappy youth had made him sensitive. The more intensely he loved, the more timid he became. He might have dared anything with this companion of his early youth, with this creature as ignorant of fault as of light, with this blind girl who knew but one thing,—that she adored him. But he would have thought it a

theft to take what she might have given ; so he resigned himself with a melancholy satisfaction to love angelically, and the knowledge of his deformity imbued him with a proud purity of thought and action.

These happy creatures dwelt in the ideal world. They embraced and caressed each other only in spirit. They had always lived the same life ; they knew themselves only in each other's society. The infancy of Dea had coincided with the youth of Gwynplaine ; they had grown up side by side. For a long time they had slept in the same bed, for the sleeping accommodations of the van were limited. They slept on the chest ; Ursus, on the floor, — that was the arrangement. One day, while Dea was still very young, Gwynplaine felt himself grown up ; and it was now that a feeling of shame was first aroused in him. So he said to Ursus, " I too will sleep on the floor ; " and at night he stretched himself on the bear-skin beside the old man. Then Dea cried for her bed-fellow ; but Gwynplaine, become restless because he had begun to love, insisted upon remaining where he was. From that time he always in cold weather slept by Ursus on the floor. In the summer, when the nights were fine, he slept outside with Homo.

CHAPTER VI.

URSUS AS TUTOR, AND URSUS AS GUARDIAN.

URSUS said to himself, "Some of these days I will play them a mean trick,—I will marry them."

Ursus taught Gwynplaine the theory of love. He said to him: "Do you know how the Almighty lights the fire called love? He places the woman underneath, the devil between, and the man at the top. A match—that is to say, a look—and behold, it is all on fire."

"A look is unnecessary," answered Gwynplaine, thinking of Dea.

And Ursus replied, "Idiot! do souls require mortal eyes to see each other?"

Ursus was a good fellow at times. Gwynplaine, madly in love with Dea, sometimes became melancholy, and made use of the presence of Ursus as a guard on himself. One day Ursus said to him: "Bah! do not put yourself out. When in love, the cock shows himself."

"But the eagle conceals himself," replied Gwynplaine.

At other times Ursus would say to himself apart: "It is well to put some spokes in the wheels of the Cytherean car occasionally. They love each other too much. This may have its disadvantages. Let us avoid too much of a conflagration; let us moderate these raptures."

So Ursus had recourse to warnings of this nature,—speaking to Gwynplaine while Dea slept, and to Dea when Gwynplaine was out of hearing:—

“Dea, you must not be so fond of Gwynplaine. To live only in another is dangerous. Selfishness is the surest foundation for happiness, after all. Men play women false sometimes. Besides, Gwynplaine might end by becoming infatuated with you. His success is very great! You have no idea how great his success is!”

Again: “Gwynplaine, such disparities are unfortunate. So much ugliness on one side and so much beauty on another, ought to cause reflection. Temper your ardour, my boy; do not become too enthusiastic about Dea. Do you seriously consider that you are suited to her? Just think of your deformity and her perfection! See the difference between her and yourself. She has everything, this Dea. What a white skin! What hair! Lips like strawberries! and her foot, her hand! Those shoulders, with their exquisite curve! Her expression too is sublime. She seems to diffuse light around her as she moves; and when she speaks, that grave tone of voice is charming. And in spite of all this, to think that she is a woman! She would not be such a fool as to be an angel. She is a perfect beauty! Keep all this in mind, to calm your ardour.”

These speeches only increased the mutual love of Gwynplaine and Dea; and Ursus marvelled at his want of success, like one who might say, “It is singular that with all the oil I throw on the fire, I cannot extinguish it!”

Did Ursus, then, really desire to extinguish their love, or to cool it even? Certainly not. He would have been sorely disappointed had he succeeded. In his secret heart this love delighted him beyond measure. But it is natural to scoff a little at that which charms us; men call it wisdom. Ursus had been, in his relations with Gwynplaine and Dea, almost a father and a

mother. Grumbling all the while, he had brought them up; grumbling all the while, he had nourished them. His adoption of them had made the van harder to draw, and he had been oftener compelled to harness himself by Homo's side to help pull it. We may remark here, however, that after the first few years, when Gwynplaine was nearly grown up and Ursus had grown quite old, Gwynplaine had taken his turn and drawn Ursus.

Ursus, seeing that Gwynplaine was becoming a man, had cast the horoscope. "Your fortune is made," he said to him once, alluding to his disfigurement.

This family of an old man and two children, with a wolf, had become, as they wandered, more and more closely united. Their roving life had not hindered education. "To travel is to grow," Ursus said. Gwynplaine was evidently made to exhibit at fairs. Ursus had cultivated in him feats of dexterity, and had incrustated him with as much of the science and wisdom he himself possessed as possible. Ursus, contemplating the perplexing mask of Gwynplaine's face, often growled, "He has begun well." It was probably for this reason that he had tried to endow him with every ornament of philosophy and wisdom. He repeated constantly to Gwynplaine:—

"Be a philosopher. To be wise is to be invulnerable. You see what I am. I have never shed a tear. This is all the result of my wisdom. Do you think that occasion for tears has been wanting, had I felt disposed to weep?"

Ursus, in one of his monologues in the hearing of the wolf, said: "I have taught Gwynplaine everything, Latin included. I have taught Dea nothing, music included."

Ursus had taught them both to sing. He had himself quite a talent for playing on the oaten reed, a little flute of that period. He played on it very agreeably, as also

on the chiffonie, — a sort of beggar's hurdy-gurdy, mentioned in the Chronicle of Bertrand Duguesclin as the "truant instrument," which started the symphony. These instruments attracted the crowd. Ursus would show them the chiffonie, and say, "It is called *organistrum* in Latin." He had taught Dea and Gwynplaine to sing according to the method of Orpheus and of Egide Binchois. Frequently he interrupted the lessons with enthusiastic cries, such as, "Orpheus, musician of Greece! Binchois, musician of Picardy!" These branches of culture did not occupy the children so much as to prevent their adoring each other. They had mingled their hearts together as they grew up, as two saplings planted near each other mingle their branches as they become trees.

"That is well," said Ursus. "I will have them marry, one of these days." Then he grumbled to himself: "They are quite tiresome with their love."

The past, at least their little past, had no existence for Dea and Gwynplaine. They knew only what Ursus had told them of it. They called Ursus father. The only remembrance which Gwynplaine had of his infancy was as of a passage of demons over his cradle. He had an impression of having been trodden in the darkness under deformed feet. Was this intentional or not? He was ignorant on this point. The one thing that he did remember clearly, even to the slightest detail, were his tragical adventures when deserted at Portland. The finding of Dea made the dismal night a notable date for him.

Dea's recollections were even more confused than those of Gwynplaine. In so young a child all remembrance soon melts away. She recollected her mother as something cold. Had she ever seen the sun? Perhaps so. "The sun! what was it like?" She had a vague

idea of something luminous and warm, of which Gwynplaine now filled the place. They spoke to each other in low tones: it is certain that cooing is the most important thing in the world. Dea often said to Gwynplaine: "Light means that you are speaking."

Once, no longer able to restrain himself as he caught sight of Dea's bare arm through her thin muslin sleeve, Gwynplaine touched the transparent stuff with his lips: ideal kiss of a disfigured mouth! Dea felt a deep delight; she blushed like a rose. This kiss from a monster brought the roseate hues of dawn to gleam on this beautiful brow shrouded in night. Gwynplaine sighed with a sort of terror; but Dea pulled up her sleeve, and extending her naked arm to Gwynplaine, said, "Again!" Gwynplaine fled. The next day the game was renewed, with variations. It was a heavenly subsidence into that sweet abyss called love.

At such things Heaven smiles philosophically.

CHAPTER VII.

BLINDNESS GIVES LESSONS IN CLAIRVOYANCE.

GWYNPLAINE reproached himself at times. He made his happiness a matter of conscience. He fancied that in allowing a woman who could not see him to love him, he was guilty of a gross deception. What would she say if her sight were suddenly restored? How she would shrink from what had previously attracted her! How she would recoil from her frightful lover! What a cry! what covering of her face! what a flight! These bitter scruples harassed him. He told himself that such a monster as he was had no right to love. He was a hydra idolized by a star. It was his duty to enlighten the blind star.

One day Gwynplaine said to Dea, "You know that I am very ugly."

"I know that you are sublime," she answered.

He resumed: "When you hear everybody laugh, it is at me they are laughing, because I am horrible."

"I love you!" said Dea. After a silence, she added: "I was dead; you restored me to life. When you are near me heaven is beside me. Give me your hand, that I may touch heaven."

Their hands met and grasped each other. They spoke no more, but were silent in the plenitude of their love.

Ursus, who was a crabbed old fellow, overheard this. The next day when the three were together, he remarked, "For that matter, Dea is ugly too."

The words produced no effect. Dea and Gwynplaine were not even listening. Absorbed in each other, they rarely heeded the exclamations of Ursus.

The remark, "Dea is ugly too," showed that Ursus possessed considerable knowledge of women. It is certain that Gwynplaine, in his loyalty, had been guilty of an imprudence. To have said "I am ugly" to any other blind girl than Dea might have been dangerous. To be blind, and in love too, is to be doubly blind. In such a situation one indulges in all sorts of dreams. Illusion is the food of dreams. Take illusion from love, and you take from it its aliment. It is compounded of all sorts of enthusiasm, and of both physical and moral admiration.

Moreover, you should never tell a woman anything she cannot understand. She will dream about it, and she often dreams falsely. An enigma in a reverie spoils it. The shock caused by the fall of a careless word displaces that against which it strikes. At times it happens, without our knowing why, that because we have received an almost imperceptible blow from a chance word, the heart insensibly empties itself of love. He who loves, perceives a decline in his happiness. There is nothing more to be dreaded than this slow exudation from the fissure in the vase.

Happily, Dea was not formed of such clay. The stuff of which women are usually made had not been used in her construction. She had a rare nature. The frame was fragile, but not the heart. A divine perseverance in love was one of her attributes. The whole disturbance which the word used by Gwynplaine had created in her, ended in her saying one day, —

"What is it to be ugly? It is to do wrong. Gwynplaine only does good: he is handsome."

Then, under the form of interrogation so familiar to children and to the blind, Dea resumed: "Too see? —

what is it that you call seeing? For my own part, I cannot see; I know! It seems that *to see* means *to hide*."

"What do you mean?" said Gwynplaine.

Dea answered: "To see is a thing which conceals the true."

"No," said Gwynplaine.

"But, yes," replied Dea, "since you say you are ugly."

She reflected a moment, and then exclaimed fondly, "Oh, you story-teller!"

Gwynplaine felt the joy of having confessed and of not being believed. Both his conscience and his love were consoled.

Dea was now sixteen, and Gwynplaine nearly twenty-five. A sort of holy childhood had continued in their love. Thus it sometimes happens that the belated nightingale prolongs her nocturnal song till dawn. Their caresses went no further than pressing hands, or lips brushing a naked arm. Soft, half articulate whispers sufficed them.

Twenty-four and sixteen! So it happened that Ursus, who did not lose sight of the ill-turn he intended to do them, said, —

"One of these days you must choose a religion."

"Wherefore?" inquired Gwynplaine.

"That you may marry."

"That is done already," said Dea.

Dea did not understand that they could be more man and wife than they were already. This chimerical and virginal content, this chaste union of souls, this celibacy taken for marriage, was not displeasing to Ursus. He had said what he had said because he thought it necessary; but the medical knowledge he possessed convinced him that Dea, if not too young, was too fragile and delicate for what he called "Hymen in flesh and

bone." That would come soon enough. Besides, were they not already married? If the indissoluble existed anywhere, was it not in their union? Gwynplaine and Dea, — they were creatures worthy of the love they mutually felt, flung by misfortune into each other's arms. And as if they were not enough in this first link, love had supervened and united them yet more closely. What power could ever break that iron chain, bound with knots of flowers? They were indeed indissolubly united. Dea had beauty, Gwynplaine had sight. Each brought a dowry. They were more than coupled, they were paired; separated solely by the sacred interposition of innocence.

Still, in spite of all Gwynplaine's noble dreams and his absorbing love for Dea, he was a man. The laws of Nature are not to be evaded. He underwent, like everything else in the natural world, the mysterious fermentation ordained by the Creator. At times, therefore, he looked at the women in the crowd, but he immediately felt that the look was a sin, and hastened to retire, repentant, into his own soul. Let us add that he met with no encouragement. On the face of every woman who looked upon him, he saw aversion, antipathy, repugnance, and scorn. It was evident that no one save Dea was possible for him. This probably helped him to repent.

CHAPTER VIII.

NOT ONLY HAPPINESS, BUT PROSPERITY.

HOW many true things are told in stories! The burn of the invisible fiend who touches you is remorse for a wicked thought.

In Gwynplaine these evil thoughts never came to fruition; so he felt no remorse. Sometimes he felt regret. A few vague compunctions of conscience, what was that? Nothing. Their happiness was complete; so complete, that they were no longer poor, even.

From 1689 to 1704 a great change had taken place. It sometimes happened, in the year 1704 that an immense van drawn by two sturdy horses made its appearance about nightfall in some small village on the sea-coast. This van resembled the hull of a vessel turned upside down, the keel serving for a roof, and the deck, placed upon four wheels, for a floor. The wheels were all of the same size, and as high as wagon-wheels. Wheels, pole, and van were all painted green, with a rhythmical gradation of shades, which ranged from bottle-green for the wheels, to apple-green for the roofing. This colour attracted attention to the establishment, which was known on all fair-grounds as The Green Box. The Green Box had but two windows, one at each end, and at the back there was a door with steps that let down. On the roof, from a pipe painted green like the rest, smoke arose. This moving house was always newly varnished and washed. In front, on a sort of platform, fastened to the

van, behind the horses, and beside an old man who held the reins and guided the team, two gipsy women, dressed as goddesses, sounded their trumpets. The wonder with which the villagers regarded this gorgeous establishment was overwhelming.

This was the old van of Ursus, with its proportions augmented by success, and changed from a wretched box into a fine travelling show. A kind of animal, between dog and wolf, was chained under the van; this was Homo. The old coachman who drove the horses was the philosopher himself. Whence came his improvement from the shabby box to the Olympic caravan? From this, — Gwynplaine had become famous.

It was with a correct idea of what would succeed best among men that Ursus had said to Gwynplaine: "Your fortune is made." Ursus, it may be remembered, had made Gwynplaine his pupil. Unknown people had worked upon his face; he, on the other hand, had worked upon his mind; and as soon as the growth of the child warranted it, he had brought him out on the stage, — that is to say, he had produced him in front of the van.

The effect of Gwynplaine's appearance had been surprising. The passers-by were immediately struck with wonder. Never had anything been seen to be compared to this extraordinary imitation of laughter. They were ignorant how the miracle of infectious hilarity had been obtained. Some believed it to be natural, others declared it to be artificial; and all these conjectures added to the reality; so that everywhere, at every cross-road on the journey, at all the fair-grounds and *fêtes*, crowds rushed to see Gwynplaine. Thanks to this great attraction, there had come into the poor purse of the wanderers first a shower of farthings, then of pennies, and finally of shillings. The curiosity of one place satisfied, they passed on to another. Rolling does not enrich a

stone, but it enriches a caravan ; and year by year, from city to city, with the increased growth of Gwynplaine's stature and ugliness, the good fortune predicted by Ursus had come.

"What a good turn they did you after all, my boy," said Ursus.

This good fortune enabled Ursus, who acted as business manager to have the chariot of his dreams constructed,—that is to say, a caravan large enough to carry a theatre, and thus sow science and art in the highways. Moreover, Ursus had been able to add to the troupe composed of himself, Homo, Gwynplaine, and Dea, two horses and two women, who were the goddesses of the troupe, as we have just said, and also its servants. A mythological frontispiece was, in those days, of great service to a travelling show.

"We are a wandering temple," said Ursus.

These two gipsies, picked up by the philosopher from among the vagabondage of cities and suburbs, were ugly and young, and were called, by order of Ursus, one Phœbe, and the other Venus. For these read Fibi and Vinos, that we may conform to English pronunciation. Phœbe cooked ; Venus scrubbed the temple. Moreover, on days of performance they dressed Dea. Mountebanks have to appear in public as well as princes ; and on these occasions Dea was arrayed, like Fibi, and Vinos, in a Florentine petticoat of flowered stuff, and a woman's jacket, which, having no sleeves, left the arms bare. Ursus and Gwynplaine wore men's jackets and long loose trousers, like sailors on board a man-of-war. Gwynplaine had, besides, for his work and for his feats of strength, round his neck and over his shoulders, a leather esclavine. He took care of the horses. Ursus and Homo took care of each other.

Dea, being used to the Green Box, moved about the

interior of the wheeled house with almost as much ease and safety as a person who could see. In the back part of this new and imposing establishment, in the corner to the right of the door, stood the old van, securely fastened to the floor. This now served as a sleeping apartment and dressing-room for Gwynplaine and Ursus. In the opposite corner was the kitchen.

No vessel could be more precise and compact in its arrangements than the interior of the Green Box. Everything connected with it had been planned with remarkable foresight and care. The caravan was divided into three compartments, partitioned off from one another. These communicated by open spaces without doors, but were hung with curtains. The compartment in the rear belonged to the men, the compartment in front to the women, the compartment in the middle, separating the two sexes, was the stage. The musical instruments and the stage properties were kept in the kitchen. A loft under the arch of the roof held the scenery, and on opening a trap-door lamps appeared, which did wonders in the way of lighting the stage!

Ursus was the poet of these representations; he wrote the pieces. He had a diversity of talents; he was clever at sleight-of-hand. Besides the voices he imitated, he produced all sorts of unexpected effects, — sudden alternations of light and darkness, spontaneous formations of figures or words, — as he willed, on the wall; also vanishing figures in *chiaroscuro*; wonders amidst which he seemed to meditate, unmindful of the crowd who marvelled at him.

One day Gwynplaine said to him: "Father, you look like a sorcerer!"

And Ursus replied, "Then I look, perhaps, like what I am."

The Green Box, built on a model conceived by Ursus,

contained this stroke of ingenuity : between the fore and hind wheels, the central panel of the left side turned on hinges by the aid of chains and pulleys, and could be let down at will like a drawbridge. As it dropped, it set at liberty three legs also on hinges, which supported the panel and converted it into a sort of platform. The opening thus made disclosed the stage, which was enlarged by the platform in front. This opening looked for all the world like a "mouth of hell," in the words of the itinerant Puritan preachers, who turned away from it with horror. It was, perhaps, for some such impious invention that Solon kicked out Thespis.

For all that, Thespis has lasted much longer than is generally supposed. The travelling theatre is still in existence. It was on these stages on wheels that the ballets and dances of Amner and Pilkington were performed in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; the pastorals of Gilbert Colin in France; and in Flanders, at the annual fairs, the double choruses of Clement, called *Non Papa*; in Germany, the "Adam and Eve" of Theiles; and, in Italy, the Venetian exhibitions of *Animuccia* and of *Ca-Fossis*, the "*Silvæ*" of Gesualdo, prince of Venosa, the "Satyr," of Laura Guidiccioni, the "Despair of Philene," and the "Death of Ugolino," by Vincent Galileo, father of the astronomer, in which Vincent Galileo sang his own music, and accompanied himself on his viol de gamba; as well as all the first attempts of the Italian opera, which, from 1580, substituted free inspiration for the madrigal style.

The chariot, which carried Ursus, Gwynplaine, and their fortunes, and in front of which Fibi and Vines trumpeted like figures of Fame, played its part in this great Bohemian and literary brotherhood. Thespis would no more have disowned Ursus, than Congrio would have disowned Gwynplaine.

On arriving at open spaces in towns or villages, Ursus, in the intervals between the tootings of Fibi and Vinos, gave instructive explanations concerning the trumpeting. "This symphony is Gregorian," he would exclaim, "citizens and townsmen; the Gregorian form of worship, this great progress, has had to contend in Italy with the Ambrosial ritual, and in Spain with the Mozarabic ceremonial, and has achieved its triumph over them with difficulty." After which the Green Box drew up in some place chosen by Ursus, and evening having come, and the panel stage having been let down, the theatre opened and the performance began.

The scenery of the Green Box represented a landscape, painted by Ursus; and as he knew nothing about painting, it could, if need be, represent a cave just as well as a landscape. The curtain was quite a gorgeous silk affair, with large plaids of contrasting colours.

The public stood outside, in the street, forming a semicircle round the stage, exposed to the wind and weather,—an arrangement which made rain even less desirable for theatres in those days than now. When they could, they acted in an inn yard, on which occasions the windows of the different stories served as boxes for the spectators. The theatre being better protected, the audience was a better paying one.

Ursus was everywhere,—in the piece, in the company, in the kitchen, in the orchestra. Vinos beat the drum, handling the sticks with great dexterity. Fibi played on the *morache*, a kind of guitar. The wolf had been promoted to be a utility gentleman, and played his little parts as occasion required. Often when they appeared side by side on the stage, Ursus in his tightly laced bear's skin, Homo with his wolf's skin fitting still better, one could hardly tell which was the beast. This flattered Ursus.

CHAPTER IX.

ABSURDITIES WHICH FOLKS WITHOUT TASTE CALL POETRY.

THE pieces written by Ursus were interludes, — a kind of composition out of fashion nowadays. One of these pieces, which has not come down to us, was entitled “Ursus Rursus.” It is probable that he played the principal part himself. A pretended exit, followed by a reappearance, was doubtless its praiseworthy and edifying subject.

The titles of the interludes of Ursus were sometimes in Latin, as we have seen, and the poetry frequently in Spanish. The Spanish verses written by Ursus were rhymed, like nearly all the Castilian poetry of that period. This did not puzzle the people. Spanish was then a familiar language; and the English sailor spoke Castilian as the Roman sailors spoke Carthaginian (See Plautus). Moreover, at a theatrical representation, as at Mass, Latin, or any other unknown language, has no terrors for the audience. They get out of the dilemma by adapting familiar words to the sounds. Our old Gallic France was often treated in this irreverent way. At church, under cover of an *Immolatus*, the faithful chanted, “I will make merry;” and under a *Sanctus*, “Kiss me, sweet.” The Council of Trent was required to put an end to this sacrilege.

Ursus had composed expressly for Gwynplaine an interlude, with which he was well pleased. It was his

best work. He had thrown his whole soul into it. To give one's entire talent in the production is the greatest triumph that any one can achieve. The toad which produces a toad achieves a grand success. You doubt it? Then try it yourself. Ursus had carefully polished this interlude. This bear's cub was entitled "Chaos Vanquished."

Here it was. A night scene. When the curtain drew up, the crowd, massed around the Green Box, saw nothing but intense darkness. In this darkness three shadowy forms were moving about, — a wolf, a bear, and a man. The wolf acted the wolf; Ursus, the bear; Gwynplaine, the man. The wolf and the bear represented the ferocious forces of Nature, — unreasoning hunger and savage ignorance. Both rushed on Gwynplaine. It was chaos combating man. No face could be distinguished. Gwynplaine fought enfolded in a winding-sheet, his face being covered by his thickly falling locks. All else was shadow. The bear growled, the wolf gnashed his teeth, the man cried out. The man was down; the beasts overwhelmed him. He called for aid and succour; he shrieked out an agonized appeal to the Unknown. He gave a death-rattle. To witness this agony of the prostrate man, now scarcely distinguishable from the brutes, was appalling. The crowd looked on breathless; in a minute more the wild beasts would triumph, and chaos re-absorb man. A struggle — cries — howlings; then, all at once, silence.

A song in the distance. Mysterious music floated out, accompanying this chant of invisible spirits; and suddenly, none knowing whence or how, a white apparition arose. This apparition was a light; this light was a woman; this woman was a spirit. Dea — calm, fair, beautiful, awe-inspiring in her serenity and sweetness — appeared in the centre of a luminous haze, the very spirit of dawn. With a voice light, sweet, indescribable,

she sang in the new-born light, — she, the invisible, suddenly made visible. They thought that they heard the hymn of an angel or the song of a bird. On beholding this apparition the man, starting up in ecstasy, struck the beasts with his fists, and overthrew them.

Then the vision, gliding along in a manner difficult to understand, and therefore the more admired, sang these words in sufficiently pure Spanish for the English sailors who were present: —

“Ora! llora!
De palabra
Nace razon.
Da luz el son.”¹

Then, looking down, as if she saw a gulf beneath, she went on: —

“Noche, quita te de alli!
El alba canta hallali.”²

As she sang, the man raised himself by degrees; instead of crouching he was now kneeling, his hands elevated towards the vision, his knees resting on the beasts, which lay motionless, as if petrified. Turning towards him, she continued, —

“Es menester a cielos ir,
Y tu que llorabas reir.”³

Then approaching him with the majesty of a star, she added, —

“Gebra barzon;
Deja, monstro,
A tu negro
Caparazon.”⁴

And placed her hand upon his brow. Then another voice arose, deeper, and, consequently, still sweeter, —

¹ Pray! weep! Reason is born of the word. Song creates light.

² Night, away! the dawn sings hallali.

³ Thou must go to heaven, and smile, thou that weapest.

⁴ Break the yoke; throw off, monster, thy dark clothing.

a voice broken but inwra^pt in a gravity both wild and tender. It was the human voice responding to the voice of the stars. Gwynplaine, still in obscurity, his head under Dea's hand, kneeling on the vanquished bear and wolf, sang:—

“O ven! ama!
Eres alma,
Soy corazon.”¹

Suddenly from the shadow a glare of light fell full upon Gwynplaine. Then, through the darkness, the monster was fully exposed.

The excitement of the crowd was indescribable. Shrieks of laughter resounded. Mirth is created by startling surprises, and nothing could be more unexpected than this termination. Never was there a sensation comparable to that produced by the ray of light falling on that mask, at once so ludicrous and terrible in its aspect. They laughed on account of his laugh. Everywhere: above, below, behind, in front, at the uttermost distance,—men, women, old grey-heads, rosy-faced children; the good, the wicked, the gay, the sad, everybody. And even in the streets, the passers-by who could see nothing, hearing the laughter, laughed also. The laughter ended in a wild clapping of hands and stamping of feet. The curtain dropped, Gwynplaine was recalled with frenzy. Hence an immense success. Have you seen “Chaos Vanquished”? Gwynplaine became the rage. The listless came to laugh, the melancholy came to laugh, evil consciences came to laugh,—a laugh so irresistibile that it seemed almost an epidemic. There is one epidemic from which men do not fly, and that is the contagion of joy.

Gwynplaine's successes, it must be admitted, had not extended beyond the lower classes. A great crowd

¹ O, come, and love! thou art soul, I am heart.

means a crowd of nobodies. "Chaos Vanquished" could be seen for a penny. Fashionable people never go where the price of admission is a penny.

Ursus had a very exalted opinion of this work, which he had brooded over a long time. "It is very much in the style of one Shakspeare," he said modestly. The juxtaposition of Dea added to the indescribable effect produced by Gwynplaine. Her white face by the side of the gnome, represented what might have been called divine astonishment. The audience regarded Dea with a sort of mysterious anxiety. She had in her aspect the dignity of a virgin and of a priestess. They saw that she was blind, and yet felt that she could see. She seemed to stand on the threshold of the supernatural. The light that beamed on her seemed half earthly and half heavenly. She had come to work on earth, and to work as heaven works, in the radiance of morning. She found a hydra, and created a soul. She seemed like a creative power, satisfied, but astonished at the result of her creation; and the audience fancied that they could see in the divine surprise of her face wonder at the result she had achieved. They felt that she loved this monster. Did she know that he was one? Yes, since she touched him; no, since she accepted him. Without going too deep, for spectators do not like the fatigue of seeking below the surface, something more was understood than was perceived. And this strange spectacle had the transparency of an avatar.

As for Dea, what she felt cannot be expressed in human words; she knew that she was in the midst of a crowd, and yet knew not what a crowd was. She heard a murmur, that was all. For her the crowd was but a breath. Generations are passing breaths. Man respire, aspires, and expires. In the crowd Dea felt utterly alone, and shuddered as one shudders on the edge of a

precipice. Suddenly, even while shuddering at her isolation, she regains confidence. She has found her thread of safety in the universe of shadows, — she has placed her hand on Gwynplaine's powerful head. Joy unspeakable fills her heart as she lays her rosy fingers on his thick locks. Wool when touched gives an impression of softness. Dea touched a lamb which she knew to be a lion. Her whole heart flowed out in love ineffable. She felt safe now, she had found her saviour. The public believed that they saw the contrary. To the spectators the being loved was Gwynplaine, and the saviour was Dea. "What does it matter?" thought Ursus, to whom the heart of Dea was an open book. And Dea, reassured, consoled, and delighted, adored as an angel what the people regarded as a monster.

True love never wanes. Being all soul it cannot cool. A brazier may become full of cinders; not so a star. These exquisite impressions were renewed every evening for Dea, and she was ready to weep with tenderness whilst the audience was in convulsions of laughter. Those around her were only joyful; she was happy.

The sensation of gaiety due to the sudden shock caused by the sight of Gwynplaine was evidently not intended by Ursus. He would have preferred more smiles and less laughter, and more of a literary triumph. But success consoles. He reconciled himself to this disappointment every evening, as he counted how many shillings the piles of farthings made, and how many pounds the piles of shillings made. He consoled himself, too, with the belief that after their laughter was over, "Chaos Vanquished" would continue to haunt them by reason of the noble sentiments it inculcated. Perhaps he was not altogether wrong; the foundations of a work settle down in the mind of the public. The fact is, the spectators, attentive to the wolf, the bear,

to the man, then to the music, to the howlings silenced by harmony, to the night dispelled by dawn, to the chant releasing the light, accepted with a confused, dull sympathy, and with a certain emotional respect, the dramatic poem of "Chaos Vanquished," the victory of spirit over matter, ending with the triumph of man.

Such were the vulgar pleasures of the people. They sufficed them. The people had not the means of going to the elevating prize-fights of the gentry, and could not bet a thousand guineas on Helmsgail against Phelemghe-Madone, like great lords and gentlemen.

CHAPTER X.

AN OUTSIDER'S VIEW OF MEN AND THINGS.

MAN has a desire to revenge himself on that which pleases him. Hence the contempt felt for the comedian. This being charms, diverts, distracts, teaches, enchants, consoles me, transports me into an ideal world, is agreeable and useful to me. What evil can I do him in return? Humiliate him. Disdain is a crushing blow, so I will crush him with disdain. He amuses me, therefore he is vile. He serves me, therefore I hate him. Where can I find a stone to throw at him? Priest, give me yours. Philosopher, give me yours. Bossuet, excommunicate him. Rousseau, insult him. Orator, spit the pebbles from your mouth at him. Bear, fling your stone. Let us hurl stones at the tree, hit the fruit and eat it. Bravo! down with him! To repeat poetry is to be infected with the plague. Wretched play-actor! we will put him in the pillory for his success. Let him follow up his triumph with our hisses. Let him collect a crowd, and yet create a solitude around him. Thus it is that the wealthy, termed the higher classes, have invented for the actor that form of isolation known as public applause.

The vulgar herd is less brutal. They neither hated nor despised Gwynplaine. Only the meanest calker of the meanest crew of the meanest merchantman, anchored in the meanest English sea-port, considered himself immeasurably superior to this amuser of the "scum,"

and believed that a calker is as superior to an actor as a lord is to a calker. Gwynplaine was, therefore, like all comedians, applauded and kept at a distance. Truly, success in this world is a crime, and must be bitterly expiated. He who obtains the medal has to take its reverse side as well.

For Gwynplaine there was no reverse side. In one sense, both sides of his medal pleased him. He was satisfied with the applause, and content with the isolation. In applause, he was rich; in isolation, happy. To be rich, to one of his low estate, means to be no longer wretchedly poor, to have neither holes in his clothes nor cold at his hearth, nor emptiness in his stomach. It is to eat when hungry, and drink when thirsty. It is to have everything needful, including a penny for a beggar. This paltry wealth, enough for liberty, Gwynplaine now possessed. So far as his soul was concerned, he was opulent. He had love. What more could he want? Nothing.

You may think that, had the offer been made to him to cure his disfigurement, he would have jumped at it. But he would have refused it emphatically. What! to throw off his mask and have his former face restored, to be the creature he had perchance been created, handsome and charming? No, he would not have consented to it. For what would he have to support Dea upon? what would have become of the poor child, the sweet blind girl who loved him? Without his disfigurement, making him a clown without parallel, he would have been a common mountebank, like any other; a common athlete, a picker up of pence from the chinks in the pavement, and Dea would, perhaps, not have had bread to eat. It was with deep and tender pride that he felt himself the protector of the helpless and heavenly creature. Night, solitude, nakedness, weakness, ignorance,

hunger, and thirst — the seven dread jaws of poverty — yawned about her, and he was Saint George fighting the dragon. He triumphed over poverty. How? By his deformity. By means of his deformity he was useful, helpful, victorious, great! He had but to show himself, and money poured in. He was a master of crowds, the sovereign of the mob. He could do everything for Dea. He supplied her every want; her desires, her tastes, her fancies, — in the limited sphere in which wishes are possible to the blind, — he gratified.

Gwynplaine and Dea had been, as we have already shown, a Providence to each other. He felt himself raised on her wings, she felt herself carried in his arms. To protect the being who loves you, to give what she requires to her who shines on you as your star, can anything be sweeter? Gwynplaine possessed this supreme happiness, and he owed it to his deformity. By it he had gained the means of livelihood for himself and others; by it he had gained independence, liberty, celebrity, internal satisfaction, and pride. In his deformity he was invulnerable. The Fates could do nothing beyond this blow in which they had expended their whole force, but which he had converted into a triumph. This greatest of misfortunes had become the summit of Elysium. Gwynplaine was imprisoned in his deformity, — but with Dea. And this was, as we have already said, to live in a dungeon in paradise. A wall stood between them and the living world. So much the better. This wall protected as well as enclosed them. What could harm Dea, what could harm Gwynplaine, with such a fortress around them? To deprive him of his success was impossible. They would have to deprive him of his face. Take his love from him? Impossible! Dea could not see him. The blindness of Dea was divinely incurable. What harm did his deformity do Gwyn-

plaine? None. What advantage did it give him? Every advantage. He was beloved, notwithstanding its horror, and, perhaps, for that very reason. Infirmity and deformity had, by instinct, been drawn towards and united with each other. To be beloved, is not that everything? Gwynplaine thought of his disfigurement only with gratitude. He was blessed in the stigma. With joy he felt that it was irremediable and eternal. What a blessing that it was so! While there were highways and fair-grounds, and journeys to take, and people below, and the sky above, they were sure of a living. Dea would want for nothing, and they would have love.

Gwynplaine would not have changed faces with Apollo. To be a monster was his happiness. He was so happy that he felt compassion for the men around him. He pitied all the rest of the world. No man's nature is wholly consistent; so, although he was glad to live within an enclosure, he lifted his head above the wall from time to time, but only to retreat again with even more joy into his solitude with Dea, having drawn his comparisons. What did he see around him? What were those living creatures of which his wandering life showed him so many specimens, changed every day? Always new crowds, but always the same multitude; ever new faces, but ever the same misfortunes. Every evening every known phase of human misery came within his notice.

The Green Box was popular. Low prices attract the low classes. Those who came were the weak, the poor, the insignificant. They rushed to Gwynplaine as they rushed to the gin-shop. They came to buy a pennyworth of forgetfulness. From his platform Gwynplaine passed these wretched people in review. His mind was absorbed in the contemplation of each successive form of wide-spread misery. The physiognomy of a man is moulded by conscience, and by the tenor of his life, and

the result is a host of mysterious excavations. There was not a pain nor an emotion of anger, shame, or despair, of which Gwynplaine did not see the trace. The mouths of those children were hungering for food. That man was a father, that woman a mother, and behind them might be seen families on the road to ruin. There was a face already marked by vice and contact with crime, and the reasons were plain, — ignorance and poverty. Another showed the stamp of original goodness, obliterated by social pressure, and turned to hatred. On the face of an old woman he saw starvation; on that of a girl, prostitution. The same fact, and although the girl had the resource of her youth, all the sadder for that! In this crowd were hands but no tools; the workers only asked for work, but work was wanting. Sometimes a soldier came and seated himself by the workmen, sometimes a wounded pensioner; and Gwynplaine saw the grim spectre of war. Here, he read lack of employment, there, man-farming, — slavery. On some brows he saw a gradual return to animalism, — that slow return of man to beast, produced in those in the lower walks of life by the good fortune of their superiors.

There was a break in the gloom for Gwynplaine. He and Dea had a loop-hole of happiness; the rest was damnation. Gwynplaine saw above him the thoughtless trampling of the powerful, the rich, the magnificent, and the great of the earth. Below, he saw the pale faces of the disinherited. He saw himself and Dea, with their blessings, so paltry in appearance, so great to themselves, between these two worlds. That which was above went and came, free, joyous, dancing, carelessly trampling everything and everybody under foot; above him, the world which treads; below, the world which is trodden upon. It is a fatal fact, and one indicating a profound social evil, that happiness should crush misery. Gwynplaine comprehended this gloomy fact thoroughly. What

a destiny! Must a man needs drag himself along through mire and corruption, with such vicious tastes, such a total abdication of his rights, or such abjectness that one feels inclined to crush him under foot? Of what butterfly can this earthly life be grub? What! in this vast crowd of ignorant, starving creatures, scarcely able to distinguish good from evil, — the inflexibility of human laws producing marvellous laxity of conscience, — is there no child that grows but to be stunted, no virgin that matures but for sin, no rose that blooms but for the slimy snail?

Gwynplaine shuddered as he saw the foaming wave of misery dash over the crowd of humanity. He himself was safe in port, as he watched the wrecks around him. Sometimes he buried his disfigured head in his hands and dreamed. What folly to expect to be happy! What an idle dream! Strange ideas arose within him. Absurd notions flitted through his brain. Because he had once succoured an infant, he felt a ridiculous desire to succour the whole world. The mists of reverie sometimes obscured his individuality, and he lost all ideas of proportion so far as to ask himself the question, "What can be done for the poor?" Sometimes he was so absorbed in the subject that he unconsciously uttered his thoughts aloud. Ursus shrugged his shoulders and looked at him wonderingly.

"Oh, if I were powerful, would I not aid the wretched?" Gwynplaine would exclaim, continuing his reverie. But what am I? — A mere atom. What can I do? — Nothing."

He was mistaken. He was able to do a great deal for the wretched. He could make them laugh; and, as we have said before, to make people laugh is to make them forget. What a benefactor to humanity is he who can bestow forgetfulness!

CHAPTER XI.

GWYNPLAINE THINKS JUSTICE, AND URSUS SPEAKS TRUTH.

A PHILOSOPHER is a spy; so it was only natural that Ursus should watch his pupil closely. Our soliloquies leave on our brows a faint reflection, distinguishable to the eye of a physiognomist. Hence, the ideas that occurred to Gwynplaine did not escape Ursus. One day as Gwynplaine was meditating, Ursus took him by the jacket, and exclaimed, —

“ You strike me as being a close observer! You fool! Take care. It is no business of yours. You have only one thing to do, — to love Dea. You have two great causes for thankfulness, — the first is, that the crowd sees your face; the second is, that Dea does not. You have no right to the happiness you possess, for no woman who saw your mouth would ever consent to your kiss; and the mouth which has made your fortune, and the face which has given you riches, are not your own. You were not born with that countenance. It was borrowed from the grimace which lurks in the depths of perdition. You have stolen your mask from the devil. You are hideous; be satisfied with having drawn that prize in the lottery of life. There are in this world (and a very good thing it is too) the happy by right, and the happy by luck. You are happy by luck. You are in a cave wherein a star is enclosed. The poor star belongs to you. Do not seek to leave the

cave; and guard your star, O spider! You have Venus in your web. Do me the favour to be satisfied. I see your dreams are troubled. It is idiotic of you. Listen, I am going to speak to you in the language of true poetry. Let Dea eat beefsteaks and mutton-chops, and in six months she will be as strong as a Turk; marry her immediately, give her a child, two children, three children, a long string of children. That is what I call philosophy. Moreover, it is happiness, which is no folly. To have children is a glimpse of heaven. Have brats: blow their noses, spank them, wash them, and put them to bed. Let them swarm about you. If they laugh, it is well; if they howl, it is better, — crying is healthy. Watch them suck at six months, crawl at a year, walk at two, grow tall at fifteen, fall in love at twenty. He who has these joys has everything. For myself, I lacked the privilege, and that is the reason why I am such a brute. God, a composer of beautiful poems and the first of men of letters, said to his fellow-workman, Moses, 'Increase and multiply.' Such is the text. So multiply, you beast! As for the world, it is as it is; you cannot make nor mar it. Do not trouble yourself about it. Pay no attention to what goes on outside. A comedian is made to be looked at, not to look. Do you know what there is outside? The happy, by right. You, I repeat, are one of the happy by chance. You are the pickpocket of the happiness of which they are the rightful proprietors. They are the legitimate possessors; you are an interloper. You live in concubinage with luck. What do you want that you have not already? Shibboleth help me! This fellow is a rascal. Such happiness is a swindle. Those who possess happiness by right do not like folks below them to have so much enjoyment. If they ask you what right you have to be happy, you will not know what to an-

swer. You have no patent, and they have. Jupiter, Allah, Vishnou, Sabaoth, it matters not who, has given them the passport to happiness. Beware of them. Do not meddle with them, lest they should meddle with you. Wretch! do you know what the man is who is happy by right? He is a terrible being. He is a lord. A lord! He must have intrigued pretty well in the devil's unknown country before he was born, to enter life by the door he did. How difficult it must have been to him to be born! It is the only trouble he has given himself; but, just Heaven! what a one!—to bribe destiny, that egregious blockhead, to mark him in his cradle a master of men; to bribe the box-keeper to give him the best place at the show. Read the memoranda in the old van which I have placed on the half-pay list. Read that breviary of wisdom, and you will see what it is to be a lord. A lord is one who has all, and is all. A lord is one who lives far above his own nature. A lord is one who has when young the rights of an old man; when old, the success in intrigue of a young one; if vicious, the homage of respectable people; if a coward, the command of brave men; if a do-nothing, the fruits of labour; if ignorant, the diploma of Cambridge or Oxford; if a fool, the admiration of poets; if ugly, the smiles of women; if a Thersites, the helm of Achilles; if a hare, the skin of a lion. Do not misunderstand my words. I do not say that a lord must necessarily be ignorant, or a coward, or ugly, or stupid, or old. I only mean that he may be all those things without any detriment to himself. On the contrary. Lords are princes. The King of England is only a lord, the first peer of the peerage; that is all, but it is much. Kings were formerly called lords,—the Lord of Denmark, the Lord of Ireland, the Lord of the Isles. The Lord of Norway was first called king three hundred years ago.

Lucius, the most ancient king in England, was addressed by Saint Telesphorus as my Lord Lucius. The lords are peers — that is to say, equals — of whom? Of the king. I do not make the mistake of confounding the lords with parliament. The assembly of the people which the Saxons before the Conquest called *wittenagemote*, the Normans, after the Conquest, entitled *parliamentum*. By degrees the people were turned out. The king's letters convoking the Commons, addressed formerly *ad concilium impendendum*, are now addressed *ad consentiendum*. They have the privilege of saying "Yes." But the peers have the right to say "No;" and the proof is that they have said it. The peers can cut off the king's head. The people cannot. The stroke of the hatchet which decapitated Charles I. is an encroachment, not on the king, but on the peers; and it was well to place on the gibbet the carcass of Cromwell. The lords have power. Why? Because they have the property. Glance over the leaves of the Domesday-book. That is proof that the lords own England. It is the registry of the estates of subjects, compiled under William the Conqueror; and it is in the charge of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. To copy anything in it, you have to pay twopence a line. It is a fine book! Do you know that I was once physician to a lord who was called Marmaduke, and who had thirty-six thousand a year? Think of that, you hideous idiot! Do you know that, with rabbits from the warrens of Earl Lindsay only, they could feed all the riff-raff of the Cinque Ports? And the good order kept! Every poacher is hung. For two long, furry ears sticking out of a game-bag, I saw the father of six children hanging on the gibbet. Such is the peerage. The rabbit of a great lord is of more importance than God's image in a man. Lords exist, you see, you rascal! and we must think it well that they do. Even if we do not, what harm

will it do them? The people object, indeed! Why? Plautus himself would never have entertained such an absurd idea. A philosopher would be thought jesting if he advised a poor devil of the masses to cry out against the size and weight of the lords. As well might the gnat dispute with the foot of an elephant. One day I saw a hippopotamus tread upon a mole-hill; he crushed it utterly. He was innocent. The great soft-headed fool of a mastodon was not even aware of the mole's existence. My son, the down-trodden moles are the human race. To crush is the universal law. And do you think that the mole himself crushes nothing? Why, he is the mastodon of the flesh-worm, who in turn is the mastodon of the globe-worm.

“ But let us cease arguing. My boy, there are coaches in the world; my lord is inside, the people under the wheels; the philosopher gets out of the way. Stand aside, and let them pass. As for me, I love lords, and yet shun them. I lived with one; the charm of the recollection suffices me. I remember his country house; it would be impossible to conceive of anything more grand and beautiful than Marmaduke Lodge and its surroundings. The houses, country seats, and palaces of the lords form a collection of all that is greatest and most magnificent in this flourishing kingdom. I love our lords. I am grateful to them for being opulent, powerful, and prosperous. I myself am clothed in shadow, so I look with interest upon the shred of heavenly blue which is called a lord. You enter Marmaduke Lodge by an exceedingly spacious courtyard, which forms an oblong square, divided into eight spaces, each surrounded by a balustrade; on each side is a wide approach, and a superb hexagonal fountain plays in the midst; this fountain is formed of two basins, which are surmounted by a dome of exquisite open-work, elevated

on six columns. It was there that I knew a learned Frenchman, Monsieur l'Abbé du Cros, who belonged to the Jacobin monastery in the Rue Saint Jacques. Half the library of Erpenius is at Marmaduke Lodge, the other half is in the theological schools at Cambridge. I used to read the books, seated under the richly ornamented portal. These things are only shown to a select number of curious travellers. Do you know, you ridiculous boy, that William North, who is Lord Grey of Rolleston, and sits fourteenth on the bench of Barons, has more forest trees on his mountains than you have hairs on your horrible noddle? Do you know that Lord Norreys of Rycote, who is Earl of Abingdon, has a square keep a hundred feet high, having this device: *Virtus ariete fortior*; which you would think meant that virtue is stronger than a ram, but which really means, you idiot, that courage is stronger than a battering-machine. Yes, I honour, accept, respect, and revere our lords. It is the lords who, with her royal Majesty, labour to ensure and preserve the welfare of the nation. Their consummate wisdom shines in critical junctures. Their precedence over others I wish they had not; but they have it. What is called principality in Germany and grandeeship in Spain, is called peerage in England and France. There being a fair show of reason for considering the world a wretched place, Heaven felt where the burden was most galling, and to prove that it knew how to make happy people, created lords for the satisfaction of philosophers. This acts as a set-off, and gets Heaven out of the scrape, affording it a decent escape from a false position. The great are great. A peer, speaking of himself, says "We." A peer is a plural. The king calls the peer *consanguinei nostri*. The peers have made a multitude of wise laws; among others, one which condemns to death any one who cuts down a

three-year-old poplar tree. Their supremacy is such that they have a language of their own. In heraldic style, black, which is called *sable* for gentry, is called *saturne* for princes, and *diamond* for peers. Diamond powder! a night thick with stars, such is the night of the happy! Even among themselves these high and mighty lords have their distinctions. A baron cannot bathe with a viscount without his permission. These are indeed excellent safeguards for the nation. What a fine thing it is for the people to have twenty-five dukes, five marquises, seventy-six earls, nine viscounts, and sixty-one barons; making altogether a hundred and seventy-six peers, some of whom are "your grace," and some "my lord." What matter a few rags here and there; everybody cannot be dressed in cloth of gold. Let the rags be. Can you not gaze on the purple? One counterbalances the other. Of course, there are the poor; what of them? They are made to add to the comfort of the opulent. Devil take it! our lords are our glory! The pack of hounds belonging to Charles, Baron Mohun, costs him as much as the hospital for lepers in Moorgate, and Christ's Hospital, founded for children, in 1553, by Edward VI. Thomas Osborne, Duke of Leeds, spends yearly on his liveries five thousand golden guineas. The Spanish *grandees* have a guardian appointed by law to prevent them from ruining themselves. That is cowardly. Our lords are extravagant and magnificent. I honour them for it. Let us not abuse them like envious folks. I feel happy when a beautiful vision passes. I do not possess the light myself, but I have the reflection. A reflect on thrown on my ulcer, you will say. Go to the devil! I am a Job, happy in the contemplation of Trimalcion. Oh, that beautiful and radiant planet up there! But the moonlight is something! To suppress the lords was an idea

which Orestes, mad as he was, would not have dared to entertain. To say that the lords are mischievous or useless, is to say that the State should be revolutionized, and that men are not made to live like cattle, browsing the grass and bitten by the dog. The field is shorn by the sheep, the sheep by the shepherd. It is all one to me. I am a philosopher, and I attach just about as much importance to life as a fly. Life is only a lodging-house. When I think that Henry Bowes Howard, Earl of Berkshire, has in his stable twenty-four state carriages, of which one is mounted in silver, and another in gold, — good heavens! I know that every one does not possess twenty-four state carriages; but there is no need to complain for all that. Because you were cold one night, what was that to him? It concerns you only. Others besides you suffer from cold and hunger. Don't you know that but for the cold Dea would not have been blind; and if Dea were not blind, she would not love you? Think of that, you fool! Besides, if all the people who are unhappy were to complain, there would be a pretty tumult! Silence is the rule. I have no doubt that Heaven imposes silence on the damned, otherwise Heaven itself would be spoiled by their everlasting wailing. The happiness of Olympus is ensured by the silence of Cocytus. Then, good people, be silent! I do better myself; I approve and admire.

“Just now I was enumerating the lords, and I ought to add to the list two archbishops and twenty-four bishops. Truly, I am quite affected when I think of it! I remember to have seen at the tithe-gathering of the Rev. Dean of Raphoe, who combined the peerage with the church, a great tithe of beautiful wheat taken from the peasants in the neighbourhood, and which the dean had not been at the trouble of growing. This left him time to say his prayers. Do you know that Lord

Marmaduke, my master, was Lord Grand Treasurer of Ireland, and High Seneschal of the sovereignty of Knaresborough in the county of York? Do you know that the Lord High Chamberlain, which is an hereditary office in the family of the Dukes of Lancaster, dresses the king for his coronation, and receives for his trouble forty yards of crimson velvet, besides the bed on which the king has slept; and that the Usher of the Black Rod is his deputy? I should like to see you deny this, that the senior viscount of England is Robert Brent, created a viscount by Henry V. The lords' titles imply sovereignty over land, except that of Earl Rivers, who takes his title from his family name. How admirable is the right which they have to tax others, and to levy, for instance, four shillings on the pound sterling income-tax, which has just been continued for another year. And all the fine taxes on distilled spirits, on the excise of wine and beer, on tonnage and poundage, on cider, on mum, malt, and prepared barley, on coals, and on a hundred things besides. Let us respect the powers that be. The clergy themselves are dependent on the lords. The Bishop of Man is subject to the Earl of Derby. The lords have wild beasts of their own, which they place in their armorial bearings. God not having made animals enough, they have invented others. They have created the heraldic wild boar, who is as much above the wild boar as a wild boar is above the common pig, and a lord is above a priest. They have created the griffin, which is an eagle to lions, and a lion to eagles, terrifying lions by his wings, and eagles by his mane. They have the guivre, the unicorn, the serpent, the salamander, the tarask, the dree, the dragon, and the hippogriff. All these things, terrible to us, are to them but an ornament and an embellishment. They have a menagerie which they call the blazon, in which

these unknown beasts roar. The prodigies of the forest are nothing compared to the inventions of their pride. Their vanity is full of phantoms which move as in a sublime night, armed with helm and cuirass, spurs on their heels and sceptres in their hands, saying in a grave voice, 'We are the ancestors!' Canker-worms eat the roots, and panoplies eat the people. Why not? Can we expect to change the laws? The peerage is part of the order of society. Do you know that there is a duke in Scotland who can ride ninety miles without leaving his own estate? Do you know that the Archbishop of Canterbury has a revenue of £40,000 a year? Do you know that her Majesty has £700,000 sterling from the civil list, besides castles, forests, domains, fiefs, tenancies, freeholds, prebendaries, tithes, rent, confiscations, and fines, which bring in over a million sterling? Those who are not satisfied are hard to please."

"Yes," murmured Gwynplaine, sadly; "the paradise of the rich is made out of the hell of the poor."

CHAPTER XII.

URSUS THE POET DRAGS ON URSUS THE PHILOSOPHER.

JUST then Dea entered. Gwynplaine looked at her, and saw her only. Such is love; one may be carried away for a moment by the importunity of some other idea, but the beloved one enters, and everything that does not pertain to her immediately fades away, without her dreaming perhaps that she is effacing all the rest of the world from one's mind. Let us mention a circumstance. In "Chaos Vanquished" the word *monstro*, addressed to Gwynplaine, displeased Dea. Sometimes, with the smattering of Spanish, which every one possessed at the period, she took it into her head to replace it by *quiero*, which signifies, "I wish it." Ursus tolerated, although not without considerable impatience, this alteration in his text. He might have said to Dea, as in our own day Moessard said to Vissot, "Tu manques de respect au repertoire." "The Laughing Man." This was the form Gwynplaine's celebrity had assumed. His name, Gwynplaine, but little known at any time, was hidden under this nickname, as his face was hidden under its ghastly grin. His popularity was like his visage, — a mask. His name, however, appeared on a large placard in front of the Green Box, which bore the following notice composed by Ursus:—

"Do not fail to see Gwynplaine, who was deserted at the age of ten, on the night of the 29th of January, 1690, by villainous Comprachicos, on the coast of Portland. The little boy has grown up, and is now known as

"THE LAUGHING MAN."

The existence of these mountebanks resembled the life of lepers in a leper-house as well as of the blessed in one of the Pleiades. Every day there was a sudden transition from the noisy exhibition outside to the most complete seclusion. Every evening they made their exit from the world. They were like the dead, vanishing on condition of being re-born next day. A comedian is a sort of revolving light, appearing one moment, disappearing the next, and existing for the public only as a phantom, as his life circles round. To exhibition succeeded isolation. As soon as the performance was finished, and even while the spectators were dispersing, and their murmur of satisfaction was still heard in the streets, the Green Box drew in its platform, as a fortress does its drawbridge, and all communication with mankind was cut off. On one side, the universe; on the other, the van; but the van contained liberty, clear consciences, courage, devotion, innocence, happiness, love,—all the heavenly constellations. Clear-sighted blindness and fondly beloved deformity sat side by side,—hand pressing hand, brow touching brow,—and whispered to each other, intoxicated with love.

The compartment in the middle of the van served two purposes,—for the public it was a stage; for the actors, a dining-room. Ursus, ever delighting in comparisons, profited by this diversity of uses to liken the central compartment in the Green Box to the arradach in an Abyssinian hut. Ursus counted the receipts, then they supped.

Love idealizes everything. When persons are in love, eating and drinking together afford opportunities for many sweet promiscuous touches, by which a mouthful becomes a kiss. The two drank ale or wine from the same glass, as they might drink dew out of the same

lily. Two souls in love are as full of grace as two birds. Gwynplaine waited on Dea, cut her bread, poured out her drink, approaching as close to her as possible.

"Hum!" cried Ursus, and turned away, his scolding melting into a smile.

The wolf supped under the table, heedless of everything which did not actually affect his bone. Fibi and Vinos shared the repast, but gave no trouble. These vagabonds, who were only half civilized, and as uncouth as ever, conversed with each other in the Gipsy tongue. At length Dea re-entered the women's apartment with Fibi and Vinos. Ursus chained Homo under the Green Box; Gwynplaine looked after the horses, — the lover becoming a groom, like one of Homer's heroes or Charlemagne's paladins. By midnight all were sound asleep, except the wolf, who, alive to his responsibility, now and then opened an eye. The next morning they met again, and breakfasted together, generally on ham and tea. Tea was introduced into England in 1668. In the middle of the day Dea, after the Spanish fashion, took a siesta, acting on the advice of Ursus, who considered her delicate, and slept several hours, while Gwynplaine and Ursus did all the little jobs of work, in doors and out, which their wandering life necessitated.

Gwynplaine rarely wandèred far from the Green Box, except on unfrequented roads and in solitary places. In cities he went out only at night, disguised in a large slouched hat, so as not to show his face in the street. His face was seen uncovered only on the stage.

The Green Box had frequented cities but little. Gwynplaine at twenty-four had never seen any town larger than the Cinque Ports. His fame, however, was increasing. It had begun to rise above the populace, and to percolate into higher ground. Among the many who were fond of, and ran after, foreign curiosities and

prodigies, it was known that there was somewhere in existence, leading a wandering life, now here, now there, an extraordinary monster. They talked about him, they sought him, they wondered where he was. The laughing man was becoming decidedly famous. A certain lustre, too, was reflected from him upon "Chaos Vanquished." So much so that one day Ursus, being ambitious, exclaimed, —

"We must go to London."

END OF VOL. I.