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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE THREE CITIES TRILOGY: PARIS,
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THE THREE CITIES

PARIS

BY

EMILE ZOLA

TRANSLATED BY ERNEST A. VIZETELLY

BOOK II

I

REVOLUTIONISTS

IN that out-of-the-way street at Neuilly, along which nobody passed after dusk, Pierre's little house was now steeped in deep slumber under the black sky; each of its shutters closed, and not a ray of light stealing forth from within. And one could divine, too, the profound quietude of the little garden in the rear, a garden empty and lifeless, benumbed by the winter cold.

Pierre had several times feared that his brother would faint away in the cab in which they were journeying. Leaning back, and often sinking down, Guillaume spoke not a word. And terrible was the silence between them—a silence fraught with all the questions and answers which they

felt it would be useless and painful to exchange at such a time. However, the priest was anxious about the wound, and wondered to what surgeon he might apply, desirous as he was of admitting only a sure, staunch man into the secret, for he had noticed with how keen a desire to disappear his brother had sought to hide himself.

Until they reached the Arc de Triomphe the silence remained unbroken. It was only there that Guillaume seemed to emerge from the prostration of his reverie. "Mind, Pierre," said he, "no doctor. We will attend to this together."

Pierre was on the point of protesting, but he realised that it would be useless to discuss the subject at such a moment, and so he merely waved his hand to signify that he should act in spite of the prohibition were it necessary. In point of fact, his anxiety had increased, and, when the cab at last drew up before the house, it was with real relief that he saw his brother alight without evincing any marked feebleness. He himself quickly paid the driver, well-pleased, too, at finding that nobody, not even a neighbour, was about. And having opened the door with his latch key, he helped the injured man to ascend the steps.

A little night lamp glimmered faintly in the vestibule. On hearing the door open, Pierre's servant, Sophie, had at once emerged from the kitchen. A short, thin, dark woman of sixty, she had formed part of the household for more than thirty years, having served the mother before serving the son. She knew Guillaume, having seen him when he was a young man, and doubtless she now recognised him, although well-nigh ten years had gone by since he had last crossed that threshold. Instead of evincing any surprise, she seemed to consider his extraordinary return quite natural, and remained as silent and discreet as usual. She led, indeed, the life of a recluse, never speaking unless her work absolutely required it. And thus she now contented herself with saying: "Monsieur l'Abbe, Monsieur Bertheroy is in the study, and has been waiting there for a quarter of an hour."

At this Guillaume intervened, as if the news revived him: "Does Bertheroy still come here, then? I'll see him willingly. His is one of the best, the broadest, minds of these days. He has still remained my master."

A former friend of their father,—the illustrious chemist, Michel Froment,—Bertheroy had now, in his turn, become one of the loftiest glories of France, one to whom chemistry owed much of the extraordinary progress that has made it the mother-science, by which the very face of the earth is being changed. A member of the Institute, laden with offices and honours, he had retained much affection for Pierre, and occasionally visited him in this wise before dinner, by way of relaxation, he would say.

"You showed him into the study? All right, then, we will go there," said the Abbe to the servant. "Light a lamp and take it into my room, and get my bed ready so that my brother may go to bed at once."

While Sophie, without a word or sign of surprise, was obeying these instructions, the brothers went into their father's former laboratory, of which the priest had now made a spacious study. And it was with a cry of joyous astonishment that the *savant* greeted them on seeing them enter the room side by side, the one supporting the other. "What, together!" he exclaimed. "Ah! my dear children, you could not have caused me greater pleasure! I who have so often deplored your painful misunderstanding."

Bertheroy was a tall and lean septuagenarian, with angular features. His yellow skin clung like parchment to the projecting bones of his cheeks and jaw. Moreover, there was nothing imposing about him; he looked like some old shop-keeping herbalist. At the same time he had a fine, broad, smooth brow, and his eyes still glittered brightly beneath his tangled hair.

"What, have you injured yourself, Guillaume?" he continued, as soon as he saw the bandaged hand.

Pierre remained silent, so as to let his brother tell the story as he chose. Guillaume had realised that he must confess the truth, but in simple fashion, without detailing the circumstances. "Yes, in an explosion," he answered, "and I really think that I have my wrist broken."

At this, Bertheroy, whose glance was fixed upon him, noticed that his moustaches were burnt, and that there was an expression of bewildered stupor, such as follows a catastrophe, in his eyes. Forthwith the *savant* became grave and circumspect; and, without seeking to compel confidence by any questions, he simply said: "Indeed! an explosion! Will you let me see the injury? You know that before letting chemistry ensnare me I studied medicine, and am still somewhat of a surgeon."

On hearing these words Pierre could not restrain a heart-cry: "Yes, yes, master! Look at the injury—I was very anxious, and to find you here is unhopd-for good fortune!"

The *savant* glanced at him, and divined that the hidden circumstances of the accident must be serious. And then, as Guillaume, smiling, though paling with weakness, consented to the suggestion, Bertheroy retorted that before anything else he must be put to bed. The servant just then returned to say the bed was ready, and so they all went into the adjoining room, where the

injured man was soon undressed and helped between the sheets.

"Light me, Pierre," said Bertheroy, "take the lamp; and let Sophie give me a basin full of water and some cloths." Then, having gently washed the wound, he resumed: "The devil! The wrist isn't broken, but it's a nasty injury. I am afraid there must be a lesion of the bone. Some nails passed through the flesh, did they not?"

Receiving no reply, he relapsed into silence. But his surprise was increasing, and he closely examined the hand, which the flame of the explosion had scorched, and even sniffed the shirt cuff as if seeking to understand the affair better. He evidently recognised the effects of one of those new explosives which he himself had studied, almost created. In the present case, however, he must have been puzzled, for there were characteristic signs and traces the significance of which escaped him.

"And so," he at last made up his mind to ask, carried away by professional curiosity, "and so it was a laboratory explosion which put you in this nice condition? What devilish powder were you concocting then?"

Guillaume, ever since he had seen Bertheroy thus studying his injury, had, in spite of his sufferings, given marked signs of annoyance and agitation. And as if the real secret which he wished to keep lay precisely in the question now put to him, in that powder, the first experiment with which had thus injured him, he replied with an air of restrained ardour, and a straight frank glance: "Pray do not question me, master. I cannot answer you. You have, I know, sufficient nobility of nature to nurse me and care for me without exacting a confession."

"Oh! certainly, my friend," exclaimed Bertheroy; "keep your secret. Your discovery belongs to you if you have made one; and I know that you are capable of putting it to the most generous use. Besides, you must be aware that I have too great a passion for truth to judge the actions of others, whatever their nature, without knowing every circumstance and motive."

So saying, he waved his hand as if to indicate how broadly tolerant and free from error and superstition was that lofty sovereign mind of his, which in spite of all the orders that bedizened him, in spite of all the academical titles that he bore as an official *savant*, made him a man of the boldest and most independent views, one whose only passion was truth, as he himself said.

He lacked the necessary appliances to do more than dress the wound, after making sure that no fragment of any projectile had remained in the flesh. Then he at last went off, promising to return at an early hour on the morrow; and, as the priest escorted him to the street door, he spoke some comforting words: if the bone had not been deeply injured all would be well.

On returning to the bedside, Pierre found his brother still sitting up and seeking fresh energy in his desire to write home and tranquillise his loved ones. So the priest, after providing pen and paper, again had to take up the lamp and light him. Guillaume fortunately retained full use of his right hand, and was thus able to pen a few lines to say that he would not be home that night. He addressed the note to Madame Leroi, the mother of his deceased mistress, who, since the latter's death, had remained with him and had reared his three sons. Pierre was aware also that the household at Montmartre included a young woman of five or six and twenty, the daughter of an old friend, to whom Guillaume had given shelter on her father's death, and whom he was soon to marry, in spite of the great difference in their ages. For the priest, however, all these were vague, disturbing things, condemnable features of disorderly life, and he had invariably pretended to be ignorant of them.

"So you wish this note to be taken to Montmartre at once?" he said to his brother.

"Yes, at once. It is scarcely more than seven o'clock now, and it will be there by eight. And you will choose a reliable man, won't you?"

"The best course will be for Sophie to take a cab. We need have no fear with her. She won't chatter. Wait a moment, and I will settle everything."

Sophie, on being summoned, at once understood what was wanted of her, and promised to say, in reply to any questions, that M. Guillaume had come to spend the night at his brother's, for reasons which she did not know. And without indulging in any reflections herself, she left the house, saying simply: "Monsieur l'Abbe's dinner is ready; he will only have to take the broth and the stew off the stove."

However, when Pierre this time returned to the bedside to sit down there, he found that Guillaume had fallen back with his head resting on both pillows. And he looked very weary and pale, and showed signs of fever. The lamp, standing on a corner of a side table, cast a soft light around, and so deep was the quietude that the big clock in the adjoining dining-room could be heard ticking. For a moment the silence continued around the two brothers, who, after so many years of separation, were at last re-united and alone together. Then the injured man brought his right hand to the edge of the sheet, and the priest grasped it, pressed it tenderly in his own. And the clasp was a long one, those two brotherly hands remaining locked, one in the other.

"My poor little Pierre," Guillaume faintly murmured, "you must forgive me for falling on you in this fashion. I've invaded the house and taken your bed, and I'm preventing you from dining."

"Don't talk, don't tire yourself any more," interrupted Pierre. "Is not this the right place for you when you are in trouble?"

A warmer pressure came from Guillaume's feverish hand, and tears gathered in his eyes. "Thanks, my little Pierre. I've found you again, and you are as gentle and loving as you always were. Ah! you cannot know how delightful it seems to me."

Then the priest's eyes also were dimmed by tears. Amidst the deep quietude, the great sense of comfort which had followed their violent emotion, the brothers found an infinite charm in being together once more in the home of their childhood.* It was there that both their father and mother had died—the father tragically, struck down by an explosion in his laboratory; the mother piously, like a very saint. It was there, too, in that same bed, that Guillaume had nursed Pierre, when, after their mother's death, the latter had nearly died; and it was there now that Pierre in his turn was nursing Guillaume. All helped to bow them down and fill them with emotion: the strange circumstances of their meeting, the frightful catastrophe which had caused them such a shock, the mysteriousness of the things which remained unexplained between them. And now that after so long a separation they were tragically brought together again, they both felt their memory awaking. The old house spoke to them of their childhood, of their parents dead and gone, of the far-away days when they had loved and suffered there. Beneath the window lay the garden, now icy cold, which once, under the sunbeams, had re-echoed with their play. On the left was the laboratory, the spacious room where their father had taught them to read. On the right, in the dining-room, they could picture their mother cutting bread and butter for them, and looking so gentle with her big, despairing eyes—those of a believer mated to an infidel. And the feeling that they were now alone in that home, and the pale, sleepy gleam of the lamp, and the deep silence of the garden and the house, and the very past itself, all filled them with the softest of emotion blended with the keenest bitterness.

* See M. Zola's "Lourdes," Day I., Chapter II.

They would have liked to talk and unbosom themselves. But what could they say to one another? Although their hands remained so tightly clasped, did not the most impassable of chasms separate them? In any case, they thought so. Guillaume was convinced that Pierre was a saint, a priest of the most robust faith, without a doubt, without aught in common with himself, whether in the sphere of ideas or in that of practical life. A hatchet-stroke had parted them, and each lived in a different world. And in the same way Pierre pictured Guillaume as one who had lost caste, whose conduct was most suspicious, who had never even married the mother of his three children, but was on the point of marrying that girl who was far too young for him, and who had come nobody knew whence. In him, moreover, were blended the passionate ideas of a *savant* and a revolutionist, ideas in which one found negation of everything, acceptance and possibly provocation of the worst forms of violence, with a glimpse of the vague monster of Anarchism underlying all. And so, on what basis could there be any understanding between them, since each retained his prejudices against the other, and saw him on the opposite side of the chasm, without possibility of any plank being thrown across it to enable them to unite? Thus, all alone in that room, their poor hearts bled with distracted brotherly love.

Pierre knew that, on a previous occasion, Guillaume had narrowly escaped being compromised in an Anarchist affair. He asked him no questions, but he could not help reflecting that he would not have hidden himself in this fashion had he not feared arrest for complicity. Complicity with Salvat? Was he really an accomplice? Pierre shuddered, for the only materials on which he could found a contrary opinion were, on one hand, the words that had escaped his brother after the crime, the cry he had raised accusing Salvat of having stolen a cartridge from him; and, on the other hand, his heroic rush into the doorway of the Duvillard mansion in order to extinguish the match. A great deal still remained obscure; but if a cartridge of that frightful explosive had been stolen from Guillaume the fact must be that he manufactured such cartridges and had others at home. Of course, even if he were not an accomplice, the injury to his wrist had made it needful for him to disappear. Given his bleeding hand, and the previous suspicions levelled against him, he would never have convinced anybody of his innocence. And yet, even allowing for these surmises, the affair remained wrapt in darkness: a crime on Guillaume's part seemed a possibility, and to Pierre it was all dreadful to think of.

Guillaume, by the trembling of his brother's moist, yielding hand, must in some degree have realised the prostration of his poor mind, already shattered by doubt and finished off by this calamity. Indeed, the sepulchre was empty now, the very ashes had been swept out of it.

"My poor little Pierre," the elder brother slowly said. "Forgive me if I do not tell you anything. I cannot do so. And besides, what would be the use of it? We should certainly not understand one another. . . . So let us keep from saying anything, and let us simply enjoy the delight of being together and loving one another in spite of all."

Pierre raised his eyes, and for a long time their glances lingered, one fixed on the other. "Ah!" stammered the priest, "how frightful it all is!"

Guillaume, however, had well understood the mute inquiry of Pierre's eyes. His own did not waver but replied boldly, beaming with purity and loftiness: "I can tell you nothing. Yet, all the same, let us love each other, my little Pierre."

And then Pierre for a moment felt that his brother was above all base anxiety, above the guilty fear of the man who trembles for himself. In lieu thereof he seemed to be carried away by the passion of some great design, the noble thought of concealing some sovereign idea, some secret which it was imperative for him to save. But, alas! this was only the fleeting vision of a vague hope; for all vanished, and again came the doubt, the suspicion, of a mind dealing with one that it knew nothing of.

And all at once a souvenir, a frightful spectacle, arose before Pierre's eyes and distracted him: "Did you see, brother," he stammered, "did you see that fair-haired girl lying under the archway, ripped open, with a smile of astonishment on her face?"

Guillaume in his turn quivered, and in a low and dolorous voice replied: "Yes, I saw her! Ah, poor little thing! Ah! the atrocious necessities, the atrocious errors, of justice!"

Then, amidst the frightful shudder that seemed to sweep by, Pierre, with his horror of all violence, succumbed, and let his face sink upon the counterpane at the edge of the bed. And he sobbed distractedly: a sudden attack of weakness, overflowing in tears, cast him there exhausted, with no more strength than a child. It was as if all his sufferings since the morning, the deep grief with which universal injustice and woe inspired him, were bursting forth in that flood of tears which nothing now could stay. And Guillaume, who, to calm his little brother, had set his hand upon his head, in the same way as he had often caressingly stroked his hair in childhood's days, likewise felt upset and remained silent, unable to find a word of consolation, resigned, as he was, to the eruption which in life is always possible, the cataclysm by which the slow evolution of nature is always liable to be precipitated. But how hard a fate for the wretched ones whom the lava sweeps away in millions! And then his tears also began to flow amidst the profound silence.

"Pierre," he gently exclaimed at last, "you must have some dinner. Go, go and have some. And screen the lamp; leave me by myself, and let me close my eyes. It will do me good."

Pierre had to content him. Still, he left the dining-room door open; and, weak for want of food, though he had not hitherto noticed it, he ate standing, with his ears on the alert, listening lest his brother should complain or call him. And the silence seemed to have become yet more complete, the little house sank, as it were, into annihilation, instinct with all the melancholy charm of the past.

At about half-past eight, when Sophie returned from her errand to Montmartre, Guillaume heard her step, light though it was. And he at once became restless and wanted to know what news she brought. It was Pierre, however, who enlightened him. "Don't be anxious. Sophie was received by an old lady who, after reading your note, merely answered, 'Very well.' She did not even ask Sophie a question, but remained quite composed without sign of curiosity."

Guillaume, realising that this fine serenity perplexed his brother, thereupon replied with similar calmness: "Oh! it was only necessary that grandmother should be warned. She knows well enough that if I don't return home it is because I can't."

However, from that moment it was impossible for the injured man to rest. Although the lamp was hidden away in a corner, he constantly opened his eyes, glanced round him, and seemed to listen, as if for sounds from the direction of Paris. And it at last became necessary for the priest to summon the servant and ask her if she had noticed anything strange on her way to or from Montmartre. She seemed surprised by the question, and answered that she had noticed nothing. Besides, the cab had followed the outer boulevards, which were almost deserted. A slight fog had again begun to fall, and the streets were steeped in icy dampness.

By the time it was nine o'clock Pierre realised that his brother would never be able to sleep if he were thus left without news. Amidst his growing feverishness the injured man experienced keen anxiety, a haunting desire to know if Salvat were arrested and had spoken out. He did not confess this; indeed he sought to convey the impression that he had no personal disquietude, which was doubtless true. But his great secret was stifling him; he shuddered at the thought that his lofty scheme, all his labour and all his hope, should be at the mercy of that unhappy man whom want had filled with delusions and who had sought to set justice upon earth by the aid of a bomb. And in vain did the priest try to make Guillaume understand that nothing certain could yet be known. He perceived that his impatience increased every minute, and at last resolved to make some effort to satisfy him.

But where could he go, of whom could he inquire? Guillaume, while talking and trying to guess with whom Salvat might have sought refuge, had mentioned Janzen, the Princess de Harn's mysterious lover; and for a moment he had even thought of sending to this man for information. But he reflected that if Janzen had heard of the explosion he was not at all the individual to wait for the police at home.

Meantime Pierre repeated: "I will willingly go to buy the evening papers for you—but there will certainly be nothing in them. Although I know almost everyone in Neuilly I can think of nobody who is likely to have any information, unless perhaps it were Bache—"

"You know Bache, the municipal councillor?" interrupted Guillaume.

"Yes, we have both had to busy ourselves with charitable work in the neighbourhood."

"Well, Bache is an old friend of mine, and I know no safer man. Pray go to him and bring him back with you."

A quarter of an hour later Pierre returned with Bache, who resided in a neighbouring street. And it was not only Bache whom he brought with him, for, much to his surprise, he had found Janzen at Bache's house. As Guillaume had suspected, Janzen, while dining at the Princess de Harn's, had heard of the crime, and had consequently refrained from returning to his little lodging in the Rue des Martyrs, where the police might well have set a trap for him. His connections were known, and he was aware that he was watched and was liable at any moment to arrest or expulsion as a foreign Anarchist. And so he had thought it prudent to solicit a few days' hospitality of Bache, a very upright and obliging man, to whom he entrusted himself without fear. He would never have remained with Rosemonde, that adorable lunatic who for a month past had been exhibiting him as her lover, and whose useless and dangerous extravagance of conduct he fully realised.

Guillaume was so delighted on seeing Bache and Janzen that he wished to sit up in bed again. But Pierre bade him remain quiet, rest his head on the pillows, and speak as little as possible. Then, while Janzen stood near, erect and silent, Bache took a chair and sat down by the bedside with many expressions of friendly interest. He was a stout man of sixty, with a broad, full face, a large white beard and long white hair. His little, gentle eyes had a dim, dreamy expression, while a pleasant, hopeful smile played round his thick lips. His father, a fervent St. Simonian, had brought him up in the doctrines of that belief. While retaining due respect for it, however, his personal inclinations towards orderliness and religion had led him to espouse the ideas of Fourier, in such wise that one found in him a succession and an abridgment, so to say, of two doctrines. Moreover, when he was about thirty, he had busied himself with spiritualism. Possessed of a comfortable little fortune, his only adventure in life had been his connection with the Paris Commune of 1871. How or why he had become a member of it he could now scarcely tell. Condemned to death by default, although he had sat among the Moderates, he had resided in Belgium until the amnesty; and since then Neuilly had elected him as its representative on the Paris Municipal Council, less by way of glorifying in him a victim of reaction than as a reward for his worthiness, for he was really esteemed by the whole district.

Guillaume, with his desire for tidings, was obliged to confide in his two visitors, tell them of the explosion and Salvat's flight, and how he himself had been wounded while seeking to extinguish the match. Janzen, with curly beard and hair, and a thin, fair face such as painters often attribute to the Christ, listened coldly, as was his wont, and at last said slowly in a gentle voice: "Ah! so it was Salvat! I thought it might be little Mathis—I'm surprised that it should be Salvat—for he hadn't made up his mind." Then, as Guillaume anxiously inquired if he thought that Salvat would speak out, he began to protest: "Oh! no; oh! no."

However, he corrected himself with a gleam of disdain in his clear, harsh eyes: "After all, there's no telling. Salvat is a man of sentiment."

Then Bache, who was quite upset by the news of the explosion, tried to think how his friend Guillaume, to whom he was much attached, might be extricated from any charge of complicity should he be denounced. And Guillaume, at sight of Janzen's contemptuous coldness, must have suffered keenly, for the other evidently believed him to be trembling, tortured by the one desire to save his own skin. But what could he say, how could he reveal the deep concern which rendered him so feverish without betraying the secret which he had hidden even from his brother?

However, at this moment Sophie came to tell her master that M. Theophile Morin had called with another gentleman. Much astonished by this visit at so late an hour, Pierre hastened into the next room to receive the new comers. He had become acquainted with Morin since his return from Rome, and had helped him to introduce a translation of an excellent scientific manual, prepared according to the official programmes, into the Italian schools.* A Franc-Comtois by birth, a compatriot of Proudhon, with whose poor family he had been intimate at Besancon, Morin, himself the son of a journeyman clockmaker, had grown up with Proudhonian ideas, full of affection for the poor and an instinctive hatred of property and wealth. Later on, having come to Paris as a school teacher, impassioned by study, he had given his whole mind to Auguste Comte. Beneath the fervent Positivist, however, one might yet find the old Proudhonian, the pauper who rebelled and detested want. Moreover, it was scientific Positivism that he clung to; in his hatred of all mysticism he would have naught to do with the fantastic religious leanings of Comte in his last years. And in Morin's brave, consistent, somewhat mournful life, there had been but one page of romance: the sudden feverish impulse which had carried him off to fight in Sicily by Garibaldi's side. Afterwards he had again become a petty professor in Paris, obscurely earning a dismal livelihood.

* See M. Zola's "Rome," Chapters IV. and XVI.

When Pierre returned to the bedroom he said to his brother in a tone of emotion: "Morin has brought me Barthes, who fancies himself in danger and asks my hospitality."

At this Guillaume forgot himself and became excited: "Nicholas Barthes, a hero with a soul worthy of antiquity. Oh! I know him; I admire and love him. You must set your door open wide for him."

Bache and Janzen, however, had glanced at one another smiling. And the latter, with his cold ironical air, slowly remarked: "Why does Monsieur Barthes hide himself? A great many people think he is dead; he is simply a ghost who no longer frightens anybody."

Four and seventy years of age as he now was, Barthes had spent nearly half a century in prison. He was the eternal prisoner, the hero of liberty whom each successive Government had carried from citadel to fortress. Since his youth he had been marching on amidst his dream of fraternity, fighting for an ideal Republic based on truth and justice, and each and every endeavour had led him to a dungeon; he had invariably finished his humanitarian reverie under bolts and bars. Carbonaro, Republican, evangelical sectarian, he had conspired at all times and in all places, incessantly struggling against the Power of the day, whatever it might be. And when the Republic at last had come, that Republic which had cost him so many years of gaol, it had, in its own turn, imprisoned him, adding fresh years of gloom to those which already had lacked sunlight. And thus he remained the martyr of freedom: freedom which he still desired in spite of everything; freedom, which, strive as he might, never came, never existed.

"But you are mistaken," replied Guillaume, wounded by Janzen's raillery. "There is again a thought of getting rid of Barthes, whose uncompromising rectitude disturbs our politicians; and he does well to take his precautions!"

Nicholas Barthes came in, a tall, slim, withered old man, with a nose like an eagle's beak, and eyes that still burned in their deep sockets, under white and bushy brows. His mouth, toothless but still refined, was lost to sight between his moustaches and snowy beard; and his hair, crowning him whitely like an aureola, fell in curls over his shoulders. Behind him with all modesty came Theophile Morin, with grey whiskers, grey, brush-like hair, spectacles, and yellow, weary mien—that of an old professor exhausted by years of teaching. Neither of them seemed astonished or awaited an explanation on finding that man in bed with an injured wrist. And there were no introductions: those who were acquainted merely smiled at one another.

Barthes, for his part, stooped and kissed Guillaume on both cheeks. "Ah!" said the latter, almost gaily, "it gives me courage to see you."

However, the new comers had brought a little information. The boulevards were in an agitated state, the news of the crime had spread from cafe to cafe, and everybody was anxious to see the late edition which one paper had published giving a very incorrect account of the affair, full of the most extraordinary details. Briefly, nothing positive was as yet known.

On seeing Guillaume turn pale Pierre compelled him to lie down again, and even talked of taking the visitors into the next room. But the injured man gently replied: "No, no, I promise you that I won't stir again, that I won't open my mouth. But stay there and chat together. I assure you that it will do me good to have you near me and hear you."

Then, under the sleepy gleams of the lamp, the others began to talk in undertones. Old Barthes, who considered that bomb to be both idiotic and abominable, spoke of it with the stupefaction of one who, after fighting like a hero through all the legendary struggles for liberty, found himself belated, out of his element, in a new era, which he could not understand. Did not the conquest of freedom suffice for everything? he added. Was there any other problem beyond that of founding the real Republic? Then, referring to Mege and his speech in the Chamber that afternoon, he bitterly arraigned Collectivism, which he declared to be one of the democratic forms of tyranny. Theophile Morin, for his part, also spoke against the Collectivist enrolling of the social forces, but he professed yet greater hatred of the odious violence of the Anarchists; for it was only by evolution that he expected progress, and he felt somewhat indifferent as to what political means might bring about the scientific society of to-morrow. And in like way Bache did not seem particularly fond of the Anarchists, though he was touched by the idyllic dream, the humanitarian hope, whose germs lay beneath their passion for destruction. And, like Barthes, he also flew into a passion with Mege, who since entering the Chamber had become, said he, a mere rhetorician and theorist, dreaming of dictatorship. Meantime Janzen, still erect, his face frigid and his lips curling ironically, listened to all three of them, and vented a few trenchant words to express his own Anarchist faith; the uselessness of drawing distinctions, and the necessity of destroying everything in order that everything might be rebuilt on fresh lines.

Pierre, who had remained near the bed, also listened with passionate attention. Amidst the downfall of his own beliefs, the utter void which he felt within him, here were these four men, who represented the cardinal points of this century's ideas, debating the very same terrible problem which brought him so much suffering, that of the new belief which the democracy of the coming century awaits. And, ah! since the days of the immediate ancestors, since the days of Voltaire and Diderot and Rousseau how incessantly had billows of ideas followed and jostled one another, the older ones giving birth to new ones, and all breaking and bounding in a tempest in which it was becoming so difficult to distinguish anything clearly! Whence came the wind, and whither was the ship of salvation going, for what port ought one to embark? Pierre had already thought that the balance-sheet of the century ought to be drawn up, and that, after accepting the legacies of Rousseau and the other precursors, he ought to study the ideas of St. Simon, Fourier and even Cabet; of Auguste Comte, Proudhon and Karl Marx as well, in order, at any rate, to form some idea of the distance that had been travelled, and of the cross-ways which one had now reached. And was not this an opportunity, since chance had gathered those men together in his house, living exponents of the conflicting doctrines which he wished to examine?

On turning round, however, he perceived that Guillaume was now very pale and had closed his eyes. Had even he, with his faith in science, felt the doubt which is born of contradictory theories, and the despair which comes when one sees the fight for truth resulting in growth of error?

"Are you in pain?" the priest anxiously inquired.

"Yes, a little. But I will try to sleep."

At this they all went off with silent handshakes. Nicholas Barthes alone remained in the house and slept in a room on the first floor which Sophie had got ready for him. Pierre, unwilling to quit his brother, dozed off upon a sofa. And the little house relapsed into its deep quietude, the silence of solitude and winter, through which passed the melancholy quiver of the souvenirs of childhood.

In the morning, as soon as it was seven o'clock, Pierre had to go for the newspapers. Guillaume had passed a bad night and intense fever had set in. Nevertheless, his brother was obliged to read him the articles on the explosion. There was an amazing medley of truths and inventions, of precise information lost amidst the most unexpected extravagance. Sagnier's paper, the "Voix du Peuple," distinguished itself by its sub-titles in huge print and a whole page of particulars jumbled together chance-wise. It had at once decided to postpone the famous list of the thirty-two deputies and senators compromised in the African Railways affair; and there was no end to the details it gave of the aspect of the entrance to the Duvillard mansion after the explosion the pavement broken up, the upper floor rent open, the huge doors torn away from their hinges. Then came the story of the Baron's son and daughter preserved as by a miracle, the landau escaping the slightest injury, while the banker and his wife, it was alleged, owed their preservation to the circumstance that they had lingered at the Madeleine after Monseigneur Martha's remarkable address there. An entire column was given to the one victim, the poor, pretty, fair-haired errand girl, whose identity did not seem to be clearly established, although a flock of reporters had rushed first to the modiste employing her, in the Avenue de l'Opera, and next to the upper part of the Faubourg St. Denis, where it was thought her grandmother resided. Then, in a gravely worded article in "Le Globe," evidently inspired by Fongseque, an appeal was made to the Chamber's patriotism to avoid giving cause for any ministerial crisis in the painful circumstances through which the country was passing. Thus the ministry might last, and live in comparative quietude, for a few weeks longer.

Guillaume, however, was struck by one point only: the culprit was not known; Salvat, it appeared certain, was neither arrested nor even suspected. It seemed, indeed, as if the police were starting on a false scent—that of a well-dressed gentleman wearing gloves, whom a neighbour swore he had seen entering the mansion at the moment of the explosion. Thus Guillaume became a little calmer. But his brother read to him from another paper some particulars concerning the engine of destruction that had been employed. It was a preserved-meat can, and the fragments of it showed that it had been comparatively small. And Guillaume relapsed into anxiety on learning that people were much astonished at the violent ravages of such a sorry appliance, and that the presence of some new explosive of incalculable power was already suspected.

At eight o'clock Bertheroy put in an appearance. Although he was sixty-eight, he showed as much briskness and sprightliness as any young sawbones calling in a friendly way to perform a little operation. He had brought an instrument case, some linen bands and some lint. However, he became angry on finding the injured man nervous, flushed and hot with fever.

"Ah! I see that you haven't been reasonable, my dear child," said he. "You must have talked too much, and have bestirred and excited yourself." Then, having carefully probed the wound, he added, while dressing it: "The bone is injured, you know, and I won't answer for anything unless you behave better. Any complications would make amputation necessary."

Pierre shuddered, but Guillaume shrugged his shoulders, as if to say that he might just as well be amputated since all was crumbling around him. Bertheroy, who had sat down, lingering there for another moment, scrutinised both brothers with his keen eyes. He now knew of the explosion, and must have thought it over. "My dear child," he resumed in his brusque way, "I certainly don't think that you committed that abominable act of folly in the Rue Godot-de-Mauroy. But I fancy that you were in the neighbourhood—no, no, don't answer me, don't defend yourself. I know nothing and desire to know nothing, not even the formula of that devilish powder of which your shirt cuff bore traces, and which has wrought such terrible havoc."

And then as the brothers remained surprised, turning cold with anxiety, in spite of his assurances, he added with a sweeping gesture: "Ah! my friends, I regard such an action as even more useless than criminal! I only feel contempt for the vain agitation of politics, whether they be revolutionary or conservative. Does not science suffice? Why hasten the times when one single step of science brings humanity nearer to the goal of truth and justice than do a hundred years of politics and social revolt? Why, it is science alone which sweeps away dogmas, casts down gods, and creates light and happiness. And I, Member of the Institute as I am, decorated and possessed of means, I am the only true Revolutionist."

Then he began to laugh and Guillaume realised all the good-natured irony of his laugh. While

admiring him as a great *savant*, he had hitherto suffered at seeing him lead such a *bourgeois* life, accepting whatever appointments and honours were offered him, a Republican under the Republic, but quite ready to serve science under no matter what master. But now, from beneath this opportunist, this hieratical *savant*, this toiler who accepted wealth and glory from all hands, there appeared a quiet yet terrible evolutionist, who certainly expected that his own work would help to ravage and renew the world!

However, Bertheroy rose and took his leave: "I'll come back; behave sensibly, and love one another as well as you can."

When the brothers again found themselves alone, Pierre seated at Guillaume's bedside, their hands once more sought each other and met in a burning clasp instinct with all their anguish. How much threatening mystery and distress there was both around and within them! The grey wintry daylight came into the room, and they could see the black trees in the garden, while the house remained full of quivering silence, save that overhead a faint sound of footsteps was audible. They were the steps of Nicholas Barthes, the heroic lover of freedom, who, rising at daybreak, had, like a caged lion, resumed his wonted promenade, the incessant coming and going of one who had ever been a prisoner. And as the brothers ceased listening to him their eyes fell on a newspaper which had remained open on the bed, a newspaper soiled by a sketch in outline which pretended to portray the poor dead errand girl, lying, ripped open, beside the handbox and the bonnet it had contained. It was so frightful, so atrociously hideous a scene, that two big tears again fell upon Pierre's cheeks, whilst Guillaume's blurred, despairing eyes gazed wistfully far away, seeking for the Future.

II

A HOME OF INDUSTRY

THE little house in which Guillaume had dwelt for so many years, a home of quietude and hard work, stood in the pale light of winter up yonder at Montmartre, peacefully awaiting his return. He reflected, however, after *dejeuner* that it might not be prudent for him to go back thither for some three weeks, and so he thought of sending Pierre to explain the position of affairs. "Listen, brother," he said. "You must render me this service. Go and tell them the truth—that I am here, slightly injured, and do not wish them to come to see me, for fear lest somebody should follow them and discover my retreat. After the note I wrote them last evening they would end by getting anxious if I did not send them some news." Then, yielding to the one worry which, since the previous night, had disturbed his clear, frank glance, he added: "Just feel in the right-hand pocket of my waistcoat; you will find a little key there. Good! that's it. Now you must give it to Madame Leroi, my mother-in-law, and tell her that if any misfortune should happen to me, she is to do what is understood between us. That will suffice, she will understand you."

At the first moment Pierre had hesitated; but he saw how even the slight effort of speaking exhausted his brother, so he silenced him, saying: "Don't talk, but put your mind at ease. I will go and reassure your people, since you wish that this commission should be undertaken by me."

Truth to tell, the errand was so distasteful to Pierre that he had at first thought of sending Sophie in his place. All his old prejudices were reviving; it was as if he were going to some ogre's den. How many times had he not heard his mother say "that creature!" in referring to the woman with whom her elder son cohabited. Never had she been willing to kiss Guillaume's boys; the whole connection had shocked her, and she was particularly indignant that Madame Leroi, the woman's mother, should have joined the household for the purpose of bringing up the little ones. Pierre retained so strong a recollection of all this that even nowadays, when he went to the basilica of the Sacred Heart and passed the little house on his way, he glanced at it distrustfully, and kept as far from it as he could, as if it were some abode of vice and error. Undoubtedly, for ten years now, the boys' mother had been dead, but did not another scandal-inspiring creature dwell there, that young orphan girl to whom his brother had given shelter, and whom he was going to marry, although a difference of twenty years lay between them? To Pierre all this was contrary to propriety, abnormal and revolting, and he pictured a home given over to social rebellion, where lack of principle led to every kind of disorder.

However, he was leaving the room to start upon his journey, when Guillaume called him back. "Tell Madame Leroi," said he, "that if I should die you will let her know of it, so that she may immediately do what is necessary."

"Yes, yes," answered Pierre. "But calm yourself, and don't move about. I'll say everything. And in my absence Sophie will stop here with you in case you should need her."

Having given full instructions to the servant, Pierre set out to take a tramcar, intending to alight from it on the Boulevard de Rochechouart, and then climb the height on foot. And on the road, lulled by the gliding motion of the heavy vehicle, he began to think of his brother's past life and connections, with which he was but vaguely, imperfectly, acquainted. It was only at a later date that details of everything came to his knowledge. In 1850 a young professor named Leroi,

who had come from Paris to the college of Montauban with the most ardent republican ideas, had there married Agathe Dagnan, the youngest of the five girls of an old Protestant family from the Cevennes. Young Madame Leroi was *enceinte* when her husband, threatened with arrest for contributing some violent articles to a local newspaper, immediately after the "Coup d'Etat," found himself obliged to seek refuge at Geneva. It was there that the young couple's daughter, Marguerite, a very delicate child, was born in 1852. For seven years, that is until the Amnesty of 1859, the household struggled with poverty, the husband giving but a few ill-paid lessons, and the wife absorbed in the constant care which the child required. Then, after their return to Paris, their ill-luck became even greater. For a long time the ex-professor vainly sought regular employment; it was denied him on account of his opinions, and he had to run about giving lessons in private houses. When he was at last on the point of being received back into the University a supreme blow, an attack of paralysis, fell upon him. He lost the use of both legs. And then came utter misery, every kind of sordid drudgery, the writing of articles for dictionaries, the copying of manuscripts, and even the addressing of newspaper wrappers, on the fruits of which the household barely contrived to live, in a little lodging in the Rue Monsieur-le-Prince.

It was there that Marguerite grew up. Leroi, embittered by injustice and suffering, predicted the advent of a Republic which would avenge the follies of the Empire, and a reign of science which would sweep away the deceptive and cruel divinity of religious dogmas. On the other hand, Agathe's religious faith had collapsed at Geneva, at sight of the narrow and imbecile practices of Calvinism, and all that she retained of it was the old Protestant leaven of rebellion. She had become at once the head and the arm of the house; she went for her husband's work, took it back when completed, and even did much of it herself, whilst, at the same time, performing her house duties, and rearing and educating her daughter. The latter, who attended no school, was indebted for all she learnt to her father and mother, on whose part there was never any question of religious instruction. Through contact with her husband, Madame Leroi had lost all belief, and her Protestant heredity inclining her to free inquiry and examination, she had arranged for herself a kind of peaceful atheism, based on paramount principles of human duty and justice, which she applied courageously, irrespective of all social conventionalities. The long iniquity of her husband's fate, the undeserved misfortunes which struck her through him and her daughter, ended by endowing her with wonderful fortitude and devotion, which made her, whether as a judge, a manager, or a consoler, a woman of incomparable energy and nobleness of character.

It was in the Rue Monsieur-le-Prince that Guillaume became acquainted with the Leroi family, after the war of 1870. On the same floor as their little lodging he occupied a large room, where he devoted himself passionately to his studies. At the outset there was only an occasional bow, for Guillaume's neighbours were very proud and very grave, leading their life of poverty in fierce silence and retirement. Then intercourse began with the rendering of little services, such as when the young man procured the ex-professor a commission to write a few articles for a new encyclopaedia. But all at once came the catastrophe: Leroi died in his armchair one evening while his daughter was wheeling him from his table to his bed. The two distracted women had not even the money to bury him. The whole secret of their bitter want flowed forth with their tears, and they were obliged to accept the help of Guillaume, who, from that moment, became the necessary confidant and friend. And the thing which was bound to happen did happen, in the most simple and loving manner, permitted by the mother herself, who, full of contempt for a social system which allowed those of good hearts to die of hunger, refused to admit the necessity of any social tie. Thus there was no question of a regular marriage. One day Guillaume, who was twenty-three years old, found himself mated to Marguerite, who was twenty; both of them handsome, healthy, and strong, adoring one another, loving work, and full of hope in the future.

From that moment a new life began. Since his father's death, Guillaume, who had broken off all intercourse with his mother, had been receiving an allowance of two hundred francs a month. This just represented daily bread; however, he was already doubling the amount by his work as a chemist,—his analyses and researches, which tended to the employment of certain chemical products in industry. So he and Marguerite installed themselves on the very summit of Montmartre, in a little house, at a rental of eight hundred francs a year, the great convenience of the place being a strip of garden, where one might, later on, erect a wooden workshop. In all tranquillity Madame Leroi took up her abode with the young people, helping them, and sparing them the necessity of keeping a second servant. And at successive intervals of two years, her three grandchildren were born, three sturdy boys: first Thomas, then Francois, and then Antoine. And in the same way as she had devoted herself to her husband and daughter, and then to Guillaume, so did she now devote herself to the three children. She became "Mere-Grand"—an emphatic and affectionate way of expressing the term "grandmother"—for all who lived in the house, the older as well as the younger ones. She there personified sense, and wisdom, and courage; it was she who was ever on the watch, who directed everything, who was consulted about everything, and whose opinion was always followed. Indeed, she reigned there like an all-powerful queen-mother.

For fifteen years this life went on, a life of hard work and peaceful affection, while the strictest economy was observed in contenting every need of the modest little household. Then Guillaume lost his mother, took his share of the family inheritance, and was able to satisfy his old desire, which was to buy the house he lived in, and build a spacious workshop in the garden. He was even able to build it of bricks, and add an upper story to it. But the work was scarcely finished, and life seemed to be on the point of expanding and smiling on them all, when misfortune returned, and typhoid fever, with brutal force, carried off Marguerite, after a week's

illness. She was then five and thirty, and her eldest boy, Thomas, was fourteen. Thus Guillaume, distracted by his loss, found himself a widower at thirty-eight. The thought of introducing any unknown woman into that retired home, where all hearts beat in tender unison, was so unbearable to him that he determined to take no other mate. His work absorbed him, and he would know how to quiet both his heart and his flesh. Mere-Grand, fortunately, was still there, erect and courageous; the household retained its queen, and in her the children found a manageress and teacher, schooled in adversity and heroism.

Two years passed; and then came an addition to the family. A young woman, Marie Couturier, the daughter of one of Guillaume's friends, suddenly entered it. Couturier had been an inventor, a madman with some measure of genius, and had spent a fairly large fortune in attempting all sorts of fantastic schemes. His wife, a very pious woman, had died of grief at it all; and although on the rare occasions when he saw his daughter, he showed great fondness for her and loaded her with presents, he had first placed her in a boarding college, and afterwards left her in the charge of a poor female relative. Remembering her only on his death-bed, he had begged Guillaume to give her an asylum, and find her a husband. The poor relation, who dealt in ladies' and babies' linen, had just become a bankrupt. So, at nineteen, the girl, Marie, found herself a penniless outcast, possessed of nothing save a good education, health and courage. Guillaume would never allow her to run about giving lessons. He took her, in quite a natural way, to help Mere-Grand, who was no longer so active as formerly. And the latter approved the arrangement, well pleased at the advent of youth and gaiety, which would somewhat brighten the household, whose life had been one of much gravity ever since Marguerite's death. Marie would simply be an elder sister; she was too old for the boys, who were still at college, to be disturbed by her presence. And she would work in that house where everybody worked. She would help the little community pending the time when she might meet and love some worthy fellow who would marry her.

Five more years elapsed without Marie consenting to quit that happy home. The sterling education she had received was lodged in a vigorous brain, which contented itself with the acquirement of knowledge. Yet she had remained very pure and healthy, even very *naive*, maidenly by reason of her natural rectitude. And she was also very much a woman, beautifying and amusing herself with a mere nothing, and ever showing gaiety and contentment. Moreover, she was in no wise of a dreamy nature, but very practical, always intent on some work or other, and only asking of life such things as life could give, without anxiety as to what might lie beyond it. She lovingly remembered her pious mother, who had prepared her for her first Communion in tears, imagining that she was opening heaven's portals to her. But since she had been an orphan she had of her own accord ceased all practice of religion, her good sense revolting and scorning the need of any moral police regulations to make her do her duty. Indeed, she considered such regulations dangerous and destructive of true health. Thus, like Mere-Grand, she had come to a sort of quiet and almost unconscious atheism, not after the fashion of one who reasons, but simply like the brave, healthy girl she was, one who had long endured poverty without suffering from it, and believed in nothing save the necessity of effort. She had been kept erect, indeed, by her conviction that happiness was to be found in the normal joys of life, lived courageously. And her happy equilibrium of mind had ever guided and saved her, in such wise that she willingly listened to her natural instinct, saying, with her pleasant laugh, that this was, after all, her best adviser. She rejected two offers of marriage, and on the second occasion, as Guillaume pressed her to accept, she grew astonished, and inquired if he had had enough of her in the house. She found herself very comfortable, and she rendered service there. So why should she leave and run the risk of being less happy elsewhere, particularly as she was not in love with anybody?

Then, by degrees, the idea of a marriage between Marie and Guillaume presented itself; and indeed what could have been more reasonable and advantageous for all? If Guillaume had not mated again it was for his sons' sake, because he feared that by introducing a stranger to the house he might impair its quietude and gaiety. But now there was a woman among them who already showed herself maternal towards the boys, and whose bright youth had ended by disturbing his own heart. He was still in his prime, and had always held that it was not good for man to live alone, although, personally, thanks to his ardour for work, he had hitherto escaped excessive suffering in his bereavement. However, there was the great difference of ages to be considered; and he would have bravely remained in the background and have sought a younger husband for Marie, if his three big sons and Mere-Grand herself had not conspired to effect his happiness by doing all they could to bring about a marriage which would strengthen every home tie and impart, as it were, a fresh springtide to the house. As for Marie, touched and grateful to Guillaume for the manner in which he had treated her for five years past, she immediately consented with an impulse of sincere affection, in which, she fancied, she could detect love. And at all events, could she act in a more sensible, reasonable way, base her life on more certain prospects of happiness? So the marriage had been resolved upon; and about a month previously it had been decided that it should take place during the ensuing spring, towards the end of April.

When Pierre, after alighting from the tramcar, began to climb the interminable flights of steps leading to the Rue St. Eleuthere, a feeling of uneasiness again came over him at the thought that he was about to enter that suspicious ogre's den where everything would certainly wound and irritate him. Given the letter which Sophie had carried thither on the previous night, announcing that the master would not return, how anxious and upset must all its inmates be! However, as Pierre ascended the final flight and nervously raised his head, the little house appeared to him right atop of the hill, looking very serene and quiet under the bright wintry sun, which had peered forth as if to bestow upon the modest dwelling an affectionate caress.

There was a door in the old garden wall alongside the Rue St. Eleuthere, almost in front of the broad thoroughfare conducting to the basilica of the Sacred Heart; but to reach the house itself one had to skirt the wall and climb to the Place du Tertre, where one found the facade and the entrance. Some children were playing on the Place, which, planted as it was with a few scrubby trees, and edged with humble shops,—a fruiterer's, a grocer's and a baker's,—looked like some square in a small provincial town. In a corner, on the left, Guillaume's dwelling, which had been whitewashed during the previous spring, showed its bright frontage and five lifeless windows, for all its life was on the other, the garden, side, which overlooked Paris and the far horizon.

Pierre mustered his courage and, pulling a brass knob which glittered like gold, rang the bell. There came a gay, distant jingle; but for a moment nobody appeared, and he was about to ring again, when the door was thrown wide open, revealing a passage which ran right through the house, beyond which appeared the ocean of Paris, the endless sea of house roofs bathed in sunlight. And against this spacious, airy background, stood a young woman of twenty-six, clad in a simple gown of black woolen stuff, half covered by a large blue apron. She had her sleeves rolled up above her elbows, and her arms and hands were still moist with water which she had but imperfectly wiped away.

A moment's surprise and embarrassment ensued. The young woman, who had hastened to the door with laughing mien, became grave and covertly hostile at sight of the visitor's cassock. The priest thereupon realised that he must give his name: "I am Abbe Pierre Froment."

At this the young woman's smile of welcome came back to her. "Oh! I beg your pardon, monsieur—I ought to have recognised you, for I saw you wish Guillaume good day one morning as you passed."

She said Guillaume; she, therefore, must be Marie. And Pierre looked at her in astonishment, finding her very different from what he had imagined. She was only of average height, but she was vigorously, admirably built, broad of hip and broad of shoulder, with the small firm bosom of an amazon. By her erect and easy step, instinct with all the adorable grace of woman in her prime, one could divine that she was strong, muscular and healthy. A brunette, but very white of skin, she had a heavy helm of superb black hair, which she fastened in a negligent way, without any show of coquetry. And under her dark locks, her pure, intelligent brow, her delicate nose and gay eyes appeared full of intense life; whilst the somewhat heavier character of her lower features, her fleshy lips and full chin, bespoke her quiet kindness. She had surely come on earth as a promise of every form of tenderness, every form of devotion. In a word, she was a true mate for man.

However, with her heavy, straying hair and superb arms, so ingenuous in their nudity, she only gave Pierre an impression of superfluous health and extreme self-assurance. She displeased him and even made him feel somewhat anxious, as if she were a creature different from all others.

"It is my brother Guillaume who has sent me," he said.

At this her face again changed; she became grave and hastened to admit him to the passage. And when the door was closed she answered: "You have brought us news of him, then! I must apologise for receiving you in this fashion. The servants have just finished some washing, and I was making sure if the work had been well done. Pray excuse me, and come in here for a moment; it is perhaps best that I should be the first to know the news."

So saying, she led him past the kitchen to a little room which served as scullery and wash-house. A tub full of soapy water stood there, and some dripping linen hung over some wooden bars. "And so, Guillaume?" she asked.

Pierre then told the truth in simple fashion: that his brother's wrist had been injured; that he himself had witnessed the accident, and that his brother had then sought an asylum with him at Neuilly, where he wished to remain and get cured of his injury in peace and quietness, without even receiving a visit from his sons. While speaking in this fashion, the priest watched the effect of his words on Marie's face: first fright and pity, and then an effort to calm herself and judge things reasonably.

"His letter quite froze me last night," she ended by replying. "I felt sure that some misfortune had happened. But one must be brave and hide one's fear from others. His wrist injured, you say; it is not a serious injury, is it?"

"No; but it is necessary that every precaution should be taken with it."

She looked him well in the face with her big frank eyes, which dived into his own as if to reach the very depths of his being, though at the same time she plainly sought to restrain the score of questions which rose to her lips. "And that is all: he was injured in an accident," she resumed; "he didn't ask you to tell us anything further about it?"

"No, he simply desires that you will not be anxious."

Thereupon she insisted no further, but showed herself obedient and respectful of the decision

which Guillaume had arrived at. It sufficed that he should have sent a messenger to reassure the household—she did not seek to learn any more. And even as she had returned to her work in spite of the secret anxiety in which the letter of the previous evening had left her, so now, with her air of quiet strength, she recovered an appearance of serenity, a quiet smile and clear brave glance.

"Guillaume only gave me one other commission," resumed Pierre, "that of handing a little key to Madame Leroi."

"Very good," Marie answered, "Mere-Grand is here; and, besides, the children must see you. I will take you to them."

Once more quite tranquil, she examined Pierre without managing to conceal her curiosity, which seemed of rather a kindly nature blended with an element of vague pity. Her fresh white arms had remained bare. In all candour she slowly drew down her sleeves; then took off the large blue apron, and showed herself with her rounded figure, at once robust and elegant, in her modest black gown. He meanwhile looked at her, and most certainly he did not find her to his liking. On seeing her so natural, healthy, and courageous, quite a feeling of revolt arose within him, though he knew not why.

"Will you please follow me, Monsieur l'Abbe?" she said. "We must cross the garden."

On the ground-floor of the house, across the passage, and facing the kitchen and the scullery, there were two other rooms, a library overlooking the Place du Tertre, and a dining-room whose windows opened into the garden. The four rooms on the first floor served as bedchambers for the father and the sons. As for the garden, originally but a small one, it had now been reduced to a kind of gravelled yard by the erection of the large workshop at one end of it. Of the former greenery, however, there still remained two huge plum-trees with old knotted trunks, as well as a big clump of lilac-bushes, which every spring were covered with bloom. And in front of the latter Marie had arranged a broad flower-bed, in which she amused herself with growing a few roses, some wallflowers and some mignonette.

With a wave of her hand as she went past, she called Pierre's attention to the black plum-trees and the lilacs and roses, which showed but a few greenish spots, for winter still held the little nook in sleep. "Tell Guillaume," she said, "that he must make haste to get well and be back for the first shoots."

Then, as Pierre glanced at her, she all at once flushed purple. Much to her distress, sudden and involuntary blushes would in this wise occasionally come upon her, even at the most innocent remarks. She found it ridiculous to feel such childish emotion when she had so brave a heart. But her pure maidenly blood had retained exquisite delicacy, such natural and instinctive modesty that she yielded to it perforce. And doubtless she had merely blushed because she feared that the priest might think she had referred to her marriage in speaking of the spring.

"Please go in, Monsieur l'Abbe. The children are there, all three." And forthwith she ushered him into the workshop.

It was a very spacious place, over sixteen feet high, with a brick flooring and bare walls painted an iron grey. A sheet of light, a stream of sunshine, spread to every corner through a huge window facing the south, where lay the immensity of Paris. The Venetian shutters often had to be lowered in the summer to attenuate the great heat. From morn till night the whole family lived here, closely and affectionately united in work. Each was installed as fancy listed, having a particular chosen place. One half of the building was occupied by the father's chemical laboratory, with its stove, experiment tables, shelves for apparatus, glass cases and cupboards for phials and jars. Near all this Thomas, the eldest son, had installed a little forge, an anvil, a vice bench, in fact everything necessary to a working mechanic, such as he had become since taking his bachelor's degree, from his desire to remain with his father and help him with certain researches and inventions. Then, at the other end, the younger brothers, Francois and Antoine, got on very well together on either side of a broad table which stood amidst a medley of portfolios, nests of drawers and revolving book-stands. Francois, laden with academical laurels, first on the pass list for the Ecole Normale, had entered that college where young men are trained for university professorships, and was there preparing for his Licentiate degree, while Antoine, who on reaching the third class at the Lycee Condorcet had taken a dislike to classical studies, now devoted himself to his calling as a wood-engraver. And, in the full light under the window, Mere-Grand and Marie likewise had their particular table, where needlework, embroidery, all sorts of *chiffons* and delicate things lay about near the somewhat rough jumble of retorts, tools and big books.

Marie, however, on the very threshold called out in her calm voice, to which she strove to impart a gay and cheering accent: "Children! children! here is Monsieur l'Abbe with news of father!"

Children, indeed! Yet what motherliness she already set in the word as she applied it to those big fellows whose elder sister she had long considered herself to be! At three and twenty Thomas was quite a colossus, already bearded and extremely like his father. But although he had a lofty brow and energetic features, he was somewhat slow both in mind and body. And he was also

taciturn, almost unsociable, absorbed in filial devotion, delighted with the manual toil which made him a mere workman at his master's orders. Francois, two years younger than Thomas, and nearly as tall, showed a more refined face, though he had the same large brow and firm mouth, a perfect blending of health and strength, in which the man of intellect, the scientific Normalian, could only be detected by the brighter and more subtle sparkle of the eyes. The youngest of the brothers, Antoine, who for his eighteen years was almost as strong as his elders, and promised to become as tall, differed from them by his lighter hair and soft, blue, dreamy eyes, which he had inherited from his mother. It had been difficult, however, to distinguish one from the other when all three were schoolboys at the Lycee Condorcet; and even nowadays people made mistakes unless they saw them side by side, so as to detect the points of difference which were becoming more marked as age progressed.

On Pierre's arrival the brothers were so absorbed in their work that they did not even hear the door open. And again, as in the case of Marie, the priest was surprised by the discipline and firmness of mind, which amidst the keenest anxiety gave the young fellows strength to take up their daily task. Thomas, who stood at his vice-bench in a blouse, was carefully filing a little piece of copper with rough but skilful hands. Francois, leaning forward, was writing in a bold, firm fashion, whilst on the other side of the table, Antoine, with a slender graver between his fingers, finished a block for an illustrated newspaper.

However, Marie's clear voice made them raise their heads: "Children, father has sent you some news!"

Then all three with the same impulse hurriedly quitted their work and came forward. One could divine that directly there was any question of their father they were drawn together, blended one with the other, so that but one and the same heart beat in their three broad chests. However, a door at the far end of the workroom opened at that moment, and Mere-Grand, coming from the upper floor where she and Marie had their bedrooms, made her appearance. She had just absented herself to fetch a skein of wool; and she gazed fixedly at the priest, unable to understand the reason of his presence.

Marie had to explain matters. "Mere-Grand," said she, "this is Monsieur l'Abbe Froment, Guillaume's brother; he has come from him."

Pierre on his side was examining the old lady, astonished to find her so erect and full of life at seventy. Her former beauty had left a stately charm on her rather long face; youthful fire still lingered in her brown eyes; and very firm was the contour of her pale lips, which in parting showed that she had retained all her teeth. A few white hairs alone silvered her black tresses, which were arranged in old-time fashion. Her cheeks had but slightly withered, and her deep, symmetrical wrinkles gave her countenance an expression of much nobility, a sovereign air as of a queen-mother, which, tall and slight of stature as she was, and invariably gowned in black woollen stuff, she always retained, no matter how humble her occupation.

"So Guillaume sent you, monsieur," she said; "he is injured, is he not?"

Surprised by this proof of intuition, Pierre repeated his story. "Yes, his wrist is injured—but oh! it's not a case of immediate gravity."

On the part of the three sons, he had divined a sudden quiver, an impulse of their whole beings to rush to the help and defence of their father. And for their sakes he sought words of comfort: "He is with me at Neuilly. And with due care it is certain that no serious complications will arise. He sent me to tell you to be in no wise uneasy about him."

Mere-Grand for her part evinced no fears, but preserved great calmness, as if the priest's tidings contained nothing beyond what she had known already. If anything, she seemed rather relieved, freed from anxiety which she had confided to none. "If he is with you, monsieur," she answered, "he is evidently as comfortable as he can be, and sheltered from all risks. We were surprised, however, by his letter last night, as it did not explain why he was detained, and we should have ended by feeling frightened. But now everything is satisfactory."

Mere-Grand and the three sons, following Marie's example, asked no explanations. On a table near at hand Pierre noticed several morning newspapers lying open and displaying column after column of particulars about the crime. The sons had certainly read these papers, and had feared lest their father should be compromised in that frightful affair. How far did their knowledge of the latter go? They must be ignorant of the part played by Salvat. It was surely impossible for them to piece together all the unforeseen circumstances which had brought about their father's meeting with the workman, and then the crime. Mere-Grand, no doubt, was in certain respects better informed than the others. But they, the sons and Marie, neither knew nor sought to know anything. And thus what a wealth of respect and affection there was in their unshakable confidence in the father, in the tranquillity they displayed directly he sent them word that they were not to be anxious about him!

"Madame," Pierre resumed, "Guillaume told me to give you this little key, and to remind you to do what he charged you to do, if any misfortune should befall him."

She started, but so slightly that it was scarcely perceptible; and taking the key she answered

as if some ordinary wish on the part of a sick person were alone in question. "Very well. Tell him that his wishes shall be carried out." Then she added, "But pray take a seat, monsieur."

Pierre, indeed, had remained standing. However, he now felt it necessary to accept a chair, desirous as he was of hiding the embarrassment which he still felt in this house, although he was *en famille* there. Marie, who could not live without occupation for her fingers, had just returned to some embroidery, some of the fine needlework which she stubbornly executed for a large establishment dealing in baby-linen and bridal *trousseaux*; for she wished at any rate to earn her own pocket-money, she often said with a laugh. Mere-Grand, too, from habit, which she followed even when visitors were present, had once more started on her perpetual stocking-mending; while Francois and Antoine had again seated themselves at their table; and Thomas alone remained on his legs, leaning against his bench. All the charm of industrious intimacy pervaded the spacious, sun-lit room.

"But we'll all go to see father to-morrow," Thomas suddenly exclaimed.

Before Pierre could answer Marie raised her head. "No, no," said she, "he does not wish any of us to go to him; for if we should be watched and followed we should betray the secret of his retreat. Isn't that so, Monsieur l'Abbe?"

"It would indeed be prudent of you to deprive yourselves of the pleasure of embracing him until he himself can come back here. It will be a matter of some two or three weeks," answered Pierre.

Mere-Grand at once expressed approval of this. "No doubt," said she. "Nothing could be more sensible."

So the three sons did not insist, but bravely accepted the secret anxiety in which they must for a time live, renouncing the visit which would have caused them so much delight, because their father bade them do so and because his safety depended perhaps on their obedience.

However, Thomas resumed: "Then, Monsieur l'Abbe, will you please tell him that as work will be interrupted here, I shall return to the factory during his absence. I shall be more at ease there for the researches on which we are engaged."

"And please tell him from me," put in Francois, "that he mustn't worry about my examination. Things are going very well. I feel almost certain of success."

Pierre promised that he would forget nothing. However, Marie raised her head, smiling and glancing at Antoine, who had remained silent with a faraway look in his eyes. "And you, little one," said she, "don't you send him any message?"

Emerging from a dream, the young fellow also began to smile. "Yes, yes, a message that you love him dearly, and that he's to make haste back for you to make him happy."

At this they all became merry, even Marie, who in lieu of embarrassment showed a tranquil gaiety born of confidence in the future. Between her and the young men there was naught but happy affection. And a grave smile appeared even on the pale lips of Mere-Grand, who likewise approved of the happiness which life seemed to be promising.

Pierre wished to stay a few minutes longer. They all began to chat, and his astonishment increased. He had gone from surprise to surprise in this house where he had expected to find that equivocal, disorderly life, that rebellion against social laws, which destroy morality. But instead of this he had found loving serenity, and such strong discipline that life there partook of the gravity, almost the austerity, of convent life, tempered by youth and gaiety. The vast room was redolent of industry and quietude, warm with bright sunshine. However, what most particularly struck him was the Spartan training, the bravery of mind and heart among those sons who allowed nothing to be seen of their personal feelings, and did not presume to judge their father, but remained content with his message, ready to await events, stoical and silent, while carrying on their daily tasks. Nothing could be more simple, more dignified, more lofty. And there was also the smiling heroism of Mere-Grand and Marie, those two women who slept over that laboratory where terrible preparations were manipulated, and where an explosion was always possible.

However, such courage, orderliness and dignity merely surprised Pierre, without touching him. He had no cause for complaint, he had received a polite greeting if not an affectionate one; but then he was as yet only a stranger there, a priest. In spite of everything, however, he remained hostile, feeling that he was in a sphere where none of his own torments could be shared or even divined. How did these folks manage to be so calm and happy amidst their religious unbelief, their sole faith in science, and in presence of that terrifying Paris which spread before them the boundless sea, the growling abomination of its injustice and its want? As this thought came to him he turned his head and gazed at the city through the huge window, whence it stretched away, ever present, ever living its giant life. And at that hour, under the oblique sun-rays of the winter afternoon, all Paris was speckled with luminous dust, as if some invisible sower, hidden amidst the glory of the planet, were fast scattering seed which fell upon every side in a stream of gold. The whole field was covered with it; for the endless chaos of house roofs and edifices seemed to be land in tilth, furrowed by some gigantic plough. And Pierre in his

uneasiness, stirred, despite everything, by an invincible need of hope, asked himself if this was not a good sowing, the furrows of Paris strewn with light by the divine sun for the great future harvest, that harvest of truth and justice of whose advent he had despaired.

At last he rose and took his leave, promising to return at once, if there should be any bad news. It was Marie who showed him to the front door. And there another of those childish blushes which worried her so much suddenly rose to her face, just as she, in her turn, also wished to send her loving message to the injured man. However, with her gay, candid eyes fixed on those of the priest, she bravely spoke the words: "*Au revoir, Monsieur l'Abbe*. Tell Guillaume that I love him and await him."

III

PENURY AND TOIL

THREE days went by, and every morning Guillaume, confined to his bed and consumed by fever and impatience, experienced fresh anxiety directly the newspapers arrived. Pierre had tried to keep them from him, but Guillaume then worried himself the more, and so the priest had to read him column by column all the extraordinary articles that were published respecting the crime.

Never before had so many rumours inundated the press. Even the "Globe," usually so grave and circumspect, yielded to the general *furor*, and printed whatever statements reached it. But the more unscrupulous papers were the ones to read. The "Voix du Peuple" in particular made use of the public feverishness to increase its sales. Each morning it employed some fresh device, and printed some frightful story of a nature to drive people mad with terror. It related that not a day passed without Baron Duvillard receiving threatening letters of the coarsest description, announcing that his wife, his son and his daughter would all be killed, that he himself would be butchered in turn, and that do what he might his house would none the less be blown up. And as a measure of precaution the house was guarded day and night alike by a perfect army of plain-clothes officers. Then another article contained an amazing piece of invention. Some anarchists, after carrying barrels of powder into a sewer near the Madeleine, were said to have undermined the whole district, planning a perfect volcano there, into which one half of Paris would sink. And at another time it was alleged that the police were on the track of a terrible plot which embraced all Europe, from the depths of Russia to the shores of Spain. The signal for putting it into execution was to be given in France, and there would be a three days' massacre, with grape shot sweeping everyone off the Boulevards, and the Seine running red, swollen by a torrent of blood. Thanks to these able and intelligent devices of the Press, terror now reigned in the city; frightened foreigners fled from the hotels *en masse*; and Paris had become a mere mad-house, where the most idiotic delusions at once found credit.

It was not all this, however, that worried Guillaume. He was only anxious about Salvat and the various new "scents" which the newspaper reporters attempted to follow up. The engineer was not yet arrested, and, so far indeed, there had been no statement in print to indicate that the police were on his track. At last, however, Pierre one morning read a paragraph which made the injured man turn pale.

"Dear me! It seems that a tool has been found among the rubbish at the entrance of the Duvillard mansion. It is a bradawl, and its handle bears the name of Grandidier, which is that of a man who keeps some well-known metal works. He is to appear before the investigating magistrate to-day."

Guillaume made a gesture of despair. "Ah!" said he, "they are on the right track at last. That tool must certainly have been dropped by Salvat. He worked at Grandidier's before he came to me for a few days. And from Grandidier they will learn all that they need to know in order to follow the scent."

Pierre then remembered that he had heard the Grandidier factory mentioned at Montmartre. Guillaume's eldest son, Thomas, had served his apprenticeship there, and even worked there occasionally nowadays.

"You told me," resumed Guillaume, "that during my absence Thomas intended to go back to the factory. It's in connection with a new motor which he's planning, and has almost hit upon. If there should be a perquisition there, he may be questioned, and may refuse to answer, in order to guard his secret. So he ought to be warned of this, warned at once!"

Without trying to extract any more precise statement from his brother, Pierre obligingly offered his services. "If you like," said he, "I will go to see Thomas this afternoon. Perhaps I may come across Monsieur Grandidier himself and learn how far the affair has gone, and what was said at the investigating magistrate's."

With a moist glance and an affectionate grasp of the hand, Guillaume at once thanked Pierre: "Yes, yes, brother, go there, it will be good and brave of you."

"Besides," continued the priest, "I really wanted to go to Montmartre to-day. I haven't told you so, but something has been worrying me. If Salvat has fled, he must have left the woman and the child all alone up yonder. On the morning of the day when the explosion took place I saw the poor creatures in such a state of destitution, such misery, that I can't think of them without a heart-pang. Women and children so often die of hunger when the man is no longer there."

At this, Guillaume, who had kept Pierre's hand in his own, pressed it more tightly, and in a trembling voice exclaimed: "Yes, yes, and that will be good and brave too. Go there, brother, go there."

That house of the Rue des Saules, that horrible home of want and agony, had lingered in Pierre's memory. To him it was like an embodiment of the whole filthy *cloaca*, in which the poor of Paris suffer unto death. And on returning thither that afternoon, he found the same slimy mud around it; its yard littered with the same filth, its dark, damp stairways redolent of the same stench of neglect and poverty, as before. In winter time, while the fine central districts of Paris are dried and cleansed, the far-away districts of the poor remain gloomy and miry, beneath the everlasting tramp of the wretched ones who dwell in them.

Remembering the staircase which conducted to Salvat's lodging, Pierre began to climb it amidst a loud screaming of little children, who suddenly became quiet, letting the house sink into death-like silence once more. Then the thought of Laveuve, who had perished up there like a stray dog, came back to Pierre. And he shuddered when, on the top landing, he knocked at Salvat's door, and profound silence alone answered him. Not a breath was to be heard.

However, he knocked again, and as nothing stirred he began to think that nobody could be there. Perhaps Salvat had returned to fetch the woman and the child, and perhaps they had followed him to some humble nook abroad. Still this would have astonished him; for the poor seldom quit their homes, but die where they have suffered. So he gave another gentle knock.

And at last a faint sound, the light tread of little feet, was heard amidst the silence. Then a weak, childish voice ventured to inquire: "Who is there?"

"Monsieur l'Abbe."

The silence fell again, nothing more stirred. There was evidently hesitation on the other side.

"Monsieur l'Abbe who came the other day," said Pierre again.

This evidently put an end to all uncertainty, for the door was set ajar and little Celine admitted the priest. "I beg your pardon, Monsieur l'Abbe," said she, "but Mamma Theodore has gone out, and she told me not to open the door to anyone."

Pierre had, for a moment, imagined that Salvat himself was hiding there. But with a glance he took in the whole of the small bare room, where man, woman and child dwelt together. At the same time, Madame Theodore doubtless feared a visit from the police. Had she seen Salvat since the crime? Did she know where he was hiding? Had he come back there to embrace and tranquillise them both?

"And your papa, my dear," said Pierre to Celine, "isn't he here either?"

"Oh! no, monsieur, he has gone away."

"What, gone away?"

"Yes, he hasn't been home to sleep, and we don't know where he is."

"Perhaps he's working."

"Oh, no! he'd send us some money if he was."

"Then he's gone on a journey, perhaps?"

"I don't know."

"He wrote to Mamma Theodore, no doubt?"

"I don't know."

Pierre asked no further questions. In fact, he felt somewhat ashamed of his attempt to extract information from this child of eleven, whom he thus found alone. It was quite possible that she knew nothing, that Salvat, in a spirit of prudence, had even refrained from sending any tidings of himself. Indeed, there was an expression of truthfulness on the child's fair, gentle and intelligent face, which was grave with the gravity that extreme misery imparts to the young.

"I am sorry that Mamma Theodore isn't here," said Pierre, "I wanted to speak to her."

"But perhaps you would like to wait for her, Monsieur l'Abbe. She has gone to my Uncle Toussaint's in the Rue Marcadet; and she can't stop much longer, for she's been away more than

an hour."

Thereupon Celine cleared one of the chairs on which lay a handful of scraps of wood, picked up on some waste ground.

The bare and fireless room was assuredly also a breadless one. Pierre could divine the absence of the bread-winner, the disappearance of the man who represents will and strength in the home, and on whom one still relies even when weeks have gone by without work. He goes out and scours the city, and often ends by bringing back the indispensable crust which keeps death at bay. But with his disappearance comes complete abandonment, the wife and child in danger, destitute of all prop and help.

Pierre, who had sat down and was looking at that poor, little, blue-eyed girl, to whose lips a smile returned in spite of everything, could not keep from questioning her on another point. "So you don't go to school, my child?" said he.

She faintly blushed and answered: "I've no shoes to go in."

He glanced at her feet, and saw that she was wearing a pair of ragged old list-slippers, from which her little toes protruded, red with cold.

"Besides," she continued, "Mamma Theodore says that one doesn't go to school when one's got nothing to eat. Mamma Theodore wanted to work but she couldn't, because her eyes got burning hot and full of water. And so we don't know what to do, for we've had nothing left since yesterday, and if Uncle Toussaint can't lend us twenty sous it'll be all over."

She was still smiling in her unconscious way, but two big tears had gathered in her eyes. And the sight of the child shut up in that bare room, apart from all the happy ones of earth, so upset the priest that he again felt his anger with want and misery awakening. Then, another ten minutes having elapsed, he became impatient, for he had to go to the Grandidier works before returning home.

"I don't know why Mamma Theodore doesn't come back," repeated Celine. "Perhaps she's chatting." Then, an idea occurring to her she continued: "I'll take you to my Uncle Toussaint's, Monsieur l'Abbe, if you like. It's close by, just round the corner."

"But you have no shoes, my child."

"Oh! that don't matter, I walk all the same."

Thereupon he rose from the chair and said simply: "Well, yes, that will be better, take me there. And I'll buy you some shoes."

Celine turned quite pink, and then made haste to follow him after carefully locking the door of the room like a good little housewife, though, truth to tell, there was nothing worth stealing in the place.

In the meantime it had occurred to Madame Theodore that before calling on her brother Toussaint to try to borrow a franc from him, she might first essay her luck with her younger sister, Hortense, who had married little Chretiennot, the clerk, and occupied a flat of four rooms on the Boulevard de Rochechouart. This was quite an affair, however, and the poor woman only made the venture because Celine had been fasting since the previous day.

Eugene Toussaint, the mechanic, a man of fifty, was her stepbrother, by the first marriage contracted by her father. A young dressmaker whom the latter had subsequently wedded, had borne him three daughters, Pauline, Leonie and Hortense. And on his death, his son Eugene, who already had a wife and child of his own, had found himself for a short time with his stepmother and sisters on his hands. The stepmother, fortunately, was an active and intelligent woman, and knew how to get out of difficulties. She returned to her former workroom where her daughter Pauline was already apprenticed, and she next placed Leonie there; so that Hortense, the youngest girl, who was a spoilt child, prettier and more delicate than her sisters, was alone left at school. And, later on,—after Pauline had married Labitte the stonemason, and Leonie, Salvat the journeyman-engineer,—Hortense, while serving as assistant at a confectioner's in the Rue des Martyrs, there became acquainted with Chretiennot, a clerk, who married her. Leonie had died young, only a few weeks after her mother; Pauline, forsaken by her husband, lived with her brother-in-law Salvat, and Hortense alone wore a light silk gown on Sundays, resided in a new house, and ranked as a *bourgeoise*, at the price, however, of interminable worries and great privation.

Madame Theodore knew that her sister was generally short of money towards the month's end, and therefore felt rather ill at ease in thus venturing to apply for a loan. Chretiennot, moreover, embittered by his own mediocrity, had of late years accused his wife of being the cause of their spoilt life, and had ceased all intercourse with her relatives. Toussaint, no doubt, was a decent workman; but that Madame Theodore who lived in misery with her brother-in-law, and that Salvat who wandered from workshop to workshop like an incorrigible ranter whom no employer would keep; those two, with their want and dirt and rebellion, had ended by incensing the vain little clerk, who was not only a great stickler for the proprieties, but was soured by all

the difficulties he encountered in his own life. And thus he had forbidden Hortense to receive her sister.

All the same, as Madame Theodore climbed the carpeted staircase of the house on the Boulevard Rochechouart, she experienced a certain feeling of pride at the thought that she had a relation living in such luxury. The Chretiennot's rooms were on the third floor, and overlooked the courtyard. Their *femme-de-menage*—a woman who goes out by the day or hour charring, cleaning and cooking—came back every afternoon about four o'clock to see to the dinner, and that day she was already there. She admitted the visitor, though she could not conceal her anxious surprise at her boldness in calling in such slatternly garb. However, on the very threshold of the little salon, Madame Theodore stopped short in wonderment herself, for her sister Hortense was sobbing and crouching on one of the armchairs, upholstered in blue repp, of which she was so proud.

"What is the matter? What has happened to you?" asked Madame Theodore.

Her sister, though scarcely two and thirty, was no longer "the beautiful Hortense" of former days. She retained a doll-like appearance, with a tall slim figure, pretty eyes and fine, fair hair. But she who had once taken so much care of herself, had now come down to dressing-gowns of doubtful cleanliness. Her eyelids, too, were reddening, and blotches were appearing on her skin. She had begun to fade after giving birth to two daughters, one of whom was now nine and the other seven years of age. Very proud and egotistical, she herself had begun to regret her marriage, for she had formerly considered herself a real beauty, worthy of the palaces and equipages of some Prince Charming. And at this moment she was plunged in such despair, that her sister's sudden appearance on the scene did not even astonish her: "Ah! it's you," she gasped. "Ah! if you only knew what a blow's fallen on me in the middle of all our worries!"

Madame Theodore at once thought of the children, Lucienne and Marcelle. "Are your daughters ill?" she asked.

"No, no, our neighbour has taken them for a walk on the Boulevard. But the fact is, my dear, I'm *enceinte*, and when I told Chretiennot of it after *dejeuner*, he flew into a most fearful passion, saying the most dreadful, the most cruel things!"

Then she again sobbed. Gentle and indolent by nature, desirous of peace and quietness before anything else, she was incapable of deceiving her husband, as he well knew. But the trouble was that an addition to the family would upset the whole economy of the household.

"*Mon Dieu!*" said Madame Theodore at last, "you brought up the others, and you'll bring up this one too."

At this an explosion of anger dried the other's eyes; and she rose, exclaiming: "You are good, you are! One can see that our purse isn't yours. How are we to bring up another child when we can scarcely make both ends meet as it is?"

And thereupon, forgetting the *bourgeois* pride which usually prompted her to silence or falsehood, she freely explained their embarrassment, the horrid pecuniary worries which made their life a perpetual misery. Their rent amounted to 700 francs,* so that out of the 3000 francs** which the husband earned at his office, barely a couple of hundred were left them every month. And how were they to manage with that little sum, provide food and clothes, keep up their rank and so forth? There was the indispensable black coat for monsieur, the new dress which madame must have at regular intervals, under penalty of losing caste, the new boots which the children required almost every month, in fact, all sorts of things that could not possibly be dispensed with. One might strike a dish or two out of the daily menu, and even go without wine; but evenings came when it was absolutely necessary to take a cab. And, apart from all this, one had to reckon with the wastefulness of the children, the disorder in which the discouraged wife left the house, and the despair of the husband, who was convinced that he would never extricate himself from his difficulties, even should his salary some day be raised to as high a figure as 4000 francs. Briefly, one here found the unbearable penury of the petty clerk, with consequences as disastrous as the black want of the artisan: the mock facade and lying luxury; all the disorder and suffering which lie behind intellectual pride at not earning one's living at a bench or on a scaffolding.

* \$140.

** \$600.

"Well, well," repeated Madame Theodore, "you can't kill the child."

"No, of course not; but it's the end of everything," answered Hortense, sinking into the armchair again. "What will become of us, *mon Dieu!* What will become of us!" Then she collapsed in her unbuttoned dressing gown, tears once more gushing from her red and swollen eyes.

Much vexed that circumstances should be so unpropitious, Madame Theodore nevertheless ventured to ask for the loan of twenty sous; and this brought her sister's despair and confusion to a climax. "I really haven't a centime in the house," said she, "just now I borrowed ten sous for the children from the servant. I had to get ten francs from the Mont de Piete on a little ring the other day. And it's always the same at the end of the month. However, Chretiennot will be paid to-day,

and he's coming back early with the money for dinner. So if I can I will send you something to-morrow."

At this same moment the servant hastened in with a distracted air, being well aware that monsieur was in no wise partial to madame's relatives. "Oh madame, madame!" said she; "here's monsieur coming up the stairs."

"Quick then, quick, go away!" cried Hortense, "I should only have another scene if he met you here. To-morrow, if I can, I promise you."

To avoid Chretiennot who was coming in, Madame Theodore had to hide herself in the kitchen. As he passed, she just caught sight of him, well dressed as usual in a tight-fitting frock-coat. Short and lean, with a thin face and long and carefully tended beard, he had the bearing of one who is both vain and quarrelsome. Fourteen years of office life had withered him, and now the long evening hours which he spent at a neighbouring cafe were finishing him off.

When Madame Theodore had quitted the house she turned with dragging steps towards the Rue Marcadet where the Toussaints resided. Here, again, she had no great expectations, for she well knew what ill-luck and worry had fallen upon her brother's home. During the previous autumn Toussaint, though he was but fifty, had experienced an attack of paralysis which had laid him up for nearly five months. Prior to this mishap he had borne himself bravely, working steadily, abstaining from drink, and bringing up his three children in true fatherly fashion. One of them, a girl, was now married to a carpenter, with whom she had gone to Le Havre, while of the others, both boys—one a soldier, had been killed in Tonquin, and the other Charles, after serving his time in the army, had become a working mechanic. Still, Toussaint's long illness had exhausted the little money which he had in the Savings Bank, and now that he had been set on his legs again, he had to begin life once more without a copper before him.

Madame Theodore found her sister-in-law alone in the cleanly kept room which she and her husband occupied. Madame Toussaint was a portly woman, whose corpulence increased in spite of everything, whether it were worry or fasting. She had a round puffy face with bright little eyes; and was a very worthy woman, whose only faults were an inclination for gossiping and a fondness for good cheer. Before Madame Theodore even opened her mouth she understood the object of her visit. "You've come on us at a bad moment, my dear," she said, "we're stumped. Toussaint wasn't able to go back to the works till the day before yesterday, and he'll have to ask for an advance this evening."

As she spoke, she looked at the other with no great sympathy, hurt as she felt by her slovenly appearance. "And Salvat," she added, "is he still doing nothing?"

Madame Theodore doubtless foresaw the question, for she quietly lied: "He isn't in Paris, a friend has taken him off for some work over Belgium way, and I'm waiting for him to send us something."

Madame Toussaint still remained distrustful, however: "Ah!" she said, "it's just as well that he shouldn't be in Paris; for with all these bomb affairs we couldn't help thinking of him, and saying that he was quite mad enough to mix himself up in them."

The other did not even blink. If she knew anything she kept it to herself.

"But you, my dear, can't you find any work?" continued Madame Toussaint.

"Well, what would you have me do with my poor eyes? It's no longer possible for me to sew."

"That's true. A seamstress gets done for. When Toussaint was laid up here I myself wanted to go back to my old calling as a needlewoman. But there! I spoilt everything and did no good. Charring's about the only thing that one can always do. Why don't you get some jobs of that kind?"

"I'm trying, but I can't find any."

Little by little Madame Toussaint was softening at sight of the other's miserable appearance. She made her sit down, and told her that she would give her something if Toussaint should come home with money. Then, yielding to her partiality for gossiping, since there was somebody to listen to her, she started telling stories. The one affair, however, on which she invariably harped was the sorry business of her son Charles and the servant girl at a wine shop over the way. Before going into the army Charles had been a most hard-working and affectionate son, invariably bringing his pay home to his mother. And certainly he still worked and showed himself good-natured; but military service, while sharpening his wits, had taken away some of his liking for ordinary manual toil. It wasn't that he regretted army life, for he spoke of his barracks as a prison. Only his tools had seemed to him rather heavy when, on quitting the service, he had been obliged to take them in hand once more.

"And so, my dear," continued Madame Toussaint, "it's all very well for Charles to be kind-hearted, he can do no more for us. I knew that he wasn't in a hurry to get married, as it costs money to keep a wife. And he was always very prudent, too, with girls. But what would you have? There was that moment of folly with that Eugenie over the road, a regular baggage who's already

gone off with another man, and left her baby behind. Charles has put it out to nurse, and pays for it every month. And a lot of expense it is too, perfect ruination. Yes, indeed, every possible misfortune has fallen on us."

In this wise Madame Toussaint rattled on for a full half hour. Then seeing that waiting and anxiety had made her sister-in-law turn quite pale, she suddenly stopped short. "You're losing patience, eh?" she exclaimed. "The fact is, that Toussaint won't be back for some time. Shall we go to the works together? I'll easily find out if he's likely to bring any money home."

They then decided to go down, but at the bottom of the stairs they lingered for another quarter of an hour chatting with a neighbour who had lately lost a child. And just as they were at last leaving the house they heard a call: "Mamma! mamma!"

It came from little Celine, whose face was beaming with delight. She was wearing a pair of new shoes and devouring a cake. "Mamma," she resumed, "Monsieur l'Abbe who came the other day wants to see you. Just look! he bought me all this!"

On seeing the shoes and the cake, Madame Theodore understood matters. And when Pierre, who was behind the child, accosted her she began to tremble and stammer thanks. Madame Toussaint on her side had quickly drawn near, not indeed to ask for anything herself, but because she was well pleased at such a God-send for her sister-in-law, whose circumstances were worse than her own. And when she saw the priest slip ten francs into Madame Theodore's hand she explained to him that she herself would willingly have lent something had she been able. Then she promptly started on the stories of Toussaint's attack and her son Charles's ill-luck.

But Celine broke in: "I say, mamma, the factory where papa used to work is here in this street, isn't it? Monsieur l'Abbe has some business there."*

* Although the children of the French peasantry almost invariably address their parents as "father" and "mother," those of the working classes of Paris, and some other large cities, usually employ the terms "papa" and "mamma."—Trans.

"The Grandidier factory," resumed Madame Toussaint; "well, we were just going there, and we can show Monsieur l'Abbe the way."

It was only a hundred steps off. Escorted by the two women and the child, Pierre slackened his steps and tried to extract some information about Salvat from Madame Theodore. But she at once became very prudent. She had not seen him again, she declared; he must have gone with a mate to Belgium, where there was a prospect of some work. From what she said, it appeared to the priest that Salvat had not dared to return to the Rue des Saules since his crime, in which all had collapsed, both his past life of toil and hope, and his recent existence with its duties towards the woman and the child.

"There's the factory, Monsieur l'Abbe," suddenly said Madame Toussaint, "my sister-in-law won't have to wait now, since you've been kind enough to help her. Thank you for her and for us."

Madame Theodore and Celine likewise poured forth their thanks, standing beside Madame Toussaint in the everlasting mud of that populous district, amidst the jostling of the passers-by. And lingering there as if to see Pierre enter, they again chatted together and repeated that, after all, some priests were very kind.

The Grandidier works covered an extensive plot of ground. Facing the street there was only a brick building with narrow windows and a great archway, through which one espied a long courtyard. But, in the rear, came a suite of habitations, workshops, and sheds, above whose never ending roofs arose the two lofty chimneys of the generators. From the very threshold one detected the rumbling and quivering of machinery, all the noise and bustle of work. Black water flowed by at one's feet, and up above white vapour spurted from a slender pipe with a regular strident puff, as if it were the very breath of that huge, toiling hive.

Bicycles were now the principal output of the works. When Grandidier had taken them on leaving the Dijon Arts and Trades School, they were declining under bad management, slowly building some little motive engines by the aid of antiquated machinery. Foreseeing the future, however, he had induced his elder brother, one of the managers of the Bon Marche, to finance him, on the promise that he would supply that great emporium with excellent bicycles at 150 francs apiece. And now quite a big venture was in progress, for the Bon Marche was already bringing out the new popular machine "La Lisette," the "Bicycle for the Multitude," as the advertisements asserted. Nevertheless, Grandidier was still in all the throes of a great struggle, for his new machinery had cast a heavy burden of debt on him. At the same time each month brought its effort, the perfecting or simplifying of some part of the manufacture, which meant a saving in the future. He was ever on the watch; and even now was thinking of reverting to the construction of little motors, for he thought he could divine in the near future the triumph of the motor-car.

On asking if M. Thomas Froment were there, Pierre was led by an old workman to a little shed, where he found the young fellow in the linen jacket of a mechanic, his hands black with filings. He was adjusting some piece of mechanism, and nobody would have suspected him to be a former pupil of the Lycee Condorcet, one of the three clever Froments who had there rendered

the name famous. But his only desire had been to act as his father's faithful servant, the arm that forges, the embodiment of the manual toil by which conceptions are realised. And, a giant of three and twenty, ever attentive and courageous, he was likewise a man of patient, silent and sober nature.

On catching sight of Pierre he quivered with anxiety and sprang forward. "Father is no worse?" he asked.

"No, no. But he read in the papers that story of a bradawl found in the Rue Godot-de-Mauroy, and it made him anxious, because the police may make a perquisition here."

Thomas, his own anxiety allayed, began to smile. "Tell him he may sleep quietly," he responded. "To begin with, I've unfortunately not yet hit on our little motor such as I want it to be. In fact, I haven't yet put it together. I'm keeping the pieces at our house, and nobody here knows exactly what I come to do at the factory. So the police may search, it will find nothing. Our secret runs no risk."

Pierre promised to repeat these words to Guillaume, so as to dissipate his fears. However, when he tried to sound Thomas, and ascertain the position of affairs, what the factory people thought of the discovery of the bradawl, and whether there was as yet any suspicion of Salvat, he once more found the young man taciturn, and elicited merely a "yes" or a "no" in answer to his inquiries. The police had not been there as yet? No. But the men must surely have mentioned Salvat? Yes, of course, on account of his Anarchist opinions. But what had Grandidier, the master, said, on returning from the investigating magistrate's? As for that Thomas knew nothing. He had not seen Grandidier that day.

"But here he comes!" the young man added. "Ah! poor fellow, his wife, I fancy, had another attack this morning."

He alluded to a frightful story which Guillaume had already recounted to Pierre. Grandidier, falling in love with a very beautiful girl, had married her; but for five years now she had been insane: the result of puerperal fever and the death of an infant son. Her husband, with his ardent affection for her, had been unwilling to place her in an asylum, and had accordingly kept her with him in a little pavilion, whose windows, overlooking the courtyard of the factory, always remained closed. She was never seen; and never did he speak of her to anybody. It was said that she was usually like a child, very gentle and very sad, and still beautiful, with regal golden hair. At times, however, attacks of frantic madness came upon her, and he then had to struggle with her, and often hold her for hours in his arms to prevent her from splitting her head against the walls. Fearful shrieks would ring out for a time, and then deathlike silence would fall once more.

Grandidier came into the shed where Thomas was working. A handsome man of forty, with an energetic face, he had a dark and heavy moustache, brush-like hair and clear eyes. He was very partial to Thomas, and during the young fellow's apprenticeship there, had treated him like a son. And he now let him return thither whenever it pleased him, and placed his appliances at his disposal. He knew that he was trying to devise a new motor, a question in which he himself was extremely interested; still he evinced the greatest discretion, never questioning Thomas, but awaiting the result of his endeavours.

"This is my uncle, Abbe Froment, who looked in to wish me good day," said the young man, introducing Pierre.

An exchange of polite remarks ensued. Then Grandidier sought to cast off the sadness which made people think him stern and harsh, and in a bantering tone exclaimed: "I didn't tell you, Thomas, of my business with the investigating magistrate. If I hadn't enjoyed a good reputation we should have had all the spies of the Prefecture here. The magistrate wanted me to explain the presence of that bradawl in the Rue Godot-de-Mauroy, and I at once realised that, in his opinion, the culprit must have worked here. For my part I immediately thought of Salvat. But I don't denounce people. The magistrate has my hiring-book, and as for Salvat I simply answered that he worked here for nearly three months last autumn, and then disappeared. They can look for him themselves! Ah! that magistrate! you can picture him a little fellow with fair hair and cat-like eyes, very careful of his appearance, a society man evidently, but quite frisky at being mixed up in this affair."

"Isn't he Monsieur Amadiou?" asked Pierre.

"Yes, that's his name. Ah! he's certainly delighted with the present which those Anarchists have made him, with that crime of theirs."

The priest listened in deep anxiety. As his brother had feared, the true scent, the first conducting wire, had now been found. And he looked at Thomas to see if he also were disturbed. But the young man was either ignorant of the ties which linked Salvat to his father, or else he possessed great power of self-control, for he merely smiled at Grandidier's sketch of the magistrate.

Then, as Grandidier went to look at the piece of mechanism which Thomas was finishing, and they began to speak about it, Pierre drew near to an open doorway which communicated with a long workshop where engine lathes were rumbling, and the beams of press-drills falling quickly

and rhythmically. Leather gearing spun along with a continuous gliding, and there was ceaseless bustle and activity amidst the odoriferous dampness of all the steam. Scores of perspiring workmen, grimy with dust and filings, were still toiling. Still this was the final effort of the day. And as three men approached a water-tap near Pierre to wash their hands, he listened to their talk, and became particularly interested in it when he heard one of them, a tall, ginger-haired fellow, call another Toussaint, and the third Charles.

Toussaint, a big, square-shouldered man with knotty arms, only showed his fifty years on his round, scorched face, which besides being roughened and wrinkled by labour, bristled with grey hairs, which nowadays he was content to shave off once a week. It was only his right arm that was affected by paralysis, and moved rather sluggishly. As for Charles, a living portrait of his father, he was now in all the strength of his six and twentieth year, with splendid muscles distending his white skin, and a full face barred by a heavy black moustache. The three men, like their employer, were speaking of the explosion at the Duvillard mansion, of the bradawl found there, and of Salvat, whom they all now suspected.

"Why, only a brigand would do such a thing!" said Toussaint. "That Anarchism disgusts me. I'll have none of it. But all the same it's for the *bourgeois* to settle matters. If the others want to blow them up, it's their concern. It's they who brought it about."

This indifference was undoubtedly the outcome of a life of want and social injustice; it was the indifference of an old toiler, who, weary of struggling and hoping for improvements, was now quite ready to tolerate the crumbling of a social system, which threatened him with hunger in his impotent old age.

"Well, you know," rejoined Charles, "I've heard the Anarchists talking, and they really say some very true and sensible things. And just take yourself, father; you've been working for thirty years, and isn't it abominable that you should have had to pass through all that you did pass through recently, liable to go off like some old horse that's slaughtered at the first sign of illness? And, of course, it makes me think of myself, and I can't help feeling that it won't be at all amusing to end like that. And may the thunder of God kill me if I'm wrong, but one feels half inclined to join in their great flare-up if it's really to make everybody happy!"

He certainly lacked the flame of enthusiasm, and if he had come to these views it was solely from impatience to lead a less toilsome life, for obligatory military service had given him ideas of equality among all men—a desire to struggle, raise himself and obtain his legitimate share of life's enjoyments. It was, in fact, the inevitable step which carries each generation a little more forward. There was the father, who, deceived in his hope of a fraternal republic, had grown sceptical and contemptuous; and there was the son advancing towards a new faith, and gradually yielding to ideas of violence, since political liberty had failed to keep its promises.

Nevertheless, as the big, ginger-haired fellow grew angry, and shouted that if Salvat were guilty, he ought to be caught and guillotined at once, without waiting for judges, Toussaint ended by endorsing his opinion. "Yes, yes, he may have married one of my sisters, but I renounce him. . . . And yet, you know, it would astonish me to find him guilty, for he isn't wicked at heart. I'm sure he wouldn't kill a fly."

"But what would you have?" put in Charles. "When a man's driven to extremities he goes mad."

They had now washed themselves; but Toussaint, on perceiving his employer, lingered there in order to ask him for an advance. As it happened, Grandidier, after cordially shaking hands with Pierre, approached the old workman of his own accord, for he held him in esteem. And, after listening to him, he gave him a line for the cashier on a card. As a rule, he was altogether against the practice of advancing money, and his men disliked him, and said he was over rigid, though in point of fact he had a good heart. But he had his position as an employer to defend, and to him concessions meant ruin. With such keen competition on all sides, with the capitalist system entailing a terrible and incessant struggle, how could one grant the demands of the workers, even when they were legitimate?

Sudden compassion came upon Pierre when, after quitting Thomas, he saw Grandidier, who had finished his round, crossing the courtyard in the direction of the closed pavilion, where all the grief of his heart-tragedy awaited him. Here was that man waging the battle of life, defending his fortune with the risk that his business might melt away amidst the furious warfare between capital and labour; and at the same time, in lieu of evening repose, finding naught but anguish at his hearth: a mad wife, an adored wife, who had sunk back into infancy, and was for ever dead to love! How incurable was his secret despair! Even on the days when he triumphed in his workshops, disaster awaited him at home. And could any more unhappy man, any man more deserving of pity, be found even among the poor who died of hunger, among those gloomy workers, those vanquished sons of labour who hated and who envied him?

When Pierre found himself in the street again he was astonished to see Madame Toussaint and Madame Theodore still there with little Celine. With their feet in the mud, like bits of wreckage against which beat the ceaseless flow of wayfarers, they had lingered there, still and ever chatting, loquacious and doleful, lulling their wretchedness to rest beneath a deluge of tittle-tattle. And when Toussaint, followed by his son, came out, delighted with the advance he had

secured, he also found them on the same spot. Then he told Madame Theodore the story of the bradawl, and the idea which had occurred to him and all his mates that Salvat might well be the culprit. She, however, though turning very pale, began to protest, concealing both what she knew and what she really thought.

"I tell you I haven't seen him for several days," said she. "He must certainly be in Belgium. And as for a bomb, that's humbug. You say yourself that he's very gentle and wouldn't harm a fly!"

A little later as Pierre journeyed back to Neuilly in a tramcar he fell into a deep reverie. All the stir and bustle of that working-class district, the buzzing of the factory, the overflowing activity of that hive of labour, seemed to have lingered within him. And for the first time, amidst his worries, he realised the necessity of work. Yes, it was fatal, but it also gave health and strength. In effort which sustains and saves, he at last found a solid basis on which all might be reared. Was this, then, the first gleam of a new faith? But ah! what mockery! Work an uncertainty, work hopeless, work always ending in injustice! And then wait ever on the watch for the toiler, strangling him as soon as slack times came round, and casting him into the streets like a dead dog immediately old age set in.

On reaching Neuilly, Pierre found Bertheroy at Guillaume's bedside. The old *savant* had just dressed the injured wrist, and was not yet certain that no complications would arise. "The fact is," he said to Guillaume, "you don't keep quiet. I always find you in a state of feverish emotion which is the worst possible thing for you. You must calm yourself, my dear fellow, and not allow anything to worry you."

A few minutes later, though, just as he was going away, he said with his pleasant smile: "Do you know that a newspaper writer came to interview me about that explosion? Those reporters imagine that scientific men know everything! I told the one who called on me that it would be very kind of *him* to enlighten *me* as to what powder was employed. And, by the way, I am giving a lesson on explosives at my laboratory to-morrow. There will be just a few persons present. You might come as well, Pierre, so as to give an account of it to Guillaume; it would interest him."

At a glance from his brother, Pierre accepted the invitation. Then, Bertheroy having gone, he recounted all he had learnt during the afternoon, how Salvat was suspected, and how the investigating magistrate had been put on the right scent. And at this news, intense fever again came over Guillaume, who, with his head buried in the pillow, and his eyes closed, stammered as if in a kind of nightmare: "Ah! then, this is the end! Salvat arrested, Salvat interrogated! Ah! that so much toil and so much hope should crumble!"

IV

CULTURE AND HOPE

ON the morrow, punctually at one o'clock, Pierre reached the Rue d'Ulm, where Bertheroy resided in a fairly large house, which the State had placed at his disposal, in order that he might install in it a laboratory for study and research. Thus the whole first floor had been transformed into one spacious apartment, where, from time to time, the illustrious chemist was fond of receiving a limited number of pupils and admirers, before whom he made experiments, and explained his new discoveries and theories.

For these occasions a few chairs were set out before the long and massive table, which was covered with jars and appliances. In the rear one saw the furnace, while all around were glass cases, full of vials and specimens. The persons present were, for the most part, fellow *savants*, with a few young men, and even a lady or two, and, of course, an occasional journalist. The whole made up a kind of family gathering, the visitors chatting with the master in all freedom.

Directly Bertheroy perceived Pierre he came forward, pressed his hand and seated him on a chair beside Guillaume's son Francois, who had been one of the first arrivals. The young man was completing his third year at the Ecole Normale, close by, so he only had a few steps to take to call upon his master Bertheroy, whom he regarded as one of the firmest minds of the age. Pierre was delighted to meet his nephew, for he had been greatly impressed in his favour on the occasion of his visit to Montmartre. Francois, on his side, greeted his uncle with all the cordial expansiveness of youth. He was, moreover, well pleased to obtain some news of his father.

However, Bertheroy began. He spoke in a familiar and sober fashion, but frequently employed some very happy expressions. At first he gave an account of his own extensive labours and investigations with regard to explosive substances, and related with a laugh that he sometimes manipulated powders which would have blown up the entire district. But, said he, in order to reassure his listeners, he was always extremely prudent. At last he turned to the subject of that explosion in the Rue Godot-de-Mauroy, which, for some days, had filled Paris with dismay. The remnants of the bomb had been carefully examined by experts, and one fragment had been brought to him, in order that he might give his opinion on it. The bomb appeared to have been prepared in a very rudimentary fashion; it had been charged with small pieces of iron, and fired

by means of a match, such as a child might have devised. The extraordinary part of the affair was the formidable power of the central cartridge, which, although it must have been a small one, had wrought as much havoc as any thunderbolt. And the question was this: What incalculable power of destruction might one not arrive at if the charge were increased ten, twenty or a hundredfold. Embarrassment began, and divergencies of opinion clouded the issue directly one tried to specify what explosive had been employed. Of the three experts who had been consulted, one pronounced himself in favour of dynamite pure and simple; but the two others, although they did not agree together, believed in some combination of explosive matters. He, Bertheroy, had modestly declined to adjudicate, for the fragment submitted to him bore traces of so slight a character, that analysis became impossible. Thus he was unwilling to make any positive pronouncement. But his opinion was that one found oneself in presence of some unknown powder, some new explosive, whose power exceeded anything that had hitherto been dreamt of. He could picture some unknown *savant*, or some ignorant but lucky inventor, discovering the formula of this explosive under mysterious conditions. And this brought him to the point he wished to reach, the question of all the explosives which are so far unknown, and of the coming discoveries which he could foresee. In the course of his investigations he himself had found cause to suspect the existence of several such explosives, though he had lacked time and opportunity to prosecute his studies in that direction. However, he indicated the field which should be explored, and the best way of proceeding. In his opinion it was there that lay the future. And in a broad and eloquent peroration, he declared that explosives had hitherto been degraded by being employed in idiotic schemes of vengeance and destruction; whereas it was in them possibly that lay the liberating force which science was seeking, the lever which would change the face of the world, when they should have been so domesticated and subdued as to be only the obedient servants of man.

Throughout this familiar discourse Pierre could feel that Francois was growing impassioned, quivering at thought of the vast horizon which the master opened up. He himself had become extremely interested, for he could not do otherwise than notice certain allusions, and connect what he heard with what he had guessed of Guillaume's anxiety regarding that secret which he feared to see at the mercy of an investigating magistrate. And so as he, Pierre, before going off with Francois, approached Bertheroy to wish him good day, he pointedly remarked: "Guillaume will be very sorry that he was unable to hear you unfold those admirable ideas."

The old *savant* smiled. "Pooh!" said he; "just give him a summary of what I said. He will understand. He knows more about the matter than I do."

In presence of the illustrious chemist, Francois preserved the silent gravity of a respectful pupil, but when he and Pierre had taken a few steps down the street in silence, he remarked: "What a pity it is that a man of such broad intelligence, free from all superstition, and anxious for the sole triumph of truth, should have allowed himself to be classified, ticketed, bound round with titles and academical functions! How greatly our affection for him would increase if he took less State pay, and freed himself from all the grand cordons which tie his hands."

"What would you have!" rejoined Pierre, in a conciliatory spirit. "A man must live! At the same time I believe that he does not regard himself as tied by anything."

Then, as they had reached the entrance of the Ecole Normale, the priest stopped, thinking that his companion was going back to the college. But Francois, raising his eyes and glancing at the old place, remarked: "No, no, to-day's Thursday, and I'm at liberty! Oh! we have a deal of liberty, perhaps too much. But for my own part I'm well pleased at it, for it often enables me to go to Montmartre and work at my old little table. It's only there that I feel any real strength and clearness of mind."

His preliminary examinations had entitled him to admission at either the Ecole Polytechnique or the Ecole Normale,* and he had chosen the latter, entering its scientific section with No. 1 against his name. His father had wished him to make sure of an avocation, that of professor, even if circumstances should allow him to remain independent and follow his own bent on leaving the college. Francois, who was very precocious, was now preparing for his last examination there, and the only rest he took was in walking to and from Montmartre, or in strolling through the Luxembourg gardens.

* The purposes of the Ecole Normale have been referred to on p. 197. At the Ecole Polytechnique young men receive much of the preliminary training which they require to become either artillery officers, or military, naval or civil engineers.—Trans.

From force of habit he now turned towards the latter, accompanied by Pierre and chatting with him. One found the mildness of springtime there that February afternoon; for pale sunshine streamed between the trees, which were still leafless. It was indeed one of those first fine days which draw little green gems from the branches of the lilac bushes.

The Ecole Normale was still the subject of conversation and Pierre remarked: "I must own that I hardly like the spirit that prevails there. Excellent work is done, no doubt, and the only way to form professors is to teach men the trade by cramming them with the necessary knowledge. But the worst is that although all the students are trained for the teaching profession, many of them don't remain in it, but go out into the world, take to journalism, or make it their business to control the arts, literature and society. And those who do this are for the most part unbearable."

After swearing by Voltaire they have gone back to spirituality and mysticism, the last drawing-room craze. Now that a firm faith in science is regarded as brutish and inelegant, they fancy that they rid themselves of their caste by feigning amiable doubt, and ignorance, and innocence. What they most fear is that they may carry a scent of the schools about with them, so they put on extremely Parisian airs, venture on somersaults and slang, and assume all the grace of dancing bears in their eager desire to please. From that desire spring the sarcastic shafts which they aim at science, they who pretend that they know everything, but who go back to the belief of the humble, the *naïve* idealism of Biblical legends, just because they think the latter to be more distinguished."

Francois began to laugh: "The portrait is perhaps a little overdrawn," said he, "still there's truth in it, a great deal of truth."

"I have known several of them," continued Pierre, who was growing animated. "And among them all I have noticed that a fear of being duped leads them to reaction against the entire effort, the whole work of the century. Disgust with liberty, distrust of science, denial of the future, that is what they now profess. And they have such a horror of the commonplace that they would rather believe in nothing or the incredible. It may of course be commonplace to say that two and two make four, yet it's true enough; and it is far less foolish for a man to say and repeat it than to believe, for instance, in the miracles of Lourdes."

Francois glanced at the priest in astonishment. The other noticed it and strove to restrain himself. Nevertheless, grief and anger carried him away whenever he spoke of the educated young people of the time, such as, in his despair, he imagined them to be. In the same way as he had pitied the toilers dying of hunger in the districts of misery and want, so here he overflowed with contempt for the young minds that lacked bravery in the presence of knowledge, and harked back to the consolation of deceptive spirituality, the promise of an eternity of happiness in death, which last was longed for and exalted as the very sum of life. Was not the cowardly thought of refusing to live for the sake of living so as to discharge one's simple duty in being and making one's effort, equivalent to absolute assassination of life? However, the *Ego* was always the mainspring; each one sought personal happiness. And Pierre was grieved to think that those young people, instead of discarding the past and marching on to the truths of the future, were relapsing into shadowy metaphysics through sheer weariness and idleness, due in part perhaps to the excessive exertion of the century, which had been overladen with human toil.

However, Francois had begun to smile again. "But you are mistaken," said he; "we are not all like that at the Ecole Normale. You only seem to know the Normalians of the Section of Letters, and your opinions would surely change if you knew those of the Section of Sciences. It is quite true that the reaction against Positivism is making itself felt among our literary fellow-students, and that they, like others, are haunted by the idea of that famous bankruptcy of science. This is perhaps due to their masters, the neo-spiritualists and dogmatical rhetoricians into whose hands they have fallen. And it is still more due to fashion, the whim of the times which, as you have very well put it, regards scientific truth as bad taste, something graceless and altogether too brutal for light and distinguished minds. Consequently, a young fellow of any shrewdness who desires to please is perforce won over to the new spirit."

"The new spirit!" interrupted Pierre, unable to restrain himself. "Oh! that is no mere innocent, passing fashion, it is a tactical device and a terrible one, an offensive return of the powers of darkness against those of light, of servitude against free thought, truth and justice."

Then, as the young man again looked at him with growing astonishment, he relapsed into silence. The figure of Monseigneur Martha had risen before his eyes, and he fancied he could again hear the prelate at the Madeleine, striving to win Paris over to the policy of Rome, to that spurious neo-Catholicism which, with the object of destroying democracy and science, accepted such portions of them as it could adapt to its own views. This was indeed the supreme struggle. Thence came all the poison poured forth to the young. Pierre knew what efforts were being made in religious circles to help on this revival of mysticism, in the mad hope of hastening the rout of science. Monseigneur Martha, who was all-powerful at the Catholic University, said to his intimates, however, that three generations of devout and docile pupils would be needed before the Church would again be absolute sovereign of France.

"Well, as for the Ecole Normale," continued Francois, "I assure you that you are mistaken. There are a few narrow bigots there, no doubt. But even in the Section of Letters the majority of the students are sceptics at bottom—sceptics of discreet and good-natured average views. Of course they are professors before everything else, though they are a trifle ashamed of it; and, as professors, they judge things with no little pedantic irony, devoured by a spirit of criticism, and quite incapable of creating anything themselves. I should certainly be astonished to see the man of genius whom we await come out of their ranks. To my thinking, indeed, it would be preferable that some barbarian genius, neither well read nor endowed with critical faculty, or power of weighing and shading things, should come and open the next century with a hatchet stroke, sending up a fine flare of truth and reality. . . . But, as for my comrades of the Scientific Section, I assure you that neo-Catholicism and Mysticism and Occultism, and every other branch of the fashionable phantasmagoria trouble them very little indeed. They are not making a religion of science, they remain open to doubt on many points; but they are mostly men of very clear and firm minds, whose passion is the acquirement of certainty, and who are ever absorbed in the investigations which continue throughout the whole vast field of human knowledge. They haven't

flinched, they have remained Positivists, or Evolutionists, or Determinists, and have set their faith in observation and experiment to help on the final conquest of the world."

Francois himself was growing excited, as he thus confessed his faith while strolling along the quiet sunlit garden paths. "The young indeed!" he resumed. "Do people know them? It makes us laugh when we see all sorts of apostles fighting for us, trying to attract us, and saying that we are white or black or grey, according to the hue which they require for the triumph of their particular ideas! The young, the real ones, why, they're in the schools, the laboratories and the libraries. It's they who work and who'll bring to-morrow to the world. It's not the young fellows of dinner and supper clubs, manifestoes and all sorts of extravagances. The latter make a great deal of noise, no doubt; in fact, they alone are heard. But if you knew of the ceaseless efforts and passionate striving of the others, those who remain silent, absorbed in their tasks. And I know many of them: they are with their century, they have rejected none of its hopes, but are marching on to the coming century, resolved to pursue the work of their forerunners, ever going towards more light and more equity. And just speak to them of the bankruptcy of science. They'll shrug their shoulders at the mere idea, for they know well enough that science has never before inflamed so many hearts or achieved greater conquests! It is only if the schools, laboratories and libraries were closed, and the social soil radically changed, that one would have cause to fear a fresh growth of error such as weak hearts and narrow minds hold so dear!"

At this point Francois's fine flow of eloquence was interrupted. A tall young fellow stopped to shake hands with him; and Pierre was surprised to recognise Baron Duvillard's son Hyacinthe, who bowed to him in very correct style. "What! you here in our old quarter," exclaimed Francois.

"My dear fellow, I'm going to Jonas's, over yonder, behind the Observatory. Don't you know Jonas? Ah! my dear fellow, he's a delightful sculptor, who has succeeded in doing away with matter almost entirely. He has carved a figure of Woman, no bigger than the finger, and entirely soul, free from all baseness of form, and yet complete. All Woman, indeed, in her essential symbolism! Ah! it's grand, it's overpowering. A perfect scheme of aesthetics, a real religion!"

Francois smiled as he looked at Hyacinthe, buttoned up in his long pleated frock-coat, with his made-up face, and carefully cropped hair and beard. "And yourself?" said he, "I thought you were working, and were going to publish a little poem, shortly?"

"Oh! the task of creating is so distasteful to me, my dear fellow! A single line often takes me weeks. . . . Still, yes, I have a little poem on hand, 'The End of Woman.' And you see, I'm not so exclusive as some people pretend, since I admire Jonas, who still believes in Woman. His excuse is sculpture, which, after all, is at best such a gross materialistic art. But in poetry, good heavens, how we've been overwhelmed with Woman, always Woman! It's surely time to drive her out of the temple, and cleanse it a little. Ah! if we were all pure and lofty enough to do without Woman, and renounce all those horrid sexual questions, so that the last of the species might die childless, eh? The world would then at least finish in a clean and proper manner!"

Thereupon, Hyacinthe walked off with his languid air, well pleased with the effect which he had produced on the others.

"So you know him?" said Pierre to Francois.

"He was my school-fellow at Condorcet, we were in the same classes together. Such a funny fellow he was! A perfect dunce! And he was always making a parade of Father Duvillard's millions, while pretending to disdain them, and act the revolutionist, for ever saying that he'd use his cigarette to fire the cartridge which was to blow up the world! He was Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche, and Tolstoi, and Ibsen, rolled into one! And you can see what he has become with it all: a humbug with a diseased mind!"

"It's a terrible symptom," muttered Pierre, "when through *ennui* or lassitude, or the contagion of destructive fury, the sons of the happy and privileged ones start doing the work of the demolishers."

Francois had resumed his walk, going down towards the ornamental water, where some children were sailing their boats. "That fellow is simply grotesque," he replied; "but how would you have sane people give any heed to that mysticism, that awakening of spirituality which is alleged by the same *doctrinaires* who started the bankruptcy of science cry, when after so brief an evolution it produces such insanity, both in art and literature? A few years of influence have sufficed; and now Satanism, Occultism and other absurdities are flourishing; not to mention that, according to some accounts, the Cities of the Plains are reconciled with new Rome. Isn't the tree judged by its fruits? And isn't it evident that, instead of a renascence, a far-spreading social movement bringing back the past, we are simply witnessing a transitory reaction, which many things explain? The old world would rather not die, and is struggling in a final convulsion, reviving for a last hour before it is swept away by the overflowing river of human knowledge, whose waters ever increase. And yonder, in the future, is the new world, which the real young ones will bring into existence, those who work, those who are not known, who are not heard. And yet, just listen! Perhaps you will hear them, for we are among them, in their 'quarter.' This deep silence is that of the labour of all the young fellows who are leaning over their work-tables, and day by day carrying forward the conquest of truth."

So saying Francois waved his hand towards all the day-schools and colleges and high schools beyond the Luxembourg garden, towards the Faculties of Law and Medicine, the Institute and its five Academies, the innumerable libraries and museums which made up the broad domain of intellectual labour. And Pierre, moved by it all, shaken in his theories of negation, thought that he could indeed hear a low but far-spreading murmur of the work of thousands of active minds, rising from laboratories, studies and class, reading and lecture rooms. It was not like the jerky, breathless trepidation, the loud clamour of factories where manual labour toils and chafes. But here, too, there were sighs of weariness, efforts as killing, exertion as fruitful in its results. Was it indeed true that the cultured young were still and ever in their silent forge, renouncing no hope, relinquishing no conquest, but in full freedom of mind forging the truth and justice of to-morrow with the invincible hammers of observation and experiment?

Francois, however, had raised his eyes to the palace clock to ascertain the time. "I'm going to Montmartre," he said; "will you come part of the way with me?"

Pierre assented, particularly as the young man added that on his way he meant to call for his brother Antoine at the Museum of the Louvre. That bright afternoon the Louvre picture galleries were steeped in warm and dignified quietude, which one particularly noticed on coming from the tumult and scramble of the streets. The majority of the few people one found there were copyists working in deep silence, which only the wandering footsteps of an occasional tourist disturbed. Pierre and Francois found Antoine at the end of the gallery assigned to the Primitive masters. With scrupulous, almost devout care he was making a drawing of a figure by Mantegna. The Primitives did not impassion him by reason of any particular mysticism and ideality, such as fashion pretends to find in them, but on the contrary, and justifiably enough, by reason of the sincerity of their ingenuous realism, their respect and modesty in presence of nature, and the minute fidelity with which they sought to transcribe it. He spent days of hard work in copying and studying them, in order to learn strictness and probity of drawing from them—all that lofty distinction of style which they owe to their candour as honest artists.

Pierre was struck by the pure glow which a sitting of good hard work had set in Antoine's light blue eyes. It imparted warmth and even feverishness to his fair face, which was usually all dreaminess and gentleness. His lofty forehead now truly looked like a citadel armed for the conquest of truth and beauty. He was only eighteen, and his story was simply this: as he had grown disgusted with classical studies and been mastered by a passion for drawing, his father had let him leave the Lycee Condorcet when he was in the third class there. Some little time had then elapsed while he felt his way and the deep originality within him was being evolved. He had tried etching on copper, but had soon come to wood engraving, and had attached himself to it in spite of the discredit into which it had fallen, lowered as it had been to the level of a mere trade. Was there not here an entire art to restore and enlarge? For his own part he dreamt of engraving his own drawings, of being at once the brain which conceives and the hand which executes, in such wise as to obtain new effects of great intensity both as regards perception and touch. To comply with the wishes of his father, who desired each of his sons to have a trade, he earned his bread like other engravers by working for the illustrated newspapers. But, in addition to this current work, he had already engraved several blocks instinct with wonderful power and life. They were simply copies of real things, scenes of everyday existence, but they were accentuated, elevated so to say, by the essential line, with a maestria which on the part of so young a lad fairly astonished one.

"Do you want to engrave that?" Francois asked him, as he placed his copy of Mantegna's figure in his portfolio.

"Oh! no, that's merely a dip into innocence, a good lesson to teach one to be modest and sincere. Life is very different nowadays."

Then, while walking along the streets—for Pierre, who felt growing sympathy for the two young fellows, went with them in the direction of Montmartre, forgetful of all else,—Antoine, who was beside him, spoke expansively of his artistic dreams.

"Colour is certainly a power, a sovereign source of charm, and one may, indeed, say that without colour nothing can be completely represented. Yet, singularly enough, it isn't indispensable to me. It seems to me that I can picture life as intensely and definitely with mere black and white, and I even fancy that I shall be able to do so in a more essential manner, without any of the dupery which lies in colour. But what a task it is! I should like to depict the Paris of to-day in a few scenes, a few typical figures, which would serve as testimony for all time. And I should like to do it with great fidelity and candour, for an artist only lives by reason of his candour, his humility and steadfast belief in Nature, which is ever beautiful. I've already done a few figures, I will show them to you. But ah! if I only dared to tackle my blocks with the graver, at the outset, without drawing my subject beforehand. For that generally takes away one's fire. However, what I do with the pencil is a mere sketch; for with the graver I may come upon a find, some unexpected strength or delicacy of effect. And so I'm draughtsman and engraver all in one, in such a way that my blocks can only be turned out by myself. If the drawings on them were engraved by another, they would be quite lifeless. . . . Yes, life can spring from the fingers just as well as from the brain, when one really possesses creative power."

They walked on, and when they found themselves just below Montmartre, and Pierre spoke of taking a tramcar to return to Neuilly, Antoine, quite feverish with artistic passion, asked him if he

knew Jahan, the sculptor, who was working for the Sacred Heart. And on receiving a negative reply, he added: "Well, come and see him for a moment. He has a great future before him. You'll see an angel of his which has been declined."

Then, as Francois began to praise the angel in question, Pierre agreed to accompany them. On the summit of the height, among all the sheds which the building of the basilica necessitated, Jahan had been able to set up a glazed workshop large enough for the huge angel ordered of him. His three visitors found him there in a blouse, watching a couple of assistants, who were rough-hewing the block of stone whence the angel was to emerge. Jahan was a sturdy man of thirty-six, with dark hair and beard, a large, ruddy mouth and fine bright eyes. Born in Paris, he had studied at the Fine Art School, but his impetuous temperament had constantly landed him in trouble there.

"Ah! yes," said he, "you've come to see my angel, the one which the Archbishop wouldn't take. Well, there it is."

The clay model of the figure, some three feet high, and already drying, looked superb in its soaring posture, with its large, outspread wings expanding as if with passionate desire for the infinite. The body, barely draped, was that of a slim yet robust youth, whose face beamed with the rapture of his heavenly flight.

"They found him too human," said Jahan. "And after all they were right. There's nothing so difficult to conceive as an angel. One even hesitates as to the sex; and when faith is lacking one has to take the first model one finds and copy it and spoil it. For my part, while I was modelling that one, I tried to imagine a beautiful youth suddenly endowed with wings, and carried by the intoxication of his flight into all the joy of the sunshine. But it upset them, they wanted something more religious, they said; and so then I concocted that wretched thing over there. After all, one has to earn one's living, you know."

So saying, he waved his hand towards another model, the one for which his assistants were preparing the stone. And this model represented an angel of the correct type, with symmetrical wings like those of a goose, a figure of neither sex, and commonplace features, expressing the silly ecstasy that tradition requires.

"What would you have?" continued Jahan. "Religious art has sunk to the most disgusting triteness. People no longer believe; churches are built like barracks, and decorated with saints and virgins fit to make one weep. The fact is that genius is only the fruit of the social soil; and a great artist can only send up a blaze of the faith of the time he lives in. For my part, I'm the grandson of a Beauceron peasant. My father came to Paris to set himself up in business as a marble worker for tombstones and so forth, just at the top of the Rue de la Roquette. It was there I grew up. I began as a workman, and all my childhood was spent among the masses, in the streets, without ever a thought coming to me of setting foot in a church. So few Parisians think of doing so nowadays. And so what's to become of art since there's no belief in the Divinity or even in beauty? We're forced to go forward to the new faith, which is the faith in life and work and fruitfulness, in all that labours and produces."

Then suddenly breaking off he exclaimed: "By the way, I've been doing some more work to my figure of Fecundity, and I'm fairly well pleased with it. Just come with me and I'll show it you."

Thereupon he insisted on taking them to his private studio, which was near by, just below Guillaume's little house. It was entered by way of the Rue du Calvaire, a street which is simply a succession of ladder-like flights of steps. The door opened on to one of the little landings, and one found oneself in a spacious, well-lighted apartment littered with models and casts, fragments and figures, quite an overflow of sturdy, powerful talent. On a stool was the unfinished model of Fecundity swathed in wet cloths. These Jahan removed, and then she stood forth with her rounded figure, her broad hips and her wifely, maternal bosom, full of the milk which nourishes and redeems.

"Well, what do you think of her?" asked Jahan. "Built as she is, I fancy that her children ought to be less puny than the pale, languid, aesthetic fellows of nowadays!"

While Antoine and Francois were admiring the figure, Pierre, for his part, took most interest in a young girl who had opened the door to them, and who had now wearily reseated herself at a little table to continue a book she was reading. This was Jahan's sister, Lise. A score of years younger than himself, she was but sixteen, and had been living alone with him since their father's death. Very slight and delicate looking, she had a most gentle face, with fine light hair which suggested pale gold-dust. She was almost a cripple, with legs so weak that she only walked with difficulty, and her mind also was belated, still full of childish *naivete*. At first this had much saddened her brother, but with time he had grown accustomed to her innocence and languor. Busy as he always was, ever in a transport, overflowing with new plans, he somewhat neglected her by force of circumstances, letting her live beside him much as she listed.

Pierre had noticed, however, the sisterly impulsiveness with which she had greeted Antoine. And the latter, after congratulating Jahan on his statue, came and sat down beside her, questioned her and wished to see the book which she was reading. During the last six months the most pure and affectionate intercourse had sprung up between them. He, from his father's

garden, up yonder on the Place du Tertre, could see her through the huge window of that studio where she led so innocent a life. And noticing that she was always alone, as if forsaken, he had begun to take an interest in her. Then had come acquaintance; and, delighted to find her so simple and so charming, he had conceived the design of rousing her to intelligence and life, by loving her, by becoming at once the mind and the heart whose power fructifies. Weak plant that she was, in need of delicate care, sunshine and affection, he became for her all that her brother had, through circumstances, failed to be. He had already taught her to read, a task in which every mistress had previously failed. But him she listened to and understood. And by slow degrees a glow of happiness came to the beautiful clear eyes set in her irregular face. It was love's miracle, the creation of woman beneath the breath of a young lover who gave himself entirely. No doubt she still remained very delicate, with such poor health that one ever feared that she might expire in a faint sigh; and her legs, moreover, were still too weak to admit of her walking any distance. But all the same, she was no longer the little wilding, the little ailing flower of the previous spring.

Jahan, who marvelled at the incipient miracle, drew near to the young people. "Ah!" said he, "your pupil does you honour. She reads quite fluently, you know, and understands the fine books you send her. You read to me of an evening now, don't you, Lise?"

She raised her candid eyes, and gazed at Antoine with a smile of infinite gratitude. "Oh! whatever he'll teach me," she said, "I'll learn it, and do it."

The others laughed gently. Then, as the visitors were going off, Francois paused before a model which had cracked while drying. "Oh! that's a spoilt thing," said the sculptor. "I wanted to model a figure of Charity. It was ordered of me by a philanthropic institution. But try as I might, I could only devise something so commonplace that I let the clay spoil. Still, I must think it over and endeavour to take the matter in hand again."

When they were outside, it occurred to Pierre to go as far as the basilica of the Sacred Heart in the hope of finding Abbe Rose there. So the three of them went round by way of the Rue Gabrielle and climbed the steps of the Rue Chape. And just as they were reaching the summit where the basilica reared its forest of scaffoldings beneath the clear sky, they encountered Thomas, who, on leaving the factory, had gone to give an order to a founder in the Rue Lamarck.

He, who as a rule was so silent and discreet, now happened to be in an expansive mood, which made him look quite radiant. "Ah! I'm so pleased," he said, addressing Pierre; "I fancy that I've found what I want for our little motor. Tell father that things are going on all right, and that he must make haste to get well."

At these words his brothers, Francois and Antoine, drew close to him with a common impulse. And they stood there all three, a valiant little group, their hearts uniting and beating with one and the same delight at the idea that their father would be gladdened, that the good news they were sending him would help him towards recovery. As for Pierre, who, now that he knew them, was beginning to love them and judge them at their worth, he marvelled at the sight of these three young giants, each so strikingly like the other, and drawn together so closely and so promptly, directly their filial affection took fire.

"Tell him that we are waiting for him, and will come to him at the first sign if we are wanted."

Then each in turn shook the priest's hand vigorously. And while he remained watching them as they went off towards the little house, whose garden he perceived over the wall of the Rue Saint Eleuthere, he fancied he could there detect a delicate silhouette, a white, sunlit face under a help of dark hair. It was doubtless the face of Marie, examining the buds on her lilac bushes. At that evening hour, however, the diffuse light was so golden that the vision seemed to fade in it as in a halo. And Pierre, feeling dazzled, turned his head, and on the other side saw naught but the overwhelming, chalky mass of the basilica, whose hugeness shut out all view of the horizon.

For a moment he remained motionless on that spot, so agitated by conflicting thoughts and feelings that he could read neither heart nor mind clearly. Then, as he turned towards the city, all Paris spread itself out at his feet, a limpid, lightsome Paris, beneath the pink glow of that spring-like evening. The endless billows of house-roofs showed forth with wonderful distinctness, and one could have counted the chimney stacks and the little black streaks of the windows by the million. The edifices rising into the calm atmosphere seemed like the anchored vessels of some fleet arrested in its course, with lofty masting which glittered at the sun's farewell. And never before had Pierre so distinctly observed the divisions of that human ocean. Eastward and northward was the city of manual toil, with the rumbling and the smoke of its factories. Southward, beyond the river, was the city of study, of intellectual labour, so calm, so perfectly serene. And on all sides the passion of trade ascended from the central districts, where the crowds rolled and scrambled amidst an everlasting uproar of wheels; while westward, the city of the happy and powerful ones, those who fought for sovereignty and wealth, spread out its piles of palaces amidst the slowly reddening flare of the declining planet.

And then, from the depths of his negation, the chaos into which his loss of faith had plunged him, Pierre felt a delicious freshness pass like the vague advent of a new faith. So vague it was that he could not have expressed even his hope of it in words. But already among the rough factory workers, manual toil had appeared to him necessary and redemptive, in spite of all the

misery and abominable injustice to which it led. And now the young men of intellect of whom he had despaired, that generation of the morrow which he had thought spoilt, relapsing into ancient error and rottenness, had appeared to him full of virile promise, resolved to prosecute the work of those who had gone before, and effect, by the aid of Science only, the conquest of absolute truth and absolute justice.

V

PROBLEMS

A FULL month had already gone by since Guillaume had taken refuge at his brother's little house at Neuilly. His wrist was now nearly healed. He had long ceased to keep his bed, and often strolled through the garden. In spite of his impatience to go back to Montmartre, join his loved ones and resume his work there, he was each morning prompted to defer his return by the news he found in the newspapers. The situation was ever the same. Salvat, whom the police now suspected, had been perceived one evening near the central markets, and then again lost sight of. Every day, however, his arrest was said to be imminent. And in that case what would happen? Would he speak out, and would fresh perquisitions be made?

For a whole week the press had been busy with the bradawl found under the entrance of the Duvillard mansion. Nearly every reporter in Paris had called at the Grandidier factory and interviewed both workmen and master. Some had even started on personal investigations, in the hope of capturing the culprit themselves. There was no end of jesting about the incompetence of the police, and the hunt for Salvat was followed all the more passionately by the general public, as the papers overflowed with the most ridiculous concoctions, predicting further explosions, and declaring even that all Paris would some morning be blown into the air. The "Voix du Peuple" set a fresh shudder circulating every day by its announcements of threatening letters, incendiary placards and mysterious, far-reaching plots. And never before had so base and foolish a spirit of contagion wafted insanity through a civilised city.

Guillaume, for his part, no sooner awoke of a morning than he was all impatience to see the newspapers, quivering at the idea that he would at last read of Salvat's arrest. In his state of nervous expectancy, the wild campaign which the press had started, the idiotic and the ferocious things which he found in one or another journal, almost drove him crazy. A number of "suspects" had already been arrested in a kind of chance razzia, which had swept up the usual Anarchist herd, together with sundry honest workmen and bandits, *illumines* and lazy devils, in fact, a most singular, motley crew, which investigating magistrate Amadiou was endeavouring to turn into a gigantic association of evil-doers. One morning, moreover, Guillaume found his own name mentioned in connection with a perquisition at the residence of a revolutionary journalist, who was a friend of his. At this his heart bounded with revolt, but he was forced to the conclusion that it would be prudent for him to remain patient a little longer, in his peaceful retreat at Neuilly, since the police might at any moment break into his home at Montmartre, to arrest him should it find him there.

Amidst all this anxiety the brothers led a most solitary and gentle life. Pierre himself now spent most of his time at home. The first days of March had come, and precocious springtide imparted delightful charm and warmth to the little garden. Guillaume, however, since quitting his bed, had more particularly installed himself in his father's old laboratory, now transformed into a spacious study. All the books and papers left by the illustrious chemist were still there, and among the latter Guillaume found a number of unfinished essays, the perusal of which greatly excited his interest, and often absorbed him from morning till night. It was this which largely enabled him to bear his voluntary seclusion patiently. Seated on the other side of the big table, Pierre also mostly occupied himself with reading; but at times his eyes would quit his book and wander away into gloomy reverie, into all the chaos into which he still and ever sank. For long hours the brothers would in this wise remain side by side, without speaking a word. Yet they knew they were together; and occasionally, when their eyes met, they would exchange a smile. The strong affection of former days was again springing up within them; their childhood, their home, their parents, all seemed to live once more in the quiet atmosphere they breathed. However, the bay window overlooked the garden in the direction of Paris, and often, when they emerged from their reading or their reverie, it was with a sudden feeling of anxiety, and in order to lend ear to the distant rumbling, the increased clamour of the great city.

On other occasions they paused as if in astonishment at hearing a continuous footfall overhead. It was that of Nicholas Barthes, who still lingered in the room above. He seldom came downstairs, and scarcely ever ventured into the garden, for fear, said he, that he might be perceived and recognised from a distant house whose windows were concealed by a clump of trees. One might laugh at the old conspirator's haunting thought of the police. Nevertheless, the caged-lion restlessness, the ceaseless promenade of that perpetual prisoner who had spent two thirds of his life in the dungeons of France in his desire to secure the liberty of others, imparted to the silence of the little house a touching melancholy, the very rhythm as it were of all the great good things which one hoped for, but which would never perhaps come.

Very few visits drew the brothers from their solitude. Bertheroy came less frequently now that Guillaume's wrist was healing. The most assiduous caller was certainly Theophile Morin, whose discreet ring was heard every other day at the same hour. Though he did not share the ideas of Barthes he worshipped him as a martyr; and would always go upstairs to spend an hour with him. However, they must have exchanged few words, for not a sound came from the room. Whenever Morin sat down for a moment in the laboratory with the brothers, Pierre was struck by his seeming weariness, his ashen grey hair and beard and dismal countenance, all the life of which appeared to have been effaced by long years spent in the teaching profession. Indeed, it was only when the priest mentioned Italy that he saw his companion's resigned eyes blaze up like live coals. One day when he spoke of the great patriot Orlando Prada, Morin's companion of victory in Garibaldi's days, he was amazed by the sudden flare of enthusiasm which lighted up the other's lifeless features. However, these were but transient flashes: the old professor soon reappeared, and all that one found in Morin was the friend of Proudhon and the subsequent disciple of Auguste Comte. Of his Proudhonian principles he had retained all a pauper's hatred of wealth, and a desire for a more equitable partition of fortune. But the new times dismayed him, and neither principle nor temperament allowed him to follow Revolutionism to its utmost limits. Comte had imparted unshakable convictions to him in the sphere of intellectual questions, and he contented himself with the clear and decisive logic of Positivism, rejecting all metaphysical hypotheses as useless, persuaded as he was that the whole human question, whether social or religious, would be solved by science alone. This faith, firm as it had remained, was, however, coupled with secret bitterness, for nothing seemed to advance in a sensible manner towards its goal. Comte himself had ended in the most cloudy mysticism; great *savants* recoiled from truth in terror; and now barbarians were threatening the world with fresh night; all of which made Morin almost a reactionist in politics, already resigned to the advent of a dictator, who would set things somewhat in order, so that humanity might be able to complete its education.

Other visitors who occasionally called to see Guillaume were Bache and Janzen, who invariably came together and at night-time. Every now and then they would linger chatting with Guillaume in the spacious study until two o'clock in the morning. Bache, who was fat and had a fatherly air, with his little eyes gently beaming amidst all the snowy whiteness of his hair and beard, would talk on slowly, unctuously and interminably, as soon as he had begun to explain his views. He would address merely a polite bow to Saint-Simon, the initiator, the first to lay down the law that work was a necessity for one and all according to their capacities; but on coming to Fourier his voice softened and he confessed his whole religion. To his thinking, Fourier had been the real messiah of modern times, the saviour of genius, who had sown the good seed of the future world, by regulating society such as it would certainly be organised to-morrow. The law of harmony had been promulgated; human passions, liberated and utilised in healthy fashion, would become the requisite machinery; and work, rendered pleasant and attractive, would prove the very function of life. Nothing could discourage Bache; if merely one parish began by transforming itself into a *phalansterium*, the whole department would soon follow, then the adjacent departments, and finally all France. Moreover, Bache even favoured the schemes of Cabet, whose *Icaria*, said he, had in no wise been such a foolish idea. Further, he recalled a motion he had made, when member of the Commune in 1871, to apply Fourier's ideas to the French Republic; and he was apparently convinced that the troops of Versailles had delayed the triumph of Communism for half a century. Whenever people nowadays talked of table-turning he pretended to laugh, but at bottom he had remained an impenitent "spiritist." Since he had been a municipal councillor he had been travelling from one socialist sect to another, according as their ideas offered points of resemblance to his old faith. And he was fairly consumed by his need of faith, his perplexity as to the Divine, which he was now occasionally inclined to find in the legs of some piece of furniture, after denying its presence in the churches.

Janzen, for his part, was as taciturn as his friend Bache was garrulous. Such remarks as he made were brief, but they were as galling as lashes, as cutting as sabre-strokes. At the same time his ideas and theories remained somewhat obscure, partly by reason of this brevity of his, and partly on account of the difficulty he experienced in expressing himself in French. He was from over yonder, from some far-away land—Russia, Poland, Austria or Germany, nobody exactly knew; and it mattered little, for he certainly acknowledged no country, but wandered far and wide with his dream of blood-shedding fraternity. Whenever, with his wonted fridity, he gave utterance to one of those terrible remarks of his which, like a scythe in a meadow, cut away all before him, little less than the necessity of thus mowing down nations, in order to sow the earth afresh with a young and better community, became apparent. At each proposition unfolded by Bache, such as labour rendered agreeable by police regulations, *phalansteria* organised like barracks, religion transformed into pantheist or spiritist deism, he gently shrugged his shoulders. What could be the use of such childishness, such hypocritical repairing, when the house was falling and the only honest course was to throw it to the ground, and build up the substantial edifice of to-morrow with entirely new materials? On the subject of propaganda by deeds, bomb-throwing and so forth, he remained silent, though his gestures were expressive of infinite hope. He evidently approved that course. The legend which made him one of the perpetrators of the crime of Barcelona set a gleam of horrible glory in his mysterious past. One day when Bache, while speaking to him of his friend Bergaz, the shadowy Bourse jobber who had already been compromised in some piece of thieving, plainly declared that the aforesaid Bergaz was a bandit, Janzen contented himself with smiling, and replying quietly that theft was merely forced restitution. Briefly, in this man of culture and refinement, in whose own mysterious life one might perhaps have found various crimes but not a single act of base improbity, one could divine an implacable, obstinate theoretician, who was resolved to set the world ablaze for the triumph of

his ideas.

On certain evenings when a visit from Theophile Morin coincided with one from Bache and Janzen, and they and Guillaume lingered chatting until far into the night, Pierre would listen to them in despair from the shadowy corner where he remained motionless, never once joining in the discussions. Distracted, by his own unbelief and thirst for truth, he had at the outset taken a passionate interest in these debates, desirous as he was of drawing up a balance-sheet of the century's ideas, so as to form some notion of the distance that had been travelled, and the profits that had accrued. But he recoiled from all this in fresh despair, on hearing the others argue, each from his own standpoint and without possibility of concession and agreement. After the repulses he had encountered at Lourdes and Rome, he well realised that in this fresh experiment which he was making with Paris, the whole brain of the century was in question, the new truths, the expected gospel which was to change the face of the world. And, burning with inconsiderate zeal, he went from one belief to another, which other he soon rejected in order to adopt a third. If he had first felt himself to be a Positivist with Morin, an Evolutionist and Determinist with Guillaume, he had afterwards been touched by the fraternal dream of a new golden age which he had found in Bache's humanitarian Communism. And indeed even Janzen had momentarily shaken him by his fierce confidence in the theory of liberative Individualism. But afterwards he had found himself out of his depth; and each and every theory had seemed to him but part of the chaotic contradictions and incoherences of humanity on its march. It was all a continuous piling up of dross, amidst which he lost himself. Although Fourier had sprung from Saint-Simon he denied him in part; and if Saint-Simon's doctrine ended in a kind of mystical sensuality, the other's conducted to an unacceptable regimenting of society. Proudhon, for his part, demolished without rebuilding anything. Comte, who created method and declared science to be the one and only sovereign, had not even suspected the advent of the social crisis which now threatened to sweep all away, and had finished personally as a mere worshipper of love, overpowered by woman. Nevertheless, these two, Comte and Proudhon, entered the lists and fought against the others, Fourier and Saint-Simon; the combat between them or their disciples becoming so bitter and so blind that the truths common to them all were obscured and disfigured beyond recognition. Thence came the extraordinary muddle of the present hour; Bache with Saint-Simon and Fourier, and Morin with Proudhon and Comte, utterly failing to understand Mege, the Collectivist deputy, whom they held up to execration, him and his State Collectivism, in the same way, moreover, as they thundered against all the other present-time Socialist sects, without realising that these also, whatever their nature, had more or less sprung from the same masters as themselves. And all this seemingly indicated that Janzen was right when he declared that the house was past repair, fast crumbling amidst rottenness and insanity, and that it ought to be levelled to the ground.

One night, after the three visitors had gone, Pierre, who had remained with Guillaume, saw him grow very gloomy as he slowly walked to and fro. He, in his turn, had doubtless felt that all was crumbling. And though his brother alone was there to hear him, he went on speaking. He expressed all his horror of the Collectivist State as imagined by Mege, a Dictator-State re-establishing ancient servitude on yet closer lines. The error of all the Socialist sects was their arbitrary organisation of Labour, which enslaved the individual for the profit of the community. And, forced to conciliate the two great currents, the rights of society and the rights of the individual, Guillaume had ended by placing his whole faith in free Communism, an anarchical state in which he dreamt of seeing the individual freed, moving and developing without restraint, for the benefit both of himself and of all others. Was not this, said he, the one truly scientific theory, unities creating worlds, atoms producing life by force of attraction, free and ardent love? All oppressive minorities would disappear; and the faculties and energies of one and all would by free play arrive at harmony amidst the equilibrium—which changed according to needs—of the active forces of advancing humanity. In this wise he pictured a nation, saved from State tutelage, without a master, almost without laws, a happy nation, each citizen of which, completely developed by the exercise of liberty, would, of his free will, come to an understanding with his neighbours with regard to the thousand necessities of life. And thence would spring society, free association, hundreds of associations which would regulate social life; though at the same time they would remain variable, in fact often opposed and hostile to one another. For progress is but the fruit of conflict and struggle; the world has only been created by the battle of opposing forces. And that was all; there would be no more oppressors, no more rich, no more poor; the domain of the earth with its natural treasures and its implements of labour would be restored to the people, its legitimate owners, who would know how to enjoy it with justice and logic, when nothing abnormal would impede their expansion. And then only would the law of love make its action felt; then would human solidarity, which, among mankind, is the living form of universal attraction, acquire all its power, bringing men closer and closer together, and uniting them in one sole family. A splendid dream it was—the noble and pure dream of absolute freedom—free man in free society. And thither a *savant's* superior mind was fated to come after passing on the road the many Socialist sects which one and all bore the stigma of tyranny. And, assuredly, as thus indulged, the Anarchist idea is the loftiest, the proudest, of all ideas. And how delightful to yield to the hope of harmony in life—life which restored to the full exercise of its natural powers would of itself create happiness!

When Guillaume ceased speaking, he seemed to be emerging from a dream; and he glanced at Pierre with some dismay, for he feared that he might have said too much and have hurt his feelings. Pierre—moved though he was, for a moment in fact almost won over—had just seen the terrible practical objection, which destroyed all hope, arise before his mind's eye. Why had not

harmony asserted itself in the first days of the world's existence, at the time when societies were formed? How was it that tyranny had triumphed, delivering nations over to oppressors? And supposing that the apparently insolvable problem of destroying everything, and beginning everything afresh, should ever be solved, who could promise that mankind, obedient to the same laws, would not again follow the same paths as formerly? After all, mankind, nowadays, is simply what life has made it; and nothing proves that life would again make it other than it is. To begin afresh, ah, yes! but to attain another result! But could that other result really come from man? Was it not rather man himself who should be changed? To start afresh from where one was, to continue the evolution that had begun, undoubtedly meant slow travel and dismal waiting. But how great would be the danger and even the delay, if one went back without knowing by what road across the whole chaos of ruins one might regain all the lost time!

"Let us go to bed," at last said Guillaume, smiling. "It's silly of me to weary you with all these things which don't concern you."

Pierre, in his excitement, was about to reveal his own heart and mind, and the whole torturing battle within him. But a feeling of shame again restrained him. His brother only knew him as a believing priest, faithful to his faith. And so, without answering, he betook himself to his room.

On the following evening, about ten o'clock, while Guillaume and Pierre sat reading in the study, the old servant entered to announce M. Janzen and a friend. The friend was Salvat.

"He wished to see you," Janzen explained to Guillaume. "I met him, and when he heard of your injury and anxiety he implored me to bring him here. And I've done so, though it was perhaps hardly prudent of me."

Guillaume had risen, full of surprise and emotion at such a visit; Pierre, however, though equally upset by Salvat's appearance; did not stir from his chair, but kept his eyes upon the workman.

"Monsieur Froment," Salvat ended by saying, standing there in a timid, embarrassed way, "I was very sorry indeed when I heard of the worry I'd put you in; for I shall never forget that you were very kind to me when everybody else turned me away."

As he spoke he balanced himself alternately on either leg, and transferred his old felt hat from hand to hand.

"And so I wanted to come and tell you myself that if I took a cartridge of your powder one evening when you had your back turned, it's the only thing that I feel any remorse about in the whole business, since it may compromise you. And I also want to take my oath before you that you've nothing to fear from me, that I'll let my head be cut off twenty times if need be, rather than utter your name. That's all that I had in my heart."

He relapsed into silence and embarrassment, but his soft, dreamy eyes, the eyes of a faithful dog, remained fixed upon Guillaume with an expression of respectful worship. And Pierre was still gazing at him athwart the hateful vision which his arrival had conjured up, that of the poor, dead, errand girl, the fair pretty child lying ripped open under the entrance of the Duvillard mansion! Was it possible that he was there, he, that madman, that murderer, and that his eyes were actually moist!

Guillaume, touched by Salvat's words, had drawn near and pressed his hand. "I am well aware, Salvat," said he, "that you are not wicked at heart. But what a foolish and abominable thing you did!"

Salvat showed no sign of anger, but gently smiled. "Oh! if it had to be done again, Monsieur Froment, I'd do it. It's my idea, you know. And, apart from you, all is well; I am content."

He would not sit down, but for another moment continued talking with Guillaume, while Janzen, as if he washed his hands of the business, deeming this visit both useless and dangerous, sat down and turned over the leaves of a picture book. And Guillaume made Salvat tell him what he had done on the day of the crime; how like a stray dog he had wandered in distraction through Paris, carrying his bomb with him, originally in his tool-bag and then under his jacket; how he had gone a first time to the Duvillard mansion and found its carriage entrance closed; then how he had betaken himself first to the Chamber of Deputies which the ushers had prevented him from entering, and afterwards to the Circus, where the thought of making a great sacrifice of *bourgeois* had occurred to him too late. And finally, how he had at last come back to the Duvillard mansion, as if drawn thither by the very power of destiny. His tool-bag was lying in the depths of the Seine, he said; he had thrown it into the water with sudden hatred of work, since it had even failed to give him bread. And he next told the story of his flight; the explosion shaking the whole district behind him, while, with delight and astonishment, he found himself some distance off, in quiet streets where nothing was as yet known. And for a month past he had been living in chance fashion, how or where he could hardly tell, but he had often slept in the open, and gone for a day without food. One evening little Victor Mathis had given him five francs. And other comrades had helped him, taken him in for a night and sent him off at the first sign of peril. A far-spreading, tacit complicity had hitherto saved him from the police. As for going abroad, well, he had, at one

moment, thought of doing so; but a description of his person must have been circulated, the gendarmes must be waiting for him at the frontiers, and so would not flight, instead of retarding, rather hasten his arrest? Paris, however, was an ocean; it was there that he incurred the least risk of capture. Moreover, he no longer had sufficient energy to flee. A fatalist as he was after his own fashion, he could not find strength to quit the pavements of Paris, but there awaited arrest, like a social waif carried chancewise through the multitude as in a dream.

"And your daughter, little Celine?" Guillaume inquired. "Have you ventured to go back to see her?"

Salvat waved his hand in a vague way. "No, but what would you have? She's with Mamma Theodore. Women always find some help. And then I'm done for, I can do nothing for anybody. It's as if I were already dead." However, in spite of these words, tears were rising to his eyes. "Ah! the poor little thing!" he added, "I kissed her with all my heart before I went away. If she and the woman hadn't been starving so long the idea of that business would perhaps never have come to me."

Then, in all simplicity, he declared that he was ready to die. If he had ended by depositing his bomb at the entrance of Duvillard's house, it was because he knew the banker well, and was aware that he was the wealthiest of those *bourgeois* whose fathers at the time of the Revolution had duped the people, by taking all power and wealth for themselves,—the power and wealth which the sons were nowadays so obstinately bent in retaining that they would not even bestow the veriest crumbs on others. As for the Revolution, he understood it in his own fashion, like an illiterate fellow who had learnt the little he knew from newspapers and speeches at public meetings. And he struck his chest with his fist as he spoke of his honesty, and was particularly desirous that none should doubt his courage because he had fled.

"I've never robbed anybody," said he, "and if I don't go and hand myself up to the police, it's because they may surely take the trouble to find and arrest me. I'm very well aware that my affair's clear enough as they've found that bradawl and know me. All the same, it would be silly of me to help them in their work. Still, they'd better make haste, for I've almost had enough of being tracked like a wild beast and no longer knowing how I live."

Janzen, yielding to curiosity, had ceased turning over the leaves of the picture book and was looking at Salvat. There was a smile of disdain in the Anarchist leader's cold eyes; and in his usual broken French he remarked: "A man fights and defends himself, kills others and tries to avoid being killed himself. That's warfare."

These words fell from his lips amidst deep silence. Salvat, however, did not seem to have heard them, but stammered forth his faith in a long sentence laden with fulsome expressions, such as the sacrifice of his life in order that want might cease, and the example of a great action, in the certainty that it would inspire other heroes to continue the struggle. And with this certainly sincere faith and illuminism of his there was blended a martyr's pride, delight at being one of the radiant, worshipped saints of the dawning Revolutionary Church.

As he had come so he went off. When Janzen had led him away, it seemed as if the night which had brought him had carried him back into its impenetrable depths. And then only did Pierre rise from his chair. He was stifling, and threw the large window of the room wide open. It was a very mild but moonless night, whose silence was only disturbed by the subsiding clamour of Paris, which stretched away, invisible, on the horizon.

Guillaume, according to his habit, had begun to walk up and down. And at last he spoke, again forgetting that his brother was a priest. "Ah! the poor fellow! How well one can understand that deed of violence and hope! His whole past life of fruitless labour and ever-growing want explains it. Then, too, there has been all the contagion of ideas; the frequentation of public meetings where men intoxicate themselves with words, and of secret meetings among comrades where faith acquires firmness and the mind soars wildly. Ah! I think I know that man well indeed! He's a good workman, sober and courageous. Injustice has always exasperated him. And little by little the desire for universal happiness has cast him out of the realities of life which he has ended by holding in horror. So how can he do otherwise than live in a dream—a dream of redemption, which, from circumstances, has turned to fire and murder as its fitting instruments. As I looked at him standing there, I fancied I could picture one of the first Christian slaves of ancient Rome. All the iniquity of olden pagan society, agonising beneath the rottenness born of debauchery and covetousness, was weighing on his shoulders, bearing him down. He had come from the dark Catacombs where he had whispered words of deliverance and redemption with his wretched brethren. And a thirst for martyrdom consumed him, he spat in the face of Caesar, he insulted the gods, he fired the pagan temples, in order that the reign of Jesus might come and abolish servitude. And he was ready to die, to be torn to pieces by the wild beasts!"

Pierre did not immediately reply. He had already been struck, however, by the fact that there were undoubted points of resemblance between the secret propaganda and militant faith of the Anarchists, and certain practices of the first Christians. Both sects abandon themselves to a new faith in the hope that the humble may thereby at last reap justice. Paganism disappears through weariness of the flesh and the need of a more lofty and pure faith. That dream of a Christian paradise opening up a future life with a system of compensations for the ills endured on earth, was the outcome of young hope dawning at its historic hour. But to-day, when eighteen centuries

have exhausted that hope, when the long experiment is over and the toiler finds himself duped and still and ever a slave, he once more dreams of getting happiness upon this earth, particularly as each day Science tends more and more to show him that the happiness of the spheres beyond is a lie. And in all this there is but the eternal struggle of the poor and the rich, the eternal question of bringing more justice and less suffering to the world.

"But surely," Pierre at last replied, "you can't be on the side of those bandits, those murderers whose savage violence horrifies me. I let you talk on yesterday, when you dreamt of a great and happy people, of ideal anarchy in which each would be free amidst the freedom of all. But what abomination, what disgust both for mind and heart, when one passes from theory to propaganda and practice! If yours is the brain that thinks, whose is the hateful hand that acts, that kills children, throws down doors and empties drawers? Do you accept that responsibility? With your education, your culture, the whole social heredity behind you, does not your entire being revolt at the idea of stealing and murdering?"

Guillaume halted before his brother, quivering. "Steal and murder! no! no! I will not. But one must say everything and fully understand the history of the evil hour through which we are passing. It is madness sweeping by; and, to tell the truth, everything necessary to provoke it has been done. At the very dawn of the Anarchist theory, at the very first innocent actions of its partisans, there was such stern repression, the police so grossly ill-treating the poor devils that fell into its hands, that little by little came anger and rage leading to the most horrible reprisals. It is the Terror initiated by the *bourgeois* that has produced Anarchist savagery. And would you know whence Salvat and his crime have come? Why, from all our centuries of impudence and iniquity, from all that the nations have suffered, from all the sores which are now devouring us, the impatience for enjoyment, the contempt of the strong for the weak, the whole monstrous spectacle which is presented by our rotting society!"

Guillaume was again slowly walking to and fro; and as if he were reflecting aloud he continued: "Ah! to reach the point I have attained, through how much thought, through how many battles, have I not passed! I was merely a Positivist, a *savant* devoted to observation and experiment, accepting nothing apart from proven facts. Scientifically and socially, I admitted that simple evolution had slowly brought humanity into being. But both in the history of the globe and that of human society, I found it necessary to make allowance for the volcano, the sudden cataclysm, the sudden eruption, by which each geological phase, each historical period, has been marked. In this wise one ends by ascertaining that no forward step has ever been taken, no progress ever accomplished in the world's history, without the help of horrible catastrophes. Each advance has meant the sacrifice of millions and millions of human lives. This of course revolts us, given our narrow ideas of justice, and we regard nature as a most barbarous mother; but, if we cannot excuse the volcano, we ought to deal with it when it bursts forth, like *savants* forewarned of its possibility. . . . And then, ah, then! well, perhaps I'm a dreamer like others, but I have my own notions."

With a sweeping gesture he confessed what a social dreamer there was within him beside the methodical and scrupulous *savant*. His constant endeavour was to bring all back to science, and he was deeply grieved at finding in nature no scientific sign of equality or even justice, such as he craved for in the social sphere. His despair indeed came from this inability to reconcile scientific logic with apostolic love, the dream of universal happiness and brotherhood and the end of all iniquity.

Pierre, however, who had remained near the open window, gazing into the night towards Paris, whence ascended the last sounds of the evening of passionate pleasure, felt the whole flood of his own doubt and despair stifling him. It was all too much: that brother of his who had fallen upon him with his scientific and apostolic beliefs, those men who came to discuss contemporary thought from every standpoint, and finally that Salvat who had brought thither the exasperation of his mad deed. And Pierre, who had hitherto listened to them all without a word, without a gesture, who had hidden his secrets from his brother, seeking refuge in his supposed priestly views, suddenly felt such bitterness stirring his heart that he could lie no longer.

"Ah! brother, if you have your dream, I have my sore which has eaten into me and left me void! Your Anarchy, your dream of just happiness, for which Salvat works with bombs, why, it is the final burst of insanity which will sweep everything away! How is it that you can't realise it? The century is ending in ruins. I've been listening to you all for a month past. Fourier destroyed Saint-Simon, Proudhon and Comte demolished Fourier, each in turn piling up incoherences and contradictions, leaving mere chaos behind them, which nobody dares to sort out. And since then, Socialist sects have been swarming and multiplying, the more sensible of them leading simply to dictatorship, while the others indulge in most dangerous reveries. And after such a tempest of ideas there could indeed come nothing but your Anarchy, which undertakes to bring the old world to a finish by reducing it to dust. . . . Ah! I expected it, I was waiting for it—that final catastrophe, that fratricidal madness, the inevitable class warfare in which our civilisation was destined to collapse! Everything announced it: the want and misery below, the egotism up above, all the cracking of the old human habitation, borne down by too great a weight of crime and grief. When I went to Lourdes it was to see if the divinity of simple minds would work the awaited miracle, and restore the belief of the early ages to the people, which rebelled through excess of suffering. And when I went to Rome it was in the *naïve* hope of there finding the new religion required by our democracies, the only one that could pacify the world by bringing back the fraternity of the golden age. But how foolish of me all that was! Both here and there, I simply

lighted on nothingness. There where I so ardently dreamt of finding the salvation of others, I only sank myself, going down apeak like a ship not a timber of which is ever found again. One tie still linked me to my fellow-men, that of charity, the dressing, relieving, and perhaps, in the long run, healing, of wounds and sores; but that last cable has now been severed. Charity, to my mind, appears futile and derisive by the side of justice, to whom all supremacy belongs, and whose advent has become a necessity and can be stayed by none. And so it is all over, I am mere ashes, an empty grave as it were. I no longer believe in anything, anything, anything whatever!"

Pierre had risen to his full height, with arms outstretched as if to let all the nothingness within his heart and mind fall from them. And Guillaume, distracted by the sight of such a fierce denier, such a despairing Nihilist as was now revealed to him, drew near, quivering: "What are you saying, brother! I thought you so firm, so calm in your belief! A priest to be admired, a saint worshipped by the whole of this parish! I was unwilling even to discuss your faith, and now it is you who deny all, and believe in nothing whatever!"

Pierre again slowly stretched out his arms. "There is nothing, I tried to learn all, and only found the atrocious grief born of the nothingness that overwhelms me."

"Ah! how you must suffer, Pierre, my little brother! Can religion, then, be even more withering than science, since it has ravaged you like that, while I have yet remained an old madman, still full of fancies?"

Guillaume caught hold of Pierre's hands and pressed them, full of terrified compassion in presence of all the grandeur and horror embodied in that unbelieving priest who watched over the belief of others, and chastely, honestly discharged his duty amidst the haughty sadness born of his falsehood. And how heavily must that falsehood have weighed upon his conscience for him to confess himself in that fashion, amidst an utter collapse of his whole being! A month previously, in the unexpansiveness of his proud solitude, he would never have taken such a course. To speak out it was necessary that he should have been stirred by many things, his reconciliation with his brother, the conversations he had heard of an evening, the terrible drama in which he was mingled, as well as his reflections on labour struggling against want, and the vague hope with which the sight of intellectual youth had inspired him. And, indeed, amid the very excess of his negation was there not already the faint dawn of a new faith?

This Guillaume must have understood, on seeing how he quivered with unsatisfied tenderness as he emerged from the fierce silence which he had preserved so long. He made him sit down near the window, and placed himself beside him without releasing his hands. "But I won't have you suffer, my little brother!" he said; "I won't leave you, I'll nurse you. For I know you much better than you know yourself. You would never have suffered were it not for the battle between your heart and your mind, and you will cease to suffer on the day when they make peace, and you love what you understand." And in a lower voice, with infinite affection, he went on: "You see, it's our poor mother and our poor father continuing their painful struggle in you. You were too young at the time, you couldn't know what went on. But I knew them both very wretched: he, wretched through her, who treated him as if he were one of the damned; and she, suffering through him, tortured by his irreligion. When he died, struck down by an explosion in this very room, she took it to be the punishment of God. Yet, what an honest man he was, with a good, great heart, what a worker, seeking for truth alone, and desirous of the love and happiness of all! Since we have spent our evenings here, I have felt him coming back, reviving as it were both around and within us; and she, too, poor, saintly woman, is ever here, enveloping us with love, weeping, and yet stubbornly refusing to understand. It is they, perhaps, who have kept me here so long, and who at this very moment are present to place your hands in mine."

And, indeed, it seemed to Pierre as if he could feel the breath of vigilant affection which Guillaume evoked passing over them both. There was again a revival of all the past, all their youth, and nothing could have been more delightful.

"You hear me, brother," Guillaume resumed. "You must reconcile them, for it is only in you that they can be reconciled. You have his firm, lofty brow, and her mouth and eyes of unrealisable tenderness. So, try to bring them to agreement, by some day contenting, as your reason shall allow, the everlasting thirst for love, and self-bestowal, and life, which for lack of satisfaction is killing you. Your frightful wretchedness has no other cause. Come back to life, love, bestow yourself, be a man!"

Pierre raised a dolorous cry: "No, no, the death born of doubt has swept through me, withering and shattering everything, and nothing more can live in that cold dust!"

"But, come," resumed Guillaume, "you cannot have reached such absolute negation. No man reaches it. Even in the most disabused of minds there remains a nook of fancy and hope. To deny charity, devotion, the prodigies which love may work, ah! for my part I do not go so far as that. And now that you have shown me your sore, why should I not tell you my dream, the wild hope which keeps me alive! It is strange; but, are *savants* to be the last childish dreamers, and is faith only to spring up nowadays in chemical laboratories?"

Intense emotion was stirring Guillaume; there was battle waging in both his brain and his heart. And at last, yielding to the deep compassion which filled him, vanquished by his ardent affection for his unhappy brother, he spoke out. But he had drawn yet closer to Pierre, even

passed one arm around him; and it was thus embracing him that he, in his turn, made his confession, lowering his voice as if he feared that someone might overhear his secret. "Why should you not know it?" he said. "My own sons are ignorant of it. But you are a man and my brother, and since there is nothing of the priest left in you, it is to the brother I will confide it. This will make me love you the more, and perhaps it may do you good."

Then he told him of his invention, a new explosive, a powder of such extraordinary force that its effects were incalculable. And he had found employment for this powder in an engine of warfare, a special cannon, hurling bombs which would assure the most overwhelming victory to the army using them. The enemy's forces would be destroyed in a few hours, and besieged cities would fall into dust at the slightest bombardment. He had long searched and doubted, calculated, recalculated and experimented; but everything was now ready: the precise formula of the powder, the drawings for the cannon and the bombs, a whole packet of precious papers stored in a safe spot. And after months of anxious reflection he had resolved to give his invention to France, so as to ensure her a certainty of victory in her coming, inevitable war with Germany!

At the same time, he was not a man of narrow patriotism; on the contrary he had a very broad, international conception of the future liberative civilisation. Only he believed in the initiatory mission of France, and particularly in that of Paris, which, even as it is to-day, was destined to be the world's brain to-morrow, whence all science and justice would proceed. The great idea of liberty and equality had already soared from it at the prodigious blast of the Revolution; and from its genius and valour the final emancipation of man would also take its flight. Thus it was necessary that Paris should be victorious in the struggle in order that the world might be saved.

Pierre understood his brother, thanks to the lecture on explosives which he had heard at Bertheroy's. And the grandeur of this scheme, this dream, particularly struck him when he thought of the extraordinary future which would open for Paris amidst the effulgent blaze of the bombs. Moreover, he was struck by all the nobility of soul which had lain behind his brother's anxiety for a month past. If Guillaume had trembled it was simply with fear that his invention might be divulged in consequence of Salvat's crime. The slightest indiscretion might compromise everything; and that little stolen cartridge, whose effects had so astonished *savants*, might reveal his secret. He felt it necessary to act in mystery, choosing his own time, awaiting the proper hour, until when the secret would slumber in its hiding-place, confided to the sole care of Mere-Grand, who had her orders and knew what she was to do should he, in any sudden accident, disappear.

"And, now," said Guillaume in conclusion, "you know my hopes and my anguish, and you can help me and even take my place if I am unable to reach the end of my task. Ah! to reach the end! Since I have been shut up here, reflecting, consumed by anxiety and impatience, there have been hours when I have ceased to see my way clearly! There is that Salvat, that wretched fellow for whose crime we are all of us responsible, and who is now being hunted down like a wild beast! There is also that insensate and insatiable *bourgeoisie*, which will let itself be crushed by the fall of the shaky old house, rather than allow the least repair to it! And there is further that avaricious, that abominable Parisian press, so harsh towards the weak and little, so fond of insulting those who have none to defend them, so eager to coin money out of public misfortune, and ready to spread insanity on all sides, simply to increase its sales! Where, therefore, shall one find truth and justice, the hand endowed with logic and health that ought to be armed with the thunderbolt? Would Paris the conqueror, Paris the master of the nations, prove the justiciar, the saviour that men await! Ah! the anguish of believing oneself to be the master of the world's destinies, and to have to choose and decide."

He had risen again quivering, full of anger and fear that human wretchedness and baseness might prevent the realisation of his dream. And amidst the heavy silence which fell in the room, the little house suddenly resounded with a regular, continuous footfall.

"Ah, yes! to save men and love them, and wish them all to be equal and free," murmured Pierre, bitterly. "But just listen! Barthes's footsteps are answering you, as if from the everlasting dungeon into which his love of liberty has thrown him!"

However, Guillaume had already regained possession of himself, and coming back in a transport of his faith, he once more took Pierre in his loving, saving arms, like an elder brother who gives himself without restraint. "No, no, I'm wrong, I'm blaspheming," he exclaimed; "I wish you to be with me, full of hope and full of certainty. You must work, you must love, you must revive to life. Life alone can give you back peace and health."

Tears returned to the eyes of Pierre, who was penetrated to the heart by this ardent affection. "Ah! how I should like to believe you," he faltered, "and try to cure myself. True, I have already felt, as it were, a vague revival within me. And yet to live again, no, I cannot; the priest that I am is dead—a lifeless, an empty tomb."

He was shaken by so frightful a sob, that Guillaume could not restrain his own tears. And clasped in one another's arms the brothers wept on, their hearts full of the softest emotion in that home of their youth, whither the dear shadows of their parents ever returned, hovering around until they should be reconciled and restored to the peace of the earth. And all the darkness and mildness of the garden streamed in through the open window, while yonder, on the horizon, Paris

had fallen asleep in the mysterious gloom, beneath a very peaceful sky which was studded with stars.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE THREE CITIES TRILOGY: PARIS,
VOLUME 2 ***

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