Eve and David
Honore de Balzac

(Lost Illusions, Part III)

Translated by Ellen Marriage

Lucien had gone to Paris; and David Sechard, with the courage and intelligence of the ox which painters give the Evangelist for accompanying symbol, set himself to make the large fortune for which he had wished that evening down by the Charente, when he sat with Eve by the weir, and she gave him her hand and her heart. He wanted to make the money quickly, and less for himself than for Eve's sake and Lucien's. He would place his wife amid the elegant and comfortable surroundings that were hers by right, and his strong arm should sustain her brother's ambitions — this was the programme that he saw before his eyes in letters of fire.

Journalism and politics, the immense development of the book trade, of literature and of the sciences; the increase of public interest in matters touching the various industries in the country; in fact, the whole social tendency of the epoch following the establishment of the Restoration produced an enormous increase in the demand for paper. The supply required was almost ten times as large as the quantity in which the celebrated Ouvrard speculated at the outset of the Revolution. Then Ouvrard could buy up first the entire stock of paper and then the manufacturers; but in the year 1821 there were so many paper-mills in France, that no one could hope to repeat his success; and David had neither audacity enough nor capital enough for such speculation. Machinery for producing paper in any length was just coming into use in England. It was one of the most urgent needs of the time, therefore, that the paper trade should keep pace with the requirements of the French system of civil government, a system by which the right of discussion was to be extended to every man, and the whole fabric based upon continual expression of individual opinion; a grave misfortune, for the nation that deliberates is but little wont to act.

So, strange coincidence! while Lucien was drawn into the great machinery of journalism, where he was like to leave his honor and his intelligence torn to shreds, David Sechard, at the back of his printing-house, foresaw all the practical consequences of the increased activity of the periodical press. He saw the direction in which the spirit of the age was tending, and sought to find means to the required end. He saw also that there was a fortune awaiting the discoverer of cheap paper, and the event has justified his clearsightedness. Within the last fifteen years, the Patent Office has received more than a hundred applications

from persons claiming to have discovered cheap substances to be employed in the manufacture of paper. David felt more than ever convinced that this would be no brilliant triumph, it is true, but a useful and immensely profitable discovery; and after his brother-inlaw went to Paris, he became more and more absorbed in the problem which he had set himself to solve.

The expenses of his marriage and of Lucien's journey to Paris had exhausted all his resources; he confronted the extreme of poverty at the very outset of married life. He had kept one thousand francs for the working expenses of the business, and owed a like sum, for which he had given a bill to Postel the druggist. So here was a double problem for this deep thinker; he must invent a method of making cheap paper, and that quickly; he must make the discovery, in fact, in order to apply the proceeds to the needs of the household and of the business. What words can describe the brain that can forget the cruel preoccupations caused by hidden want, by the daily needs of a family and the daily drudgery of a printer's business, which requires such minute, painstaking care; and soar, with the enthusiasm and intoxication of the man of science, into the regions of the unknown in quest of a secret which daily eludes the most subtle experiment? And the inventor, alas! as will shortly be seen, has plenty of woes to endure, besides the ingratitude of the many; idle folk that can do nothing themselves tell them, "Such a one is a born inventor; he could not do otherwise. He no more deserves credit for his invention than a prince for being born to rule! He is simply exercising his natural faculties, and his work is its own reward," and the people believe them.

Marriage brings profound mental and physical perturbations into a girl's life; and if she marries under the ordinary conditions of lower middle-class life, she must moreover begin to study totally new interests and initiate herself in the intricacies of business. With marriage, therefore, she enters upon a phase of her existence when she is necessarily on the watch before she can act. Unfortunately, David's love for his wife retarded this training; he dared not tell her the real state of affairs on the day after their wedding, nor for some time afterwards. His father's avarice condemned him to the most grinding poverty, but he could not bring himself to spoil the honeymoon by beginning his wife's commercial education and prosaic apprenticeship to his laborious craft. So it came to pass that housekeeping, no less than working expenses, ate up the thousand francs, his whole fortune. For four months David gave no thought to the future, and his wife remained in ignorance. The awakening was terrible! Postel's bill fell due; there was no money

to meet it, and Eve knew enough of the debt and its cause to give up her bridal trinkets and silver.

That evening Eve tried to induce David to talk of their affairs, for she had noticed that he was giving less attention to the business and more to the problem of which he had once spoken to her. Since the first few weeks of married life, in fact, David spent most of his time in the shed in the backyard, in the little room where he was wont to mould his ink-rollers. Three months after his return to Angouleme, he had replaced the old fashioned round ink-balls by rollers made of strong glue and treacle, and an ink-table, on which the ink was evenly distributed, an improvement so obvious that Cointet Brothers no sooner saw it than they adopted the plan themselves.

By the partition wall of this kitchen, as it were, David had set up a little furnace with a copper pan, ostensibly to save the cost of fuel over the recasting of his rollers, though the moulds had not been used twice, and hung there rusting upon the wall. Nor was this all; a solid oak door had been put in by his orders, and the walls were lined with sheet-iron; he even replaced the dirty window sash by panes of ribbed glass, so that no one without could watch him at his work.

When Eve began to speak about the future, he looked uneasily at her, and cut her short at the first word by saying, “I know all that you must think, child, when you see that the workshop is left to itself, and that I am dead, as it were, to all business interests; but see,” he continued, bringing her to the window, and pointing to the mysterious shed, “there lies our fortune. For some months yet we must endure our lot, but let us bear it patiently; leave me to solve the problem of which I told you, and all our troubles will be at an end.”

David was so good, his devotion was so thoroughly to be taken upon his word, that the poor wife, with a wife’s anxiety as to daily expenses, determined to spare her husband the household cares and to take the burden upon herself. So she came down from the pretty blue-and-white room, where she sewed and talked contentedly with her mother, took possession of one of the two dens at the back of the printing-room, and set herself to learn the business routine of typography. Was it not heroism in a wife who expected ere long to be a mother?

During the past few months David’s workmen had left him one by one; there was not enough work for them to do. Cointet Brothers, on the other hand, were overwhelmed with orders; they were employing all the workmen of the

department; the alluring prospect of high wages even brought them a few from Bordeaux, more especially apprentices, who thought themselves sufficiently expert to cancel their articles and go elsewhere. When Eve came to look into the affairs of Sechard's printing works, she discovered that he employed three persons in all.

First in order stood Cerizet, an apprentice of Didot's, whom David had chosen to train. Most foremen have some one favorite among the great numbers of workers under them, and David had brought Cerizet to Angouleme, where he had been learning more of the business. Marion, as much attached to the house as a watch-dog, was the second; and the third was Kolb, an Alsacien, at one time a porter in the employ of the Messrs. Didot. Kolb had been drawn for military service, chance brought him to Angouleme, and David recognized the man's face at a review just as his time was about to expire. Kolb came to see David, and was smitten forthwith by the charms of the portly Marion; she possessed all the qualities which a man of his class looks for in a wife — the robust health that bronzes the cheeks, the strength of a man (Marion could lift a form of type with ease), the scrupulous honesty on which an Alsacien sets such store, the faithful service which bespeaks a sterling character, and finally, the thrift which had saved a little sum of a thousand francs, besides a stock of clothing and linen, neat and clean, as country linen can be. Marion herself, a big, stout woman of thirty-six, felt sufficiently flattered by the admiration of a cuirassier, who stood five feet seven in his stockings, a well-built warrior, strong as a bastion, and not unnaturally suggested that he should become a printer. So, by the time Kolb received his full discharge, Marion and David between them had transformed him into a tolerably creditable "bear," though their pupil could neither read nor write.

Job printing, as it is called, was not so abundant at this season but that Cerizet could manage it without help. Cerizet, compositor, clicker, and foreman, realized in his person the "phenomenal triplicity" of Kant; he set up type, read proof, took orders, and made out invoices; but the most part of the time he had nothing to do, and used to read novels in his den at the back of the workshop while he waited for an order for a bill-head or a trade circular. Marion, trained by old Sechard, prepared and wetted down the paper, helped Kolb with the printing, hung the sheets to dry, and cut them to size; yet cooked the dinner, none the less, and did her marketing very early of a morning.

Eve told Cerizet to draw out a balance-sheet for the last six months, and found that the gross receipts amounted to eight hundred francs. On the other hand, wages at the rate of three francs per day — two francs to Cerizet, and one to Kolb — reached a total of six hundred francs; and as the goods supplied for the work printed and delivered amounted to some hundred odd francs, it was clear to Eve that David had been carrying on business at a loss during the first half-year of their married life. There was nothing to show for rent, nothing for Marion's wages, nor for the interest on capital represented by the plant, the license, and the ink; nothing, finally, by way of allowance for the host of things included in the technical expression "wear and tear," a word which owes its origin to the cloths and silks which are used to moderate the force of the impression, and to save wear to the type; a square of stuff (the *blanket*) being placed between the platen and the sheet of paper in the press.

Eve made a rough calculation of the resources of the printing office and of the output, and saw how little hope there was for a business drained dry by the all-devouring activity of the brothers Cointet; for by this time the Cointets were not only contract printers to the town and the prefecture, and printers to the Diocese by special appointment — they were paper-makers and proprietors of a newspaper to boot. That newspaper, sold two years ago by the Sechards, father and son, for twenty-two thousand francs, was now bringing in eighteen thousand francs per annum. Eve began to understand the motives lurking beneath the apparent generosity of the brothers Cointet; they were leaving the Sechard establishment just sufficient work to gain a pittance, but not enough to establish a rival house.

When Eve took the management of the business, she began by taking stock. She set Kolb and Marion and Cerizet to work, and the workshop was put to rights, cleaned out, and set in order. Then one evening when David came in from a country excursion, followed by an old woman with a huge bundle tied up in a cloth, Eve asked counsel of him as to the best way of turning to profit the odds and ends left them by old Sechard, promising that she herself would look after the business. Acting upon her husband's advice, Mme. Sechard sorted all the remnants of paper which she found, and printed old popular legends in double columns upon a single sheet, such as peasants paste on their walls, the histories of *The Wandering Jew*, *Robert the Devil*, *La Belle Maguelonne* and sundry miracles. Eve sent Kolb out as a hawker.

Cerizet had not a moment to spare now; he was composing the naive pages, with the rough cuts that adorned them, from morning to night; Marion was able to manage the taking off; and all domestic cares fell to Mme. Chardon, for Eve was busy coloring the prints. Thanks to Kolb's activity and honesty, Eve sold three thousand broad sheets at a penny apiece, and made three hundred francs in all at a cost of thirty francs.

But when every peasant's hut and every little wine-shop for twenty leagues round was papered with these legends, a fresh speculation must be discovered; the Alsacien could not go beyond the limits of the department. Eve, turning over everything in the whole printing house, had found a collection of figures for printing a "Shepherd's Calendar," a kind of almanac meant for those who cannot read, letterpress being replaced by symbols, signs, and pictures in colored inks, red, black and blue. Old Sechard, who could neither read nor write himself, had made a good deal of money at one time by bringing out an almanac in hieroglyph. It was in book form, a single sheet folded to make one hundred and twenty-eight pages.

Thoroughly satisfied with the success of the broad sheets, a piece of business only undertaken by country printing offices, Mme. Sechard invested all the proceeds in the *Shepherd's Calendar*, and began it upon a large scale. Millions of copies of this work are sold annually in France. It is printed upon even coarser paper than the *Almanac of Liege*, a ream (five hundred sheets) costing in the first instance about four francs; while the printed sheets sell at the rate of a halfpenny apiece — twenty-five francs per ream.

Mme. Sechard determined to use one hundred reams for the first impression; fifty thousand copies would bring in two thousand francs. A man so deeply absorbed in his work as David in his researches is seldom observant; yet David, taking a look round his workshop, was astonished to hear the groaning of a press and to see Cerizet always on his feet, setting up type under Mme. Sechard's direction. There was a pretty triumph for Eve on the day when David came in to see what she was doing, and praised the idea, and thought the calendar an excellent stroke of business. Furthermore, David promised to give advice in the matter of colored inks, for an almanac meant to appeal to the eye; and finally, he resolved to recast the ink-rollers himself in his mysterious workshop, so as to help his wife as far as he could in her important little enterprise.

But just as the work began with strenuous industry, there came letters from Lucien in Paris, heart-sinking letters that told his mother and sister and brother-inlaw of his failure and distress; and when Eve, Mme. Chardon, and David each secretly sent money to their poet, it must be plain to the reader that the three hundred francs they sent were like their very blood. The overwhelming news, the disheartening sense that work as bravely as she might, she made so little, left Eve looking forward with a certain dread to an event which fills the cup of happiness to the full. The time was coming very near now, and to herself she said, "If my dear David has not reached the end of his researches before my confinement, what will become of us? And who will look after our poor printing office and the business that is growing up?"

The *Shepherd's Calendar* ought by rights to have been ready before the 1st of January, but Cerizet was working unaccountably slowly; all the work of composing fell to him; and Mme. Sechard, knowing so little, could not find fault, and was fain to content herself with watching the young Parisian.

Cerizet came from the great Foundling Hospital in Paris. He had been apprenticed to the MM. Didot, and between the ages of fourteen and seventeen he was David Sechard's fanatical worshiper. David put him under one of the cleverest workmen, and took him for his copy-holder, his page. Cerizet's intelligence naturally interested David; he won the lad's affection by procuring amusements now and again for him, and comforts from which he was cut off by poverty. Nature had endowed Cerizet with an insignificant, rather pretty little countenance, red hair, and a pair of dull blue eyes; he had come to Angouleme and brought the manners of the Parisian street-boy with him. He was formidable by reason of a quick, sarcastic turn and a spiteful disposition. Perhaps David looked less strictly after him in Angouleme; or, perhaps, as the lad grew older, his mentor put more trust in him, or in the sobering influences of a country town; but be that as it may, Cerizet (all unknown to his sponsor) was going completely to the bad, and the printer's apprentice was acting the part of a Don Juan among little work girls. His morality, learned in Paris drinking-saloons, laid down the law of self-interest as the sole rule of guidance; he knew, moreover, that next year he would be "drawn for a soldier," to use the popular expression, saw that he had no prospects, and ran into debt, thinking that soon he should be in the army, and none of his creditors would run after him. David still possessed some ascendency over the young fellow, due not to his position as master, nor yet to the interest that he had taken in his

pupil, but to the great intellectual power which the sometime street-boy fully recognized.

Before long Cerizet began to fraternize with the Cointets' workpeople, drawn to them by the mutual attraction of blouse and jacket, and the class feeling, which is, perhaps, strongest of all in the lowest ranks of society. In their company Cerizet forgot the little good doctrine which David had managed to instil into him; but, nevertheless, when the others joked the boy about the presses in his workshop ("old sabots," as the "bears" contemptuously called them), and showed him the magnificent machines, twelve in number, now at work in the Cointets' great printing office, where the single wooden press was only used for experiments, Cerizet would stand up for David and fling out at the braggarts.

"My gaffer will go farther with his 'sabots' than yours with their cast-iron contrivances that turn out mass books all day long," he would boast. "He is trying to find out a secret that will lick all the printing offices in France and Navarre."

"And meantime you take your orders from a washer-woman, you snip of a foreman, on two francs a day."

"She is pretty though," retorted Cerizet; "it is better to have her to look at than the phizes of your gaffers."

"And do you live by looking at his wife?"

From the region of the wineshop, or from the door of the printing office, where these bickerings took place, a dim light began to break in upon the brothers Cointet as to the real state of things in the Sechard establishment. They came to hear of Eve's experiment, and held it expedient to stop these flights at once, lest the business should begin to prosper under the poor young wife's management.

"Let us give her a rap over the knuckles, and disgust her with the business," said the brothers Cointet.

One of the pair, the practical printer, spoke to Cerizet, and asked him to do the proof-reading for them by piecework, to relieve their reader, who had more than he could manage. So it came to pass that Cerizet earned more by a few hours' work of an evening for the brothers Cointet than by a whole day's work for David Sechard. Other transactions followed; the Cointets seeing no small aptitude in Cerizet, he was told that it was a pity that he should be in a position so little favorable to his interests.

“You might be foreman some day in a big printing office, making six francs a day,” said one of the Cointets one day, “and with your intelligence you might come to have a share in the business.”

“Where is the use of my being a good foreman?” returned Cerizet. “I am an orphan, I shall be drawn for the army next year, and if I get a bad number who is there to pay some one else to take my place?”

“If you make yourself useful,” said the well-to-do printer, “why should not somebody advance the money?”

“It won’t be my gaffer in any case!” said Cerizet.

“Pooh! Perhaps by that time he will have found out the secret.”

The words were spoken in a way that could not but rouse the worst thoughts in the listener; and Cerizet gave the papermaker and printer a very searching look.

“I do not know what he is busy about,” he began prudently, as the master said nothing, “but he is not the kind of man to look for capitals in the lower case!”

“Look here, my friend,” said the printer, taking up half-a-dozen sheets of the diocesan prayer-book and holding them out to Cerizet, “if you can correct these for us by tomorrow, you shall have eighteen francs tomorrow for them. We are not shabby here; we put our competitor’s foreman in the way of making money. As a matter of fact, we might let Mme. Sechard go too far to draw back with her *Shepherd’s Calendar*, and ruin her; very well, we give you permission to tell her that we are bringing out a *Shepherd’s Calendar* of our own, and to call her attention too to the fact that she will not be the first in the field.”

Cerizet’s motive for working so slowly on the composition of the almanac should be clear enough by this time.

When Eve heard that the Cointets meant to spoil her poor little speculation, dread seized upon her; at first she tried to see a proof of attachment in Cerizet’s hypocritical warning of competition; but before long she saw signs of an over-keen curiosity in her sole compositor — the curiosity of youth, she tried to think.

“Cerizet,” she said one morning, “you stand about on the threshold, and wait for M. Sechard in the passage, to pry into his private affairs; when he comes out into the yard to melt down the rollers, you are there looking at him, instead of getting on with the almanac. These things are not right, especially when you see

that I, his wife, respect his secrets, and take so much trouble on myself to leave him free to give himself up to his work. If you had not wasted time, the almanac would be finished by now, and Kolb would be selling it, and the Cointets could have done us no harm."

"Eh! madame," answered Cerizet. "Here am I doing five francs' worth of composing for two francs a day, and don't you think that that is enough? Why, if I did not read proofs of an evening for the Cointets, I might feed myself on husks."

"You are turning ungrateful early," said Eve, deeply hurt, not so much by Cerizet's grumbling as by his coarse tone, threatening attitude, and aggressive stare; "you will get on in life."

"Not with a woman to order me about though, for it is not often that the month has thirty days in it then."

Feeling wounded in her womanly dignity, Eve gave Cerizet a withering look and went upstairs again. At dinner-time she spoke to David.

"Are you sure, dear, of that little rogue Cerizet?"

"Cerizet!" said David. "Why, he was my youngster; I trained him, I took him on as my copy-holder. I put him to composing; anything that he is he owes to me, in fact! You might as well ask a father if he is sure of his child."

Upon this, Eve told her husband that Cerizet was reading proofs for the Cointets.

"Poor fellow! he must live," said David, humbled by the consciousness that he had not done his duty as a master.

"Yes, but there is a difference, dear, between Kolb and Cerizet — Kolb tramps about twenty leagues every day, spends fifteen or twenty sous, and brings us back seven and eight and sometimes nine francs of sales; and when his expenses are paid, he never asks for more than his wages. Kolb would sooner cut off his hand than work a lever for the Cointets; Kolb would not peer among the things that you throw out into the yard if people offered him a thousand crowns to do it; but Cerizet picks them up and looks at them."

It is hard for noble natures to think evil, to believe in ingratitude; only through rough experience do they learn the extent of human corruption; and even when there is nothing left them to learn in this kind, they rise to an indulgence

which is the last degree of contempt.

"Pooh! pure Paris street-boy's curiosity," cried David.

"Very well, dear, do me the pleasure to step downstairs and look at the work done by this boy of yours, and tell me then whether he ought not to have finished our almanac this month."

David went into the workshop after dinner, and saw that the calendar should have been set up in a week. Then, when he heard that the Cointets were bringing out a similar almanac, he came to the rescue. He took command of the printing office, Kolb helped at home instead of selling broadsheets. Kolb and Marion pulled off the impressions from one form while David worked another press with Cerizet, and superintended the printing in various inks. Every sheet must be printed four separate times, for which reason none but small houses will attempt to produce a *Shepherd's Calendar*, and that only in the country where labor is cheap, and the amount of capital employed in the business is so small that the interest amounts to little. Wherefore, a press which turns out beautiful work cannot compete in the printing of such sheets, coarse though they may be.

So, for the first time since old Sechard retired, two presses were at work in the old house. The calendar was, in its way, a masterpiece; but Eve was obliged to sell it for less than a halfpenny, for the Cointets were supplying hawkers at the rate of three centimes per copy. Eve made no loss on the copies sold to hawkers; on Kolb's sales, made directly, she gained; but her little speculation was spoiled. Cerizet saw that his fair employer distrusted him; in his own conscience he posed as the accuser, and said to himself, "You suspect me, do you? I will have my revenge," for the Paris street-boy is made on this wise. Cerizet accordingly took pay out of all proportion to the work of proof-reading done for the Cointets, going to their office every evening for the sheets, and returning them in the morning. He came to be on familiar terms with them through the daily chat, and at length saw a chance of escaping the military service, a bait held out to him by the brothers. So far from requiring prompting from the Cointets, he was the first to propose the espionage and exploitation of David's researches.

Eve saw how little she could depend upon Cerizet, and to find another Kolb was simply impossible; she made up her mind to dismiss her one compositor, for the insight of a woman who loves told her that Cerizet was a traitor; but as this meant a deathblow to the business, she took a man's resolution. She wrote to M.

Metivier, with whom David and the Cointets and almost every papermaker in the department had business relations, and asked him to put the following advertisement into a trade paper:

"FOR SALE, as a going concern, a Printing Office, with License and Plant; situated at Angouleme. Apply for particulars to M. Metivier, Rue Serpente."

The Cointets saw the advertisement. "That little woman has a head on her shoulders," they said. "It is time that we took her business under our own control, by giving her enough work to live upon; we might find a real competitor in David's successor; it is in our interest to keep an eye upon that workshop."

The Cointets went to speak to David Sechard, moved thereto by this thought. Eve saw them, knew that her stratagem had succeeded at once, and felt a thrill of the keenest joy. They stated their proposal. They had more work than they could undertake, their presses could not keep pace with the work, would M. Sechard print for them? They had sent to Bordeaux for workmen, and could find enough to give full employment to David's three presses.

"Gentlemen," said Eve, while Cerizet went across to David's workshop to announce the two printers, "while my husband was with the MM. Didot he came to know of excellent workers, honest and industrious men; he will choose his successor, no doubt, from among the best of them. If he sold his business outright for some twenty thousand francs, it might bring us in a thousand francs per annum; that would be better than losing a thousand yearly over such trade as you leave us. Why did you envy us the poor little almanac speculation, especially as we have always brought it out?"

"Oh, why did you not give us notice, madame? We would not have interfered with you," one of the brothers answered blandly (he was known as the "tall Cointet").

"Oh, come gentlemen! you only began your almanac after Cerizet told you that I was bringing out mine."

She spoke briskly, looking full at "the tall Cointet" as she spoke. He lowered his eyes; Cerizet's treachery was proven to her.

This brother managed the business and the paper-mill; he was by far the cleverer man of business of the two. Jean showed no small ability in the conduct of the printing establishment, but in intellectual capacity he might be said to take

colonel's rank, while Boniface was a general. Jean left the command to Boniface. This latter was thin and spare in person; his face, sallow as an altar candle, was mottled with reddish patches; his lips were pinched; there was something in his eyes that reminded you of a cat's eyes. Boniface Cointet never excited himself; he would listen to the grossest insults with the serenity of a bigot, and reply in a smooth voice. He went to mass, he went to confession, he took the sacrament. Beneath his caressing manners, beneath an almost spiritless look, lurked the tenacity and ambition of the priest, and the greed of the man of business consumed with a thirst for riches and honors. In the year 1820 "tall Cointet" wanted all that the *bourgeoisie* finally obtained by the Revolution of 1830. In his heart he hated the aristocrats, and in religion he was indifferent; he was as much or as little of a bigot as Bonaparte was a member of the Mountain; yet his vertebral column bent with a flexibility wonderful to behold before the noblesse and the official hierarchy; for the powers that be, he humbled himself, he was meek and obsequious. One final characteristic will describe him for those who are accustomed to dealings with all kinds of men, and can appreciate its value — Cointet concealed the expression of his eyes by wearing colored glasses, ostensibly to preserve his sight from the reflection of the sunlight on the white buildings in the streets; for Angouleme, being set upon a hill, is exposed to the full glare of the sun. Tall Cointet was really scarcely above middle height; he looked much taller than he actually was by reason of the thinness, which told of overwork and a brain in continual ferment. His lank, sleek gray hair, cut in somewhat ecclesiastical fashion; the black trousers, black stockings, black waistcoat, and long puce-colored greatcoat (styled a *levite* in the south), all completed his resemblance to a Jesuit.

Boniface was called "tall Cointet" to distinguish him from his brother, "fat Cointet," and the nicknames expressed a difference in character as well as a physical difference between a pair of equally redoubtable personages. As for Jean Cointet, a jolly, stout fellow, with a face from a Flemish interior, colored by the southern sun of Angouleme, thick-set, short and paunchy as Sancho Panza; with a smile on his lips and a pair of sturdy shoulders, he was a striking contrast to his older brother. Nor was the difference only physical and intellectual. Jean might almost be called Liberal in politics; he belonged to the Left Centre, only went to mass on Sundays, and lived on a remarkably good understanding with the Liberal men of business. There were those in L'Houmeau who said that this divergence

between the brothers was more apparent than real. Tall Cointet turned his brother's seeming good nature to advantage very skilfully. Jean was his bludgeon. It was Jean who gave all the hard words; it was Jean who conducted the executions which little beseemed the elder brother's benevolence. Jean took the storms department; he would fly into a rage, and propose terms that nobody would think of accepting, to pave the way for his brother's less unreasonable propositions. And by such policy the pair attained their ends, sooner or later.

Eve, with a woman's tact, had soon divined the characters of the two brothers; she was on her guard with foes so formidable. David, informed beforehand of everything by his wife, lent a profoundly inattentive mind to his enemies' proposals.

"Come to an understanding with my wife," he said, as he left the Cointets in the office and went back to his laboratory. "Mme. Sechard knows more about the business than I do myself. I am interested in something that will pay better than this poor place; I hope to find a way to retrieve the losses that I have made through you ——"

"And how?" asked the fat Cointet, chuckling.

Eve gave her husband a look that meant, "Be careful!"

"You will be my tributaries," said David, "and all other consumers of papers besides."

"Then what are you investigating?" asked the hypocritical Boniface Cointet.

Boniface's question slipped out smoothly and insinuatingly, and again Eve's eyes implored her husband to give an answer that was no answer, or to say nothing at all.

"I am trying to produce paper at fifty per cent less than the present cost price," and he went. He did not see the glances exchanged between the brothers. "That is an inventor, a man of his build cannot sit with his hands before him. — Let us exploit him," said Boniface's eyes. "How can we do it?" said Jean's.

Mme. Sechard spoke. "David treats me just in the same way," she said. "If I show any curiosity, he feels suspicious of my name, no doubt, and out comes that remark of his; it is only a formula, after all."

"If your husband can work out the formula, he will certainly make a fortune

more quickly than by printing; I am not surprised that he leaves the business to itself," said Boniface, looking across the empty workshop, where Kolb, seated upon a wetting-board, was rubbing his bread with a clove of garlic; "but it would not suit our views to see this place in the hands of an energetic, pushing, ambitious competitor," he continued, "and perhaps it might be possible to arrive at an understanding. Suppose, for instance, that you consented for a consideration to allow us to put in one of our own men to work your presses for our benefit, but nominally for you; the thing is sometimes done in Paris. We would find the fellow work enough to enable him to rent your place and pay you well, and yet make a profit for himself."

"It depends on the amount," said Eve Sechard. "What is your offer?" she added, looking at Boniface to let him see that she understood his scheme perfectly well.

"What is your own idea?" Jean Cointet put in briskly.

"Three thousand francs for six months," said she.

"Why, my dear young lady, you were proposing to sell the place outright for twenty thousand francs," said Boniface with much suavity. "The interest on twenty thousand francs is only twelve hundred francs per annum at six per cent."

For a moment Eve was thrown into confusion; she saw the need for discretion in matters of business.

"You wish to use our presses and our name as well," she said; "and, as I have already shown you, I can still do a little business. And then we pay rent to M. Sechard senior, who does not load us with presents."

After two hours of debate, Eve obtained two thousand francs for six months, one thousand to be paid in advance. When everything was concluded, the brothers informed her that they meant to put in Cerizet as lessee of the premises. In spite of herself, Eve started with surprise.

"Isn't it better to have somebody who knows the workshop?" asked the fat Cointet.

Eve made no reply; she took leave of the brothers, vowing inwardly to look after Cerizet.

"Well, here are our enemies in the place!" laughed David, when Eve brought

out the papers for his signature at dinner-time.

"Pshaw!" said she, "I will answer for Kolb and Marion; they alone would look after things. Besides, we shall be making an income of four thousand francs from the workshop, which only costs us money as it is; and looking forward, I see a year in which you may realize your hopes."

"You were born to be the wife of a scientific worker, as you said by the weir," said David, grasping her hand tenderly.

But though the Sechard household had money sufficient that winter, they were none the less subjected to Cerizet's espionage, and all unconsciously became dependent upon Boniface Cointet.

"We have them now!" the manager of the paper-mill had exclaimed as he left the house with his brother the printer. "They will begin to regard the rent as regular income; they will count upon it and run themselves into debt. In six months' time we will decline to renew the agreement, and then we shall see what this man of genius has at the bottom of his mind; we will offer to help him out of his difficulty by taking him into partnership and exploiting his discovery."

Any shrewd man of business who should have seen tall Cointet's face as he uttered those words, "taking him into partnership," would have known that it behooves a man to be even more careful in the selection of the partner whom he takes before the Tribunal of Commerce than in the choice of the wife whom he weds at the Mayor's office. Was it not enough already, and more than enough, that the ruthless hunters were on the track of the quarry? How should David and his wife, with Kolb and Marion to help them, escape the toils of a Boniface Cointet?

A draft for five hundred francs came from Lucien, and this, with Cerizet's second payment, enabled them to meet all the expenses of Mme. Sechard's confinement. Eve and the mother and David had thought that Lucien had forgotten them, and rejoiced over this token of remembrance as they rejoiced over his success, for his first exploits in journalism made even more noise in Angouleme than in Paris.

But David, thus lulled into a false security, was to receive a staggering blow, a cruel letter from Lucien:—

Lucien to David.

"MY DEAR DAVID— I have drawn three bills on you, and negotiated

them with Metivier; they fall due in one, two, and three months' time. I took this hateful course, which I know will burden you heavily, because the one alternative was suicide. I will explain my necessity some time, and I will try besides to send the amounts as the bills fall due.

"Burn this letter; say nothing to my mother and sister; for, I confess it, I have counted upon you, upon the heroism known so well to your despairing brother,

"LUCIEN DE RUBEMPRE."

By this time Eve had recovered from her confinement.

"Your brother, poor fellow, is in desperate straits," David told her. "I have sent him three bills for a thousand francs at one, two, and three months; just make a note of them," and he went out into the fields to escape his wife's questionings.

But Eve had felt very uneasy already. It was six months since Lucien had written to them. She talked over the news with her mother till her forebodings grew so dark that she made up her mind to dissipate them. She would take a bold step in her despair.

Young M. de Rastignac had come to spend a few days with his family. He had spoken of Lucien in terms that set Paris gossip circulating in Angouleme, till at last it reached the journalist's mother and sister. Eve went to Mme. de Rastignac, asked the favor of an interview with her son, spoke of all her fears, and asked him for the truth. In a moment Eve heard of her brother's connection with the actress Coralie, of his duel with Michel Chrestien, arising out of his own treacherous behavior to Daniel d'Arthez; she received, in short, a version of Lucien's history, colored by the personal feeling of a clever and envious dandy. Rastignac expressed sincere admiration for the abilities so terribly compromised, and a patriotic fear for the future of a native genius; spite and jealousy masqueraded as pity and friendliness. He spoke of Lucien's blunders. It seemed that Lucien had forfeited the favor of a very great person, and that a patent conferring the right to bear the name and arms of Rubempre had actually been made out and subsequently torn up.

"If your brother, madame, had been well advised, he would have been on the way to honors, and Mme. de Bargeton's husband by this time; but what can you expect? He deserted her and insulted her. She is now Mme. la Comtesse Sixte du Chatelet, to her own great regret, for she loved Lucien."

"Is it possible!" exclaimed Mme. Sechard.

"Your brother is like a young eagle, blinded by the first rays of glory and luxury. When an eagle falls, who can tell how far he may sink before he drops to the bottom of some precipice? The fall of a great man is always proportionately great."

Eve came away with a great dread in her heart; those last words pierced her like an arrow. She had been wounded to the quick. She said not a word to anybody, but again and again a tear rolled down her cheeks, and fell upon the child at her breast. So hard is it to give up illusions sanctioned by family feeling, illusions that have grown with our growth, that Eve had doubted Eugene de Rastignac. She would rather hear a true friend's account of her brother. Lucien had given them d'Arthez's address in the days when he was full of enthusiasm for the brotherhood; she wrote a pathetic letter to d'Arthez, and received the following reply:—

D'Arthez to Mme. Sechard.

"MADAME— You ask me to tell you the truth about the life that your brother is leading in Paris; you are anxious for enlightenment as to his prospects; and to encourage a frank answer on my part, you repeat certain things that M. de Rastignac has told you, asking me if they are true. With regard to the purely personal matter, madame, M. de Rastignac's confidences must be corrected in Lucien's favor. Your brother wrote a criticism of my book, and brought it to me in remorse, telling me that he could not bring himself to publish it, although obedience to the orders of his party might endanger one who was very dear to him. Alas! madame, a man of letters must needs comprehend all passions, since it is his pride to express them; I understood that where a mistress and a friend are involved, the friend is inevitably sacrificed. I smoothed your brother's way; I corrected his murderous article myself, and gave it my full approval.

"You ask whether Lucien has kept my friendship and esteem; to this it is difficult to make an answer. Your brother is on a road that leads him to ruin. At this moment I still feel sorry for him; before long I shall have forgotten him, of set purpose, not so much on account of what he has done already as for that which he inevitably will do. Your Lucien is not a poet, he has the poetic temper; he dreams, he does not think; he spends himself in emotion, he does not create. He is, in fact — permit me to say it — a womanish creature that loves to shine, the Frenchman's great failing. Lucien will always sacrifice his best friend for the pleasure of displaying his own wit. He would not hesitate to sign

a pact with the Devil tomorrow if so he might secure a few years of luxurious and glorious life. Nay, has he not done worse already? He has bartered his future for the short-lived delights of living openly with an actress. So far, he has not seen the dangers of his position; the girl's youth and beauty and devotion (for she worships him) have closed his eyes to the truth; he cannot see that no glory or success or fortune can induce the world to accept the position. Very well, as it is now, so it will be with each new temptation — your brother will not look beyond the enjoyment of the moment. Do not be alarmed: Lucien will never go so far as a crime, he has not the strength of character; but he would take the fruits of a crime, he would share the benefit but not the risk — a thing that seems abhorrent to the whole world, even to scoundrels. Oh, he would despise himself, he would repent; but bring him once more to the test, and he would fail again; for he is weak of will, he cannot resist the allurements of pleasure, nor forego the least of his ambitions. He is indolent, like all who would fain be poets; he thinks it clever to juggle with the difficulties of life instead of facing and overcoming them. He will be brave at one time, cowardly at another, and deserves neither credit for his courage, nor blame for his cowardice. Lucien is like a harp with strings that are slackened or tightened by the atmosphere. He might write a great book in a glad or angry mood, and care nothing for the success that he had desired for so long.

"When he first came to Paris he fell under the influence of an unprincipled young fellow, and was dazzled by his companion's adroitness and experience in the difficulties of a literary life. This juggler completely bewitched Lucien; he dragged him into a life which a man cannot lead and respect himself, and, unluckily for Lucien, love shed its magic over the path. The admiration that is given too readily is a sign of want of judgment; a poet ought not to be paid in the same coin as a dancer on the tight-rope. We all felt hurt when intrigue and literary rascality were preferred to the courage and honor of those who counseled Lucien rather to face the battle than to filch success, to spring down into the arena rather than become a trumpet in the orchestra.

"Society, madame, oddly enough, shows plentiful indulgence to young men of Lucien's stamp; they are popular, the world is fascinated by their external gifts and good looks. Nothing is asked of them, all their sins are forgiven; they are treated like perfect natures, others are blind to their defects, they are the world's spoiled children. And, on the other hand, the world is stern beyond measure to strong and complete natures. Perhaps in this apparently flagrant injustice society acts sublimely, taking a harlequin at his just worth, asking nothing of him but amusement, promptly forgetting him; and asking divine great deeds of those before whom she bends the knee. Everything is judged by

laws of its being; the diamond must be flawless; the ephemeral creation of fashion may be flimsy, bizarre, inconsequent. So Lucien may perhaps succeed to admiration in spite of his mistakes; he has only to profit by some happy vein or to be among good companions; but if an evil angel crosses his path, he will go to the very depths of hell. 'Tis a brilliant assemblage of good qualities embroidered upon too slight a tissue; time wears the flowers away till nothing but the web is left; and if that is poor stuff, you behold a rag at the last. So long as Lucien is young, people will like him; but where will he be as a man of thirty? That is the question which those who love him sincerely are bound to ask themselves. If I alone had come to think in this way of Lucien, I might perhaps have spared you the pain which my plain speaking will give you; but to evade the questions put by your anxiety, and to answer a cry of anguish like your letter with commonplaces, seemed to me alike unworthy of you and of me, whom you esteem too highly; and besides, those of my friends who knew Lucien are unanimous in their judgment. So it appeared to me to be a duty to put the truth before you, terrible though it may be. Anything may be expected of Lucien, anything good or evil. That is our opinion, and this letter is summed up in that sentence. If the vicissitudes of his present way of life (a very wretched and slippery one) should bring the poet back to you, use all your influence to keep him among you; for until his character has acquired stability, Paris will not be safe for him. He used to speak of you, you and your husband, as his guardian angels; he has forgotten you, no doubt; but he will remember you again when tossed by tempest, with no refuge left to him but his home. Keep your heart for him, madame; he will need it.

"Permit me, madame, to convey to you the expression of the sincere respect of a man to whom your rare qualities are known, a man who honors your mother's fears so much, that he desires to style himself your devoted servant,

"D'ARTHEZ."

Two days after the letter came, Eve was obliged to find a wet-nurse; her milk had dried up. She had made a god of her brother; now, in her eyes, he was depraved through the exercise of his noblest faculties; he was wallowing in the mire. She, noble creature that she was, was incapable of swerving from honesty and scrupulous delicacy, from all the pious traditions of the hearth, which still burns so clearly and sheds its light abroad in quiet country homes. Then David had been right in his forecasts! The leaden hues of grief overspread Eve's white brow. She told her husband her secret in one of the pellucid talks in which married lovers tell everything to each other. The tones of David's voice brought comfort. Though the

tears stood in his eyes when he knew that grief had dried his wife's fair breast, and knew Eve's despair that she could not fulfil a mother's duties, he held out reassuring hopes.

"Your brother's imagination has let him astray, you see, child. It is so natural that a poet should wish for blue and purple robes, and hurry as eagerly after festivals as he does. It is a bird that loves glitter and luxury with such simple sincerity, that God forgives him if man condemns him for it."

"But he is draining our lives!" exclaimed poor Eve.

"He is draining our lives just now, but only a few months ago he saved us by sending us the first fruits of his earnings," said the good David. He had the sense to see that his wife was in despair, was going beyond the limit, and that love for Lucien would very soon come back. "Fifty years ago, or thereabouts, Mercier said in his *Tableau de Paris* that a man cannot live by literature, poetry, letters, or science, by the creatures of his brain, in short; and Lucien, poet that he is, would not believe the experience of five centuries. The harvests that are watered with ink are only reaped ten or twelve years after the sowing, if indeed there is any harvest after all. Lucien has taken the green wheat for the sheaves. He will have learned something of life, at any rate. He was the dupe of a woman at the outset; he was sure to be duped afterwards by the world and false friends. He has bought his experience dear, that is all. Our ancestors used to say, 'If the son of the house brings back his two ears and his honor safe, all is well ——'"

"Honor!" poor Eve broke in. "Oh, but Lucien has fallen in so many ways! Writing against his conscience! Attacking his best friend! Living upon an actress! Showing himself in public with her. Bringing us to lie on straw ——"

"Oh, that is nothing ——!" cried David, and suddenly stopped short. The secret of Lucien's forgery had nearly escaped him, and, unluckily, his start left a vague, uneasy impression on Eve.

"What do you mean by nothing?" she answered. "And where shall we find the money to meet bills for three thousand francs?"

"We shall be obliged to renew the lease with Cerizet, to begin with," said David. "The Cointets have been allowing him fifteen per cent on the work done for them, and in that way alone he has made six hundred francs, besides contriving to make five hundred francs by job printing."

“If the Cointets know that, perhaps they will not renew the lease. They will be afraid of him, for Cerizet is a dangerous man.”

“Eh! what is that to me!” cried David, “we shall be rich in a very little while. When Lucien is rich, dear angel, he will have nothing but good qualities.”

“Oh! David, my dear, my dear; what is this that you have said unthinkingly? Then Lucien fallen into the clutches of poverty would not have the force of character to resist evil? And you think just as M. d’Arthez thinks! No one is great unless he has strength of character, and Lucien is weak. An angel must not be tempted — what is that?”

“What but a nature that is noble only in its own region, its own sphere, its heaven? I will spare him the struggle; Lucien is not meant for it. Look here! I am so near the end now that I can talk to you about the means.”

He drew several sheets of white paper from his pocket, brandished them in triumph, and laid them on his wife’s lap.

“A ream of this paper, royal size, would cost five francs at the most,” he added, while Eve handled the specimens with almost childish surprise.

“Why, how did you make these sample bits?” she asked.

“With an old kitchen sieve of Marion’s.”

“And are you not satisfied yet?” asked Eve.

“The problem does not lie in the manufacturing process; it is a question of the first cost of the pulp. Alas, child, I am only a late comer in a difficult path. As long ago as 1794, Mme. Masson tried to use printed paper a second time; she succeeded, but what a price it cost! The Marquis of Salisbury tried to use straw as a material in 1800, and the same idea occurred to Seguin in France in 1801. Those sheets in your hand are made from the common rush, the *arundo phragmites*, but I shall try nettles and thistles; for if the material is to continue to be cheap, one must look for something that will grow in marshes and waste lands where nothing else can be grown. The whole secret lies in the preparation of the stems. At present my method is not quite simple enough. Still, in spite of this difficulty, I feel sure that I can give the French paper trade the privilege of our literature; papermaking will be for France what coal and iron and coarse potter’s clay are for England — a monopoly. I mean to be the Jacquart of the trade.”

Eve rose to her feet. David's simple-mindedness had roused her to enthusiasm, to admiration; she held out her arms to him and held him tightly to her, while she laid her head upon his shoulder.

"You give me my reward as if I had succeeded already," he said.

For all answer, Eve held up her sweet face, wet with tears, to his, and for a moment she could not speak.

"The kiss was not for the man of genius," she said, "but for my comforter. Here is a rising glory for the glory that has set; and, in the midst of my grief for the brother that has fallen so low, my husband's greatness is revealed to me. — Yes, you will be great, great like the Graindorges, the Rouvets, and Van Robais, and the Persian who discovered madder, like all the men you have told me about; great men whom nobody remembers, because their good deeds were obscure industrial triumphs."

"What are they doing just now?"

It was Boniface Cointet who spoke. He was walking up and down outside in the Place du Murier with Cerizet watching the silhouettes of the husband and wife on the blinds. He always came at midnight for a chat with Cerizet, for the latter played the spy upon his former master's every movement.

"He is showing her the paper he made this morning, no doubt," said Cerizet.

"What is it made of?" asked the paper manufacturer.

"Impossible to guess," answered Cerizet; "I made a hole in the roof and scrambled up and watched the gaffer; he was boiling pulp in a copper pan all last night. There was a heap of stuff in a corner, but I could make nothing of it; it looked like a heap of tow, as near as I could make out."

"Go no farther," said Boniface Cointet in unctuous tones; "it would not be right. Mme. Sechard will offer to renew your lease; tell her that you are thinking of setting up for yourself. Offer her half the value of the plant and license, and, if she takes the bid, come to me. In any case, spin the matter out. . . . Have they no money?"

"Not a sou," said Cerizet.

"Not a sou," repeated tall Cointet. —"I have them now," said he to himself.

Metivier, paper manufacturers' wholesale agent, and Cointet Brothers, printers and paper manufacturers, were also bankers in all but name. This surreptitious banking system defies all the ingenuity of the Inland Revenue Department. Every banker is required to take out a license which, in Paris, costs five hundred francs; but no hitherto devised method of controlling commerce can detect the delinquents, or compel them to pay their due to the Government. And though Metivier and the Cointets were "outside brokers," in the language of the Stock Exchange, none the less among them they could set some hundreds of thousands of francs moving every three months in the markets of Paris, Bordeaux, and Angouleme. Now it so fell out that that very evening Cointet Brothers had received Lucien's forged bills in the course of business. Upon this debt, tall Cointet forthwith erected a formidable engine, pointed, as will presently be seen, against the poor, patient inventor.

By seven o'clock next morning, Boniface Cointet was taking a walk by the mill stream that turned the wheels in his big factory; the sound of the water covered his talk, for he was talking with a companion, a young man of nine-and-twenty, who had been appointed attorney to the Court of First Instance in Angouleme some six weeks ago. The young man's name was Pierre Petit–Claud.

"You are a schoolfellow of David Sechard's, are you not?" asked tall Cointet by way of greeting to the young attorney. Petit–Claud had lost no time in answering the wealthy manufacturer's summons.

"Yes, sir," said Petit–Claud, keeping step with tall Cointet.

"Have you renewed the acquaintance?"

"We have met once or twice at most since he came back. It could hardly have been otherwise. In Paris I was buried away in the office or at the courts on week-days, and on Sundays and holidays I was hard at work studying, for I had only myself to look to." (Tall Cointet nodded approvingly.) "When we met again, David and I, he asked me what I had done with myself. I told him that after I had finished my time at Poitiers, I had risen to be Maitre Olivet's head-clerk, and that some time or other I hoped to make a bid for his berth. I know a good deal more of Lucien Chardon (de Rubempre he calls himself now), he was Mme. de Bargeton's lover, our great poet, David Sechard's brother-inlaw, in fact."

"Then you can go and tell David of your appointment, and offer him your

services," said tall Cointet.

"One can't do that," said the young attorney.

"He has never had a lawsuit, and he has no attorney, so one can do that," said Cointet, scanning the other narrowly from behind his colored spectacles.

A certain quantity of gall mingled with the blood in Pierre Petit–Claud's veins; his father was a tailor in L'Houmeau, and his schoolfellows had looked down upon him. His complexion was of the muddy and unwholesome kind which tells a tale of bad health, late hours and penury, and almost always of a bad disposition. The best description of him may be given in two familiar expressions — he was sharp and snappish. His cracked voice suited his sour face, meagre look, and magpie eyes of no particular color. A magpie eye, according to Napoleon, is a sure sign of dishonesty. "Look at So-and-so," he said to Las Cases at Saint Helena, alluding to a confidential servant whom he had been obliged to dismiss for malversation. "I do not know how I could have been deceived in him for so long; he has a magpie eye." Tall Cointet, surveying the weedy little lawyer, noted his face pitted with smallpox, the thin hair, and the forehead, bald already, receding towards a bald cranium; saw, too, the confession of weakness in his attitude with the hand on the hip. "Here is my man," said he to himself.

As a matter of fact, this Petit–Claud, who had drunk scorn like water, was eaten up with a strong desire to succeed in life; he had no money, but nevertheless he had the audacity to buy his employer's connection for thirty thousand francs, reckoning upon a rich marriage to clear off the debt, and looking to his employer, after the usual custom, to find him a wife, for an attorney always has an interest in marrying his successor, because he is the sooner paid off. But if Petit–Claud counted upon his employer, he counted yet more upon himself. He had more than average ability, and that of a kind not often found in the provinces, and rancor was the mainspring of his power. A mighty hatred makes a mighty effort.

There is a great difference between a country attorney and an attorney in Paris; tall Cointet was too clever not to know this, and to turn the meaner passions that move a pettifogging lawyer to good account. An eminent attorney in Paris, and there are many who may be so qualified, is bound to possess to some extent the diplomate's qualities; he had so much business to transact, business in which large interests are involved; questions of such wide interest are submitted to him that he does not look upon procedure as machinery for bringing money into his

pocket, but as a weapon of attack and defence. A country attorney, on the other hand, cultivates the science of costs, *broutille*, as it is called in Paris, a host of small items that swell lawyers' bills and require stamped paper. These weighty matters of the law completely fill the country attorney's mind; he has a bill of costs always before his eyes, whereas his brother of Paris thinks of nothing but his fees. The fee is a honorarium paid by a client over and above the bill of costs, for the more or less skilful conduct of his case. One-half of the bill of costs goes to the Treasury, whereas the entire fee belongs to the attorney. Let us admit frankly that the fees received are seldom as large as the fees demanded and deserved by a clever lawyer. Wherefore, in Paris, attorneys, doctors, and barristers, like courtesans with a chance-come lover, take very considerable precautions against the gratitude of clients. The client before and after the lawsuit would furnish a subject worthy of Meissonier; there would be brisk bidding among attorneys for the possession of two such admirable bits of genre.

There is yet another difference between the Parisian and the country attorney. An attorney in Paris very seldom appears in court, though he is sometimes called upon to act as arbitrator (*refere*). Barristers, at the present day, swarm in the provinces; but in 1822 the country attorney very often united the functions of solicitor and counsel. As a result of this double life, the attorney acquired the peculiar intellectual defects of the barrister, and retained the heavy responsibilities of the attorney. He grew talkative and fluent, and lost his lucidity of judgment, the first necessity for the conduct of affairs. If a man of more than ordinary ability tries to do the work of two men, he is apt to find that the two men are mediocrities. The Paris attorney never spends himself in forensic eloquence; and as he seldom attempts to argue for and against, he has some hope of preserving his mental rectitude. It is true that he brings the balista of the law to work, and looks for the weapons in the armory of judicial contradictions, but he keeps his own convictions as to the case, while he does his best to gain the day. In a word, a man loses his head not so much by thinking as by uttering thoughts. The spoken word convinces the utterer; but a man can act against his own bad judgment without warping it, and contrive to win in a bad cause without maintaining that it is a good one, like the barrister. Perhaps for this very reason an old attorney is the more likely of the two to make a good judge.

A country attorney, as we have seen, has plenty of excuses for his mediocrity; he takes up the cause of petty passions, he undertakes pettifogging business, he

lives by charging expenses, he strains the Code of procedure and pleads in court. In a word, his weak points are legion; and if by chance you come across a remarkable man practising as a country attorney, he is indeed above the average level.

“I thought, sir, that you sent for me on your own affairs,” said Petit–Claud, and a glance that put an edge on his words fell upon tall Cointet’s impenetrable blue spectacles.

“Let us have no beating about the bush,” returned Boniface Cointet. “Listen to me.”

After that beginning, big with mysterious import, Cointet set himself down upon a bench, and beckoned Petit–Claud to do likewise.

“When M. du Hautoy came to Angouleme in 1804, on his way to his consulship at Valence, he made the acquaintance of Mme. de Senonches, then Mlle. Zephirine, and had a daughter by her,” added Cointet for the attorney’s ear ——“Yes,” he continued, as Petit–Claud gave a start; “yes, and Mlle. Zephirine’s marriage with M. de Senoches soon followed the birth of the child. The girl was brought up in my mother’s house; she is the Mlle. Francoise de la Haye in whom Mme. de Senoches takes an interest; she is her godmother in the usual style. Now, my mother farmed land belonging to old Mme. de Cardanet, Mlle. Zephirine’s grandmother; and as she knew the secret of the sole heiress of the Cardanets and the Senonches of the older branch, they made me trustee for the little sum which M. Francois du Hautoy meant for the girl’s fortune. I made my own fortune with those ten thousand francs, which amount to thirty thousand at the present day. Mme. de Senonches is sure to give the wedding clothes, and some plate and furniture to her goddaughter. Now, I can put you in the way of marrying the girl, my lad,” said Cointet, slapping Petit–Claud on the knee; “and when you marry Francoise de la Haye, you will have a large number of the aristocracy of Angouleme as your clients. This understanding between us (under the rose) will open up magnificent prospects for you. Your position will be as much as any one could want; in fact, they don’t ask better, I know.”

“What is to be done?” Petit–Claud asked eagerly. “You have an attorney, Maitre Cachan ——”

“And, moreover, I shall not leave Cachan at once for you; I shall only be your

client later on," said Cointet significantly. "What is to be done, do you ask, my friend? Eh! why, David Sechard's business. The poor devil has three thousand francs' worth of bills to meet; he will not meet them; you will stave off legal proceedings in such a way as to increase the expenses enormously. Don't trouble yourself; go on, pile on items. Doublon, my process-server, will act under Cachan's directions, and he will lay on like a blacksmith. A word to the wise is sufficient. Now, young man? ——"

An eloquent pause followed, and the two men looked at each other.

"We have never seen each other," Cointet resumed; "I have not said a syllable to you; you know nothing about M. du Hautoy, nor Mme. de Senonches, nor Mlle. de la Haye; only, when the time comes, two months hence, you will propose for the young lady. If we should want to see each other, you will come here after dark. Let us have nothing in writing."

"Then you mean to ruin Sechard?" asked Petit–Claud.

"Not exactly; but he must be in jail for some time ——"

"And what is the object?"

"Do you think that I am noodle enough to tell you that? If you have wit enough to find out, you will have sense enough to hold your tongue."

"Old Sechard has plenty of money," said Petit–Claud. He was beginning already to enter into Boniface Cointet's notions, and foresaw a possible cause of failure.

"So long as the father lives, he will not give his son a farthing; and the old printer has no mind as yet to send in an order for his funeral cards."

"Agreed!" said Petit–Claud, promptly making up his mind. "I don't ask you for guarantees; I am an attorney. If any one plays me a trick, there will be an account to settle between us."

"The rogue will go far," thought Cointet; he bade Petit–Claud good-morning.

The day after this conference was the 30th of April, and the Cointets presented the first of the three bills forged by Lucien. Unluckily, the bill was brought to poor Mme. Sechard; and she, seeing at once that the signature was not in her husband's handwriting, sent for David and asked him point-blank:

“You did not put your name to that bill, did you?”

“No,” said he; “your brother was so pressed for time that he signed for me.”

Eve returned the bill to the bank messenger sent by the Cointets.

“We cannot meet it,” she said; then, feeling that her strength was failing, she went up to her room. David followed her.

“Go quickly to the Cointets, dear,” Eve said faintly; “they will have some consideration for you; beg them to wait; and call their attention besides to the fact that when Cerizet’s lease is renewed, they will owe you a thousand francs.”

David went forthwith to his enemies. Now, any foreman may become a master printer, but there are not always the makings of a good man of business in a skilled typographer; David knew very little of business; when, therefore, with a heavily-beating heart and a sensation of throttling, David had put his excuses badly enough and formulated his request, the answer —“This is nothing to do with us; the bill has been passed on to us by Metivier; Metivier will pay us. Apply to M. Metivier”— cut him short at once.

“Oh!” cried Eve when she heard the result, “as soon as the bill is returned to M. Metivier, we may be easy.”

At two o’clock the next day, Victor–Ange-Hermenegilde Doublon, bailiff, made protest for non-payment at two o’clock, a time when the Place du Murier is full of people; so that though Doublon was careful to stand and chat at the back door with Marion and Kolb, the news of the protest was known all over the business world of Angouleme that evening. Tall Cointet had enjoined it upon Master Doublon to show the Sechards the greatest consideration; but when all was said and done, could the bailiff’s hypocritical regard for appearances save Eve and David from the disgrace of a suspension of payment? Let each judge for himself. A tolerably long digression of this kind will seem all too short; and ninety out of every hundred readers shall seize with avidity upon details that possess all the piquancy of novelty, thus establishing yet once again the trust of the well-known axiom, that there is nothing so little known as that which everybody is supposed to know — the Law of the Land, to wit.

And of a truth, for the immense majority of Frenchmen, a minute description of some part of the machinery of banking will be as interesting as any chapter of foreign travel. When a tradesman living in one town gives a bill to another

tradesman elsewhere (as David was supposed to have done for Lucien's benefit), the transaction ceases to be a simple promissory note, given in the way of business by one tradesman to another in the same place, and becomes in some sort a letter of exchange. When, therefore, Metivier accepted Lucien's three bills, he was obliged to send them for collection to his correspondents in Angouleme — to Cointet Brothers, that is to say. Hence, likewise, a certain initial loss for Lucien in exchange on Angouleme, taking the practical shape of an abatement of so much per cent over and above the discount. In this way Sechard's bills had passed into circulation in the bank. You would not believe how greatly the quality of banker, united with the august title of creditor, changes the debtor's position. For instance, when a bill has been passed through the bank (please note that expression), and transferred from the money market in Paris to the financial world of Angouleme, if that bill is protested, then the bankers in Angouleme must draw up a detailed account of the expenses of protest and return; 'tis a duty which they owe to themselves. Joking apart, no account of the most romantic adventure could be more mildly improbable than this of the journey made by a bill. Behold a certain article in the Code of commerce authorizing the most ingenious pleasantries after Mascarille's manner, and the interpretation thereof shall make apparent manifold atrocities lurking beneath the formidable word "legal."

Master Doublon registered the protest and went himself with it to MM. Cointet Brothers. The firm had a standing account with their bailiff; he gave them six months' credit; and the lynxes of Angouleme practically took a twelvemonth, though tall Cointet would say month by month to the lynxes' jackal, "Do you want any money, Doublon?" Nor was this all. Doublon gave the influential house a rebate upon every transaction; it was the merest trifle, one franc fifty centimes on a protest, for instance.

Tall Cointet quietly sat himself down at his desk and took out a small sheet of paper with a thirty-five centime stamp upon it, chatting as he did so with Doublon as to the standing of some of the local tradesmen.

"Well, are you satisfied with young Gannerac?"

"He is not doing badly. Lord, a carrier drives a trade ——"

"Drives a trade, yes; but, as a matter of fact, his expenses are a heavy pull on him; his wife spends a good deal, so they tell me ——"

"Of *his* money?" asked Doublon, with a knowing look.

The lynx meanwhile had finished ruling his sheet of paper, and now proceeded to trace the ominous words at the head of the following account in bold characters:—

ACCOUNT OF EXPENSES OF PROTEST AND RETURN.

To one bill for one thousand francs, *bearing date of February the tenth, eighteen hundred and twenty-two, drawn by* Sechard junior *of Angouleme, to order of* Lucien Chardon, *otherwise* de Rubempre, *endorsed to order of* Metivier, *and finally to our order, matured the thirtieth of April last, protested by* Doublon, *process-server, on the first of May, eighteen hundred and twenty-two.*

	fr.	c.
Principal.	1000	—
Expenses of Protest.	12	35
Bank charges, one-half per cent.	5	—
Brokerage, one-quarter per cent.	2	50
Stamp on re-draft and present account. . . .	1	35
Interest and postage.	3	—
	1024	20
Exchange at the rate of one and a quarter per cent on 1024 fr. 20 c.	13	25
Total.	1037	45

One thousand and thirty-seven francs forty-five centimes, for which we repay ourselves by our draft at sight upon M. Metivier, Rue Serpente, Paris, payable to order of M. Gannerac of L'Houmeau.

ANGOULEME, May 2, 1822 COINTET BROTHERS.

At the foot of this little memorandum, drafted with the ease that comes of long practice (for the writer chatted with Doublon as he wrote), there appeared the subjoined form of declaration:—

"We, the undersigned, Postel of L'Houmeau, pharmaceutical chemist, and Gannerac, forwarding agent, merchant of this town, hereby certify that the present rate of exchange on Paris is one and a quarter per cent.

"ANGOULEME, May 2, 1822."

"Here, Doublon, be so good as to step round and ask Postel and Gannerac to put their names to this declaration, and bring it back with you tomorrow morning."

And Doublon, quite accustomed as he was to these instruments of torture, forthwith went, as if it were the simplest thing in the world. Evidently the protest

might have been sent in an envelope, as in Paris, and even so all Angouleme was sure to hear of the poor Sechards' unlucky predicament. How they all blamed his want of business energy! His excessive fondness for his wife had been the ruin of him, according to some; others maintained that it was his affection for his brother-inlaw; and what shocking conclusions did they not draw from these premises! A man ought never to embrace the interests of his kith and kin. Old Sechard's hard-hearted conduct met with approval, and people admired him for his treatment of his son!

And now, all you who for any reason whatsoever should forget to "honor your engagements," look well into the methods of the banking business, by which one thousand francs may be made to pay interest at the rate of twenty-eight francs in ten minutes, without breaking the law of the land.

The thousand francs, the one incontestable item in the account, comes first.

The second item is shared between the bailiff and the Inland Revenue Department. The six francs due to the State for providing a piece of stamped paper, and putting the debtor's mortification on record, will probably ensure a long life to this abuse; and as you already know, one franc fifty centimes from this item found its way into the banker's pockets in the shape of Doublon's rebate.

"Bank charges one-half per cent," runs the third item, which appears upon the ingenious plea that if a banker has not received payment, he has for all practical purposes discounted a bill. And although the contrary may be the case, if you fail to receive a thousand francs, it seems to be very much the same thing as if you had paid them away. Everybody who has discounted a bill knows that he has to pay more than the six per cent fixed by law; for a small percentage appears under the humble title of "charges," representing a premium on the financial genius and skill with which the capitalist puts his money out to interest. The more money he makes out of you, the more he asks. Wherefore it would be undoubtedly cheaper to discount a bill with a fool, if fools there be in the profession of bill-discounting.

The law requires the banker to obtain a stock-broker's certificate for the rate of exchange. When a place is so unlucky as to boast no stock exchange, two merchants act instead. This is the significance of the item "brokerage"; it is a fixed charge of a quarter per cent on the amount of the protested bill. The custom is to consider the amount as paid to the merchants who act for the stock-broker, and the banker quietly puts the money into his cash-box. So much for the third item in

this delightful account.

The fourth includes the cost of the piece of stamped paper on which the account itself appears, as well as the cost of the stamp for re-draft, as it is ingeniously named, viz., the banker's draft upon his colleague in Paris.

The fifth is a charge for postage and the legal interest due upon the amount for the time that it may happen to be absent from the banker's strong box.

The final item, the exchange, is the object for which the bank exists, which is to say, for the transmission of sums of money from one place to another.

Now, sift this account thoroughly, and what do you find? The method of calculation closely resembles Polichinelle's arithmetic in Lablache's Neapolitan song, "fifteen and five make twenty-two." The signatures of Messieurs Postel and Gannerac were obviously given to oblige in the way of business; the Cointets would act at need for Gannerac as Gannerac acted for the Cointets. It was a practical application of the well-known proverb, "Reach me the rhubarb and I will pass you the senna." Cointet Brothers, moreover, kept a standing account with Metivier; there was no need of a re-draft, and no re-draft was made. A returned bill between the two firms simply meant a debit or credit entry and another line in a ledger.

This highly-colored account, therefore, is reduced to the one thousand francs, with an additional thirteen francs for expenses of protest, and half per cent for a month's delay, one thousand and eighteen francs it may be in all.

Suppose that in a large banking-house a bill for a thousand francs is daily protested on an average, then the banker receives twenty-eight francs a day by the grace of God and the constitution of the banking system, that all powerful invention due to the Jewish intellect of the Middle Ages, which after six centuries still controls monarchs and peoples. In other words, a thousand francs would bring such a house twenty-eight francs per day, or ten thousand two hundred and twenty francs per annum. Triple the average of protests, and consequently of expenses, and you shall derive an income of thirty thousand francs per annum, interest upon purely fictitious capital. For which reason, nothing is more lovingly cultivated than these little "accounts of expenses."

If David Sechard had come to pay his bill on the 3rd of May, that is, the day after it was protested, MM. Cointet Brothers would have met him at once with,

"We have returned your bill to M. Metivier," although, as a matter of fact, the document would have been lying upon the desk. A banker has a right to make out the account of expenses on the evening of the day when the bill is protested, and he uses the right to "sweat the silver crowns," in the country banker's phrase.

The Kellers, with correspondents all over the world, make twenty thousand francs per annum by charges for postage alone; accounts of expenses of protest pay for Mme. la Baronne de Nucingen's dresses, opera box, and carriage. The charge for postage is a more shocking swindle, because a house will settle ten matters of business in as many lines of a single letter. And of the tithe wrung from misfortune, the Government, strange to say! takes its share, and the national revenue is swelled by a tax on commercial failure. And the Bank? from the august height of a counting-house she flings an observation, full of commonsense, at the debtor, "How is it?" asks she, "that you cannot meet your bill?" and, unluckily, there is no reply to the question. Wherefore, the "account of expenses" is an account bristling with dreadful fictions, fit to cause any debtor, who henceforth shall reflect upon this instructive page, a salutary shudder.

On the 4th of May, Metivier received the account from Cointet Brothers, with instructions to proceed against M. Lucien Chardon, otherwise de Rubempre, with the utmost rigor of the law.

Eve also wrote to M. Metivier, and a few days later received an answer which reassured her completely:—

To M. Sechard, Junior, Printer, Angouleme.

"I have duly received your esteemed favor of the 5th instant. From your explanation of the bill due on April 30th, I understand that you have obliged your brother-inlaw, M. de Rubempre, who is spending so much that it will be doing you a service to summons him. His present position is such that he is likely to delay payment for long. If your brother-inlaw should refuse payment, I shall rely upon the credit of your old-established house. — I sign myself now, as ever, your obedient servant,
"Metivier."

"Well," said Eve, commenting upon the letter to David, "Lucien will know when they summons him that we could not pay."

What a change wrought in Eve those few words meant! The love that grew deeper as she came to know her husband's character better and better, was taking the place of love for her brother in her heart. But to how many illusions had she

not bade farewell?

And now let us trace out the whole history of the bill and the account of expenses in the business world of Paris. The law enacts that the third holder, the technical expression for the third party into whose hands the bill passes, is at liberty to proceed for the whole amount against any one of the various endorsers who appears to him to be most likely to make prompt payment. M. Metivier, using this discretion, served a summons upon Lucien. Behold the successive stages of the proceedings, all of them perfectly futile. Metivier, with the Cointets behind him, knew that Lucien was not in a position to pay, but insolvency in fact is not insolvency in law until it has been formally proved.

Formal proof of Lucien's inability to pay was obtained in the following manner:

On the 5th of May, Metivier's process-server gave Lucien notice of the protest and an account of the expense thereof, and summoned him to appear before the Tribunal of Commerce, or County Court, of Paris, to hear a vast number of things: this, among others, that he was liable to imprisonment as a merchant. By the time that Lucien, hard pressed and hunted down on all sides, read this jargon, he received notice of judgment against him by default. Coralie, his mistress, ignorant of the whole matter, imagined that Lucien had obliged his brother-inlaw, and handed him all the documents together — too late. An actress sees so much of bailiffs, duns, and writs, upon the stage, that she looks on all stamped paper as a farce.

Tears filled Lucien's eyes; he was unhappy on Sechard's account, he was ashamed of the forgery, he wished to pay, he desired to gain time. Naturally he took counsel of his friends. But by the time Lousteau, Blondet, Bixiou, and Nathan had told the poet to snap his fingers at a court only established for tradesmen, Lucien was already in the clutches of the law. He beheld upon his door the little yellow placard which leaves its reflection on the porter's countenance, and exercises a most astringent influence upon credit; striking terror into the heart of the smallest tradesman, and freezing the blood in the veins of a poet susceptible enough to care about the bits of wood, silken rags, dyed woolen stuffs, and multifarious gimcracks entitled furniture.

When the broker's men came for Coralie's furniture, the author of the *Marguerites* fled to a friend of Bixiou's, one Desroches, a barrister, who burst out

laughing at the sight of Lucien in such a state about nothing at all.

"That is nothing, my dear fellow. Do you want to gain time?"

"Yes, as much possible."

"Very well, apply for stay of execution. Go and look up Masson, he is a solicitor in the Commercial Court, and a friend of mine. Take your documents to him. He will make a second application for you, and give notice of objection to the jurisdiction of the court. There is not the least difficulty; you are a journalist, your name is well known enough. If they summons you before a civil court, come to me about it, that will be my affair; I engage to send anybody who offers to annoy the fair Coralie about his business."

On the 28th of May, Lucien's case came on in the civil court, and judgment was given before Desroches expected it. Lucien's creditor was pushing on the proceedings against him. A second execution was put in, and again Coralie's pilasters were gilded with placards. Desroches felt rather foolish; a colleague had "caught him napping," to use his own expression. He demurred, not without reason, that the furniture belonged to Mlle. Coralie, with whom Lucien was living, and demanded an order for inquiry. Thereupon the judge referred the matter to the registrar for inquiry, the furniture was proved to belong to the actress, and judgment was entered accordingly. Metivier appealed, and judgment was confirmed on appeal on the 30th of June.

On the 7th of August, Maitre Cachan received by the coach a bulky package endorsed, "Metivier *versus* Sechard and Lucien Chardon."

The first document was a neat little bill, of which a copy (accuracy guaranteed) is here given for the reader's benefit:—

To Bill due the last day of April, drawn by Sechard, junior, *to order of* Lucien de Rubempre, *together with expenses of fr. c. protest and return.* 1037 45
May 5th — Serving notice of protest and summons to appear before the Tribunal of Commerce in Paris, May 7th. 8 75
" 7th — Judgment by default and warrant of arrest. . . .. 35 —
" 10th — Notification of judgment. 8 50
" 12th — Warrant of execution. 5 50

“ 14th — Inventory and appraisement
previous to execution. . . … . . . . . 16 —
“ 18th — Expenses of affixing placards. 15 25
“ 19th — Registration. . . … . … . . . . . 4 —
“ 24th — Verification of inventory, and
application for stay of execution
on the part of the said
Lucien de Rubempre, objecting
to the jurisdiction of the Court. . . . .. 12 —
“ 27th — Order of the Court upon application
duly repeated, and transfer of
of case to the Civil Court. . . … . . . 35 —

—— ——
Carried forward. . . … . … . . 1177 45

fr. c.
Brought forward 1177 45
May 28th — Notice of summary proceedings in
the Civil Court at the instance
of Metivier, represented by
counsel. . . … . … . … 6 50
June 2nd — Judgment, after hearing both
parties, condemning Lucien for
expenses of protest and return;
the plaintiff to bear costs
of proceedings in the
Commercial Court. . . … . … . . .. 150 —
“ 6th — Notification of judgment. . . … . . .. 10 —

“ 15th — Warrant of execution. . . … . … . . 5 50
“ 19th — Inventory and appraisement preparatory
to execution; interpleader summons by
the Demoiselle Coralie, claiming goods
and chattels taken in execution; demand
for immediate special inquiry before
further proceedings be taken. . . . . 20 —
“ “ — Judge’s order referring matter to
registrar for immediate special inquiry.. 40 —
“ “ — Judgment in favor of the said
Mademoiselle Coralie. . . … . . . . . 250 —
“ 20th — Appeal by Metivier. . . … . … . . 17 —
“ 30th — Confirmation of judgment. . . … . . . 250 —

—— ——
Total. . . … . … . … . … . . 1926 45

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Bill matured May 31st, with expenses of fr. c.
protest and return. . . … . … . … . . 1037 45
Serving notice of protest. . . … . … 8 75

—— ——

Total. 1046 20

Bill matured June 30th, with expenses of
protest and return. 1037 45
Serving notice of protest. 8 75

— —
Total. 1046 20

———————

This document was accompanied by a letter from Metivier, instructing Maitre Cachan, notary of Angouleme, to prosecute David Sechard with the utmost rigor of the law. Wherefore Maitre Victor–Ange-Hermenegilde Doublon summoned David Sechard before the Tribunal of Commerce in Angouleme for the sum-total of four thousand and eighteen francs eighty-five centimes, the amount of the three bills and expenses already incurred. On the morning of the very day when Doublon served the writ upon Eve, requiring her to pay a sum so enormous in her eyes, there came a letter like a thunderbolt from Metivier:—

To Monsieur Sechard, Junior, Printer, Angouleme.

"SIR— Your brother-inlaw, M. Chardon, is so shamelessly dishonest, that he declares his furniture to be the property of an actress with whom he is living. You ought to have informed me candidly of these circumstances, and not have allowed me to go to useless expense over law proceedings. I have received no answer to my letter of the 10th of May last. You must not, therefore, take it amiss if I ask for immediate repayment of the three bills and the expenses to which I have been put. — Yours, etc.,
"METIVIER."

Eve had heard nothing during these months, and supposed, in her ignorance of commercial law, that her brother had made reparation for his sins by meeting the forged bills.

"Be quick, and go at once to Petit–Claud, dear," she said; "tell him about it, and ask his advice."

David hurried to his schoolfellow's office.

"When you came to tell me of your appointment and offered me your services, I did not think that I should need them so soon," he said.

Petit–Claud studied the fine face of this man who sat opposite him in the office chair, and scarcely listened to the details of the case, for he knew more of them already than the speaker. As soon as he saw Sechard's anxiety, he said to himself, "The trick has succeeded."

This kind of comedy is often played in an attorney's office. "Why are the Cointets persecuting him?" Petit–Claud wondered within himself, for the attorney can use his wit to read his clients' thoughts as clearly as the ideas of their opponents, and it is his business to see both sides of the judicial web.

"You want to gain time," he said at last, when Sechard had come to an end. "How long do you want? Something like three or four months?"

"Oh! four months! that would be my salvation," exclaimed David. Petit–Claud appeared to him as an angel.

"Very well. No one shall lay hands on any of your furniture, and no one shall arrest you for four months —— But it will cost you a great deal," said Petit–Claud.

"Eh! what does that matter to me?" cried Sechard.

"You are expecting some money to come in; but are you sure of it?" asked Petit–Claud, astonished at the way in which his client walked into the toils.

"In three months' time I shall have plenty of money," said the inventor, with an inventor's hopeful confidence.

"Your father is still above ground," suggested Petit–Claud; "he is in no hurry to leave his vines."

"Do you think that I am counting on my father's death?" returned David. "I am on the track of a trade secret, the secret of making a sheet of paper as strong as Dutch paper, without a thread of cotton in it, and at a cost of fifty per cent less than cotton pulp."

"There is a fortune in that!" exclaimed Petit–Claud. He knew now what the tall Cointet meant.

"A large fortune, my friend, for in ten years' time the demand for paper will be ten times larger than it is today. Journalism will be the craze of our day."

"Nobody knows your secret?"

"Nobody except my wife."

"You have not told any one what you mean to do — the Cointets, for example?"

"I did say something about it, but in general terms, I think."

A sudden spark of generosity flashed through Petit–Claud's rancorous soul; he tried to reconcile Sechard's interests with the Cointet's projects and his own.

"Listen, David, we are old schoolfellows, you and I; I will fight your case; but understand this clearly — the defence, in the teeth of the law, will cost you five or six thousand francs! Do not compromise your prospects. I think you will be compelled to share the profits of your invention with some one of our paper manufacturers. Let us see now. You will think twice before you buy or build a paper mill; and there is the cost of the patent besides. All this means time, and money too. The servers of writs will be down upon you too soon, perhaps, although we are going to give them the slip ——"

"I have my secret," said David, with the simplicity of the man of books.

"Well and good, your secret will be your plank of safety," said Petit–Claud; his first loyal intention of avoiding a lawsuit by a compromise was frustrated. "I do not wish to know it; but mind this that I tell you. Work in the bowels of the earth if you can, so that no one may watch you and gain a hint from your ways of working, or your plank will be stolen from under your feet. An inventor and a simpleton often live in the same skin. Your mind runs so much on your secrets that you cannot think of everything. People will begin to have their suspicions at last, and the place is full of paper manufacturers. So many manufacturers, so many enemies for you! You are like a beaver with the hunters about you; do not give them your skin ——"

"Thank you, dear fellow, I have told myself all this," exclaimed Sechard, "but I am obliged to you for showing so much concern for me and for your forethought. It does not really matter to me myself. An income of twelve hundred francs would be enough for me, and my father ought by rights to leave me three times as much some day. Love and thought make up my life — a divine life. I am working for Lucien's sake and for my wife's."

"Come, give me this power of attorney, and think of nothing but your discovery. If there should be any danger of arrest, I will let you know in time, for we must think of all possibilities. And let me tell you again to allow no one of whom you are not so sure as you are of yourself to come into your place."

"Cerizet did not care to continue the lease of the plant and premises, hence our little money difficulties. We have no one at home now but Marion and Kolb,

an Alsacien as trusty as a dog, and my wife and her mother ——”

“One word,” said Petit–Claud, “don’t trust that dog ——”

“You do not know him,” exclaimed David; “he is like a second self.”

“May I try him?”

“Yes,” said Sechard.

“There, good-bye, but send Mme. Sechard to me; I must have a power of attorney from your wife. And bear in mind, my friend, that there is a fire burning in your affairs,” said Petit–Claud, by way of warning of all the troubles gathering in the law courts to burst upon David’s head.

“Here am I with one foot in Burgundy and the other in Champagne,” he added to himself as he closed the office door on David.

Harassed by money difficulties, beset with fears for his wife’s health, stung to the quick by Lucien’s disgrace, David had worked on at his problem. He had been trying to find a single process to replace the various operations of pounding and maceration to which all flax or cotton or rags, any vegetable fibre, in fact, must be subjected; and as he went to Petit–Claud’s office, he abstractedly chewed a bit of nettle stalk that had been steeping in water. On his way home, tolerably satisfied with his interview, he felt a little pellet sticking between his teeth. He laid it on his hand, flattened it out, and saw that the pulp was far superior to any previous result. The want of cohesion is the great drawback of all vegetable fibre; straw, for instance, yields a very brittle paper, which may almost be called metallic and resonant. These chances only befall bold inquirers into Nature’s methods!

“Now,” said he to himself, “I must contrive to do by machinery and some chemical agency the thing that I myself have done unconsciously.”

When his wife saw him, his face was radiant with belief in victory. There were traces of tears in Eve’s face.

“Oh! my darling, do not trouble yourself; Petit–Claud will guarantee that we shall not be molested for several months to come. There will be a good deal of expense over it; but, as Petit–Claud said when he came to the door with me, ‘A Frenchman has a right to keep his creditors waiting, provided he repays them capital, interest, and costs.’— Very well, then, we shall do that ——”

“And live meanwhile?” asked poor Eve, who thought of everything.

“Ah! that is true,” said David, carrying his hand to his ear after the unaccountable fashion of most perplexed mortals.

“Mother will look after little Lucien, and I can go back to work again,” said she.

“Eve! oh, my Eve!” cried David, holding his wife closely to him. —“At Saintes, not very far from here, in the sixteenth century, there lived one of the very greatest of Frenchmen, for he was not merely the inventor of glaze, he was the glorious precursor of Buffon and Cuvier besides; he was the first geologist, good, simple soul that he was. Bernard Palissy endured the martyrdom appointed for all seekers into secrets but his wife and children and all his neighbors were against him. His wife used to sell his tools; nobody understood him, he wandered about the countryside, he was hunted down, they jeered at him. But I— am loved ——”

“Dearly loved!” said Eve, with the quiet serenity of the love that is sure of itself.

“And so may well endure all that poor Bernard Palissy suffered — Bernard Palissy, the discoverer of Ecouen ware, the Huguenot excepted by Charles IX. on the day of Saint–Bartholomew. He lived to be rich and honored in his old age, and lectured on the ‘Science of Earths,’ as he called it, in the face of Europe.”

“So long as my fingers can hold an iron, you shall want for nothing,” cried the poor wife, in tones that told of the deepest devotion. “When I was Mme. Prieur’s forewoman I had a friend among the girls, Basine Clerget, a cousin of Postel’s, a very good child; well, Basine told me the other day when she brought back the linen, that she was taking Mme. Prieur’s business; I will work for her.”

“Ah! you shall not work there for long,” said David; “I have found out ——”

Eve, watching his face, saw the sublime belief in success which sustains the inventor, the belief that gives him courage to go forth into the virgin forests of the country of Discovery; and, for the first time in her life, she answered that confident look with a half-sad smile. David bent his head mournfully.

“Oh! my dear! I am not laughing! I did not doubt! It was not a sneer!” cried Eve, on her knees before her husband. “But I see plainly now that you were right to tell me nothing about your experiments and your hopes. Ah! yes, dear, an inventor should endure the long painful travail of a great idea alone, he should not utter a word of it even to his wife. . . . A woman is a woman still. This Eve of yours

could not help smiling when she heard you say, ‘I have found out,’ for the seventeenth time this month.”

David burst out laughing so heartily at his own expense that Eve caught his hand in hers and kissed it reverently. It was a delicious moment for them both, one of those roses of love and tenderness that grow beside the desert paths of the bitterest poverty, nay, at times in yet darker depths.

As the storm of misfortune grew, Eve’s courage redoubled; the greatness of her husband’s nature, his inventor’s simplicity, the tears that now and again she saw in the eyes of this dreamer of dreams with the tender heart — all these things aroused in her an unsuspected energy of resistance. Once again she tried the plan that had succeeded so well already. She wrote to M. Metivier, reminding him that the printing office was for sale, offered to pay him out of the proceeds, and begged him not to ruin David with needless costs. Metivier received the heroic letter, and shammed dead. His head-clerk replied that in the absence of M. Metivier he could not take it upon himself to stay proceedings, for his employer had made it a rule to let the law take its course. Eve wrote again, offering this time to renew the bills and pay all the costs hitherto incurred. To this the clerk consented, provided that Sechard senior guaranteed payment. So Eve walked over to Marsac, taking Kolb and her mother with her. She braved the old vinedresser, and so charming was she, that the old man’s face relaxed, and the puckers smoothed out at the sight of her; but when, with inward quakings, she came to speak of a guarantee, she beheld a sudden and complete change of the tippleographic countenance.

“If I allowed my son to put his hand to the lips of my cash box whenever he had a mind, he would plunge it deep into the vitals, he would take all I have!” cried old Sechard. “That is the way with children; they eat up their parents’ purse. What did I do myself, eh? *I* never cost my parents a farthing. Your printing office is standing idle. The rats and the mice do all the printing that is done in it. . . . You have a pretty face; I am very fond of you; you are a careful, hard-working woman; but that son of mine! — Do you know what David is? I’ll tell you — he is a scholar that will never do a stroke of work! If I had reared him, as I was reared myself, without knowing his letters, and if I had made a ‘bear’ of him, like his father before him, he would have money saved and put out to interest by now. . . . Oh! he is my cross, that fellow is, look you! And, unluckily, he is all the family I have, for there is never like to be a later edition. And when he makes you unhappy ——”

Eve protested with a vehement gesture of denial.

"Yes, he does," affirmed old Sechard; "you had to find a wet-nurse for the child. Come, come, I know all about it, you are in the county court, and the whole town is talking about you. I was only a 'bear,' *I* have no book learning, *I* was not foreman at the Didots', the first printers in the world; but yet I never set eyes on a bit of stamped paper. Do you know what I say to myself as I go to and fro among my vines, looking after them and getting in my vintage, and doing my bits of business? — I say to myself, 'You are taking a lot of trouble, poor old chap; working to pile one silver crown on another, you will leave a fine property behind you, and the bailiffs and the lawyers will get it all; . . . or else it will go in nonsensical notions and crotchets.'— Look you here, child; you are the mother of yonder little lad; it seemed to me as I held him at the font with Mme. Chardon that I could see his old grandfather's copper nose on his face; very well, think less of Sechard and more of that little rascal. I can trust no one but you; you will prevent him from squandering my property — my poor property."

"But, dear papa Sechard, your son will be a credit to you, you will see; he will make money and be a rich man one of these days, and wear the Cross of the Legion of Honor at his buttonhole."

"What is he going to do to get it?"

"You will see. But, meanwhile, would a thousand crowns ruin you? A thousand crowns would put an end to the proceedings. Well, if you cannot trust him, lend the money to me; I will pay it back; you could make it a charge on my portion, on my earnings ——"

"Then has some one brought David into a court of law?" cried the vinedresser, amazed to find that the gossip was really true. "See what comes of knowing how to write your name! And how about my rent! Oh! little girl, I must go to Angouleme at once and ask Cachan's advice, and see that I am straight. You did right well to come over. Forewarned is forearmed."

After two hours of argument Eve was fain to go, defeated by the unanswerable *dictum*, "Women never understand business." She had come with a faint hope, she went back again almost heartbroken, and reached home just in time to receive notice of judgment; Sechard must pay Metivier in full. The appearance of a bailiff at a house door is an event in a country town, and Doublon had come far too often

of late. The whole neighborhood was talking about the Sechards. Eve dared not leave her house; she dreaded to hear the whispers as she passed.

“Oh! my brother, my brother!” cried poor Eve, as she hurried into the passage and up the stairs, “I can never forgive you, unless it was ——”

“Alas! it was that, or suicide,” said David, who had followed her.

“Let us say no more about it,” she said quietly. “The woman who dragged him down into the depths of Paris has much to answer for; and your father, my David, is quite inexorable! Let us bear it in silence.”

A discreet rapping at the door cut short some word of love on David’s lips. Marion appeared, towing the big, burly Kolb after her across the outer room.

“Madame,” said Marion, “we have known, Kolb and I, that you and the master were very much put about; and as we have eleven hundred francs of savings between us, we thought we could not do better than put them in the mistress’ hands ——”

“Die misdress,” echoed Kolb fervently.

“Kolb,” cried David, “you and I will never part. Pay a thousand francs on account to Maitre Cachan, and take a receipt for it; we will keep the rest. And, Kolb, no power on earth must extract a word from you as to my work, or my absences from home, or the things you may see me bring back; and if I send you to look for plants for me, you know, no human being must set eyes on you. They will try to corrupt you, my good Kolb; they will offer you thousands, perhaps tens of thousands of francs, to tell ——”

“Dey may offer me millions,” cried Kolb, “but not ein vort from me shall dey traw. Haf I not peen in der army, and know my orders?”

“Well, you are warned. March, and ask M. Petit–Claud to go with you as witness.”

“Yes,” said the Alsacien. “Some tay I hope to be rich enough to dust der chacket of dat man of law. I don’t like his gountenance.”

“Kolb is a good man, madame,” said Big Marion; “he is as strong as a Turk, and as meek as a lamb. Just the one that would make a woman happy. It was his notion, too, to invest our savings this way —‘safings,’ as he calls them. Poor man, if he doesn’t speak right, he thinks right, and I understand him all the same. He has

a notion of working for somebody else, so as to save us his keep ——”

“Surely we shall be rich, if it is only to repay these good folk,” said David, looking at his wife.

Eve thought it quite simple; it was no surprise to her to find other natures on a level with her own. The dullest — nay, the most indifferent — observer could have seen all the beauty of her nature in her way of receiving this service.

“You will be rich some day, dear master,” said Marion; “your bread is ready baked. Your father has just bought another farm, he is putting by money for you; that he is.”

And under the circumstances, did not Marion show an exquisite delicacy of feeling by belittling, as it were, her kindness in this way?

French procedure, like all things human, has its defects; nevertheless, the sword of justice, being a two-edged weapon, is excellently adapted alike for attack or defence. Procedure, moreover, has its amusing side; for when opposed, lawyers arrive at an understanding, as they well may do, without exchanging a word; through their manner of conducting their case, a suit becomes a kind of war waged on the lines laid down by the first Marshal Biron, who, at the siege of Rouen, it may be remembered, received his son’s project for taking the city in two days with the remark, “You must be in a great hurry to go and plant cabbages!” Let two commanders-inchief spare their troops as much as possible, let them imitate the Austrian generals who give the men time to eat their soup though they fail to effect a juncture, and escape reprimand from the Aulic Council; let them avoid all decisive measures, and they shall carry on a war for ever. Maitre Cachan, Petit–Claud, and Doublon, did better than the Austrian generals; they took for their example Quintus Fabius Cunctator — the Austrian of antiquity.

Petit–Claud, malignant as a mule, was not long in finding out all the advantages of his position. No sooner had Boniface Cointet guaranteed his costs than he vowed to lead Cachan a dance, and to dazzle the paper manufacturer with a brilliant display of genius in the creation of items to be charged to Metivier. Unluckily for the fame of the young forensic Figaro, the writer of this history is obliged to pass over the scene of his exploits in as great a hurry as if he trod on burning coals; but a single bill of costs, in the shape of the specimen sent from Paris, will no doubt suffice for the student of contemporary manners. Let us follow

the example set us by the Bulletins of the Grande Armee, and give a summary of Petit–Claud's valiant feats and exploits in the province of pure law; they will be the better appreciated for concise treatment.

David Sechard was summoned before the Tribunal of Commerce at Angouleme for the 3rd of July, made default, and notice of judgment was served on the 8th. On the 10th, Doublon obtained an execution warrant, and attempted to put in an execution on the 12th. On this Petit–Claud applied for an interpleader summons, and served notice on Metivier for that day fortnight. Metivier made application for a hearing without delay, and on the 19th, Sechard's application was dismissed. Hard upon this followed notice of judgment, authorizing the issue of an execution warrant on the 22nd, a warrant of arrest on the 23rd, and bailiff's inventory previous to the execution on the 24th. Metivier, Doublon, Cachan & Company were proceeding at this furious pace, when Petit–Claud suddenly pulled them up, and stayed execution by lodging notice of appeal on the Court–Royal. Notice of appeal, duly reiterated on the 25th of July, drew Metivier off to Poitiers.

"Come!" said Petit–Claud to himself, "there we are likely to stop for some time to come."

No sooner was the storm passed over to Poitiers, and an attorney practising in the Court–Royal instructed to defend the case, than Petit–Claud, a champion facing both ways, made application in Mme. Sechard's name for the immediate separation of her estate from her husband's; using "all diligence" (in legal language) to such purpose, that he obtained an order from the court on the 28th, and inserted notice at once in the *Charente Courier*. Now David the lover had settled ten thousand francs upon his wife in the marriage contract, making over to her as security the fixtures of the printing office and the household furniture; and Petit–Claud therefore constituted Mme. Sechard her husband's creditor for that small amount, drawing up a statement of her claims on the estate in the presence of a notary on the 1st of August.

While Petit–Claud was busy securing the household property of his clients, he gained the day at Poitiers on the point of law on which the demurrer and appeals were based. He held that, as the court of the Seine had ordered the plaintiff to pay costs of proceedings in the Paris commercial court, David was so much the less liable for expenses of litigation incurred upon Lucien's account. The Court–Royal took this view of the case, and judgment was entered accordingly. David Sechard

was ordered to pay the amount in dispute in the Angouleme Court, less the law expenses incurred in Paris; these Metivier must pay, and each side must bear its own costs in the appeal to the Court–Royal.

David Sechard was duly notified of the result on the 17th of August. On the 18th the judgment took the practical shape of an order to pay capital, interest, and costs, followed up by notice of an execution for the morrow. Upon this Petit–Claud intervened and put in a claim for the furniture as the wife's property duly separated from her husband's; and what was more, Petit–Claud produced Sechard senior upon the scene of action. The old vinegrower had become his client on this wise. He came to Angouleme on the day after Eve's visit, and went to Maitre Cachan for advice. His son owed him arrears of rent; how could he come by this rent in the scrimmage in which his son was engaged?

"I am engaged by the other side," pronounced Cachan, "and I cannot appear for the father when I am suing the son; but go to Petit–Claud, he is very clever, he may perhaps do even better for you than I should do."

Cachan and Petit–Claud met at the Court.

"I have sent you Sechard senior," said Cachan; "take the case for me in exchange." Lawyers do each other services of this kind in country towns as well as in Paris.

The day after Sechard senior gave Petit–Claud his confidence, the tall Cointet paid a visit to his confederate.

"Try to give old Sechard a lesson," he said. "He is the kind of man that will never forgive his son for costing him a thousand francs or so; the outlay will dry up any generous thoughts in his mind, if he ever has any."

"Go back to your vines," said Petit–Claud to his new client. "Your son is not very well off; do not eat him out of house and home. I will send for you when the time comes."

On behalf of Sechard senior, therefore, Petit–Claud claimed that the presses, being fixtures, were so much the more to be regarded as tools and implements of trade, and the less liable to seizure, in that the house had been a printing office since the reign of Louis XIV. Cachan, on Metivier's account, waxed indignant at this. In Paris Lucien's furniture had belonged to Coralie, and here again in Angouleme David's goods and chattels all belonged to his wife or his father; pretty

things were said in court. Father and son were summoned; such claims could not be allowed to stand.

"We mean to unmask the frauds intrenched behind bad faith of the most formidable kind; here is the defence of dishonesty bristling with the plainest and most innocent articles of the Code, and why? — to avoid repayment of three thousand francs; obtained how? — from poor Metivier's cash box! And yet there are those who dare to say a word against bill-discounters! What times we live in! . . . Now, I put it to you — what is this but taking your neighbor's money? . . . You will surely not sanction a claim which would bring immorality to the very core of justice!"

Cachan's eloquence produced an effect on the court. A divided judgment was given in favor of Mme. Sechard, the house furniture being held to be her property; and against Sechard senior, who was ordered to pay costs — four hundred and thirty-four francs, sixty-five centimes.

"It is kind of old Sechard," laughed the lawyers; "he would have a finger in the pie, so let him pay!"

Notice of judgment was given on the 26th of August; the presses and plant could be seized on the 28th. Placards were posted. Application was made for an order empowering them to sell on the spot. Announcements of the sale appeared in the papers, and Doublon flattered himself that the inventory should be verified and the auction take place on the 2nd of September.

By this time David Sechard owed Metivier five thousand two hundred and seventy-five francs, twenty-five centimes (to say nothing of interest), by formal judgment confirmed by appeal, the bill of costs having been duly taxed. Likewise to Petit–Claud he owed twelve hundred francs, exclusive of the fees, which were left to David's generosity with the generous confidence displayed by the hackney coachman who has driven you so quickly over the road on which you desire to go.

Mme. Sechard owed Petit–Claud something like three hundred and fifty francs and fees besides; and of old Sechard, besides four hundred and thirty-four francs, sixty-five centimes, the little attorney demanded a hundred crowns by way of fee. Altogether, the Sechard family owed about ten thousand francs. This is what is called "putting fire into the bed straw."

Apart from the utility of these documents to other nations who thus may

behold the battery of French law in action, the French legislator ought to know the lengths to which the abuse of procedure may be carried, always supposing that the said legislator can find time for reading. Surely some sort of regulation might be devised, some way of forbidding lawyers to carry on a case until the sum in dispute is more than eaten up in costs? Is there not something ludicrous in the idea of submitting a square yard of soil and an estate of thousands of acres to the same legal formalities? These bare outlines of the history of the various stages of procedure should open the eyes of Frenchmen to the meaning of the words "legal formalities, justice, and costs," little as the immense majority of the nations know about them.

Five thousand pounds' weight of type in the printing office were worth two thousand francs as old metal; the three presses were valued at six hundred francs; the rest of the plant would fetch the price of old iron and firewood. The household furniture would have brought in a thousand francs at most. The whole personal property of Sechard junior therefore represented the sum of four thousand francs; and Cachan and Petit–Claud made claims for seven thousand francs in costs already incurred, to say nothing of expenses to come, for the blossom gave promise of fine fruits enough, as the reader will shortly see. Surely the lawyers of France and Navarre, nay, even of Normandy herself, will not refuse Petit–Claud his meed of admiration and respect? Surely, too, kind hearts will give Marion and Kolb a tear of sympathy?

All through the war Kolb sat on a chair in the doorway, acting as watch-dog, when David had nothing else for him to do. It was Kolb who received all the notifications, and a clerk of Petit–Claud's kept watch over Kolb. No sooner were the placards announcing the auction put up on the premises than Kolb tore them down; he hurried round the town after the bill-poster, tearing the placards from the walls.

"Ah, scountrels!" he cried, "to dorment so goot a man; and they calls it chustice!"

Marion made half a franc a day by working half time in a paper mill as a machine tender, and her wages contributed to the support of the household. Mme. Chardon went back uncomplainingly to her old occupation, sitting up night after night, and bringing home her wages at the end of the week. Poor Mme. Chardon! Twice already she had made a nine days' prayer for those she loved, wondering

that God should be deaf to her petitions, and blind to the light of the candles on His altar.

On the 2nd of September, a letter came from Lucien, the first since the letter of the winter, which David had kept from his wife's knowledge — the announcement of the three bills which bore David's signature. This time Lucien wrote to Eve.

"The third since he left us!" she said. Poor sister, she was afraid to open the envelope that covered the fatal sheet.

She was feeding the little one when the post came in; they could not afford a wet-nurse now, and the child was being brought up by hand. Her state of mind may be imagined, and David's also, when he had been roused to read the letter, for David had been at work all night, and only lay down at daybreak.

Lucien to Eve.

"PARIS, August 29th.

"MY DEAR SISTER— Two days ago, at five o'clock in the morning, one of God's noblest creatures breathed her last in my arms; she was the one woman on earth capable of loving me as you and mother and David love me, giving me besides that unselfish affection, something that neither mother nor sister can give — the utmost bliss of love. Poor Coralie, after giving up everything for my sake, may perhaps have died for me — for me, who at this moment have not the wherewithal to bury her. She could have solaced my life; you, and you alone, my dear good angels, can console me for her death. God has forgiven her, I think, the innocent girl, for she died like a Christian. Oh, this Paris! Eve, Paris is the glory and the shame of France. Many illusions I have lost here already, and I have others yet to lose, when I begin to beg for the little money needed before I can lay the body of my angel in consecrated earth.
"Your unhappy brother,
"Lucien."

"P. S. I must have given you much trouble by my heedlessness; some day you will know all, and you will forgive me. You must be quite easy now; a worthy merchant, a M. Camusot, to whom I once caused cruel pangs, promised to arrange everything, seeing that Coralie and I were so much distressed."

"The sheet is still moist with his tears," said Eve, looking at the letter with a heart so full of sympathy that something of the old love for Lucien shone in her eyes.

"Poor fellow, he must have suffered cruelly if he has been loved as he says!"

exclaimed Eve's husband, happy in his love; and these two forgot all their own troubles at this cry of a supreme sorrow. Just at that moment Marion rushed in.

"Madame," she panted, "here they are! Here they are!"

"Who is here?"

"Doublon and his men, bad luck to them! Kolb will not let them come in; they have come to sell us up."

"No, no, they are not going to sell you up, never fear," cried a voice in the next room, and Petit–Claud appeared upon the scene. "I have just lodged notice of appeal. We ought not to sit down under a judgment that attaches a stigma of bad faith to us. I did not think it worth while to fight the case here. I let Cachan talk to gain time for you; I am sure of gaining the day at Poitiers ——"

"But how much will it cost to win the day?" asked Mme. Sechard.

"Fees if you win, one thousand francs if we lose our case."

"Oh, dear!" cried poor Eve; "why, the remedy is worse than the disease!"

Petit–Claud was not a little confused at this cry of innocence enlightened by the progress of the flames of litigation. It struck him too that Eve was a very beautiful woman. In the middle of the discussion old Sechard arrived, summoned by Petit–Claud. The old man's presence in the chamber where his little grandson in the cradle lay smiling at misfortune completed the scene. The young attorney at once addressed the newcomer with:

"You owe me seven hundred francs for the interpleader, Papa Sechard; but you can charge the amount to your son in addition to the arrears of rent."

The vinedresser felt the sting of the sarcasm conveyed by Petit–Claud's tone and manner.

"It would have cost you less to give security for the debt at first," said Eve, leaving the cradle to greet her father-inlaw with a kiss.

David, quite overcome by the sight of the crowd outside the house (for Kolb's resistance to Doublon's men had collected a knot of people), could only hold out a hand to his father; he did not say a word.

"And how, pray, do I come to owe you seven hundred francs?" the old man asked, looking at Petit–Claud.

“Why, in the first place, I am engaged by you. Your rent is in question; so, as far as I am concerned, you and our debtor are one and the same person. If your son does not pay my costs in the case, you must pay them yourself. — But this is nothing. In a few hours David will be put in prison; will you allow him to go?”

“What does he owe?”

“Something like five or six thousand francs, besides the amounts owing to you and to his wife.”

The speech roused all the old man’s suspicions at once. He looked round the little blue-and-white bedroom at the touching scene before his eyes — at a beautiful woman weeping over a cradle, at David bowed down by anxieties, and then again at the lawyer. This was a trap set for him by that lawyer; perhaps they wanted to work upon his paternal feelings, to get money out of him? That was what it all meant. He took alarm. He went over to the cradle and fondled the child, who held out both little arms to him. No heir to an English peerage could be more tenderly cared for than this little one in that house of trouble; his little embroidered cap was lined with pale pink.

“Eh! let David get out of it as best he may. I am thinking of this child here,” cried the old grandfather, “and the child’s mother will approve of that. David that knows so much must know how to pay his debts.”

“Now I will just put your meaning into plain language,” said Petit–Claud ironically. “Look here, Papa Sechard, you are jealous of your son. Hear the truth! you put David into his present position by selling the business to him for three times its value. You ruined him to make an extortionate bargain! Yes, don’t you shake your head; you sold the newspaper to the Cointets and pocketed all the proceeds, and that was as much as the whole business was worth. You bear David a grudge, not merely because you have plundered him, but because, also, your own son is a man far above yourself. You profess to be prodigiously fond of your grandson, to cloak your want of feeling for your son and his wife, because you ought to pay down money *hic et nunc* for them, while you need only show a posthumous affection for your grandson. You pretend to be fond of the little fellow, lest you should be taxed with want of feeling for your own flesh and blood. That is the bottom of it, Papa Sechard.”

“Did you fetch me over to hear this?” asked the old man, glowering at his

lawyer, his daughter-inlaw, and his son in turn.

“Monsieur!” protested poor Eve, turning to Petit–Claud, “have you vowed to ruin us? My husband had never uttered a word against his father.” (Here the old man looked cunningly at her.) “David has told me scores of times that you loved him in your way,” she added, looking at her father-inlaw, and understanding his suspicions.

Petit–Claud was only following out the tall Cointet’s instructions. He was widening the breach between the father and son, lest Sechard senior should extricate David from his intolerable position. “The day that David Sechard goes to prison shall be the day of your introduction to Mme. de Senonches,” the “tall Cointet” had said no longer ago than yesterday.

Mme. Sechard, with the quick insight of love, had divined Petit–Claud’s mercenary hostility, even as she had once before felt instinctively that Cerizet was a traitor. As for David, his astonishment may be imagined; he could not understand how Petit–Claud came to know so much of his father’s nature and his own history. Upright and honorable as he was, he did not dream of the relations between his lawyer and the Cointets; nor, for that matter, did he know that the Cointets were at work behind Metivier. Meanwhile old Sechard took his son’s silence as an insult, and Petit–Claud, taking advantage of his client’s bewilderment, beat a retreat.

“Good-bye, my dear David; you have had warning, notice of appeal doesn’t invalidate the warrant for arrest. It is the only course left open to your creditors, and it will not be long before they take it. So, go away at once —— Or, rather, if you will take my advice, go to the Cointets and see them about it. They have capital. If your invention is perfected and answers the purpose, go into partnership with them. After all, they are very good fellows ——”

“Your invention?” broke in old Sechard.

“Why, do you suppose that your son is fool enough to let his business slip away from him without thinking of something else?” exclaimed the attorney. “He is on the brink of the discovery of a way of making paper at a cost of three francs per ream, instead of ten, he tells me.”

“One more dodge for taking me in! You are all as thick as thieves in a fair. If David has found out such a plan, he has no need of me — he is a millionaire!

Good-bye, my dears, and a good-day to you all," and the old man disappeared down the staircase.

"Find some way of hiding yourself," was Petit–Claud's parting word to David, and with that he hurried out to exasperate old Sechard still further. He found the vinegrower growling to himself outside in the Place du Murier, went with him as far as L'Houmeau, and there left him with a threat of putting in an execution for the costs due to him unless they were paid before the week was out.

"I will pay you if you will show me how to disinherit my son without injuring my daughter-inlaw or the boy," said old Sechard, and they parted forthwith.

"How well the 'tall Cointet' knows the folk he is dealing with! It is just as he said; those seven hundred francs will prevent the father from paying seven thousand," the little lawyer thought within himself as he climbed the path to Angouleme. "Still, that old slyboots of a paper-maker must not overreach us; it is time to ask him for something besides promises."

"Well, David dear, what do you mean to do?" asked Eve, when the lawyer had followed her father-inlaw.

"Marion, put your biggest pot on the fire!" called David; "I have my secret fast."

At this Eve put on her bonnet and shawl and walking shoes with feverish haste.

"Kolb, my friend, get ready to go out," she said, "and come with me; if there is any way out of this hell, I must find it."

When Eve had gone out, Marion spoke to David. "Do be sensible, sir," she said, "or the mistress will fret herself to death. Make some money to pay off your debts, and then you can try to find treasure at your ease ——"

"Don't talk, Marion," said David; "I am going to overcome my last difficulty, and then I can apply for the patent and the improvement on the patent at the same time."

This "improvement on the patent" is the curse of the French patentee. A man may spend ten years of his life in working out some obscure industrial problem; and when he has invented some piece of machinery, or made a discovery of some kind, he takes out a patent and imagines that he has a right to his own invention;

then there comes a competitor; and unless the first inventor has foreseen all possible contingencies, the second comer makes an “improvement on the patent” with a screw or a nut, and takes the whole thing out of his hands. The discovery of a cheap material for paper pulp, therefore, is by no means the conclusion of the whole matter. David Sechard was anxiously looking ahead on all sides lest the fortune sought in the teeth of such difficulties should be snatched out of his hands at the last. Dutch paper as flax paper is still called, though it is no longer made in Holland, is slightly sized; but every sheet is sized separately by hand, and this increases the cost of production. If it were possible to discover some way of sizing the paper in the pulping-trough, with some inexpensive glue, like that in use today (though even now it is not quite perfect), there would be no “improvement on the patent” to fear. For the past month, accordingly, David had been making experiments in sizing pulp. He had two discoveries before him.

Eve went to see her mother. Fortunately, it so happened that Mme. Chardon was nursing the deputy-magistrate’s wife, who had just given the Milauds of Nevers an heir presumptive; and Eve, in her distrust of all attorneys and notaries, took into her head to apply for advice to the legal guardian of widows and orphans. She wanted to know if she could relieve David from his embarrassments by taking them upon herself and selling her claims upon the estate, and besides, she had some hope of discovering the truth as to Petit–Claud’s unaccountable conduct. The official, struck with Mme. Sechard’s beauty, received her not only with the respect due to a woman but with a sort of courtesy to which Eve was not accustomed. She saw in the magistrate’s face an expression which, since her marriage, she had seen in no eyes but Kolb’s; and for a beautiful woman like Eve, this expression is the criterion by which men are judged. When passion, or self-interest, or age dims that spark of unquestioning fealty that gleams in a young man’s eyes, a woman feels a certain mistrust of him, and begins to observe him critically. The Cointets, Cerizet, and Petit–Claud — all the men whom Eve felt instinctively to be her enemies — had turned hard, indifferent eyes on her; with the deputy-magistrate, therefore, she felt at ease, although, in spite of his kindly courtesy, he swept all her hopes away by his first words.

“It is not certain, madame, that the Court–Royal will reverse the judgment of the court restricting your lien on your husband’s property, for payment of moneys due to you by the terms of your marriage-contract, to household goods and chattels. Your privilege ought not to be used to defraud the other creditors. But in

any case, you will be allowed to take your share of the proceeds with the other creditors, and your father-inlaw likewise, as a privileged creditor, for arrears of rent. When the court has given the order, other points may be raised as to the 'contribution,' as we call it, when a schedule of the debts is drawn up, and the creditors are paid a dividend in proportion to their claims.

"Then M. Petit–Claud is bringing us to bankruptcy," she cried.

"Petit–Claud is carrying out your husband's instructions," said the magistrate; "he is anxious to gain time, so his attorney says. In my opinion, you would perhaps do better to waive the appeal and buy in at the sale the indispensable implements for carrying on the business; you and your father-inlaw together might do this, you to the extent of your claim through your marriage contract, and he for his arrears of rent. But that would be bringing the matter to an end too soon perhaps. The lawyers are making a good thing out of your case."

"But then I should be entirely in M. Sechard's father's hands. I should owe him the hire of the machinery as well as the house-rent; and my husband would still be open to further proceedings from M. Metivier, for M. Metivier would have had almost nothing."

"That is true, madame."

"Very well, then we should be even worse off than we are."

"The arm of the law, madame, is at the creditor's disposal. You have received three thousand francs, and you must of necessity repay the money."

"Oh, sir, can you think that we are capable ——" Eve suddenly came to a stop. She saw that her justification might injure her brother.

"Oh! I know quite well that it is an obscure affair, that the debtors on the one side are honest, scrupulous, and even behaving handsomely; and the creditor, on the other, is only a cat's-paw ——"

Eve, aghast, looked at him with bewildered eyes.

"You can understand," he continued, with a look full of homely shrewdness, "that we on the bench have plenty of time to think over all that goes on under our eyes, while the gentlemen in court are arguing with each other."

Eve went home in despair over her useless effort. That evening at seven o'clock, Doublon came with the notification of imprisonment for debt. The

proceedings had reached the acute stage.

"After this, I can only go out after nightfall," said David.

Eve and Mme. Chardon burst into tears. To be in hiding was for them a shameful thing. As for Kolb and Marion, they were more alarmed for David because they had long since made up their minds that there was no guile in their master's nature; so frightened were they on his account, that they came upstairs under pretence of asking whether they could do anything, and found Eve and Mme. Chardon in tears; the three whose life had been so straightforward hitherto were overcome by the thought that David must go into hiding. And how, moreover, could they hope to escape the invisible spies who henceforth would dog every least movement of a man, unluckily so absent-minded?

"Gif montame vill vait ein liddle kvarter hour, she can regonnoitre der enemy's camp," put in Kolb. "You shall see dot I oonderstand mein pizness; for gif I look like ein German, I am ein drue Vrenchman, and vat is more, I am ver' conning."

"Oh! madame, do let him go," begged Marion. "He is only thinking of saving his master; he hasn't another thought in his head. Kolb is not an Alsacien, he is — eh! well — a regular Newfoundland dog for rescuing folk."

"Go, my good Kolb," said David; "we have still time to do something."

Kolb hurried off to pay a visit to the bailiff; and it so fell out that David's enemies were in Doublon's office, holding a council as to the best way of securing him.

The arrest of a debtor is an unheard-of thing in the country, an abnormal proceeding if ever there was one. Everybody, in the first place, knows everybody else, and creditor and debtor being bound to meet each other daily all their lives long, nobody likes to take this odious course. When a defaulter — to use the provincial term for a debtor, for they do not mince their words in the provinces when speaking of this legalized method of helping yourself to another man's goods — when a defaulter plans a failure on a large scale, he takes sanctuary in Paris. Paris is a kind of City of Refuge for provincial bankrupts, an almost impenetrable retreat; the writ of the pursuing bailiff has no force beyond the limits of his jurisdiction, and there are other obstacles rendering it almost invalid. Wherefore the Paris bailiff is empowered to enter the house of a third party to seize the

person of the debtor, while for the bailiff of the provinces the domicile is absolutely inviolable. The law probably makes this exception as to Paris, because there it is the rule for two or more families to live under the same roof; but in the provinces the bailiff who wishes to make forcible entry must have an order from the Justice of the Peace; and so wide a discretion is allowed the Justice of the Peace, that he is practically able to give or withhold assistance to the bailiffs. To the honor of the Justices, it should be said, that they dislike the office, and are by no means anxious to assist blind passions or revenge.

There are, besides, other and no less serious difficulties in the way of arrest for debt — difficulties which tend to temper the severity of legislation, and public opinion not infrequently makes a dead letter of the law. In great cities there are poor or degraded wretches enough; poverty and vice know no scruples, and consent to play the spy, but in a little country town, people know each other too well to earn wages of the bailiff; the meanest creature who should lend himself to dirty work of this kind would be forced to leave the place. In the absence of recognized machinery, therefore, the arrest of a debtor is a problem presenting no small difficulty; it becomes a kind of strife of ingenuity between the bailiff and the debtor, and matter for many pleasant stories in the newspapers.

Cointet the elder did not choose to appear in the affair; but the fat Cointet openly said that he was acting for Metivier, and went to Doublon, taking Cerizet with him. Cerizet was his foreman now, and had promised his co-operation in return for a thousand-franc note. Doublon could reckon upon two of his understrappers, and thus the Cointets had four bloodhounds already on the victim's track. At the actual time of arrest, Doublon could furthermore count upon the police force, who are bound, if required, to assist a bailiff in the performance of his duty. The two men, Doublon himself, and the visitors were all closeted together in the private office, beyond the public office, on the ground floor.

A tolerably wide-paved lobby, a kind of passage-way, led to the public office. The gilded scutcheons of the court, with the word "Bailiff" printed thereon in large black letters, hung outside on the house wall on either side the door. Both office windows gave upon the street, and were protected by heavy iron bars; but the private office looked into the garden at the back, wherein Doublon, an adorer of Pomona, grew espaliers with marked success. Opposite the office door you beheld the door of the kitchen, and, beyond the kitchen, the staircase that ascended to the

first story. The house was situated in a narrow street at the back of the new Law Courts, then in process of construction, and only finished after 1830. — These details are necessary if Kolb's adventures are to be intelligible to the reader.

It was Kolb's idea to go to the bailiff, to pretend to be willing to betray his master, and in this way to discover the traps which would be laid for David. Kolb told the servant who opened the door that he wanted to speak to M. Doublon on business. The servant was busy washing up her plates and dishes, and not very well pleased at Kolb's interruption; she pushed open the door of the outer office, and bade him wait there till her master was at liberty; then, as he was a stranger to her, she told the master in the private office that "a man" wanted to speak to him. Now, "a man" so invariably means "a peasant," that Doublon said, "Tell him to wait," and Kolb took a seat close to the door of the private office. There were voices talking within.

"Ah, by the by, how do you mean to set about it? For, if we can catch him tomorrow, it will be so much time saved." It was the fat Cointet who spoke.

"Nothing easier; the gaffer has come fairly by his nickname," said Cerizet.

At the sound of the fat Cointet's voice, Kolb guessed at once that they were talking about his master, especially as the sense of the words began to dawn upon him; but, when he recognized Cerizet's tones, his astonishment grew more and more.

"Und dat fellow haf eaten his pread!" he thought, horror-stricken.

"We must do it in this way, boys," said Doublon. "We will post our men, at good long intervals, about the Rue de Beaulieu and the Place du Murier in every direction, so that we can follow the gaffer (I like that word) without his knowledge. We will not lose sight of him until he is safe inside the house where he means to lie in hiding (as he thinks); there we will leave him in peace for awhile; then some fine day we will come across him before sunrise or sunset."

"But what is he doing now, at this moment? He may be slipping through our fingers," said the fat Cointet.

"He is in his house," answered Doublon; "if he left it, I should know. I have one witness posted in the Place du Murier, another at the corner of the Law Courts, and another thirty paces from the house. If our man came out, they would whistle; he could not make three paces from his door but I should know of it at

once from the signal."

(Bailiffs speak of their understrappers by the polite title of "witnesses.")

Here was better hap than Kolb had expected! He went noiselessly out of the office, and spoke to the maid in the kitchen.

"Meestair Touplon ees encaged for som time to kom," he said; "I vill kom back early tomorrow morning."

A sudden idea had struck the Alsacien, and he proceeded to put it into execution. Kolb had served in a cavalry regiment; he hurried off to see a livery stable-keeper, an acquaintance of his, picked out a horse, had it saddled, and rushed back to the Place du Murier. He found Madame Eve in the lowest depths of despondency.

"What is it, Kolb?" asked David, when the Alsacien's face looked in upon them, scared but radiant.

"You have scountrels all arount you. De safest way ees to hide de master. Haf montame thought of hiding the master anywheres?"

When Kolb, honest fellow, had explained the whole history of Cerizet's treachery, of the circle traced about the house, and of the fat Cointet's interest in the affair, and given the family some inkling of the schemes set on foot by the Cointets against the master — then David's real position gradually became fatally clear.

"It is the Cointet's doing!" cried poor Eve, aghast at the news; "*they* are proceeding against you! that accounts for Metivier's hardness. . . . They are paper-makers — David! they want your secret!"

"But what can we do to escape them?" exclaimed Mme. Chardon.

"If de misdress had some liddle blace vere the master could pe hidden," said Kolb; "I bromise to take him dere so dot nopody shall know."

"Wait till nightfall, and go to Basine Clerget," said Eve. "I will go now and arrange it all with her. In this case, Basine will be like another self to me."

"Spies will follow you," David said at last, recovering some presence of mind. "How can we find a way of communicating with Basine if none of us can go to her?"

“Montame kan go,” said Kolb. “Here ees my scheme — I go out mit der master, ve draws der vischtlers on our drack. Montame kan go to Montemoiselle Clerchet; nopody vill vollow her. I haf a horse; I take de master oop behint; und der teufel is in it if they katches us.”

“Very well; good-bye, dear,” said poor Eve, springing to her husband’s arms; “none of us can go to see you, the risk is too great. We must say good-bye for the whole time that your imprisonment lasts. We will write to each other; Basine will post your letters, and I will write under cover to her.”

No sooner did David and Kolb come out of the house than they heard a sharp whistle, and were followed to the livery stable. Once there, Kolb took his master up behind him, with a caution to keep tight hold.

“Veestle avay, mind goot vriends! I care not von rap,” cried Kolb. “You vill not datch an old trooper,” and the old cavalry man clapped both spurs to his horse, and was out into the country and the darkness not merely before the spies could follow, but before they had time to discover the direction that he took.

Eve meanwhile went out on the tolerably ingenious pretext of asking advise of Postel, sat awhile enduring the insulting pity that spends itself in words, left the Postel family, and stole away unseen to Basine Clerget, told her troubles, and asked for help and shelter. Basine, for greater safety, had brought Eve into her bedroom, and now she opened the door of a little closet, lighted only by a skylight in such a way that prying eyes could not see into it. The two friends unstopped the flue which opened into the chimney of the stove in the workroom, where the girls heated their irons. Eve and Basine spread ragged coverlets over the brick floor to deaden any sound that David might make, put in a truckle bed, a stove for his experiments, and a table and a chair. Basine promised to bring food in the night; and as no one had occasion to enter her room, David might defy his enemies one and all, or even detectives.

“At last!” Eve said, with her arms about her friend, “at last he is in safety.”

Eve went back to Postel to submit a fresh doubt that had occurred to her, she said. She would like the opinion of such an experienced member of the Chamber of Commerce; she so managed that he escorted her home, and listened patiently to his commiseration.

“Would this have happened if you had married me?”— all the little druggist’s

remarks were pitched in this key.

Then he went home again to find Mme. Postel jealous of Mme. Sechard, and furious with her spouse for his polite attention to that beautiful woman. The apothecary advanced the opinion that little red-haired women were preferable to tall, dark women, who, like fine horses, were always in the stable, he said. He gave proofs of his sincerity, no doubt, for Mme. Postel was very sweet to him next day.

“We may be easy,” Eve said to her mother and Marion, whom she found still “in a taking,” in the latter’s phrase.

“Oh! they are gone,” said Marion, when Eve looked unthinkingly round the room.

One league out of Angouleme on the main road to Paris, Kolb stopped.

“Vere shall we go?”

“To Marsac,” said David; “since we are on the way already, I will try once more to soften my father’s heart.”

“I would rader mount to der assault of a pattery,” said Kolb, “your resbected fader haf no heart whatefer.”

The ex-pressman had no belief in his son; he judged him from the outside point of view, and waited for results. He had no idea, to begin with, that he had plundered David, nor did he make allowance for the very different circumstances under which they had begun life; he said to himself, “I set him up with a printing-house, just as I found it myself; and he, knowing a thousand times more than I did, cannot keep it going.” He was mentally incapable of understanding his son; he laid the blame of failure upon him, and even prided himself, as it were on his superiority to a far greater intellect than his own, with the thought, “I am securing his bread for him.”

Moralists will never succeed in making us comprehend the full extent of the influence of sentiment upon self-interest, an influence every whit as strong as the action of interest upon our sentiments; for every law of our nature works in two ways, and acts and reacts upon us.

David, on his side, understood his father, and in his sublime charity forgave him. Kolb and David reached Marsac at eight o’clock, and suddenly came in upon the old man as he was finishing his dinner, which, by force of circumstances, came

very near bedtime.

“I see you because there is no help for it,” said old Sechard with a sour smile.

“Und how should you and mein master meet? He soars in der shkies, and you are always mit your vines! You bay for him, that’s vot you are a fader for ——”

“Come, Kolb, off with you. Put up the horse at Mme. Courtois’ so as to save inconvenience here; fathers are always in the right, remember that.”

Kolb went off, growling like a chidden dog, obedient but protesting; and David proposed to give his father indisputable proof of his discovery, while reserving his secret. He offered to give him an interest in the affair in return for money paid down; a sufficient sum to release him from his present difficulties, with or without a further amount of capital to be employed in developing the invention.

“And how are you going to prove to me that you can make good paper that costs nothing out of nothing, eh?” asked the ex-printer, giving his son a glance, vinous, it may be, but keen, inquisitive, and covetous; a look like a flash of lightning from a sodden cloud; for the old “bear,” faithful to his traditions, never went to bed without a nightcap, consisting of a couple of bottles of excellent old wine, which he “tippled down” of an evening, to use his own expression.

“Nothing simpler,” said David; “I have none of the paper about me, for I came here to be out of Doublon’s way; and having come so far, I thought I might as well come to you at Marsac as borrow of a money-lender. I have nothing on me but my clothes. Shut me up somewhere on the premises, so that nobody can come in and see me at work, and ——”

“What? you will not let me see you at your work then?” asked the old man, with an ugly look at his son.

“You have given me to understand plainly, father, that in matters of business there is no question of father and son ——”

“Ah! you distrust the father that gave you life!”

“No; the other father who took away the means of earning a livelihood.”

“Each for himself, you are right!” said the old man. “Very good, I will put you in the cellar.”

“I will go down there with Kolb. You must let me have a large pot for my pulp,” said David; then he continued, without noticing the quick look his father gave him — “and you must find artichoke and asparagus stalks for me, and nettles, and the reeds that you cut by the stream side, and tomorrow morning I will come out of your cellar with some splendid paper.”

“If you can do that,” hiccoughed the “bear,” “I will let you have, perhaps — I will see, that is, if I can let you have — pshaw! twenty-five thousand francs. On condition, mind, that you make as much for me every year.”

“Put me to the proof, I am quite willing,” cried David. “Kolb! take the horse and go to Mansle, quick, buy a large hair sieve for me of a cooper, and some glue of the grocer, and come back again as soon as you can.”

“There! drink,” said old Sechard, putting down a bottle of wine, a loaf, and the cold remains of the dinner. “You will need your strength. I will go and look for your bits of green stuff; green rags you use for your pulp, and a trifle too green, I am afraid.”

Two hours later, towards eleven o’clock that night, David and Kolb took up their quarters in a little out-house against the cellar wall; they found the floor paved with runnel tiles, and all the apparatus used in Angoumois for the manufacture of Cognac brandy.

“Pans and firewood! Why, it is as good as a factory made on purpose!” cried David.

“Very well, good-night,” said old Sechard; “I shall lock you in, and let both the dogs loose; nobody will bring you any paper, I am sure. You show me those sheets tomorrow, and I give you my word I will be your partner and the business will be straightforward and properly managed.”

David and Kolb, locked into the distillery, spent nearly two hours in macerating the stems, using a couple of logs for mallets. The fire blazed up, the water boiled. About two o’clock in the morning, Kolb heard a sound which David was too busy to notice, a kind of deep breath like a suppressed hiccough. Snatching up one of the two lighted dips, he looked round the walls, and beheld old Sechard’s empurpled countenance filling up a square opening above a door hitherto hidden by a pile of empty casks in the cellar itself. The cunning old man had brought David and Kolb into his underground distillery by the outer door,

through which the casks were rolled when full. The inner door had been made so that he could roll his puncheons straight from the cellar into the distillery, instead of taking them round through the yard.

“Aha! thees eies not fair blay, you vant to shvindle your son!” cried the Alsacien. “Do you kow vot you do ven you trink ein pottle of vine? You gif goot trink to ein bad scountrel.”

“Oh, father!” cried David.

“I came to see if you wanted anything,” said old Sechard, half sobered by this time.

“Und it was for de inderest vot you take in us dot you brought der liddle ladder!” commented Kolb, as he pushed the casks aside and flung open the door; and there, in fact, on a short step-ladder, the old man stood in his shirt.

“Risking your health!” said David.

“I think I must be walking in my sleep,” said old Sechard, coming down in confusion. “Your want of confidence in your father set me dreaming; I dreamed you were making a pact with the Devil to do impossible things.”

“Der teufel,” said Kolb; “dot is your own bassion for de liddle goldfinches.”

“Go back to bed again, father,” said David; “lock us in if you will, but you may save yourself the trouble of coming down again. Kolb will mount guard.”

At four o’clock in the morning David came out of the distillery; he had been careful to leave no sign of his occupation behind him; but he brought out some thirty sheets of paper that left nothing to be desired in fineness, whiteness, toughness, and strength, all of them bearing by way of water-mark the impress of the uneven hairs of the sieve. The old man took up the samples and put his tongue to them, the lifelong habit of the pressman, who tests papers in this way. He felt it between his thumb and finger, crumpled and creased it, put it through all the trials by which a printer assays the quality of a sample submitted to him, and when it was found wanting in no respect, he still would not allow that he was beaten.

“We have yet to know how it takes an impression,” he said, to avoid praising his son.

“Funny man!” exclaimed Kolb.

The old man was cool enough now. He cloaked his feigned hesitation with paternal dignity.

“I wish to tell you in fairness, father, that even now it seems to me that paper costs more than it ought to do; I want to solve the problem of sizing it in the pulping-trough. I have just that one improvement to make.”

“Oho! so you are trying to trick me!”

“Well, shall I tell you? I can size the pulp as it is, but so far I cannot do it evenly, and the surface is as rough as a burr!”

“Very good, size your pulp in the trough, and you shall have my money.”

“Mein master will nefer see de golor of your money,” declared Kolb.

“Father,” he began, “I have never borne you any grudge for making over the business to me at such an exorbitant valuation; I have seen the father through it all. I have said to myself —‘The old man has worked very hard, and he certainly gave me a better bringing up than I had a right to expect; let him enjoy the fruits of his toil in peace, and in his own way. — I even gave up my mother’s money to you. I began encumbered with debt, and bore all the burdens that you put upon me without a murmur. Well, harassed for debts that were not of my making, with no bread in the house, and my feet held to the flames, I have found out the secret. I have struggled on patiently till my strength is exhausted. It is perhaps your duty to help me, but do not give *me* a thought; think of a woman and a little one” (David could not keep back the tears at this); “think of them, and give them help and protection. — Kolb and Marion have given me their savings; will you do less?” he cried at last, seeing that his father was as cold as the impression-stone.

“And that was not enough for you,” said the old man, without the slightest sense of shame; “why, you would waste the wealth of the Indies! Good-night! I am too ignorant to lend a hand in schemes got up on purpose to exploit me. A monkey will never gobble down a bear” (alluding to the workshop nicknames); “I am a vinegrower, I am not a banker. And what is more, look you, business between father and son never turns out well. Stay and eat your dinner here; you shan’t say that you came for nothing.”

There are some deep-hearted natures that can force their own pain down into inner depths unsuspected by those dearest to them; and with them, when anguish forces its way to the surface and is visible, it is only after a mighty upheaval.

David's nature was one of these. Eve had thoroughly understood the noble character of the man. But now that the depths had been stirred, David's father took the wave of anguish that passed over his son's features for a child's trick, an attempt to "get round" his father, and his bitter grief for mortification over the failure of the attempt. Father and son parted in anger.

David and Kolb reached Angouleme on the stroke of midnight. They came back on foot, and steathily, like burglars. Before one o'clock in the morning David was installed in the impenetrable hiding-place prepared by his wife in Basine Clerget's house. No one saw him enter it, and the pity that henceforth should shelter David was the most resourceful pity of all — the pity of a work-girl.

Kolb bragged that day that he had saved his master on horseback, and only left him in a carrier's van well on the way to Limoges. A sufficient provision of raw material had been laid up in Basine's cellar, and Kolb, Marion, Mme. Sechard, and her mother had no communication with the house.

Two days after the scene at Marsac, old Sechard came hurrying to Angouleme and his daughter-inlaw. Covetousness had brought him. There were three clear weeks ahead before the vintage began, and he thought he would be on the look-out for squalls, to use his own expression. To this end he took up his quarters in one of the attics which he had reserved by the terms of the lease, wilfully shutting his eyes to the bareness and want that made his son's home desolate. If they owed him rent, they could well afford to keep him. He ate his food from a tinned iron plate, and made no marvel at it. "I began in the same way," he told his daughter-inlaw, when she apologized for the absence of silver spoons.

Marion was obliged to run into debt for necessaries for them all. Kolb was earning a franc for daily wage as a brick-layer's laborer; and at last poor Eve, who, for the sake of her husband and child, had sacrificed her last resources to entertain David's father, saw that she had only ten francs left. She had hoped to the last to soften the old miser's heart by her affectionate respect, and patience, and pretty attentions; but old Sechard was obdurate as ever. When she saw him turn the same cold eyes on her, the same look that the Cointets had given her, and Petit–Claud and Cerizet, she tried to watch and guess old Sechard's intentions. Trouble thrown away! Old Sechard, never sober, never drunk, was inscrutable; intoxication is a double veil. If the old man's tipsiness was sometimes real, it was quite often feigned for the purpose of extracting David's secret from his wife.

Sometimes he coaxed, sometimes he frightened his daughter-inlaw.

“I will drink up my property; *I will buy an annuity*,” he would threaten when Eve told him that she knew nothing.

The humiliating struggle was wearing her out; she kept silence at last, lest she should show disrespect to her husband’s father.

“But, father,” she said one day when driven to extremity, “there is a very simple way of finding out everything. Pay David’s debts; he will come home, and you can settle it between you.”

“Ha! that is what you want to get out of me, is it?” he cried. “It is as well to know!”

But if Sechard had no belief in his son, he had plenty of faith in the Cointets. He went to consult them, and the Cointets dazzled him of set purpose, telling him that his son’s experiments might mean millions of francs.

“If David can prove that he has succeeded, I shall not hesitate to go into partnership with him, and reckon his discovery as half the capital,” the tall Cointet told him.

The suspicious old man learned a good deal over nips of brandy with the work-people, and something more by questioning Petit–Claud and feigning stupidity; and at length he felt convinced that the Cointets were the real movers behind Metivier; they were plotting to ruin Sechard’s printing establishment, and to lure him (Sechard) on to pay his son’s debts by holding out the discovery as a bait. The old man of the people did not suspect that Petit–Claud was in the plot, nor had he any idea of the toils woven to ensnare the great secret. A day came at last when he grew angry and out of patience with the daughter-inlaw who would not so much as tell him where David was hiding; he determined to force the laboratory door, for he had discovered that David was wont to make his experiments in the workshop where the rollers were melted down.

He came downstairs very early one morning and set to work upon the lock.

“Hey! Papa Sechard, what are you doing there?” Marion called out. (She had risen at daybreak to go to her papermill, and now she sprang across to the workshop.)

“I am in my own house, am I not?” said the old man, in some confusion.

“Oh, indeed, are you turning thief in your old age? You are not drunk this time either —— I shall go straight to the mistress and tell her.”

“Hold your tongue, Marion,” said Sechard, drawing two crowns of six francs each from his pocket. “There ——”

“I will hold my tongue, but don’t you do it again,” said Marion, shaking her finger at him, “or all Angouleme shall hear of it.”

The old man had scarcely gone out, however, when Marion went up to her mistress.

“Look, madame,” she said, “I have had twelve francs out of your father-inlaw, and here they are ——”

“How did you do it?”

“What was he wanting to do but to take a look at the master’s pots and pans and stuff, to find out the secret, forsooth. I knew quite well that there was nothing in the little place, but I frightened him and talked as if he were setting about robbing his son, and he gave me twelve francs to say nothing about it.”

Just at that moment Basine came in radiant, and with a letter for her friend, a letter from David written on magnificent paper, which she handed over when they were alone.

> “MY ADORED EVE— I am writing to you the first letter on my first sheet of paper made by the new process. I have solved the problem of sizing the pulp in the trough at last. A pound of pulp costs five sous, even supposing that the raw material is grown on good soil with special culture; three francs’ worth of sized pulp will make a ream of paper, at twelve pounds to the ream. I am quite sure that I can lessen the weight of books by one-half. The envelope, the letter, and samples enclosed are all manufactured in different ways. I kiss you; you shall have wealth now to add to our happiness, everything else we had before.”

“There!” said Eve, handing the samples to her father-inlaw, “when the vintage is over let your son have the money, give him a chance to make his fortune, and you shall be repaid ten times over; he has succeeded at last!”

Old Sechard hurried at once to the Cointets. Every sample was tested and minutely examined; the prices, from three to ten francs per ream, were noted on each separate slip; some were sized, others unsized; some were of almost metallic purity, others soft as Japanese paper; in color there was every possible shade of

white. If old Sechard and the two Cointets had been Jews examining diamonds, their eyes could not have glistened more eagerly.

"Your son is on the right track," the fat Cointet said at length.

"Very well, pay his debts," returned old Sechard.

"By all means, if he will take us into partnership," said the tall Cointet.

"You are extortioners!" cried old Sechard. "You have been suing him under Metivier's name, and you mean me to buy you off; that is the long and the short of it. Not such a fool, gentlemen ——"

The brothers looked at one another, but they contrived to hide their surprise at the old miser's shrewdness.

"We are not millionaires," said fat Cointet; "we do not discount bills for amusement. We should think ourselves well off if we could pay ready money for our bits of accounts for rags, and we still give bills to our dealer."

"The experiment ought to be tried first on a much larger scale," the tall Cointet said coldly; "sometimes you try a thing with a saucepan and succeed, and fail utterly when you experiment with bulk. You should help your son out of difficulties."

"Yes; but when my son is at liberty, would he take me as his partner?"

"That is no business of ours," said the fat Cointet. "My good man, do you suppose that when you have paid some ten thousand francs for your son, that there is an end of it? It will cost two thousand francs to take out a patent; there will be journeys to Paris; and before going to any expense, it would be prudent to do as my brother suggests, and make a thousand reams or so; to try several whole batches to make sure. You see, there is nothing you must be so much on your guard against as an inventor."

"I have a liking for bread ready buttered myself," added the tall Cointet.

All through that night the old man ruminated over this dilemma —"If I pay David's debts, he will be set at liberty, and once set at liberty, he need not share his fortune with me unless he chooses. He knows very well that I cheated him over the first partnership, and he will not care to try a second; so it is to my interest to keep him shut up, the wretched boy."

The Cointets knew enough of Sechard senior to see that they should hunt in couples. All three said to themselves —"Experiments must be tried before the discovery can take any practical shape. David Sechard must be set at liberty before those experiments can be made; and David Sechard, set at liberty, will slip through our fingers."

Everybody involved, moreover, had his own little afterthought.

Petit–Claud, for instance, said, "As soon as I am married, I will slip my neck out of the Cointets' yoke; but till then I shall hold on."

The tall Cointet thought, "I would rather have David under lock and key, and then I should be master of the situation."

Old Sechard, too, thought, "If I pay my son's debts, he will repay me with a 'Thank you!'"

Eve, hard pressed (for the old man threatened now to turn her out of the house), would neither reveal her husband's hiding-place, nor even send proposals of a safe-conduct. She could not feel sure of finding so safe a refuge a second time.

"Set your son at liberty," she told her father-inlaw, "and then you shall know everything."

The four interested persons sat, as it were, with a banquet spread before them, none of them daring to begin, each one suspicious and watchful of his neighbor. A few days after David went into hiding, Petit–Claud went to the mill to see the tall Cointet.

"I have done my best," he said; "David has gone into prison of his own accord somewhere or other; he is working out some improvement there in peace. It is no fault of mine if you have not gained your end; are you going to keep your promise?"

"Yes, if we succeed," said the tall Cointet. "Old Sechard was here only a day or two ago; he came to ask us some questions as to paper-making. The old miser has got wind of his son's invention; he wants to turn it to his own account, so there is some hope of a partnership. You are with the father and the son ——"

"Be the third person in the trinity and give them up," smiled Petit–Claud.

"Yes," said Cointet. "When you have David in prison, or bound to us by a deed of partnership, you shall marry Mlle. de la Haye."

“Is that your *ultimatum*?”

“My *sine qua non*,” said Cointet, “since we are speaking in foreign languages.”

“Then here is mine in plain language,” Petit–Claud said drily.

“Ah! let us have it,” answered Cointet, with some curiosity.

“You will present me tomorrow to Mme. de Sononches, and do something definite for me; you will keep your word, in short; or I will clear off Sechard’s debts myself, sell my practice, and go into partnership with him. I will not be duped. You have spoken out, and I am doing the same. I have given proof, give me proof of your sincerity. You have all, and I have nothing. If you won’t do fairly by me, I know your cards, and I shall play for my own hand.”

The tall Cointet took his hat and umbrella, his face at the same time taking its Jesuitical expression, and out he went, bidding Petit–Claud come with him.

“You shall see, my friend, whether I have prepared your way for you,” said he.

The shrewd paper-manufacturer saw his danger at a glance; and saw, too, that with a man like Petit–Claud it was better to play above board. Partly to be prepared for contingencies, partly to satisfy his conscience, he had dropped a word or two to the point in the ear of the ex-consul-general, under the pretext of putting Mlle. de la Haye’s financial position before that gentleman.

“I have the man for Francoise,” he had said; “for with thirty thousand francs of *dot*, a girl must not expect too much nowadays.”

“We will talk it over later on,” answered Francis du Hautoy, ex-consul-general. “Mme. de Senonches’ positon has altered very much since Mme. de Bargeton went away; we very likely might marry Francoise to some elderly country gentleman.”

“She would disgrace herself if you did,” Cointet returned in his dry way. “Better marry her to some capable, ambitious young man; you could help him with your influence, and he would make a good position for his wife.”

“We shall see,” said Francis du Hautoy; “her godmother ought to be consulted first, in any case.”

When M. de Bargeton died, his wife sold the great house in the Rue du Minage. Mme. de Senonches, finding her own house scarcely large enough,

persuaded M. de Senonches to buy the Hotel de Bargeton, the cradle of Lucien Chardon's ambitions, the scene of the earliest events in his career. Zephirine de Senonches had it in mind to succeed to Mme. de Bargeton; she, too, would be a kind of queen in Angouleme; she would have "a salon," and be a great lady, in short. There was a schism in Angouleme, a strife dating from the late M. de Bargeton's duel with M. de Chandour. Some maintained that Louise de Negrepelisse was blameless, others believed in Stanislas de Chandour's scandals. Mme. de Senonches declared for the Bargetons, and began by winning over that faction. Many frequenters of the Hotel de Bargeton had been so accustomed for years to their nightly game of cards in the house that they could not leave it, and Mme. de Senonches turned this fact to account. She received every evening, and certainly gained all the ground lost by Amelie de Chandour, who set up for a rival.

Francis du Hautoy, living in the inmost circle of nobility in Angouleme, went so far as to think of marrying Francoise to old M. de Severac, Mme. du Brossard having totally failed to capture that gentleman for her daughter; and when Mme. de Bargeton reappeared as the prefect's wife, Zephirine's hopes for her dear goddaughter waxed high, indeed. The Comtesse du Chatelet, so she argued, would be sure to use her influence for her champion.

Boniface Cointet had Angouleme at his fingers' ends; he saw all the difficulties at a glance, and resolved to sweep them out of the way by a bold stroke that only a Tartuffe's brain could invent. The puny lawyer was not a little amused to find his fellow-conspirator keeping his word with him; not a word did Petit–Claud utter; he respected the musings of his companion, and they walked the whole way from the paper-mill to the Rue du Minage in silence.

"Monsieur and madame are at breakfast"— this announcement met the ill-timed visitors on the steps.

"Take in our names, all the same," said the tall Cointet; and feeling sure of his position, he followed immediately behind the servant and introduced his companion to the elaborately-affected Zephirine, who was breakfasting in company with M. Francis du Hautoy and Mlle. de la Haye. M. de Senonches had gone, as usual, for a day's shooting over M. de Pimentel's land.

"M. Petit–Claud is the young lawyer of whom I spoke to you, madame; he will go through the trust accounts when your fair ward comes of age."

The ex-diplomatist made a quick scrutiny of Petit–Claud, who, for his part, was looking furtively at the "fair ward." As for Zephirine, who heard of the matter for the first time, her surprise was so great that she dropped her fork.

Mlle. de la Haye, a shrewish young woman with an ill-tempered face, a waist that could scarcely be called slender, a thin figure, and colorless, fair hair, in spite of a certain little air that she had, was by no means easy to marry. The "parentage unknown" on her birth certificate was the real bar to her entrance into the sphere where her godmother's affection stove to establish her. Mlle. de la Haye, ignorant of her real position, was very hard to please; the richest merchant in L'Houmeau had found no favor in her sight. Cointet saw the sufficiently significant expression of the young lady's face at the sight of the little lawyer, and turning, beheld a precisely similar grimace on Petit–Claud's countenance. Mme. de Senonches and Francis looked at each other, as if in search of an excuse for getting rid of the visitors. All this Cointet saw. He asked M. du Hautoy for the favor of a few minutes' speech with him, and the pair went together into the drawing-room.

"Fatherly affection is blinding you, sir," he said bluntly. "You will not find it an easy thing to marry your daughter; and, acting in your interest throughout, I have put you in a position from which you cannot draw back; for I am fond of Francoise, she is my ward. Now — Petit–Claud knows *everything*! His overweening ambition is a guarantee for our dear child's happiness; for, in the first place, Francoise will do as she likes with her husband; and, in the second, he wants your influence. You can ask the new prefect for the post of crown attorney for him in the court here. M. Milaud is definitely appointed to Nevers, Petit–Claud will sell his practice, you will have no difficulty in obtaining a deputy public prosecutor's place for him; and it will not be long before he becomes attorney for the crown, president of the court, deputy, what you will."

Francis went back to the dining-room and behaved charmingly to his daughter's suitor. He gave Mme. de Senonches a look, and brought the scene to a close with an invitation to dine with them on the morrow; Petit–Claud must come and discuss the business in hand. He even went downstairs and as far as the corner with the visitors, telling Petit–Claud that after Cointet's recommendation, both he and Mme. de Senonches were disposed to approve all that Mlle. de la Haye's trustee had arranged for the welfare of that little angel.

"Oh!" cried Petit–Claud, as they came away, "what a plain girl! I have been

taken in ——”

“She looks a lady-like girl,” returned Cointet, “and besides, if she were a beauty, would they give her to you? Eh! my dear fellow, thirty thousand francs and the influence of Mme. de Senonches and the Comtesse du Chatelet! Many a small landowner would be wonderfully glad of the chance, and all the more so since M. Francis du Hautoy is never likely to marry, and all that he has will go to the girl. Your marriage is as good as settled.”

“How?”

“That is what I am just going to tell you,” returned Cointet, and he gave his companion an account of his recent bold stroke. “M. Milaud is just about to be appointed attorney for the crown at Nevers, my dear fellow,” he continued; “sell your practice, and in ten years’ time you will be Keeper of the Seals. You are not the kind of a man to draw back from any service required of you by the Court.”

“Very well,” said Petit–Claud, his zeal stirred by the prospect of such a career, “very well, be in the Place du Murier tomorrow at half-past four; I will see old Sechard in the meantime; we will have a deed of partnership drawn up, and the father and the son shall be bound thereby, and delivered to the third person of the trinity — Cointet, to wit.”

To return to Lucien in Paris. On the morrow of the loss announced in his letter, he obtained a *visa* for his passport, bought a stout holly stick, and went to the Rue d’Enfer to take a place in the little market van, which took him as far as Longjumeau for half a franc. He was going home to Angouleme. At the end of the first day’s tramp he slept in a cowshed, two leagues from Arpajon. He had come no farther than Orleans before he was very weary, and almost ready to break down, but there he found a boatman willing to bring him as far as Tours for three francs, and food during the journey cost him but forty sous. Five days of walking brought him from Tours to Poitiers, and left him with but five francs in his pockets, but he summoned up all his remaining strength for the journey before him.

He was overtaken by night in the open country, and had made up his mind to sleep out of doors, when a traveling carriage passed by, slowly climbing the hillside, and, all unknown to the postilion, the occupants, and the servant, he managed to slip in among the luggage, crouching in between two trunks lest he should be shaken off by the jolting of the carriage — and so he slept.

He awoke with the sun shining into his eyes, and the sound of voices in his ears. The carriage had come to a standstill. Looking about him, he knew that he was at Mansle, the little town where he had waited for Mme. de Bargeton eighteen months before, when his heart was full of hope and love and joy. A group of post-boys eyed him curiously and suspiciously, covered with dust as he was, wedged in among the luggage. Lucien jumped down, but before he could speak two travelers stepped out of the caleche, and the words died away on his lips; for there stood the new Prefect of the Charente, Sixte du Chatelet, and his wife, Louise de Negrepelisse.

"Chance gave us a traveling-companion, if we had but known!" said the Countess. "Come in with us, monsieur."

Lucien gave the couple a distant bow and a half-humbled half-defiant glance; then he turned away into a cross-country road in search of some farmhouse, where he might make a breakfast on milk and bread, and rest awhile, and think quietly over the future. He still had three francs left. On and on he walked with the hurrying pace of fever, noticing as he went, down by the riverside, that the country grew more and more picturesque. It was near mid-day when he came upon a sheet of water with willows growing about the margin, and stopped for awhile to rest his eyes on the cool, thick-growing leaves; and something of the grace of the fields entered into his soul.

In among the crests of the willows, he caught a glimpse of a mill near-by on a branch stream, and of the thatched roof of the mill-house where the house-leeks were growing. For all ornament, the quaint cottage was covered with jessamine and honeysuckle and climbing hops, and the garden about it was gay with phloxes and tall, juicy-leaved plants. Nets lay drying in the sun along a paved causeway raised above the highest flood level, and secured by massive piles. Ducks were swimming in the clear mill-pond below the currents of water roaring over the wheel. As the poet came nearer he heard the clack of the mill, and saw the good-natured, homely woman of the house knitting on a garden bench, and keeping an eye upon a little one who was chasing the hens about.

Lucien came forward. "My good woman," he said, "I am tired out; I have a fever on me, and I have only three francs; will you undertake to give me brown bread and milk, and let me sleep in the barn for a week? I shall have time to write to my people, and they will either come to fetch me or send me money."

“I am quite willing, always supposing that my husband has no objection. — Hey! little man!”

The miller came up, gave Lucien a look over, and took his pipe out of his mouth to remark, “Three francs for a weeks board? You might as well pay nothing at all.”

“Perhaps I shall end as a miller’s man,” thought the poet, as his eyes wandered over the lovely country. Then the miller’s wife made a bed ready for him, and Lucien lay down and slept so long that his hostess was frightened.

“Courtois,” she said, next day at noon, “just go in and see whether that young man is dead or alive; he has been lying there these fourteen hours.”

The miller was busy spreading out his fishing-nets and lines. “It is my belief,” he said, “that the pretty fellow yonder is some starveling play-actor without a brass farthing to bless himself with.”

“What makes you think that, little man?” asked the mistress of the mill.

“Lord, he is not a prince, nor a lord, nor a member of parliament, nor a bishop; why are his hands as white as if he did nothing?”

“Then it is very strange that he does not feel hungry and wake up,” retorted the miller’s wife; she had just prepared breakfast for yesterday’s chance guest. “A play-actor, is he?” she continued. “Where will he be going? It is too early yet for the fair at Angouleme.”

But neither the miller nor his wife suspected that (actors, princes, and bishops apart) there is a kind of being who is both prince and actor, and invested besides with a magnificent order of priesthood — that the Poet seems to do nothing, yet reigns over all humanity when he can paint humanity.

“What can he be?” Courtois asked of his wife.

“Suppose it should be dangerous to take him in?” queried she.

“Pooh! thieves look more alive than that; we should have been robbed by this time,” returned her spouse.

“I am neither a prince nor a thief, nor a bishop nor an actor,” Lucien said wearily; he must have overheard the colloquy through the window, and now he suddenly appeared. “I am poor, I am tired out, I have come on foot from Paris. My

name is Lucien de Rubempre, and my father was M. Chardon, who used to have Postel's business in L'Houmeau. My sister married David Sechard, the printer in the Place du Murier at Angouleme."

"Stop a bit," said the miller, "that printer is the son of the old skinflint who farms his own land at Marsac, isn't he?"

"The very same," said Lucien.

"He is a queer kind of father, he is!" Courtois continued. "He is worth two hundred thousand francs and more, without counting his money-box, and he has sold his son up, they say."

When body and soul have been broken by a prolonged painful struggle, there comes a crisis when a strong nature braces itself for greater effort; but those who give way under the strain either die or sink into unconsciousness like death. That hour of crisis had struck for Lucien; at the vague rumor of the catastrophe that had befallen David he seemed almost ready to succumb. "Oh! my sister!" he cried. "Oh, God! what have I done? Base wretch that I am!"

He dropped down on the wooden bench, looking white and powerless as a dying man; the miller's wife brought out a bowl of milk and made him drink, but he begged the miller to help him back to his bed, and asked to be forgiven for bringing a dying man into their house. He thought his last hour had come. With the shadow of death, thoughts of religion crossed a brain so quick to conceive picturesque fancies; he would see the cure, he would confess and receive the last sacraments. The moan, uttered in the faint voice by a young man with such a comely face and figure, went to Mme. Courtois' heart.

"I say, little man, just take the horse and go to Marsac and ask Dr. Marron to come and see this young man; he is in a very bad way, it seems to me, and you might bring the cure as well. Perhaps they may know more about that printer in the Place du Murier than you do, for Postel married M. Marron's daughter."

Courtois departed. The miller's wife tried to make Lucien take food; like all country-bred folk, she was full of the idea that sick folk must be made to eat. He took no notice of her, but gave way to a violent storm of remorseful grief, a kind of mental process of counter-irritation, which relieved him.

The Courtois' mill lies a league away from Marsac, the town of the district, and the half-way between Mansle and Angouleme; so it was not long before the

good miller came back with the doctor and the cure. Both functionaries had heard rumors coupling Lucien's name with the name of Mme. de Bargeton; and now when the whole department was talking of the lady's marriage to the new Prefect and her return to Angouleme as the Comtesse du Chatelet, both cure and doctor were consumed with a violent curiosity to know why M. de Bargeton's widow had not married the young poet with whom she had left Angouleme. And when they heard, furthermore, that Lucien was at the mill, they were eager to know whether the poet had come to the rescue of his brother-inlaw. Curiosity and humanity alike prompted them to go at once to the dying man. Two hours after Courtois set out, Lucien heard the rattle of old iron over the stony causeway, the country doctor's ramshackle chaise came up to the door, and out stepped MM. Marron, for the cure was the doctor's uncle. Lucien's bedside visitors were as intimate with David's father as country neighbors usually are in a small vine-growing township. The doctor looked at the dying man, felt his pulse, and examined his tongue; then he looked at the miller's wife, and smiled reassuringly.

"Mme. Courtois," said he, "if, as I do not doubt, you have a bottle of good wine somewhere in the cellar, and a fat eel in your fish-pond, put them before your patient, it is only exhaustion; there is nothing the matter with him. Our great man will be on his feet again directly."

"Ah! monsieur," said Lucien, "it is not the body, it is the mind that ails. These good people have told me tidings that nearly killed me; I have just heard the bad news of my sister, Mme. Sechard. Mme. Courtois says that your daughter is married to Postel, monsieur, so you must know something of David Sechard's affairs; oh, for heaven's sake, monsieur, tell me what you know!"

"Why, he must be in prison," began the doctor; "his father would not help him ——"

"*In prison*!" repeated Lucien, "and why?"

"Because some bills came from Paris; he had overlooked them, no doubt, for he does not pay much attention to his business, they say," said Dr. Marron.

"Pray leave me with M. le Cure," said the poet, with a visible change of countenance. The doctor and the miller and his wife went out of the room, and Lucien was left alone with the old priest.

"Sir," he said, "I feel that death is near, and I deserve to die. I am a very

miserable wretch; I can only cast myself into the arms of religion. I, sir, *I* have brought all these troubles on my sister and brother, for David Sechard has been a brother to me. I drew those bills that David could not meet! . . . I have ruined him. In my terrible misery, I forgot the crime. A millionaire put an end to the proceedings, and I quite believed that he had met the bills; but nothing of the kind has been done, it seems." And Lucien told the tale of his sorrows. The story, as he told it in his feverish excitement, was worthy of the poet. He besought the cure to go to Angouleme and to ask for news of Eve and his mother, Mme. Chardon, and to let him know the truth, and whether it was still possible to repair the evil.

"I shall live till you come back, sir," he added, as the hot tears fell. "If my mother, and sister, and David do not cast me off, I shall not die."

Lucien's remorse was terrible to see, the tears, the eloquence, the young white face with the heartbroken, despairing look, the tales of sorrow upon sorrow till human strength could no more endure, all these things aroused the cure's pity and interest.

"In the provinces, as in Paris," he said, "you must believe only half of all that you hear. Do not alarm yourself; a piece of hearsay, three leagues away from Angouleme, is sure to be far from the truth. Old Sechard, our neighbor, left Marsac some days ago; very likely he is busy settling his son's difficulties. I am going to Angouleme; I will come back and tell you whether you can return home; your confessions and repentance will help to plead your cause."

The cure did not know that Lucien had repented so many times during the last eighteen months, that penitence, however impassioned, had come to be a kind of drama with him, played to perfection, played so far in all good faith, but none the less a drama. To the cure succeeded the doctor. He saw that the patient was passing through a nervous crisis, and the danger was beginning to subside. The doctor-nephew spoke as comfortably as the cure-uncle, and at length the patient was persuaded to take nourishment.

Meanwhile the cure, knowing the manners and customs of the countryside, had gone to Mansle; the coach from Ruffec to Angouleme was due to pass about that time, and he found a vacant place in it. He would go to his grand-nephew Postel in L'Houmeau (David's former rival) and make inquiries of him. From the assiduity with which the little druggist assisted his venerable relative to alight from the abominable cage which did duty as a coach between Ruffec and

Angouleme, it was apparent to the meanest understanding that M. and Mme. Postel founded their hopes of future ease upon the old cure's will.

"Have you breakfasted? Will you take something? We did not in the least expect you! This is a pleasant surprise!" Out came questions innumerable in a breath.

Mme. Postel might have been born to be the wife of an apothecary in L'Houmeau. She was a common-looking woman, about the same height as little Postel himself, such good looks as she possessed being entirely due to youth and health. Her florid auburn hair grew very low upon her forehead. Her demeanor and language were in keeping with homely features, a round countenance, the red cheeks of a country damsel, and eyes that might almost be described as yellow. Everything about her said plainly enough that she had been married for expectations of money. After a year of married life, therefore, she ruled the house; and Postel, only too happy to have discovered the heiress, meekly submitted to his wife. Mme. Leonie Postel, *nee* Marron, was nursing her first child, the darling of the old cure, the doctor, and Postel, a repulsive infant, with a strong likeness to both parents.

"Well, uncle," said Leonie, "what has brought you to Angouleme, since you will not take anything, and no sooner come in than you talk of going?"

But when the venerable ecclesiastic brought out the names of David Sechard and Eve, little Postel grew very red, and Leonie, his wife, felt it incumbent upon her to give him a jealous glance — the glance that a wife never fails to give when she is perfectly sure of her husband, and gives a look into the past by way of a caution for the future.

"What have yonder folk done to you, uncle, that you should mix yourself up in their affairs?" inquired Leonie, with very perceptible tartness.

"They are in trouble, my girl," said the cure, and he told the Postels about Lucien at the Courtois' mill.

"Oh! so that is the way he came back from Paris, is it?" exclaimed Postel. "Yet he had some brains, poor fellow, and he was ambitious, too. He went out to look for wool, and comes home shorn. But what does he want here? His sister is frightfully poor; for all these geniuses, David and Lucien alike, know very little about business. There was some talk of him at the Tribunal, and, as judge, I was

obliged to sign the warrant of execution. It was a painful duty. I do not know whether the sister's circumstances are such that Lucien can go to her; but in any case the little room that he used to occupy here is at liberty, and I shall be pleased to offer it to him."

"That is right, Postel," said the priest; he bestowed a kiss on the infant slumbering in Leonie's arms, and, adjusting his cocked hat, prepared to walk out of the shop.

"You will dine with us, uncle, of course," said Mme. Postel; "if once you meddle in these people's affairs, it will be some time before you have done. My husband will drive you back again in his little pony-cart."

Husband and wife stood watching their valued, aged relative on his way into Angouleme. "He carries himself well for his age, all the same," remarked the druggist.

By this time David had been in hiding for eleven days in a house only two doors away from the druggist's shop, which the worthy ecclesiastic had just quitted to climb the steep path into Angouleme with the news of Lucien's present condition.

When the Abbe Marron debouched upon the Place du Murier he found three men, each one remarkable in his own way, and all of them bearing with their whole weight upon the present and future of the hapless voluntary prisoner. There stood old Sechard, the tall Cointet, and his confederate, the puny limb of the law, three men representing three phases of greed as widely different as the outward forms of the speakers. The first had it in his mind to sell his own son; the second, to betray his client; and the third, while bargaining for both iniquities, was inwardly resolved to pay for neither. It was nearly five o'clock. Passers-by on their way home to dinner stopped a moment to look at the group.

"What the devil can old Sechard and the tall Cointet have to say to each other?" asked the more curious.

"There was something on foot concerning that miserable wretch that leaves his wife and child and mother-inlaw to starve," suggested some.

"Talk of sending a boy to Paris to learn his trade!" said a provincial oracle.

"M. le Cure, what brings you here, eh?" exclaimed old Sechard, catching sight

of the Abbe as soon as he appeared.

“I have come on account of your family,” answered the old man.

“Here is another of my son’s notions!” exclaimed old Sechard.

“It would not cost you much to make everybody happy all round,” said the priest, looking at the windows of the printing-house. Mme. Sechard’s beautiful face appeared at that moment between the curtains; she was hushing her child’s cries by tossing him in her arms and singing to him.

“Are you bringing news of my son?” asked old Sechard, “or what is more to the purpose — money?”

“No,” answered M. Marron, “I am bringing the sister news of her brother.”

“Of Lucien?” cried Petit–Claud.

“Yes. He walked all the way from Paris, poor young man. I found him at the Courtois’ house; he was worn out with misery and fatigue. Oh! he is very much to be pitied.”

Petit–Claud took the tall Cointet by the arm, saying aloud, “If we are going to dine with Mme. de Senonches, it is time to dress.” When they had come away a few paces, he added, for his companion’s benefit, “Catch the cub, and you will soon have the dam; we have David now ——”

“I have found you a wife, find me a partner,” said the tall Cointet with a treacherous smile.

“Lucien is an old school-fellow of mine; we used to be chums. I shall be sure to hear something from him in a week’s time. Have the banns put up, and I will engage to put David in prison. When he is on the jailer’s register I shall have done my part.”

“Ah!” exclaimed the tall Cointet under his breath, “we might have the patent taken out in our name; that would be the thing!”

A shiver ran through the meagre little attorney when he heard those words.

Meanwhile Eve beheld her father-inlaw enter with the Abbe Marron, who had let fall a word which unfolded the whole tragedy.

“Here is our cure, Mme. Sechard,” the old man said, addressing his daughter-inlaw, “and pretty tales about your brother he has to tell us, no doubt!”

“Oh!” cried poor Eve, cut to the heart; “what can have happened now?”

The cry told so unmistakably of many sorrows, of great dread on so many grounds, that the Abbe Marron made haste to say, “Reassure yourself, madame; he is living.”

Eve turned to the vinegrower.

“Father,” she said, “perhaps you will be good enough to go to my mother; she must hear all that this gentleman has to tell us of Lucien.”

The old man went in search of Mme. Chardon, and addressed her in this wise:

“Go and have it out with the Abbe Marron; he is a good sort, priest though he is. Dinner will be late, no doubt. I shall come back again in an hour,” and the old man went out. Insensible as he was to everything but the clink of money and the glitter of gold, he left Mme. Chardon without caring to notice the effect of the shock that he had given her.

Mme. Chardon had changed so greatly during the last eighteen months, that in that short time she no longer looked like the same woman. The troubles hanging over both of her children, her abortive hopes for Lucien, the unexpected deterioration in one in whose powers and honesty she had for so long believed — all these things had told heavily upon her. Mme. Chardon was not only noble by birth, she was noble by nature; she idolized her children; consequently, during the last six months she had suffered as never before since her widowhood. Lucien might have borne the name of Lucien de Rubempre by royal letters patent; he might have founded the family anew, revived the title, and borne the arms; he might have made a great name — he had thrown the chance away; nay, he had fallen into the mire!

For Mme. Chardon the mother was a harder judge than Eve the sister. When she heard of the bills, she looked upon Lucien as lost. A mother is often fain to shut her eyes, but she always knows the child that she held at her breast, the child that has been always with her in the house; and so when Eve and David discussed Lucien’s chances of success in Paris, and Lucien’s mother to all appearance shared Eve’s illusions, in her inmost heart there was a tremor of fear lest David should be right, for a mother’s consciousness bore a witness to the truth of his words. So well did she know Eve’s sensitive nature, that she could not bring herself to speak of her fears; she was obliged to choke them down and keep such silence as mothers

alone can keep when they know how to love their children.

And Eve, on her side, had watched her mother, and saw the ravages of hidden grief with a feeling of dread; her mother was not growing old, she was failing from day to day. Mother and daughter lived a live of generous deception, and neither was deceived. The brutal old vinegrower's speech was the last drop that filled the cup of affliction to overflowing. The words struck a chill to Mme. Chardon's heart.

"Here is my mother, monsieur," said Eve, and the Abbe, looking up, saw a white-haired woman with a face as thin and worn as the features of some aged nun, and yet grown beautiful with the calm and sweet expression that devout submission gives to the faces of women who walk by the will of God, as the saying is. Then the Abbe understood the lives of the mother and daughter, and had no more sympathy left for Lucien; he shuddered to think of all that the victims had endured.

"Mother," said Eve, drying her eyes as she spoke, "poor Lucien is not very far away, he is at Marsac."

"And why is he not here?" asked Mme. Chardon.

Then the Abbe told the whole story as Lucien had told it to him — the misery of the journey, the troubles of the last days in Paris. He described the poet's agony of mind when he heard of the havoc wrought at home by his imprudence, and his apprehension as to the reception awaiting him at Angouleme.

"He has doubts of us; has it come to this?" said Mme. Chardon.

"The unhappy young man has come back to you on foot, enduring the most terrible hardships by the way; he is prepared to enter the humblest walks in life — if so he may make reparation."

"Monsieur," Lucien's sister said, "in spite of the wrong he has done us, I love my brother still, as we love the dead body when the soul has left it; and even so, I love him more than many sisters love their brothers. He has made us poor indeed; but let him come to us, he shall share the last crust of bread, anything indeed that he has left us. Oh, if he had never left us, monsieur, we should not have lost our heart's treasure."

"And the woman who took him from us brought him back on her carriage!" exclaimed Mme. Chardon. "He went away sitting by Mme. de Bargeton's side in

her caleche, and he came back behind it."

"Can I do anything for you?" asked the good cure, seeking an opportunity to take leave.

"A wound in the purse is not fatal, they say, monsieur," said Mme. Chardon, "but the patient must be his own doctor."

"If you have sufficient influence with my father-inlaw to induce him to help his son, you would save a whole family," said Eve.

"He has no belief in you, and he seemed to me to be very much exasperated against your husband," answered the old cure. He retained an impression, from the ex-pressman's rambling talk, that the Sechards' affairs were a kind of wasps' nest with which it was imprudent to meddle, and his mission being fulfilled, he went to dine with his nephew Postel. That worthy, like the rest of Angouleme, maintained that the father was in the right, and soon dissipated any little benevolence that the old gentleman was disposed to feel towards the son and his family.

"With those that squander money something may be done," concluded little Postel, "but those that make experiments are the ruin of you."

The cure went home; his curiosity was thoroughly satisfied, and this is the end and object of the exceeding interest taken in other people's business in the provinces. In the course of the evening the poet was duly informed of all that had passed in the Sechard family, and the journey was represented as a pilgrimage undertaken from motives of the purest charity.

"You have run your brother-inlaw and sister into debt to the amount of ten or twelve thousand francs," said the Abbe as he drew to an end, "and nobody hereabouts has that trifling amount to lend a neighbor, my dear sir. We are not rich in Angoumois. When you spoke to me of your bills, I thought that a much smaller amount was involved."

Lucien thanked the old man for his good offices. "The promise of forgiveness which you have brought is for me a priceless gift."

Very early the next morning Lucien set out from Marsac, and reached Angouleme towards nine o'clock. He carried nothing but his walking-stick; the short jacket that he wore was considerably the worst for his journey, his black

trousers were whitened with dust, and a pair of worn boots told sufficiently plainly that their owner belonged to the hapless tribe of tramps. He knew well enough that the contrast between his departure and return was bound to strike his fellow-townsmen; he did not try to hide the fact from himself. But just then, with his heart swelling beneath the oppression of remorse awakened in him by the old cure's story, he accepted his punishment for the moment, and made up his mind to brave the eyes of his acquaintances. Within himself he said, "I am behaving heroically."

Poetic temperaments of this stamp begin as their own dupes. He walked up through L'Houmeau, shame at the manner of his return struggling with the charm of old associations as he went. His heart beat quickly as he passed Postel's shop; but, very luckily for him, the only persons inside it were Leonie and her child. And yet, vanity was still so strong in him, that he could feel glad that his father's name had been painted out on the shop-front; for Postel, since his marriage, had redecorated his abode, and the word "Pharmacy" now alone appeared there, in the Paris fashion, in big letters.

When Lucien reached the steps by the Palet Gate, he felt the influence of his native air, his misfortunes no longer weighed upon him. "I shall see them again!" he said to himself, with a thrill of delight.

He reached the Place du Murier, and had not met a soul, a piece of luck that he scarcely hoped for, he who once had gone about his native place with a conqueror's air. Marion and Kolb, on guard at the door, flew out upon the steps, crying out, "Here he is!"

Lucien saw the familiar workshop and courtyard, and on the staircase met his mother and sister, and for a moment, while their arms were about him, all three almost forgot their troubles. In family life we almost always compound with our misfortunes; we make a sort of bed to rest upon; and, if it is hard, hope to make it tolerable. If Lucien looked the picture of despair, poetic charm was not wanting to the picture. His face had been tanned by the sunlight of the open road, and the deep sadness visible in his features overshadowed his poet's brow. The change in him told so plainly of sufferings endured, his face was so worn by sharp misery, that no one could help pitying him. Imagination had fared forth into the world and found sad reality at the home-coming. Eve was smiling in the midst of her joy, as the saints smile upon martyrdom. The face of a young and very fair woman grows

sublimely beautiful at the touch of grief; Lucien remembered the innocent girlish face that he saw last before he went to Paris, and the look of gravity that had come over it spoke so eloquently that he could not but feel a painful impression. The first quick, natural outpouring of affection was followed at once by a reaction on either side; they were afraid to speak; and when Lucien almost involuntarily looked round for another who should have been there, Eve burst into tears, and Lucien did the same, but Mme. Chardon's haggard face showed no sign of emotion. Eve rose to her feet and went downstairs, partly to spare her brother a word of reproach, partly to speak to Marion.

"Lucien is so fond of strawberries, child, we must find some strawberries for him."

"Oh, I was sure that you would want to welcome M. Lucien; you shall have a nice little breakfast and a good dinner, too."

"Lucien," said Mme. Chardon when the mother and son were left alone, "you have a great deal to repair here. You went away that we all might be proud of you; you have plunged us into want. You have all but destroyed your brother's opportunity of making a fortune that he only cared to win for the sake of his new family. Nor is this all that you have destroyed ——" said the mother.

There was a dreadful pause; Lucien took his mother's reproaches in silence.

"Now begin to work," Mme. Chardon went on more gently. "You tried to revive the noble family of whom I come; I do not blame you for it. But the man who undertakes such a task needs money above all things, and must bear a high heart in him; both were wanting in your case. We believed in you once, our belief has been shaken. This was a hard-working, contented household, making its way with difficulty; you have troubled their peace. The first offence may be forgiven, but it must be the last. We are in a very difficult position here; you must be careful, and take your sister's advice, Lucien. The school of trouble is a very hard one, but Eve has learned much by her lessons; she has grown grave and thoughtful, she is a mother. In her devotion to our dear David she has taken all the family burdens upon herself; indeed, through your wrongdoing she has come to be my only comfort."

"You might be still more severe, my mother," Lucien said, as he kissed her. "I accept your forgiveness, for I will not need it a second time."

Eve came into the room, saw her brother's humble attitude, and knew that he had been forgiven. Her kindness brought a smile for him to her lips, and Lucien answered with tear-filled eyes. A living presence acts like a charm, changing the most hostile positions of lovers or of families, no matter how just the resentment. Is it that affection finds out the ways of the heart, and we love to fall into them again? Does the phenomenon come within the province of the science of magnetism? Or is it reason that tells us that we must either forgive or never see each other again? Whether the cause be referred to mental, physical, or spiritual conditions, everyone knows the effect; every one has felt that the looks, the actions or gestures of the beloved awaken some vestige of tenderness in those most deeply sinned against and grievously wronged. Though it is hard for the mind to forget, though we still smart under the injury, the heart returns to its allegiance in spite of all. Poor Eve listened to her brother's confidences until breakfast-time; and whenever she looked at him she was no longer mistress of her eyes; in that intimate talk she could not control her voice. And with the comprehension of the conditions of literary life in Paris, she understood that the struggle had been too much for Lucien's strength. The poet's delight as he caressed his sister's child, his deep grief over David's absence, mingled with joy at seeing his country and his own folk again, the melancholy words that he let fall — all these things combined to make that day a festival. When Marion brought in the strawberries, he was touched to see that Eve had remembered his taste in spite of her distress, and she, his sister, must make ready a room for the prodigal brother and busy herself for Lucien. It was a truce, as it were, to misery. Old Sechard himself assisted to bring about this revulsion of feeling in the two women —"You are making as much of him as if he were bringing you any amount of money!"

"And what has my brother done that we should not make much of him?" cried Eve, jealously screening Lucien.

Nevertheless, when the first expansion was over, shades of truth came out. It was not long before Lucien felt the difference between the old affection and the new. Eve respected David from the depths of her heart; Lucien was beloved for his own sake, as we love a mistress still in spite of the disasters she causes. Esteem, the very foundation on which affection is based, is the solid stuff to which affection owes I know not what of certainty and security by which we live; and this was lacking between Mme. Chardon and her son, between the sister and the brother. Mother and daughter did not put entire confidence in him, as they would

have done if he had not lost his honor; and he felt this. The opinion expressed in d'Arthez's letter was Eve's own estimate of her brother; unconsciously she revealed it by her manner, tones, and gestures. Oh! Lucien was pitied, that was true; but as for all that he had been, the pride of the household, the great man of the family, the hero of the fireside — all this, like their fair hopes of him, was gone, never to return. They were so afraid of his heedlessness that he was not told where David was hidden. Lucien wanted to see his brother; but this Eve, insensible to the caresses which accompanied his curious questionings, was not the Eve of L'Houmeau, for whom a glance from him had been an order that must be obeyed. When Lucien spoke of making reparation, and talked as though he could rescue David, Eve only answered:

"Do not interfere; we have enemies of the most treacherous and dangerous kind."

Lucien tossed his head, as one who should say, "I have measured myself against Parisians," and the look in his sister's eyes said unmistakably, "Yes, but you were defeated."

"Nobody cares for me now," Lucien thought. "In the home circle, as in the world without, success is a necessity."

The poet tried to explain their lack of confidence in him; he had not been at home two days before a feeling of vexation rather than of angry bitterness gained hold on him. He applied Parisian standards to the quiet, temperate existence of the provinces, quite forgetting that the narrow, patient life of the household was the result of his own misdoings.

"They are *bourgeoises*, they cannot understand me," he said, setting himself apart from his sister and mother and David, now that they could no longer be deceived as to his real character and his future.

Many troubles and shocks of fortune had quickened the intuitive sense in both the women. Eve and Mme. Chardon guessed the thoughts in Lucien's inmost soul; they felt that he misjudged them; they saw him mentally isolating himself.

"Paris has changed him very much," they said between themselves. They were indeed reaping the harvest of egoism which they themselves had fostered.

It was inevitable but that the leaven should work in all three; and this most of all in Lucien, because he felt that he was so heavily to blame. As for Eve, she was

just the kind of sister to beg an erring brother to “Forgive me for your trespasses;” but when the union of two souls had been as perfect since life’s very beginnings, as it had been with Eve and Lucien, any blow dealt to that fair ideal is fatal. Scoundrels can draw knives on each other and make it up again afterwards, while a look or a word is enough to sunder two lovers for ever. In the recollection of an almost perfect life of heart and heart lies the secret of many an estrangement that none can explain. Two may live together without full trust in their hearts if only their past holds no memories of complete and unclouded love; but for those who once have known that intimate life, it becomes intolerable to keep perpetual watch over looks and words. Great poets know this; Paul and Virginie die before youth is over; can we think of Paul and Virginie estranged? Let us know that, to the honor of Lucien and Eve, the grave injury done was not the source of the pain; it was entirely a matter of feeling upon either side, for the poet in fault, as for the sister who was in no way to blame. Things had reached the point when the slightest misunderstanding, or little quarrel, or a fresh disappointment in Lucien would end in final estrangement. Money difficulties may be arranged, but feelings are inexorable.

Next day Lucien received a copy of the local paper. He turned pale with pleasure when he saw his name at the head of one of the first “leaders” in that highly respectable sheet, which like the provincial academies that Voltaire compared to a well-bred miss, was never talked about.

> “Let Franche–Comte boast of giving the light to Victor Hugo, to Charles Nodier, and Cuvier,” ran the article, “Brittany of producing a Chateaubriand and a Lammenais, Normandy of Casimir Delavigne, and Touraine of the author of *Eloa*; Angoumois that gave birth, in the days of Louis XIII., to our illustrious fellow-countryman Guez, better known under the name of Balzac, our Angoumois need no longer envy Limousin her Dupuytren, nor Auvergne, the country of Montlosier, nor Bordeaux, birthplace of so many great men; for we too have our poet! — The writer of the beautiful sonnets entitled the *Marguerites* unites his poet’s fame to the distinction of a prose writer, for to him we also owe the magnificent romance of *The Archer of Charles IX*. Some day our nephews will be proud to be the fellow-townsmen of Lucien Chardon, a rival of Petrarch!!!”

(The country newspapers of those days were sown with notes of admiration, as reports of English election speeches are studded with “cheers” in brackets.)

> “In spite of his brilliant success in Paris, our young poet has

not forgotten the Hotel de Bargeton, the cradle of his triumphs; nor the fact that the wife of M. le Comte du Chatelet, our Prefect, encouraged his early footsteps in the pathway of the Muses. He has come back among us once more! All L'Houmeau was thrown into excitement yesterday by the appearance of our Lucien de Rubempre. The news of his return produced a profound sensation throughout the town. Angouleme certainly will not allow L'Houmeau to be beforehand in doing honor to the poet who in journalism and literature has so gloriously represented our town in Paris. Lucien de Rubempre, a religious and Royalist poet, has braved the fury of parties; he has come home, it is said, for repose after the fatigue of a struggle which would try the strength of an even greater intellectual athlete than a poet and a dreamer.

"There is some talk of restoring our great poet to the title of the illustrious house of de Rubempre, of which his mother, Madame Chardon, is the last survivor, and it is added that Mme. la Comtesse du Chatelet was the first to think of this eminently politic idea. The revival of an ancient and almost extinct family by young talent and newly won fame is another proof that the immortal author of the Charter still cherishes the desire expressed by the words 'Union and oblivion.'

"Our poet is staying with his sister, Mme. Sechard."

Under the heading "Angouleme" followed some items of news:—

"Our Prefect, M. le Comte du Chatelet, Gentleman in Ordinary to His Majesty, has just been appointed Extraordinary Councillor of State.

"All the authorities called yesterday on M. le Prefet.

"Mme. la Comtesse du Chatelet will receive on Thursdays.

"The Mayor of Escarbas, M. de Negrepelisse, the representative of the younger branch of the d'Espard family, and father of Mme. du Chatelet, recently raised to the rank of a Count and Peer of France and a Commander of the Royal Order of St. Louis, has been nominated for the presidency of the electoral college of Angouleme at the forthcoming elections."

"There!" said Lucien, taking the paper to his sister. Eve read the article with attention, and returned with the sheet with a thoughtful air.

"What do you say to that?" asked he, surprised at a reserve that seemed so like indifference.

"The Cointets are proprietors of that paper, dear," she said; "they put in exactly what they please, and it is not at all likely that the prefecture or the palace have forced their hands. Can you imagine that your old rival the prefect would be

generous enough to sing your praises? Have you forgotten that the Cointets are suing us under Metivier's name? and that they are trying to turn David's discovery to their own advantage? I do not know the source of this paragraph, but it makes me uneasy. You used to rouse nothing but envious feeling and hatred here; a prophet has no honor in his own country, and they slandered you, and now in a moment it is all changed ——"

"You do not know the vanity of country towns," said Lucien. "A whole little town in the south turned out not so long ago to welcome a young man that had won the first prize in some competition; they looked on him as a budding great man."

"Listen, dear Lucien; I do not want to preach to you, I will say everything in a very few words — you must suspect every little thing here."

"You are right," said Lucien, but he was surprised at his sister's lack of enthusiasm. He himself was full of delight to find his humiliating and shame-stricken return to Angouleme changed into a triumph in this way.

"You have no belief in the little fame that has cost so dear!" he said again after a long silence. Something like a storm had been gathering in his heart during the past hour. For all answer Eve gave him a look, and Lucien felt ashamed of his accusation.

Dinner was scarcely over when a messenger came from the prefecture with a note addressed to M. Chardon. That note appeared to decide the day for the poet's vanity; the world contending against the family for him had won.

"M. le Comte Sixte du Chatelet and Mme. la Comtesse du Chatelet request the honor of M. Lucien Chardon's company at dinner on the fifteenth of September. R. S. V. P."

Enclosed with the invitation there was a card —

LE COMTE SIXTE DU CHATELET,
Gentleman of the Bedchamber, Prefect of the Charente,
Councillor of State.

"You are in favor," said old Sechard; "they are talking about you in the town as if you were somebody! Angouleme and L'Houmeau are disputing as to which shall twist wreaths for you."

"Eve, dear," Lucien whispered to his sister, "I am exactly in the same

condition as I was before in L'Houmeau when Mme. de Bargeton sent me the first invitation — I have not a dress suit for the prefect's dinner-party."

"Do you really mean to accept the invitation?" Eve asked in alarm, and a dispute sprang up between the brother and sister. Eve's provincial good sense told her that if you appear in society, it must be with a smiling face and faultless costume. "What will come of the prefect's dinner?" she wondered. "What has Lucien to do with the great people of Angouleme? Are they plotting something against him?" but she kept these thoughts to herself.

Lucien spoke the last word at bedtime: "You do not know my influence. The prefect's wife stands in fear of a journalist; and besides, Louise de Negrepelisse lives on in the Comtesse du Chatelet, and a woman with her influence can rescue David. I am going to tell her about my brother's invention, and it would be a mere nothing to her to obtain a subsidy of ten thousand francs from the Government for him."

At eleven o'clock that night the whole household was awakened by the town band, reinforced by the military band from the barracks. The Place du Murier was full of people. The young men of Angouleme were giving Lucien Chardon de Rubempre a serenade. Lucien went to his sister's window and made a speech after the last performance.

"I thank my fellow-townsmen for the honor that they do me," he said in the midst of a great silence; "I will strive to be worthy of it; they will pardon me if I say no more; I am so much moved by this incident that I cannot speak."

"Hurrah for the writer of *The Archer of Charles IX*.! . . . Hurrah for the poet of the *Marguerites*!.. . Long live Lucien de Rubempre!"

After these three salvos, taken up by some few voices, three crowns and a quantity of bouquets were adroitly flung into the room through the open window. Ten minutes later the Place du Murier was empty, and silence prevailed in the streets.

"I would rather have ten thousand francs," said old Sechard, fingering the bouquets and garlands with a satirical expression. "You gave them daisies, and they give you posies in return; you deal in flowers."

"So that is your opinion of the honors shown me by my fellow-townsmen, is it?" asked Lucien. All his melancholy had left him, his face was radiant with good

humor. “If you knew mankind, Papa Sechard, you would see that no moment in one’s life comes twice. Such a triumph as this can only be due to genuine enthusiasm! . . . My dear mother, my good sister, this wipes out many mortifications.”

Lucien kissed them; for when joy overflows like a torrent flood, we are fain to pour it out into a friend’s heart. “When an author is intoxicated with success, he will hug his porter if there is nobody else on hand,” according to Bixiou.

“Why, darling, why are you crying?” he said, looking into Eve’s face. “Ah! I know, you are crying for joy!”

“Oh me!” said her mother, shaking her head as she spoke. “Lucien has forgotten everything already; not merely his own troubles, but ours as well.”

Mother and daughter separated, and neither dared to utter all her thoughts.

In a country eaten up with the kind of social insubordination disguised by the word Equality, a triumph of any kind whatsoever is a sort of miracle which requires, like some other miracles for that matter, the co-operation of skilled labor. Out of ten ovations offered to ten living men, selected for this distinction by a grateful country, you may be quite sure that nine are given from considerations connected as remotely as possible with the conspicuous merits of the renowned recipient. What was Voltaire’s apotheosis at the Theatre–Francais but the triumph of eighteenth century philosophy? A triumph in France means that everybody else feels that he is adorning his own temples with the crown that he sets on the idol’s head.

The women’s presentiments proved correct. The distinguished provincial’s reception was antipathetic to Angoumoisin immobility; it was too evidently got up by some interested persons or by enthusiastic stage mechanics, a suspicious combination. Eve, moreover, like most of her sex, was distrustful by instinct, even when reason failed to justify her suspicions to herself. “Who can be so fond of Lucien that he could rouse the town for him?” she wondered as she fell asleep. “The *Marguerites* are not published yet; how can they compliment him on a future success?”

The ovation was, in fact, the work of Petit–Claud.

Petit–Claud had dined with Mme. de Senonches, for the first time, on the evening of the day that brought the cure of Marsac to Angouleme with the news of

Lucien's return. That same evening he made formal application for the hand of Mlle. de la Haye. It was a family dinner, one of the solemn occasions marked not so much by the number of the guests as by the splendor of their toilettes. Consciousness of the performance weighs upon the family party, and every countenance looks significant. Francoise was on exhibition. Mme. de Senonches had sported her most elaborate costume for the occasion; M. du Hautoy wore a black coat; M. de Senonches had returned from his visit to the Pimentels on the receipt of a note from his wife, informing him that Mme. du Chatelet was to appear at their house for the first time since her arrival, and that a suitor in form for Francoise would appear on the scenes. Boniface Cointet also was there, in his best maroon coat of clerical cut, with a diamond pin worth six thousand francs displayed in his shirt frill — the revenge of the rich merchant upon a poverty-stricken aristocracy.

Petit–Claud himself, scoured and combed, had carefully removed his gray hairs, but he could not rid himself of his wizened air. The puny little man of law, tightly buttoned into his clothes, reminded you of a torpid viper; for if hope had brought a spark of life into his magpie eyes, his face was icily rigid, and so well did he assume an air of gravity, that an ambitious public prosecutor could not have been more dignified.

Mme. de Senonches had told her intimate friends that her ward would meet her betrothed that evening, and that Mme. du Chatelet would appear at the Hotel de Senonches for the first time; and having particularly requested them to keep these matters secret, she expected to find her rooms crowded. The Comte and Comtesse du Chatelet had left cards everywhere officially, but they meant the honor of a personal visit to play a part in their policy. So aristocratic Angouleme was in such a prodigious ferment of curiosity, that certain of the Chandour camp proposed to go to the Hotel de Bargeton that evening. (They persistently declined to call the house by its new name.)

Proofs of the Countess' influence had stirred up ambition in many quarters; and not only so, it was said that the lady had changed so much for the better that everybody wished to see and judge for himself. Petit–Claud learned great news on the way to the house; Cointet told him that Zephirine had asked leave to present her dear Francoise's betrothed to the Countess, and that the Countess had granted the favor. Petit–Claud had seen at once that Lucien's return put Louise de

Negrepelisse in a false position; and now, in a moment, he flattered himself that he saw a way to take advantage of it.

M. and Mme. de Senonches had undertaken such heavy engagements when they bought the house, that, in provincial fashion, they thought it imprudent to make any changes in it. So when Madame du Chatelet was announced, Zephirine went up to her with —"Look, dear Louise, you are still in your old home!" indicating, as she spoke, the little chandelier, the paneled wainscot, and the furniture, which once had dazzled Lucien.

"I wish least of all to remember it, dear," Madame la Prefete answered graciously, looking round on the assemblage.

Every one admitted that Louise de Negrepelisse was not like the same woman. If the provincial had undergone a change, the woman herself had been transformed by those eighteen months in Paris, by the first happiness of a still recent second marriage, and the kind of dignity that power confers. The Comtesse du Chatelet bore the same resemblance to Mme. de Bargeton that a girl of twenty bears to her mother.

She wore a charming cap of lace and flowers, fastened by a diamond-headed pin; the ringlets that half hid the contours of her face added to her look of youth, and suited her style of beauty. Her foulard gown, designed by the celebrated Victorine, with a pointed bodice, exquisitely fringed, set off her figure to advantage; and a silken lace scarf, adroitly thrown about a too long neck, partly concealed her shoulders. She played with the dainty scent-bottle, hung by a chain from her bracelet; she carried her fan and her handkerchief with ease — pretty trifles, as dangerous as a sunken reef for the provincial dame. The refined taste shown in the least details, the carriage and manner modeled upon Mme. d'Espard, revealed a profound study of the Faubourg Saint–Germain.

As for the elderly beau of the Empire, he seemed since his marriage to have followed the example of the species of melon that turns from green to yellow in a night. All the youth that Sixte had lost seemed to appear in his wife's radiant countenance; provincial pleasantries passed from ear to ear, circulating the more readily because the women were furious at the new superiority of the sometime queen of Angouleme; and the persistent intruder paid the penalty of his wife's offence.

The rooms were almost as full as on that memorable evening of Lucien's readings from Chenier. Some faces were missing: M. de Chandour and Amelie, M. de Pimental and the Rastignacs — and M. de Bargeton was no longer there; but the Bishop came, as before, with his vicars-general in his train. Petit–Claud was much impressed by the sight of the great world of Angouleme. Four months ago he had no hope of entering the circle, today he felt his detestation of "the classes" sensibly diminished. He thought the Comtesse du Chatelet a most fascinating woman. "It is she who can procure me the appointment of deputy public prosecutor," he said to himself.

Louise chatted for an equal length of time with each of the women; her tone varied with the importance of the person addressed and the position taken up by the latter with regard to her journey to Paris with Lucien. The evening was half over when she withdrew to the boudoir with the Bishop. Zephirine came over to Petit–Claud, and laid her hand on his arm. His heart beat fast as his hostess brought him to the room where Lucien's troubles first began, and were now about to come to a crisis.

"This is M. Petit–Claud, dear; I recommend him to you the more warmly because anything that you may do for him will doubtless benefit my ward."

"You are an attorney, are you not, monsieur?" said the august Negrepelisse, scanning Petit–Claud.

"Alas! yes, *Madame la Comtesse*." (The son of the tailor in L'Houmeau had never once had occasion to use those three words in his life before, and his mouth was full of them.) "But it rests with you, Madame la Comtesse, whether or no I shall act for the Crown. M. Milaud is going to Nevers, it is said ——"

"But a man is usually second deputy and then first deputy, is he not?" broke in the Countess. "I should like to see you in the first deputy's place at once. But I should like first to have some assurance of your devotion to the cause of our legitimate sovereigns, to religion, and more especially to M. de Villele, if I am to interest myself on your behalf to obtain the favor."

Petit–Claud came nearer. "Madame," he said in her ear, "I am the man to yield the King absolute obedience."

"That is just what *we* want today," said the Countess, drawing back a little to make him understand that she had no wish for promises given under his breath.

“So long as you satisfy Mme. de Senonches, you can count upon me,” she added, with a royal movement of her fan.

Petit–Claud looked toward the door of the boudoir, and saw Cointet standing there. “Madame,” he said, “Lucien is here, in Angouleme.”

“Well, sir?” asked the Countess, in tones that would have put an end to all power of speech in an ordinary man.

“Mme. la Comtesse does not understand,” returned Petit–Claud, bringing out that most respectful formula again. “How does Mme. la Comtesse wish that the great man of her making should be received in Angouleme? There is no middle course; he must be received or despised here.”

This was a dilemma to which Louise de Negrepelisse had never given a thought; it touched her closely, yet rather for the sake of the past than of the future. And as for Petit–Claud, his plan for arresting David Sechard depended upon the lady’s actual feelings towards Lucien. He waited.

“M. Petit–Claud,” said the Countess, with haughty dignity, “you mean to be on the side of the Government. Learn that the first principle of government is this — never to have been in the wrong, and that the instinct of power and the sense of dignity is even stronger in women than in governments.”

“That is just what I thought, madame,” he answered quickly, observing the Countess meanwhile with attention the more profound because it was scarcely visible. “Lucien came here in the depths of misery. But if he must receive an ovation, I can compel him to leave Angouleme by the means of the ovation itself. His sister and brother-inlaw, David Sechard, are hard pressed for debts.”

In the Countess’ haughty face there was a swift, barely perceptible change; it was not satisfaction, but the repression of satisfaction. Surprised that Petit–Claud should have guessed her wishes, she gave him a glance as she opened her fan, and Francoise de la Haye’s entrance at that moment gave her time to find an answer.

“It will not be long before you are public prosecutor, monsieur,” she said, with a significant smile. That speech did not commit her in any way, but it was explicit enough. Francoise had come in to thank the Countess.

“Oh! madame, then I shall owe the happiness of my life to you,” she exclaimed, bending girlishly to add in the Countess’ ear, “To marry a petty

provincial attorney would be like being burned by slow fires."

It was Francis, with his knowledge of officialdom, who had prompted Zephirine to make this set upon Louise.

"In the very earliest days after promotion," so the ex-consul-general told his fair friend, "everybody, prefect, or monarch, or man of business, is burning to exert his influence for his friends; but a patron soon finds out the inconveniences of patronage, and then turns from fire to ice. Louise will do more now for Petit–Claud than she would do for her husband in three months' time."

"Madame la Comtesse is thinking of all that our poet's triumph entails?" continued Petit–Claud. "She should receive Lucien before there is an end of the nine-days' wonder."

The Countess terminated the audience with a bow, and rose to speak with Mme. de Pimentel, who came to the boudoir. The news of old Negrepelisse's elevation to a marquisate had greatly impressed the Marquise; she judged it expedient to be amiable to a woman so clever as to rise the higher for an apparent fall.

"Do tell me, dear, why you took the trouble to put your father in the House of Peers?" said the Marquise, in the course of a little confidential conversation, in which she bent the knee before the superiority of "her dear Louise."

"They were all the more ready to grant the favor because my father has no son to succeed him, dear, and his vote will always be at the disposal of the Crown; but if we should have sons, I quite expect that my oldest will succeed to his grandfather's name, title, and peerage."

Mme. de Pimentel saw, to her annoyance, that it was idle to expect a mother ambitious for children not yet in existence to further her own private designs of raising M. de Pimentel to a peerage.

"I have the Countess," Petit–Claud told Cointet when they came away. "I can promise you your partnership. I shall be deputy prosecutor before the month is out, and Sechard will be in your power. Try to find a buyer for my connection; it has come to be the first in Angouleme in my hands during the last five months ——"

"Once put *you* on the horse, and there is no need to do more," said Cointet,

half jealous of his own work.

The causes of Lucien's triumphant reception in his native town must now be plain to everybody. Louise du Chatelet followed the example of that King of France who left the Duke of Orleans unavenged; she chose to forget the insults received in Paris by Mme. de Bargeton. She would patronize Lucien, and overwhelming him with her patronage, would completely crush him and get rid of him by fair means. Petit–Claud knew the whole tale of the cabals in Paris through town gossip, and shrewdly guessed how a woman must hate the man who would not love when she was fain of his love.

The ovation justified the past of Louise de Negrepelisse. The next day Petit–Claud appeared at Mme. Sechard's house, heading a deputation of six young men of the town, all of them Lucien's schoolfellows. He meant to finish his work, to intoxicate Lucien completely, and to have him in his power. Lucien's old schoolfellows at the Angouleme grammar-school wished to invite the author of the *Marguerites* and *The Archer of Charles IX.* to a banquet given in honor of the great man arisen from their ranks.

"Come, this is your doing, Petit–Claud!" exclaimed Lucien.

"Your return has stirred our conceit," said Petit–Claud; "we made it a point of honor to get up a subscription, and we will have a tremendous affair for you. The masters and the headmaster will be there, and, at the present rate, we shall, no doubt, have the authorities too."

"For what day?" asked Lucien.

"Sunday next."

"That is quite out of the question," said Lucien. "I cannot accept an invitation for the next ten days, but then I will gladly ——"

"Very well," said Petit–Claud, "so be it then, in ten days' time."

Lucien behaved charmingly to his old schoolfellows, and they regarded him with almost respectful admiration. He talked away very wittily for half an hour; he had been set upon a pedestal, and wished to justify the opinion of his fellow-townsmen; so he stood with his hands thrust into his pockets, and held forth from the height to which he had been raised. He was modest and good-natured, as befitted genius in dressing-gown and slippers; he was the athlete, wearied by a

wrestling bout with Paris, and disenchanted above all things; he congratulated the comrades who had never left the dear old province, and so forth, and so forth. They were delighted with him. He took Petit–Claud aside, and asked him for the real truth about David's affairs, reproaching him for allowing his brother-inlaw to go into hiding, and tried to match his wits against the little lawyer. Petit–Claud made an effort over himself, and gave his acquaintance to understand that he (Petit–Claud) was only an insignificant little country attorney, with no sort of craft nor subtlety.

The whole machinery of modern society is so infinitely more complex than in ancient times, that the subdivision of human faculty is the result. The great men of the days of old were perforce universal geniuses, appearing at rare intervals like lighted torches in an antique world. In the course of ages the intellect began to work on special lines, but the great man still could "take all knowledge for his province." A man "full cautelous," as was said of Louis XI., for instance, could apply that special faculty in every direction, but today the single quality is subdivided, and every profession has its special craft. A peasant or a pettifogging solicitor might very easily overreach an astute diplomate over a bargain in some remote country village; and the wiliest journalist may prove the veriest simpleton in a piece of business. Lucien could but be a puppet in the hands of Petit–Claud.

That guileful practitioner, as might have been expected, had written the article himself; Angouleme and L'Houmeau, thus put on their mettle, thought it incumbent upon them to pay honor to Lucien. His fellow-citizens, assembled in the Place du Murier, were Cointets' workpeople from the papermills and printing-house, with a sprinkling of Lucien's old schoolfellows and the clerks in the employ of Messieurs Petit–Claud and Cachan. As for the attorney himself, he was once more Lucien's chum of old days; and he thought, not without reason, that before very long he should learn David's whereabouts in some unguarded moment. And if David came to grief through Lucien's fault, the poet would find Angouleme too hot to hold him. Petit–Claud meant to secure his hold; he posed, therefore, as Lucien's inferior.

"What better could I have done?" he said accordingly. "My old chum's sister was involved, it is true, but there are some positions that simply cannot be maintained in a court of law. David asked me on the first of June to ensure him a quiet life for three months; he had a quiet life until September, and even so I have

kept his property out of his creditors' power, for I shall gain my case in the Court–Royal; I contend that the wife is a privileged creditor, and her claim is absolute, unless there is evidence of intent to defraud. As for you, you have come back in misfortune, but you are a genius."—(Lucien turned about as if the incense were burned too close to his face.) —"Yes, my dear fellow, a *genius*. I have read your *Archer of Charles IX.*; it is more than a romance, it is literature. Only two living men could have written the preface — Chateaubriand and Lucien."

Lucien accepted that d'Arthez had written the preface. Ninety-nine writers out of a hundred would have done the same.

"Well, nobody here seemed to have heard of you!" Petit–Claud continued, with apparent indignation. "When I saw the general indifference, I made up my mind to change all that. I wrote that article in the paper ——"

"What? did you write it?" exclaimed Lucien.

"I myself. Angouleme and L'Houmeau were stirred to rivalry; I arranged for a meeting of your old schoolfellows, and got up yesterday's serenade; and when once the enthusiasm began to grow, we started a committee for the dinner. 'If David is in hiding,' said I to myself, 'Lucien shall be crowned at any rate.' And I have done even better than that," continued Petit–Claud; "I have seen the Comtesse du Chatelet and made her understand that she owes it to herself to extricate David from his position; she can do it, and she ought to do it. If David had really discovered the secret of which he spoke to me, the Government ought to lend him a hand, it would not ruin the Government; and think what a fine thing for a prefect to have half the credit of the great invention for the well-timed help. It would set people talking about him as an enlightened administrator. — Your sister has taken fright at our musketry practice; she was scared of the smoke. A battle in the law-courts costs quite as much as a battle on the field; but David has held his ground, he has his secret. They cannot stop him, and they will not pull him up now."

"Thanks, my dear fellow; I see that I can take you into my confidence; you shall help me to carry out my plan."

Petit–Claud looked at Lucien, and his gimlet face was a point of interrogation.

"I intend to rescue Sechard," Lucien said, with a certain importance. "I brought his misfortunes upon him; I mean to make full reparation. . . . I have

more influence over Louise ——”

“Who is Louise?”

“The Comtesse du Chatelet!”

Petit–Claud started.

“I have more influence over her than she herself suspects,” said Lucien; “only, my dear fellow, if I can do something with your authorities here, I have no decent clothes.”— Petit–Claud made as though he would offer his purse.

“Thank you,” said Lucien, grasping Petit–Claud’s hand. “In ten days’ time I will pay a visit to the Countess and return your call.”

The shook hands like old comrades, and separated.

“He ought to be a poet” said Petit–Claud to himself; “he is quite mad.”

“There are no friends like one’s school friends; it is a true saying,” Lucien thought at he went to find his sister.

“What can Petit–Claud have promised to do that you should be so friendly with him, my Lucien?” asked Eve. “Be on your guard with him.”

“With *him*?” cried Lucien. “Listen, Eve,” he continued, seeming to bethink himself; “you have no faith in me now; you do not trust me, so it is not likely you will trust Petit–Claud; but in ten or twelve days you will change your mind,” he added, with a touch of fatuity. And he went to his room, and indited the following epistle to Lousteau:—

Lucien to Lousteau.

“MY FRIEND— Of the pair of us, I alone can remember that bill for a thousand francs that I once lent you; and I know how things will be with you when you open this letter too well, alas! not to add immediately that I do not expect to be repaid in current coin of the realm; no, I will take it in credit from you, just as one would ask Florine for pleasure. We have the same tailor; therefore, you can order a complete outfit for me on the shortest possible notice. I am not precisely wearing Adam’s costume, but I cannot show myself here. To my astonishment, the honors paid by the departments to a Parisian celebrity awaited me. I am the hero of a banquet, for all the world as if I were a Deputy of the Left. Now, after that, do you understand that I must have a black coat? Promise to pay; have it put down to your account, try the advertisement dodge, rehearse an unpublished scene between Don Juan and M. Dimanche, for I must have a gala suit at all costs. I

have nothing, nothing but rags: start with that; it is August, the weather is magnificent, ergo see that I receive by the end of the week a charming morning suit, dark bronze-green jacket, and three waistcoats, one a brimstone yellow, one a plaid, and the third must be white; furthermore, let there be three pairs of trousers of the most fetching kind — one pair of white English stuff, one pair of nankeen, and a third of thin black kerseymere; lastly, send a black dress-coat and a black satin waistcoat. If you have picked up another Florine somewhere, I beg her good offices for two cravats. So far this is nothing; I count upon you and your skill in these matters; I am not much afraid of the tailor. But the ingenuity of poverty, assuredly the most active of all poisons at work in the system of man (*id est* the Parisian), an ingenuity that would catch Satan himself napping, has failed so far to discover a way to obtain a hat on credit! — How many a time, my dear friend, have we deplored this! When one of us shall bring a hat that costs one thousand francs into fashion, then, and not till then, can we afford to wear them; until that day comes we are bound to have cash enough in our pockets to pay for a hat. Ah! what an ill turn the Comedie–Francaise did us with, 'Lafleur, you will put gold in my pockets!'

"I write with a profound sense of all the difficulties involved by the demand. Enclose with the above a pair of boots, a pair of pumps, a hat, half a dozen pairs of gloves. 'Tis asking the impossible; I know it. But what is a literary life but a periodical recurrence of the impossible? Work the miracle, write a long article, or play some small scurvy trick, and I will hold your debt as fully discharged — this is all I say to you. It is a debt of honor after all, my dear fellow, and due these twelve months; you ought to blush for yourself if you have any blushes left.

"Joking apart, my dear Lousteau, I am in serious difficulties, as you may judge for yourself when I tell you that Mme. de Bargeton has married Chatelet, and Chatelet is prefect of Angouleme. The precious pair can do a good deal for my brother-inlaw; he is in hiding at this moment on account of that letter of exchange, and the horrid business is all my doing. So it is a question of appearing before Mme. la Prefete and regaining my influence at all costs. It is shocking, is it not, that David Sechard's fate should hang upon a neat pair of shoes, a pair of open-worked gray silk stockings (mind you, remember them), and a new hat? I shall give out that I am sick and ill, and take to my bed, like Duvicquet, to save the trouble of replying to the pressing invitations of my fellow-townsmen. My fellow-townsmen, dear boy, have treated me to a fine serenade. *My fellow-townsmen*, forsooth! I begin to wonder how many fools go to make up that word, since I learned that two or three of my old schoolfellows worked up the capital of the Angoumois to this pitch of enthusiasm.

"If you could contrive to slip a few lines as to my reception in among the news items, I should be several inches taller for it here; and besides, I should make Mme. la Prefete feel that, if I have not friends, I have some credit, at any rate, with the Parisian press. I give up none of my hopes, and I will return the compliment. If you want a good, solid, substantial article for some magazine or other, I have time enough now to think something out. I only say the word, my dear friend; I count upon you as you may count upon me, and I am yours sincerely.

"LUCIEN DE R.

"P. S. — Send the things to the coach office to wait until called for."

Lucien held up his head again. In this mood he wrote the letter, and as he wrote his thoughts went back to Paris. He had spent six days in the provinces, and the uneventful quietness of provincial life had already entered into his soul; his mind returned to those dear old miserable days with a vague sense of regret. The Comtesse du Chatelet filled his thoughts for a whole week; and at last he came to attach so much importance to his reappearance, that he hurried down to the coach office in L'Houmeau after nightfall in a perfect agony of suspense, like a woman who has set her last hopes upon a new dress, and waits in despair until it arrives.

"Ah! Lousteau, all your treasons are forgiven," he said to himself, as he eyed the packages, and knew from the shape of them that everything had been sent. Inside the hatbox he found a note from Lousteau:—

FLORINE'S DRAWING-ROOM.

"MY DEAR BOY— The tailor behaved very well; but as thy profound retrospective glance led thee to forbode, the cravats, the hats, and the silk hosen perplexed our souls, for there was nothing in our purse to be perplexed thereby. As said Blondet, so say we; there is a fortune awaiting the establishment which will supply young men with inexpensive articles on credit; for when we do not pay in the beginning, we pay dear in the end. And by the by, did not the great Napoleon, who missed a voyage to the Indies for want of boots, say that, 'If a thing is easy, it is never done?' So everything went well — except the boots. I beheld a vision of thee, fully dressed, but without a hat! appareled in waistcoats, yet shoeless! and bethought me of sending a pair of moccasins given to Florine as a curiosity by an American. Florine offered the huge sum of forty francs, that we might try our luck at play for you. Nathan, Blondet, and I had such luck (as we were not playing for ourselves) that we were rich enough to ask La Torpille, des Lupeaulx's sometime 'rat,' to supper. Frascati certainly owed us

that much. Florine undertook the shopping, and added three fine shirts to the purchases. Nathan sends you a cane. Blondet, who won three hundred francs, is sending you a gold chain; and the gold watch, the size of a forty-franc piece, is from La Torpille; some idiot gave the thing to her, and it will not go. 'Trumpery rubbish,' she says, 'like the man that owned it.' Bixiou, who came to find us up at the *Rocher de Cancale*, wished to enclose a bottle of Portugal water in the package. Said our first comic man, 'If this can make him happy, let him have it!' growling it out in a deep bass voice with the *bourgeois* pomposity that he can act to the life. Which things, my dear boy, ought to prove to you how much we care for our friends in adversity. Florine, whom I have had the weakness to forgive, begs you to send us an article on Nathan's hat. Fare thee well, my son. I can only commiserate you on finding yourself back in the same box from which you emerged when you discovered your old comrade.

"ETIENNE L."

"Poor fellows! They have been gambling for me," said Lucien; he was quite touched by the letter. A waft of the breeze from an unhealthy country, from the land where one has suffered most, may seem to bring the odors of Paradise; and in a dull life there is an indefinable sweetness in memories of past pain.

Eve was struck dumb with amazement when her brother came down in his new clothes. She did not recognize him.

"Now I can walk out in Beaulieu," he cried; "they shall not say it of me that I came back in rags. Look, here is a watch which I shall return to you, for it is mine; and, like its owner, it is erratic in its ways."

"What a child he is!" exclaimed Eve. "It is impossible to bear you any grudge."

"Then do you imagine, my dear girl, that I sent for all this with the silly idea of shining in Angouleme? I don't care *that* for Angouleme" (twirling his cane with the engraved gold knob). "I intend to repair the wrong I have done, and this is my battle array."

Lucien's success in this kind was his one real triumph; but the triumph, be it said, was immense. If admiration freezes some people's tongues, envy loosens at least as many more, and if women lost their heads over Lucien, men slandered him. He might have cried, in the words of the songwriter, "I thank thee, my coat!" He left two cards at the prefecture, and another upon Petit–Claud. The next day, the day of the banquet, the following paragraph appeared under the heading

"Angouleme" in the Paris newspapers:—

> "ANGOULEME.
>
> "The return of the author of *The Archer of Charles IX*. has been the signal for an ovation which does equal honor to the town and to M. Lucien de Rubempre, the young poet who has made so brilliant a beginning; the writer of the one French historical novel not written in the style of Scott, and of a preface which may be called a literary event. The town hastened to offer him a patriotic banquet on his return. The name of the recently-appointed prefect is associated with the public demonstration in honor of the author of the *Marguerites*, whose talent received such warm encouragement from Mme. du Chatelet at the outset of his career."

In France, when once the impulse is given, nobody can stop. The colonel of the regiment offered to put his band at the disposal of the committee. The landlord of the *Bell* (renowned for truffled turkeys, despatched in the most wonderful porcelain jars to the uttermost parts of the earth), the famous innkeeper of L'Houmeau, would supply the repast. At five o'clock some forty persons, all in state and festival array, were assembled in his largest ball, decorated with hangings, crowns of laurel, and bouquets. The effect was superb. A crowd of onlookers, some hundred persons, attracted for the most part by the military band in the yard, represented the citizens of Angouleme.

Petit–Claud went to the window. "All Angouleme is here," he said, looking out.

"I can make nothing of this," remarked little Postel to his wife (they had come out to hear the band play). "Why, the prefect and the receiver-general, and the colonel and the superintendent of the powder factory, and our mayor and deputy, and the headmaster of the school, and the manager of the foundry at Ruelle, and the public prosecutor, M. Milaud, and all the authorities, have just gone in!"

The bank struck up as they sat down to table with variations on the air *Vive le roy, vive la France*, a melody which has never found popular favor. It was then five o'clock in the evening; it was eight o'clock before dessert was served. Conspicuous among the sixty-five dishes appeared an Olympus in confectionery, surmounted by a figure of France modeled in chocolate, to give the signal for toasts and speeches.

"Gentlemen," called the prefect, rising to his feet, "the King! the rightful ruler

of France! To what do we owe the generation of poets and thinkers who maintain the sceptre of letters in the hands of France, if not to the peace which the Bourbons have restored ——"

"Long live the King!" cried the assembled guests (ministerialists predominated).

The venerable headmaster rose.

"To the hero of the day," he said, "to the young poet who combines the gift of the *prosateur* with the charm and poetic faculty of Petrarch in that sonnet-form which Boileau declares to be so difficult."

Cheers.

The colonel rose next. "Gentlemen, to the Royalist! for the hero of this evening had the courage to fight for sound principles!"

"Bravo!" cried the prefect, leading the applause.

Then Petit–Claud called upon all Lucien's schoolfellows there present. "To the pride of the grammar-school of Angouleme! to the venerable headmaster so dear to us all, to whom the acknowledgment for some part of our triumph is due!"

The old headmaster dried his eyes; he had not expected this toast. Lucien rose to his feet, the whole room was suddenly silent, and the poet's face grew white. In that pause the old headmaster, who sat on his left, crowned him with a laurel wreath. A round of applause followed, and when Lucien spoke it was with tears in his eyes and a sob in his throat.

"He is drunk," remarked the attorney-general-designate to his neighbor, Petit–Claud.

"My dear fellow-countrymen, my dear comrades," Lucien said at last, "I could wish that all France might witness this scene; for thus men rise to their full stature, and in such ways as these our land demands great deeds and noble work of us. And when I think of the little that I have done, and of this great honor shown to me today, I can only feel confused and impose upon the future the task of justifying your reception of me. The recollection of this moment will give me renewed strength for efforts to come. Permit me to indicate for your homage my earliest muse and protectress, and to associate her name with that of my birthplace; so — to the Comtesse du Chatelet and the noble town of Angouleme!"

“He came out of that pretty well!” said the public prosecutor, nodding approval; “our speeches were all prepared, and his was improvised.”

At ten o’clock the party began to break up, and little knots of guests went home together. David Sechard heard the unwonted music.

“What is going on in L’Houmeau?” he asked of Basine.

“They are giving a dinner to your brother-inlaw, Lucien ——”

“I know that he would feel sorry to miss me there,” he said.

At midnight Petit–Claud walked home with Lucien. As they reached the Place du Murier, Lucien said, “Come life, come death, we are friends, my dear fellow.”

“My marriage contract,” said the lawyer, “with Mlle. Francoise de la Haye will be signed tomorrow at Mme. de Senonches’ house; do me the pleasure of coming. Mme. de Senonches implored me to bring you, and you will meet Mme. du Chatelet; they are sure to tell her of your speech, and she will feel flattered by it.”

“I knew what I was about,” said Lucien.

“Oh! you will save David.”

“I am sure I shall,” the poet replied.

Just at that moment David appeared as if by magic in the Place du Murier. This was how it had come about. He felt that he was in a rather difficult position; his wife insisted that Lucien must neither go to David nor know of his hiding-place; and Lucien all the while was writing the most affectionate letters, saying that in a few days’ time all should be set right; and even as Basine Clerget explained the reason why the band played, she put two letters into his hands. The first was from Eve.

> “DEAREST,” she wrote, “do as if Lucien were not here; do not trouble yourself in the least; our whole security depends upon the fact that your enemies cannot find you; get that idea firmly into your head. I have more confidence in Kolb and Marion and Basine than in my own brother; such is my misfortune. Alas! poor Lucien is not the ingenuous and tender-hearted poet whom we used to know; and it is simply because he is trying to interfere on your behalf, and because he imagines that he can discharge our debts (and this from pride, my David), that I am afraid of him. Some fine clothes have been sent from Paris for him, and five gold pieces in a pretty purse. He gave the money to me, and we are living on it.

"We have one enemy the less. Your father has gone, thanks to Petit–Claud. Petit–Claud unraveled his designs, and put an end to them at once by telling him that you would do nothing without consulting him, and that he (Petit–Claud) would not allow you to concede a single point in the matter of the invention until you had been promised an indemnity of thirty thousand francs; fifteen thousand to free you from embarrassment, and fifteen thousand more to be yours in any case, whether your invention succeeds or no. I cannot understand Petit–Claud. I embrace you, dear, a wife's kiss for her husband in trouble. Our little Lucien is well. How strange it is to watch him grow rosy and strong, like a flower, in these stormy days! Mother prays God for you now, as always, and sends love only less tender than mine. — Your
"EVE."

As a matter of fact, Petit–Claud and the Cointets had taken fright at old Sechard's peasant shrewdness, and got rid of him so much the more easily because it was now vintage time at Marsac. Eve's letter enclosed another from Lucien:—

"MY DEAR DAVID— Everything is going well. I am armed *cap-a-pie*; today I open the campaign, and in forty-eight hours I shall have made great progress. How glad I shall be to embrace you when you are free again and my debts are all paid! My mother and sister persist in mistrusting me; their suspicion wounds me to the quick. As if I did not know already that you are hiding with Basine, for every time that Basine comes to the house I hear news of you and receive answers to my letters; and besides, it is plain that my sister could not find any one else to trust. It hurts me cruelly to think that I shall be so near you today, and yet that you will not be present at this banquet in my honor. I owe my little triumph to the vainglory of Angouleme; in a few days it will be quite forgotten, and you alone would have taken a real pleasure in it. But, after all, in a little while you will pardon everything to one who counts it more than all the triumphs in the world to be your brother,
"LUCIEN."

Two forces tugged sharply at David's heart; he adored his wife; and if he held Lucien in somewhat less esteem, his friendship was scarcely diminished. In solitude our feelings have unrestricted play; and a man preoccupied like David, with all-absorbing thoughts, will give way to impulses for which ordinary life would have provided a sufficient counterpoise. As he read Lucien's letter to the sound of military music, and heard of this unlooked-for recognition, he was deeply touched by that expression of regret. He had known how it would be. A very slight expression of feeling appeals irresistibly to a sensitive soul, for they are apt to

credit others with like depths. How should the drop fall unless the cup were full to the brim?

So at midnight, in spite of all Basine's entreaties, David must go to see Lucien.

"Nobody will be out in the streets at this time of night," he said; "I shall not be seen, and they cannot arrest me. Even if I should meet people, I can make use of Kolb's way of going into hiding. And besides, it is so intolerably long since I saw my wife and child."

The reasoning was plausible enough; Basine gave way, and David went. Petit–Claud was just taking leave as he came up and at his cry of "Lucien!" the two brothers flung their arms about each other with tears in their eyes.

Life holds not many moments such as these. Lucien's heart went out in response to this friendship for its own sake. There was never question of debtor and creditor between them, and the offender met with no reproaches save his own. David, generous and noble that he was, was longing to bestow pardon; he meant first of all to read Lucien a lecture, and scatter the clouds that overspread the love of the brother and sister; and with these ends in view, the lack of money and its consequent dangers disappeared entirely from his mind.

"Go home," said Petit–Claud, addressing his client; "take advantage of your imprudence to see your wife and child again, at any rate; and you must not be seen, mind you! — How unlucky!" he added, when he was alone in the Place du Murier. "If only Cerizet were here ——"

The buildings magniloquently styled the Angouleme Law Courts were then in process of construction. Petit–Claud muttered these words to himself as he passed by the hoardings, and heard a tap upon the boards, and a voice issuing from a crack between two planks.

"Here I am," said Cerizet; "I saw David coming out of L'Houmeau. I was beginning to have my suspicions about his retreat, and now I am sure; and I know where to have him. But I want to know something of Lucien's plans before I set the snare for David; and here are you sending him into the house! Find some excuse for stopping here, at least, and when David and Lucien come out, send them round this way; they will think they are quite alone, and I shall overhear their good-bye."

"You are a very devil," muttered Petit–Claud.

“Well, I’m blessed if a man wouldn’t do anything for the thing you promised me.”

Petit–Claud walked away from the hoarding, and paced up and down in the Place du Murier; he watched the windows of the room where the family sat together, and thought of his own prospects to keep up his courage. Cerizet’s cleverness had given him the chance of striking the final blow. Petit–Claud was a double-dealer of the profoundly cautious stamp that is never caught by the bait of a present satisfaction, nor entangled by a personal attachment, after his first initiation into the strategy of self-seeking and the instability of the human heart. So, from the very first, he had put little trust in Cointet. He foresaw that his marriage negotiations might very easily be broken off, saw also that in that case he could not accuse Cointet of bad faith, and he had taken his measures accordingly. But since his success at the Hotel de Bargeton, Petit–Claud’s game was above board. A certain under-plot of his was useless now, and even dangerous to a man with his political ambitions. He had laid the foundations of his future importance in the following manner:—

Gannerac and a few of the wealthy men of business in L’Houmeau formed a sort of Liberal clique in constant communication (through commercial channels) with the leaders of the Opposition. The Villele ministry, accepted by the dying Louis XVIII., gave the signal for a change of tactics in the Opposition camp; for, since the death of Napoleon, the liberals had ceased to resort to the dangerous expedient of conspiracy. They were busy organizing resistance by lawful means throughout the provinces, and aiming at securing control of the great bulk of electors by convincing the masses. Petit–Claud, a rabid Liberal, and a man of L’Houmeau, was the instigator, the secret counselor, and the very life of this movement in the lower town, which groaned under the tyranny of the aristocrats at the upper end. He was the first to see the danger of leaving the whole press of the department in the control of the Cointets; the Opposition must have its organ; it would not do to be behind other cities.

“If each one of us gives Gannerac a bill for five hundred francs, he would have some twenty thousand francs and more; we might buy up Sechard’s printing-office, and we could do as we liked with the master-printer if we lent him the capital,” Petit–Claud had said.

Others had taken up the idea, and in this way Petit–Claud strengthened his

position with regard to David on the one side and the Cointets on the other. Casting about him for a tool for his party, he naturally thought that a rogue of Cerizet's calibre was the very man for the purpose.

"If you can find Sechard's hiding-place and put him in our hands, somebody will lend you twenty thousand francs to buy his business, and very likely there will be a newspaper to print. So, set about it," he had said.

Petit–Claud put more faith in Cerizet's activity than in all the Doublons in existence; and then it was that he promised Cointet that Sechard should be arrested. But now that the little lawyer cherished hopes of office, he saw that he must turn his back upon the Liberals; and, meanwhile, the amount for the printing-office had been subscribed in L'Houmeau. Petit–Claud decided to allow things to take their natural course.

"Pooh!" he thought, "Cerizet will get into trouble with his paper, and give me an opportunity of displaying my talents."

He walked up to the door of the printing-office and spoke to Kolb, the sentinel. "Go up and warn David that he had better go now," he said, "and take every precaution. I am going home; it is one o'clock."

Marion came to take Kolb's place. Lucien and David came down together and went out, Kolb a hundred paces ahead of them, and Marion at the same distance behind. The two friends walked past the hoarding, Lucien talking eagerly the while.

"My plan is extremely simple, David; but how could I tell you about it while Eve was there? She would never understand. I am quite sure that at the bottom of Louise's heart there is a feeling that I can rouse, and I should like to arouse it if it is only to avenge myself upon that idiot the prefect. If our love affair only lasts for a week, I will contrive to send an application through her for the subvention of twenty thousand francs for you. I am going to see her again tomorrow in the little boudoir where our old affair of the heart began; Petit–Claud says that the room is the same as ever; I shall play my part in the comedy; and I will send word by Basine tomorrow morning to tell you whether the actor was hissed. You may be at liberty by then, who knows? — Now do you understand how it was that I wanted clothes from Paris? One cannot act the lover's part in rags."

At six o'clock that morning Cerizet went to Petit–Claud.

“Doublon can be ready to take his man tomorrow at noon, I will answer for it,” he said; “I know one of Mlle. Clerget’s girls, do you understand?” Cerizet unfolded his plan, and Petit–Claud hurried to find Cointet.

“If M. Francis du Hautoy will settle his property on Francoise, you shall sign a deed of partnership with Sechard in two days. I shall not be married for a week after the contract is signed, so we shall both be within the terms of our little agreement, tit for tat. To-night, however, we must keep a close watch over Lucien and Mme. la Comtesse du Chatelet, for the whole business lies in that. . . . If Lucien hopes to succeed through the Countess’ influence, I have David safe ——”

“You will be Keeper of the Seals yet, it is my belief,” said Cointet.

“And why not? No one objects to M. de Peyronnet,” said Petit–Claud. He had not altogether sloughed his skin of Liberalism.

Mlle. de la Haye’s ambiguous position brought most of the upper town to the signing of the marriage contract. The comparative poverty of the young couple and the absence of a *corbeille* quickened the interest that people love to exhibit; for it is with beneficence as with ovations, we prefer the deeds of charity which gratify self-love. The Marquise de Pimentel, the Comtesse du Chatelet, M. de Senonches, and one or two frequenters of the house had given Francoise a few wedding presents, which made great talk in the city. These pretty trifles, together with the trousseau which Zephirine had been preparing for the past twelve months, the godfather’s jewels, and the usual wedding gifts, consoled Francoise and roused the curiosity of some mothers of daughters.

Petit–Claud and Cointet had both remarked that their presence in the Angouleme Olympus was endured rather than courted. Cointet was Francoise’s trustee and quasi-guardian; and if Petit–Claud was to sign the contract, Petit–Claud’s presence was as necessary as the attendance of the man to be hanged at an execution; but though, once married, Mme. Petit–Claud might keep her right of entry to her godmother’s house, Petit–Claud foresaw some difficulty on his own account, and resolved to be beforehand with these haughty personages.

He felt ashamed of his parents. He had sent his mother to stay at Mansle; now he begged her to say that she was out of health and to give her consent in writing. So humiliating was it to be without relations, protectors, or witnesses to his signature, that Petit–Claud thought himself in luck that he could bring a

presentable friend at the Countess' request. He called to take up Lucien, and they drove to the Hotel de Bargeton.

On that memorable evening the poet dressed to outshine every man present. Mme. de Senonches had spoken of him as the hero of the hour, and a first interview between two estranged lovers is the kind of scene that provincials particularly love. Lucien had come to be the lion of the evening; he was said to be so handsome, so much changed, so wonderful, that every well-born woman in Angouleme was curious to see him again. Following the fashion of the transition period between the eighteenth century small clothes and the vulgar costume of the present day, he wore tight-fitting black trousers. Men still showed their figures in those days, to the utter despair of lean, clumsily-made mortals; and Lucien was an Apollo. The open-work gray silk stockings, the neat shoes, and the black satin waistcoat were scrupulously drawn over his person, and seemed to cling to him. His forehead looked the whiter by contrast with the thick, bright curls that rose above it with studied grace. The proud eyes were radiant. The hands, small as a woman's, never showed to better advantage than when gloved. He had modeled himself upon de Marsay, the famous Parisian dandy, holding his hat and cane in one hand, and keeping the other free for the very occasional gestures which illustrated his talk.

Lucien had quite intended to emulate the famous false modesty of those who bend their heads to pass beneath the Porte Saint–Denis, and to slip unobserved into the room; but Petit–Claud, having but one friend, made him useful. He brought Lucien almost pompously through a crowded room to Mme. de Senonches. The poet heard a murmur as he passed; not so very long ago that hum of voices would have turned his head, today he was quite different; he did not doubt that he himself was greater than the whole Olympus put together.

"Madame," he said, addressing Mme. de Senonches, "I have already congratulated my friend Petit–Claud (a man with the stuff in him of which Keepers of the Seals are made) on the honor of his approaching connection with you, slight as are the ties between godmother and goddaughter ——" (this with the air of a man uttering an epigram, by no means lost upon any woman in the room, for every woman was listening without appearing to do so.) "And as for myself," he continued, "I am delighted to have the opportunity of paying my homage to you."

He spoke easily and fluently, as some great lord might speak under the roof of

his inferiors; and as he listened to Zephirine's involved reply, he cast a glance over the room to consider the effect that he wished to make. The pause gave him time to discover Francis du Hautoy and the prefect; to bow gracefully to each with the proper shade of difference in his smile, and, finally, to approach Mme. du Chatelet as if he had just caught sight of her. That meeting was the real event of the evening. No one so much as thought of the marriage contract lying in the adjoining bedroom, whither Francoise and the notary led guest after guest to sign the document. Lucien made a step towards Louise de Negrepelisse, and then spoke with that grace of manner now associated, for her, with memories of Paris.

"Do I owe to you, madame, the pleasure of an invitation to dine at the Prefecture the day after tomorrow?" he said.

"You owe it solely to your fame, monsieur," Louise answered drily, somewhat taken aback by the turn of a phrase by which Lucien deliberately tried to wound her pride.

"Ah! Madame la Comtesse, I cannot bring you the guest if the man is in disgrace," said Lucien, and, without waiting for an answer, he turned and greeted the Bishop with stately grace.

"Your lordship's prophecy has been partially fulfilled," he said, and there was a winning charm in his tones; "I will endeavor to fulfil it to the letter. I consider myself very fortunate since this evening brings me an opportunity of paying my respects to you."

Lucien drew the Bishop into a conversation that lasted for ten minutes. The women looked on Lucien as a phenomenon. His unexpected insolence had struck Mme. du Chatelet dumb; she could not find an answer. Looking round the room, she saw that every woman admired Lucien; she watched group after group repeating the phrases by which Lucien crushed her with seeming disdain, and her heart contracted with a spasm of mortification.

"Suppose that he should not come to the Prefecture after this, what talk there would be!" she thought. "Where did he learn this pride? Can Mlle. des Touches have taken a fancy for him? . . . He is so handsome. They say that she hurried to see him in Paris the day after that actress died. . . . Perhaps he has come to the rescue of his brother-inlaw, and happened to be behind our caleche at Mansle by accident. Lucien looked at us very strangely that morning."

A crowd of thoughts crossed Louise's brain, and unluckily for her, she continued to ponder visibly as she watched Lucien. He was talking with the Bishop as if he were the king of the room; making no effort to find any one out, waiting till others came to him, looking round about him with varying expression, and as much at his ease as his model de Marsay. M. de Senonches appeared at no great distance, but Lucien still stood beside the prelate.

At the end of ten minutes Louise could contain herself no longer. She rose and went over to the Bishop and said:

"What is being said, my lord, that you smile so often?"

Lucien drew back discreetly, and left Mme. du Chatelet with his lordship.

"Ah! Mme. la Comtesse, what a clever young fellow he is! He was explaining to me that he owed all he is to you ——"

"*I* am not ungrateful, madame," said Lucien, with a reproachful glance that charmed the Countess.

"Let us have an understanding," she said, beckoning him with her fan. "Come into the boudoir. My Lord Bishop, you shall judge between us."

"She has found a funny task for his lordship," said one of the Chandour camp, sufficiently audibly.

"Judge between us!" repeated Lucien, looking from the prelate to the lady; "then, is one of us in fault?"

Louise de Negrepelisse sat down on the sofa in the familiar boudoir. She made the Bishop sit on one side and Lucien on the other, then she began to speak. But Lucien, to the joy and surprise of his old love, honored her with inattention; her words fell unheeded on his ears; he sat like Pasta in *Tancredi*, with the words *O patria!* upon her lips, the music of the great cavatina *Dell Rizzo* might have passed into his face. Indeed, Coralie's pupil had contrived to bring the tears to his eyes.

"Oh! Louise, how I loved you!" he murmured, careless of the Bishop's presence, heedless of the conversation, as soon as he knew that the Countess had seen the tears.

"Dry your eyes, or you will ruin me here a second time," she said in an aside that horrified the prelate.

“And once is enough,” was Lucien’s quick retort. “That speech from Mme. d’Espard’s cousin would dry the eyes of a weeping Magdalene. Oh me! for a little moment old memories, and lost illusions, and my twentieth year came back to me, and you have ——”

His lordship hastily retreated to the drawing-room at this; it seemed to him that his dignity was like to be compromised by this sentimental pair. Every one ostentatiously refrained from interrupting them, and a quarter of an hour went by; till at last Sixte du Chatelet, vexed by the laughter and talk, and excursions to the boudoir door, went in with a countenance distinctly overclouded, and found Louise and Lucien talking excitedly.

“Madame,” said Sixte in his wife’s ear, “you know Angouleme better than I do, and surely you should think of your position as Mme. la Prefete and of the Government?”

“My dear,” said Louise, scanning her responsible editor with a haughtiness that made him quake, “I am talking with M. de Rubempre of matters which interest you. It is a question of rescuing an inventor about to fall a victim to the basest machinations; you will help us. As to those ladies yonder, and their opinion of me, you shall see how I will freeze the venom of their tongues.”

She came out of the boudoir on Lucien’s arm, and drew him across to sign the contract with a great lady’s audacity.

“Write your name after mine,” she said, handing him the pen. And Lucien submissively signed in the place indicated beneath her name.

“M. de Senonches, would you have recognized M. de Rubempre?” she continued, and the insolent sportsman was compelled to greet Lucien.

She returned to the drawing-room on Lucien’s arm, and seated him on the awe-inspiring central sofa between herself and Zephirine. There, enthroned like a queen, she began, at first in a low voice, a conversation in which epigram evidently was not wanting. Some of her old friends, and several women who paid court to her, came to join the group, and Lucien soon became the hero of the circle. The Countess drew him out on the subject of life in Paris; his satirical talk flowed with spontaneous and incredible spirit; he told anecdotes of celebrities, those conversational luxuries which the provincial devours with such avidity. His wit was as much admired as his good looks. And Mme. la Comtesse Sixte du Chatelet,

preparing Lucien's triumph so patiently, sat like a player enraptured with the sound of his instrument; she gave him opportunities for a reply; she looked round the circle for applause so openly, that not a few of the women began to think that their return together was something more than a coincidence, and that Lucien and Louise, loving with all their hearts, had been separated by a double treason. Pique, very likely, had brought about this ill-starred match with Chatelet. And a reaction set in against the prefect.

Before the Countess rose to go at one o'clock in the morning, she turned to Lucien and said in a low voice, "Do me the pleasure of coming punctually tomorrow evening." Then, with the friendliest little nod, she went, saying a few words to Chatelet, who was looking for his hat.

"If Mme. du Chatelet has given me a correct idea of the state of affairs, count on me, my dear Lucien," said the prefect, preparing to hurry after his wife. She was going away without him, after the Paris fashion. "Your brother-inlaw may consider that his troubles are at an end," he added as he went.

"M. le Comte surely owes me so much," smiled Lucien.

Cointet and Petit–Claud heard these farewell speeches.

"Well, well, we are done for now," Cointet muttered in his confederate's ear. Petit–Claud, thunderstruck by Lucien's success, amazed by his brilliant wit and varying charm, was gazing at Francoise de la Haye; the girl's whole face was full of admiration for Lucien. "Be like your friend," she seemed to say to her betrothed. A gleam of joy flitted over Petit–Claud's countenance.

"We still have a whole day before the prefect's dinner; I will answer for everything."

An hour later, as Petit–Claud and Lucien walked home together, Lucien talked of his success. "Well, my dear fellow, I came, I saw, I conquered! Sechard will be very happy in a few hours' time."

"Just what I wanted to know," thought Petit–Claud. Aloud he said —"I thought you were simply a poet, Lucien, but you are a Lauzun too, that is to say — twice a poet," and they shook hands — for the last time, as it proved.

"Good news, dear Eve," said Lucien, waking his sister, "David will have no debts in less than a month!"

“How is that?”

“Well, my Louise is still hidden by Mme. du Chatelet’s petticoat. She loves me more than ever; she will send a favorable report of our discovery to the Minister of the Interior through her husband. So we have only to endure our troubles for one month, while I avenge myself on the prefect and complete the happiness of his married life.”

Eve listened, and thought that she must be dreaming.

“I saw the little gray drawing-room where I trembled like a child two years ago; it seemed as if scales fell from my eyes when I saw the furniture and the pictures and the faces again. How Paris changes one’s ideas!”

“Is that a good thing?” asked Eve, at last beginning to understand.

“Come, come; you are still asleep. We will talk about it tomorrow after breakfast.”

Cerizet’s plot was exceedingly simple, a commonplace stratagem familiar to the provincial bailiff. Its success entirely depends upon circumstances, and in this case it was certain, so intimate was Cerizet’s knowledge of the characters and hopes of those concerned. Cerizet had been a kind of Don Juan among the young work-girls, ruling his victims by playing one off against another. Since he had been the Cointet’s extra foreman, he had singled out one of Basine Clerget’s assistants, a girl almost as handsome as Mme. Sechard. Henriette Signol’s parents owned a small vineyard two leagues out of Angouleme, on the road to Saintes. The Signols, like everybody else in the country, could not afford to keep their only child at home; so they meant her to go out to service, in country phrase. The art of clear-starching is a part of every country housemaid’s training; and so great was Mme. Prieur’s reputation, that the Signols sent Henriette to her as apprentice, and paid for their daughter’s board and lodging.

Mme. Prieur was one of the old-fashioned mistresses, who consider that they fill a parent’s place towards their apprentices. They were part of the family; she took them with her to church, and looked scrupulously after them. Henriette Signol was a tall, fine-looking girl, with bold eyes, and long, thick, dark hair, and the pale, very fair complexion of girls in the South — white as a magnolia flower. For which reasons Henriette was one of the first on whom Cerizet cast his eyes; but Henriette came of “honest farmer folk,” and only yielded at last to jealousy, to

bad example, and the treacherous promise of subsequent marriage. By this time Cerizet was the Cointet's foreman. When he learned that the Signols owned a vineyard worth some ten or twelve thousand francs, and a tolerably comfortable cottage, he hastened to make it impossible for Henriette to marry any one else. Affairs had reached this point when Petit–Claud held out the prospect of a printing office and twenty thousand francs of borrowed capital, which was to prove a yoke upon the borrower's neck. Cerizet was dazzled, the offer turned his head; Henriette Signol was now only an obstacle in the way of his ambitions, and he neglected the poor girl. Henriette, in her despair, clung more closely to her seducer as he tried to shake her off. When Cerizet began to suspect that David was hiding in Basine's house, his views with regard to Henriette underwent another change, though he treated her as before. A kind of frenzy works in a girl's brain when she must marry her seducer to conceal her dishonor, and Cerizet was on the watch to turn this madness to his own account.

During the morning of the day when Lucien had set himself to reconquer his Louise, Cerizet told Basine's secret to Henriette, giving her to understand at the same time that their marriage and future prospects depended upon the discovery of David's hiding-place. Thus instructed, Henriette easily made certain of the fact that David was in Basine Clerget's inner room. It never occurred to the girl that she was doing wrong to act the spy, and Cerizet involved her in the guilt of betrayal by this first step.

Lucien was still sleeping while Cerizet, closeted with Petit–Claud, heard the history of the important trifles with which all Angouleme presently would ring.

The Cointets' foreman gave a satisfied nod as Petit–Claud came to an end. "Lucien surely has written you a line since he came back, has he not?" he asked.

"This is all that I have," answered the lawyer, and he held out a note on Mme. Sechard's writing-paper.

"Very well," said Cerizet, "let Doublon be in wait at the Palet Gate about ten minutes before sunset; tell him to post his gendarmes, and you shall have our man."

"Are you sure of *your* part of the business?" asked Petit–Claud, scanning Cerizet.

"I rely on chance," said the ex-street boy, "and she is a saucy huzzy; she does

not like honest folk.

"You must succeed," said Cerizet. "You have pushed me into this dirty business; you may as well let me have a few banknotes to wipe off the stains."— Then detecting a look that he did not like in the attorney's face, he continued, with a deadly glance, "If you have cheated me, sir, if you don't buy the printing-office for me within a week — you will leave a young widow;" he lowered his voice.

"If we have David on the jail register at six o'clock, come round to M. Gannerac's at nine, and we will settle your business," said Petit–Claud peremptorily.

"Agreed. Your will shall be done, governor," said Cerizet.

Cerizet understood the art of washing paper, a dangerous art for the Treasury. He washed out Lucien's four lines and replaced them, imitating the handwriting with a dexterity which augured ill for his own future:—

> "MY DEAR DAVID— Your business is settled; you need not fear to go to the prefect. You can go out at sunset. I will come to meet you and tell you what to do at the prefecture. — Your brother,
> "LUCIEN."

At noon Lucien wrote to David, telling him of his evening's success. The prefect would be sure to lend his influence, he said; he was full of enthusiasm over the invention, and was drawing up a report that very day to send to the Government. Marion carried the letter to Basine, taking some of Lucien's linen to the laundry as a pretext for the errand.

Petit–Claud had told Cerizet that a letter would in all probability be sent. Cerizet called for Mlle. Signol, and the two walked by the Charente. Henriette's integrity must have held out for a long while, for the walk lasted for two hours. A whole future of happiness and ease and the interests of a child were at stake, and Cerizet asked a mere trifle of her. He was very careful besides to say nothing of the consequences of that trifle. She was only to carry a letter and a message, that was all; but it was the greatness of the reward for the trifling service that frightened Henriette. Nevertheless, Cerizet gained her consent at last; she would help him in his stratagem.

At five o'clock Henriette must go out and come in again, telling Basine Clerget that Mme. Sechard wanted to speak to her at once. Fifteen minutes after Basine's departure she must go upstairs, knock at the door of the inner room, and give

David the forged note. That was all. Cerizet looked to chance to manage the rest.

For the first time in twelve months, Eve felt the iron grasp of necessity relax a little. She began at last to hope. She, too, would enjoy her brother's visit; she would show herself abroad on the arm of a man feted in his native town, adored by the women, beloved by the proud Comtesse du Chatelet. She dressed herself prettily, and proposed to walk out after dinner with her brother to Beaulieu. In September all Angouleme comes out at that hour to breathe the fresh air.

"Oh! that is the beautiful Mme. Sechard," voices said here and there.

"I should never have believed it of her," said a woman.

"The husband is in hiding, and the wife walks abroad," said Mme. Postel for young Mme. Sechard's benefit.

"Oh, let us go home," said poor Eve; "I have made a mistake."

A few minutes before sunset, the sound of a crowd rose from the steps that lead down to L'Houmeau. Apparently some crime had been committed, for persons coming from L'Houmeau were talking among themselves. Curiosity drew Lucien and Eve towards the steps.

"A thief has just been arrested no doubt, the man looks as pale as death," one of these passers-by said to the brother and sister. The crowd grew larger.

Lucien and Eve watched a group of some thirty children, old women and men, returning from work, clustering about the gendarmes, whose gold-laced caps gleamed above the heads of the rest. About a hundred persons followed the procession, the crowd gathering like a storm cloud.

"Oh! it is my husband!" Eve cried out.

"David!" exclaimed Lucien.

"It is his wife," said voices, and the crowd made way.

"What made you come out?" asked Lucien.

"Your letter," said David, haggard and white.

"I knew it!" said Eve, and she fainted away. Lucien raised his sister, and with the help of two strangers he carried her home; Marion laid her in bed, and Kolb rushed off for a doctor. Eve was still insensible when the doctor arrived; and Lucien was obliged to confess to his mother that he was the cause of David's

arrest; for he, of course, knew nothing of the forged letter and Cerizet's stratagem. Then he went up to his room and locked himself in, struck dumb by the malediction in his mother's eyes.

In the dead of night he wrote one more letter amid constant interruptions; the reader can divine the agony of the writer's mind from those phrases, jerked out, as it were, one by one:—

"MY BELOVED SISTER— We have seen each other for the last time. My resolution is final, and for this reason. In many families there is one unlucky member, a kind of disease in their midst. I am that unlucky one in our family. The observation is not mine; it was made at a friendly supper one evening at the *Rocher de Cancale* by a diplomate who has seen a great deal of the world. While we laughed and joked, he explained the reason why some young lady or some other remained unmarried, to the astonishment of the world — it was 'a touch of her father,' he said, and with that he unfolded his theory of inherited weaknesses. He told us how such and such a family would have flourished but for the mother; how it was that a son had ruined his father, or a father had stripped his children of prospects and respectability. It was said laughingly, but we thought of so many cases in point in ten minutes that I was struck with the theory. The amount of truth in it furnished all sorts of wild paradoxes, which journalists maintain cleverly enough for their own amusement when there is nobody else at hand to mystify. I bring bad luck to our family. My heart is full of love for you, yet I behave like an enemy. The blow dealt unintentionally is the cruelest blow of all. While I was leading a bohemian life in Paris, a life made up of pleasure and misery; taking good fellowship for friendship, forsaking my true friends for those who wished to exploit me, and succeeded; forgetful of you, or remembering you only to cause you trouble — all that while you were walking in the humble path of hard work, making your way slowly but surely to the fortune which I tried so madly to snatch. While you grew better, I grew worse; a fatal element entered into my life through my own choice. Yes, unbounded ambition makes an obscure existence simply impossible for me. I have tastes and remembrances of past pleasures that poison the enjoyments within my reach; once I should have been satisfied with them, now it is too late. Oh, dear Eve, no one can think more hardly of me than I do myself; my condemnation is absolute and pitiless. The struggle in Paris demands steady effort; my will power is spasmodic, my brain works intermittently. The future is so appalling that I do not care to face it, and the present is intolerable.

"I wanted to see you again. I should have done better to stay in exile all my days. But exile without means of subsistence would be madness; I will not add another folly to the rest. Death is better

than a maimed life; I cannot think of myself in any position in which my overweening vanity would not lead me into folly.

"Some human beings are like the figure 0, another must be put before it, and they acquire ten times their value. I am nothing unless a strong inexorable will is wedded to mine. Mme. de Bargeton was in truth my wife; when I refused to leave Coralie for her I spoiled my life. You and David might have been excellent pilots for me, but you are not strong enough to tame my weakness, which in some sort eludes control. I like an easy life, a life without cares; to clear an obstacle out of my way I can descend to baseness that sticks at nothing. I was born a prince. I have more than the requisite intellectual dexterity for success, but only by moments; and the prizes of a career so crowded by ambitious competitors are to those who expend no more than the necessary strength, and retain a sufficient reserve when they reach the goal.

"I shall do harm again with the best intentions in the world. Some men are like oaks, I am a delicate shrub it may be, and I forsooth, must needs aspire to be a forest cedar.

"There you have my bankrupt's schedule. The disproportion between my powers and my desires, my want of balance, in short, will bring all my efforts to nothing. There are many such characters among men of letters, many men whose intellectual powers and character are always at variance, who will one thing and wish another. What would become of me? I can see it all beforehand, as I think of this and that great light that once shone on Paris, now utterly forgotten. On the threshold of old age I shall be a man older than my age, needy and without a name. My whole soul rises up against the thought of such a close; I will not be a social rag. Ah, dear sister, loved and worshiped at least as much for your severity at the last as for your tenderness at the first — if we have paid so dear for my joy at seeing you all once more, you and David may perhaps some day think that you could grudge no price however high for a little last happiness for an unhappy creature who loved you. Do not try to find me, Eve; do not seek to know what becomes of me. My intellect for once shall be backed by my will. Renunciation, my angel, is daily death of self; my renunciation will only last for one day; I will take advantage now of that day. . . .

"*Two o'clock*.

"Yes, I have quite made up my mind. Farewell for ever, dear Eve. There is something sweet in the thought that I shall live only in your hearts henceforth, and I wish no other burying place. Once more, farewell. . . . That is the last word from your brother

"LUCIEN."

Lucien read the letter over, crept noiselessly down stairs, and left it in the child's cradle; amid falling tears he set a last kiss on the forehead of his sleeping sister; then he went out. He put out his candle in the gray dusk, took a last look at the old house, stole softly along the passage, and opened the street door; but in spite of his caution, he awakened Kolb, who slept on a mattress on the workshop floor.

"Who goes there?" cried Kolb.

"It is I, Lucien; I am going away, Kolb."

"You vould haf done better gif you at nefer kom," Kolb muttered audibly.

"I should have done better still if I had never come into the world," Lucien answered. "Good-bye, Kolb; I don't bear you any grudge for thinking as I think myself. Tell David that I was sorry I could not bid him good-bye, and say that this was my last thought."

By the time the Alsacien was up and dressed, Lucien had shut the house door, and was on his way towards the Charente by the Promenade de Beaulieu. He might have been going to a festival, for he had put on his new clothes from Paris and his dandy's trinkets for a drowning shroud. Something in Lucien's tone had struck Kolb. At first the man thought of going to ask his mistress whether she knew that her brother had left the house; but as the deepest silence prevailed, he concluded that the departure had been arranged beforehand, and lay down again and slept.

Little, considering the gravity of the question, has been written on the subject of suicide; it has not been studied. Perhaps it is a disease that cannot be observed. Suicide is one effect of a sentiment which we will call self-esteem, if you will, to prevent confusion by using the word "honor." When a man despises himself, and sees that others despise him, when real life fails to fulfil his hopes, then comes the moment when he takes his life, and thereby does homage to society — shorn of his virtues or his splendor, he does not care to face his fellows. Among atheists — Christians being without the question of suicide — among atheists, whatever may be said to the contrary, none but a base coward can take up a dishonored life.

There are three kinds of suicide — the first is only the last and acute stage of a long illness, and this kind belongs distinctly to pathology; the second is the suicide of despair; and the third the suicide based on logical argument. Despair and deductive reasoning had brought Lucien to this pass, but both varieties are

curable; it is only the pathological suicide that is inevitable. Not infrequently you find all three causes combined, as in the case of Jean–Jacques Rousseau.

Lucien having made up his mind fell to considering methods. The poet would fain die as became a poet. At first he thought of throwing himself into the Charente and making an end then and there; but as he came down the steps from Beaulieu for the last time, he heard the whole town talking of his suicide; he saw the horrid sight of a drowned dead body, and thought of the recognition and the inquest; and, like some other suicides, felt that vanity reached beyond death.

He remembered the day spent at Courtois' mill, and his thoughts returned to the round pool among the willows that he saw as he came along by the little river, such a pool as you often find on small streams, with a still, smooth surface that conceals great depths beneath. The water is neither green nor blue nor white nor tawny; it is like a polished steel mirror. No sword-grass grows about the margin; there are no blue water forget-me-nots, nor broad lily leaves; the grass at the brim is short and thick, and the weeping willows that droop over the edge grow picturesquely enough. It is easy to imagine a sheer precipice beneath filled with water to the brim. Any man who should have the courage to fill his pockets with pebbles would not fail to find death, and never be seen thereafter.

At the time while he admired the lovely miniature of a landscape, the poet had thought to himself, "'Tis a spot to make your mouth water for a *noyade*."

He thought of it now as he went down into L'Houmeau; and when he took his way towards Marsac, with the last sombre thoughts gnawing at his heart, it was with the firm resolve to hide his death. There should be no inquest held over him, he would not be laid in earth; no one should see him in the hideous condition of the corpse that floats on the surface of the water. Before long he reached one of the slopes, common enough on all French highroads, and commonest of all between Angouleme and Poitiers. He saw the coach from Bordeaux to Paris coming up at full speed behind him, and knew that the passengers would probably alight to walk up the hill. He did not care to be seen just then. Turning off sharply into a beaten track, he began to pick the flowers in a vineyard hard by.

When Lucien came back to the road with a great bunch of the yellow stone-crop which grows everywhere upon the stony soil of the vineyards, he came out upon a traveler dressed in black from head to foot. The stranger wore powder, there were silver buckles on his shoes of Orleans leather, and his brown face was

scarred and seamed as if he had fallen into the fire in infancy. The traveler, so obviously clerical in his dress, was walking slowly and smoking a cigar. He turned as Lucien jumped down from the vineyard into the road. The deep melancholy on the handsome young face, the poet's symbolical flowers, and his elegant dress seemed to strike the stranger. He looked at Lucien with something of the expression of a hunter that has found his quarry at last after long and fruitless search. He allowed Lucien to come alongside in nautical phrase; then he slackened his pace, and appeared to look along the road up the hill; Lucien, following the direction of his eyes, saw a light traveling carriage with two horses, and a post-boy standing beside it.

"You have allowed the coach to pass you, monsieur; you will lose your place unless you care to take a seat in my caleche and overtake the mail, for it is rather quicker traveling post than by the public conveyance." The traveler spoke with extreme politeness and a very marked Spanish accent.

Without waiting for an answer, he drew a cigar-case from his pocket, opened it, and held it out to Lucien.

"I am not on a journey," said Lucien, "and I am too near the end of my stage to indulge in the pleasure of smoking ——"

"You are very severe with yourself," returned the Spaniard. "Though I am a canon of the cathedral of Toledo, I occasionally smoke a cigarette. God gave us tobacco to allay our passions and our pains. You seem to be downcast, or at any rate, you carry the symbolical flower of sorrow in your hand, like the rueful god Hymen. Come! all your troubles will vanish away with the smoke," and again the ecclesiastic held out his little straw case; there was something fascinating in his manner, and kindliness towards Lucien lighted up his eyes.

"Forgive me, father" Lucien answered stiffly; "there is no cigar that can scatter my troubles." Tears came to his eyes at the words.

"It must surely be Divine Providence that prompted me to take a little exercise to shake off a traveler's morning drowsiness," said the churchman. "A divine prompting to fulfil my mission here on earth by consoling you. — What great trouble can you have at your age?"

"Your consolations, father, can do nothing for me. You are a Spaniard, I am a Frenchman; you believe in the commandments of the Church, I am an atheist."

“*Santa Virgen del Pilar*! you are an atheist!” cried the other, laying a hand on Lucien’s arm with maternal solicitude. “Ah! here is one of the curious things I promised myself to see in Paris. We, in Spain, do not believe in atheists. There is no country but France where one can have such opinions at nineteen years.”

“Oh! I am an atheist in the fullest sense of the word. I have no belief in God, in society, in happiness. Take a good look at me, father; for in a few hours’ time life will be over for me. My last sun has risen,” said Lucien; with a sort of rhetorical effect he waved his hand towards the sky.

“How so; what have you done that you must die? Who has condemned you to die?”

“A tribunal from which there is no appeal — I myself.”

“You, child!” cried the priest. “Have you killed a man? Is the scaffold waiting for you? Let us reason together a little. If you are resolved, as you say, to return to nothingness, everything on earth is indifferent to you, is it not?”

Lucien bowed assent.

“Very well, then; can you not tell me about your troubles? Some little affair of the heart has taken a bad turn, no doubt?”

Lucien shrugged his shoulders very significantly.

“Are you resolved to kill yourself to escape dishonor, or do you despair of life? Very good. You can kill yourself at Poitiers quite as easily as at Angouleme, and at Tours it will be no harder than at Poitiers. The quicksands of the Loire never give up their prey ——”

“No, father,” said Lucien; “I have settled it all. Not three weeks ago I chanced upon the most charming raft that can ferry a man sick and tired of this life into the other world ——”

“The other world? You are not an atheist.”

“Oh! by another world I mean my next transformation, animal or plant.”

“Have you some incurable disease?”

“Yes, father.”

“Ah! now we come to the point. What is it?”

“Poverty.”

The priest looked at Lucien. “The diamond does not know its own value,” he said, and there was an inexpressible charm, and a touch of something like irony in his smile.

“None but a priest could flatter a poor man about to die,” exclaimed Lucien.

“You are not going to die,” the Spaniard returned authoritatively.

“I have heard many times of men that were robbed on the highroad, but I have never yet heard of one that found a fortune there,” said Lucien.

“You will hear of one now,” said the priest, glancing towards the carriage to measure the time still left for their walk together. “Listen to me,” he continued, with his cigar between his teeth; “if you are poor, that is no reason why you should die. I need a secretary, for mine has just died at Barcelona. I am in the same position as the famous Baron Goertz, minister of Charles XII. He was traveling toward Sweden (just as I am going to Paris), and in some little town or other he chanced upon the son of a goldsmith, a young man of remarkable good looks, though they could scarcely equal yours. . . . Baron Goertz discerned intelligence in the young man (just as I see poetry on your brow); he took him into his traveling carriage, as I shall take you very shortly; and of a boy condemned to spend his days in burnishing spoons and forks and making trinkets in some little town like Angouleme, he made a favorite, as you shall be mine.

“Arrived at Stockholm, he installed his secretary and overwhelmed him with work. The young man spent his nights in writing, and, like all great workers, he contracted a bad habit, a trick — he took to chewing paper. The late M. de Malesherbes use to rap people over the knuckles; and he did this once, by the by, to somebody or other whose suit depended upon him. The handsome young secretary began by chewing blank paper, found it insipid for a while, and acquired a taste for manuscript as having more flavor. People did not smoke as yet in those days. At last, from flavor to flavor, he began to chew parchment and swallow it. Now, at that time a treaty was being negotiated between Russia and Sweden. The States–General insisted that Charles XII. should make peace (much as they tried in France to make Napoleon treat for peace in 1814) and the basis of these negotiations was the treaty between the two powers with regard to Finland. Goertz gave the original into his secretary’s keeping; but when the time came for laying

the draft before the States–General, a trifling difficulty arose; the treaty was not to be found. The States–General believed that the Minister, pandering to the King's wishes, had taken it into his head to get rid of the document. Baron Goertz was, in fact, accused of this, and the secretary owned that he had eaten the treaty. He was tried and convicted and condemned to death. — But you have not come to that yet, so take a cigar and smoke till we reach the caleche."

Lucien took a cigar and lit it, Spanish fashion, at the priest's cigar. "He is right," he thought; "I can take my life at any time."

"It often happens that a young man's fortunes take a turn when despair is darkest," the Spaniard continued. "That is what I wished to tell you, but I preferred to prove it by a case in point. Here was the handsome young secretary lying under sentence of death, and his case the more desperate because, as he had been condemned by the States–General, the King could not pardon him, but he connived at his escape. The secretary stole away in a fishing-boat with a few crowns in his pocket, and reached the court of Courland with a letter of introduction from Goertz, explaining his secretary's adventures and his craze for paper. The Duke of Courland was a spendthrift; he had a steward and a pretty wife — three several causes of ruin. He placed the charming young stranger with his steward.

"If you can imagine that the sometime secretary had been cured of his depraved taste by a sentence of death, you do not know the grip that a man's failings have upon him; let a man discover some satisfaction for himself, and the headsman will not keep him from it. — How is it that the vice has this power? Is it inherent strength in the vice, or inherent weakness in human nature? Are there certain tastes that should be regarded as verging on insanity? For myself, I cannot help laughing at the moralists who try to expel such diseases by fine phrases. — Well, it so fell out that the steward refused a demand for money; and the Duke taking fright at this, called for an audit. Sheer imbecility! Nothing easier than to make out a balance-sheet; the difficulty never lies there. The steward gave his secretary all the necessary documents for compiling a schedule of the civil list of Courland. He had nearly finished it when, in the dead of night, the unhappy paper-eater discovered that he was chewing up one of the Duke's discharges for a considerable sum. He had eaten half the signature! Horror seized upon him; he fled to the Duchess, flung himself at her feet, told her of his craze, and implored

the aid of his sovereign lady, implored her in the middle of the night. The handsome young face made such an impression on the Duchess that she married him as soon as she was left a widow. And so in the mid-eighteenth century, in a land where the king-at-arms is king, the goldsmith's son became a prince, and something more. On the death of Catherine I. he was regent; he ruled the Empress Anne, and tried to be the Richelieu of Russia. Very well, young man; now know this — if you are handsomer than Biron, I, simple canon that I am, am worth more than a Baron Goertz. So get in; we will find a duchy of Courland for you in Paris, or failing the duchy, we shall certainly find the duchess."

The Spanish priest laid a hand on Lucien's arm, and literally forced him into the traveling carriage. The postilion shut the door.

"Now speak; I am listening," said the canon of Toledo, to Lucien's bewilderment. "I am an old priest; you can tell me everything, there is nothing to fear. So far we have only run through our patrimony or squandered mamma's money. We have made a flitting from our creditors, and we are honor personified down to the tips of our elegant little boots. . . . Come, confess, boldly; it will be just as if you were talking to yourself."

Lucien felt like that hero of an Eastern tale, the fisher who tried to drown himself in mid-ocean, and sank down to find himself a king of countries under the sea. The Spanish priest seemed so really affectionate, that the poet hesitated no longer; between Angouleme and Ruffec he told the story of his whole life, omitting none of his misdeeds, and ended with the final catastrophe which he had brought about. The tale only gained in poetic charm because this was the third time he had told it in the past fortnight. Just as he made an end they passed the house of the Rastignac family.

"Young Rastignac left that place for Paris," said Lucien; "he is certainly not my equal, but he has had better luck."

The Spaniard started at the name. "Oh!" he said.

"Yes. That shy little place belongs to his father. As I was telling you just now, he was the lover of Mme. de Nucingen, the famous banker's wife. I drifted into poetry; he was cleverer, he took the practical side."

The priest stopped the caleche; and was so far curious as to walk down the little avenue that led to the house, showing more interest in the place than Lucien

expected from a Spanish ecclesiastic.

"Then, do you know the Rastignacs?" asked Lucien.

"I know every one in Paris," said the Spaniard, taking his place again in the carriage. "And so for want of ten or twelve thousand francs, you were about to take your life; you are a child, you know neither men nor things. A man's future is worth the value that he chooses to set upon it, and you value yours at twelve thousand francs! Well, I will give more than that for you any time. As for your brother-inlaw's imprisonment, it is the merest trifle. If this dear M. Sechard has made a discovery, he will be a rich man some day, and a rich man has never been imprisoned for debt. You do not seem to me to be strong in history. History is of two kinds — there is the official history taught in schools, a lying compilation *ad usum delphini*; and there is the secret history which deals with the real causes of events — a scandalous chronicle. Let me tell you briefly a little story which you have not heard. There was, once upon a time, a man, young and ambitious, and a priest to boot. He wanted to enter upon a political career, so he fawned on the Queen's favorite; the favorite took an interest in him, gave him the rank of minister, and a seat at the council board. One evening somebody wrote to the young aspirant, thinking to do him a service (never do a service, by the by, unless you are asked), and told him that his benefactor's life was in danger. The King's wrath was kindled against his rival; tomorrow, if the favorite went to the palace, he would certainly be stabbed; so said the letter. Well, now, young man, what would you have done?"

"I should have gone at once to warn my benefactor," Lucien exclaimed quickly.

"You are indeed the child which your story reveals!" said the priest. "Our man said to himself, 'If the King is resolved to go to such lengths, it is all over with my benefactor; I must receive this letter too late;' so he slept on till the favorite was stabbed ——"

"He was a monster!" said Lucien, suspecting that the priest meant to sound him.

"So are all great men; this one was the Cardinal de Richelieu, and his benefactor was the Marechal d'Ancre. You really do not know your history of France, you see. Was I not right when I told you that history as taught in schools is

simply a collection of facts and dates, more than doubtful in the first place, and with no bearing whatever on the gist of the matter. You are told that such a person as Jeanne Darc once existed; where is the use of that? Have you never drawn your own conclusions from that fact? never seen that if France had accepted the Angevin dynasty of the Plantagenets, the two peoples thus reunited would be ruling the world today, and the islands that now brew political storms for the continent would be French provinces? . . . Why, have you so much as studied the means by which simple merchants like the Medicis became Grand Dukes of Tuscany?"

"A poet in France is not bound to be 'as learned as a Benedictine,'" said Lucien.

"Well, they became Grand–Dukes as Richelieu became a minister. If you had looked into history for the causes of events instead of getting the headings by heart, you would have found precepts for your guidance in this life. These real facts taken at random from among so many supply you with the axiom —'Look upon men, and on women most of all, as your instruments; but never let them see this.' If some one higher in place can be useful to you, worship him as your god; and never leave him until he has paid the price of your servility to the last farthing. In your intercourse with men, in short, be grasping and mean as a Jew; all that the Jew does for money, you must do for power. And besides all this, when a man has fallen from power, care no more for him than if he had ceased to exist. And do you ask why you must do these things? You mean to rule the world, do you not? You must begin by obeying and studying it. Scholars study books; politicians study men, and their interests and the springs of action. Society and mankind in masses are fatalists; they bow down and worship the accomplished fact. Do you know why I am giving you this little history lesson? It seems to me that your ambition is boundless ——"

"Yes, father."

"I saw that myself," said the priest. "But at this moment you are thinking, 'Here is this Spanish canon inventing anecdotes and straining history to prove to me that I have too much virtue ——'"

Lucien began to smile; his thoughts had been read so clearly.

"Very well, let us take facts that every schoolboy knows. One day France is

almost entirely overrun by the English; the King has only a single province left. Two figures arise from among the people — a poor herd girl, that very Jeanne Darc of whom we were speaking, and a burgher named Jacques Coeur. The girl brings the power of virginity, the strength of her arm; the burgher gives his gold, and the kingdom is saved. The maid is taken prisoner, and the King, who could have ransomed her, leaves her to be burned alive. The King allows his courtier to accuse the great burgher of capital crime, and they rob him and divide all his wealth among themselves. The spoils of an innocent man, hunted down, brought to bay, and driven into exile by the Law, went to enrich five noble houses; and the father of the Archbishop of Bourges left the kingdom for ever without one sou of all his possessions in France, and no resource but moneys remitted to Arabs and Saracens in Egypt. It is open to you to say that these examples are out of date, that three centuries of public education have since elapsed, and that the outlines of those ages are more or less dim figures. Well, young man, do you believe in the last demi-god of France, in Napoleon? One of his generals was in disgrace all through his career; Napoleon made him a marshal grudgingly, and never sent him on service if he could help it. That marshal was Kellermann. Do you know the reason of the grudge? . . . Kellermann saved France and the First Consul at Marengo by a brilliant charge; the ranks applauded under fire and in the thick of the carnage. That heroic charge was not even mentioned in the bulletin. Napoleon's coolness toward Kellermann, Fouche's fall, and Talleyrand's disgrace were all attributable to the same cause; it is the ingratitude of a Charles VII., or a Richelieu, or ——"

"But, father," said Lucien, "suppose that you should save my life and make my fortune, you are making the ties of gratitude somewhat slight."

"Little rogue," said the Abbe, smiling as he pinched Lucien's ear with an almost royal familiarity. "If you are ungrateful to me, it will be because you are a strong man, and I shall bend before you. But you are not that just yet; as a simple 'prentice you have tried to be master too soon, the common fault of Frenchmen of your generation. Napoleon's example has spoiled them all. You send in your resignation because you have not the pair of epaulettes that you fancied. But have you attempted to bring the full force of your will and every action of your life to bear upon your one idea?"

"Alas! no."

“You have been inconsistent, as the English say,” smiled the canon.

“What I have been matters nothing now,” said Lucien, “if I can be nothing in the future.”

“If at the back of all your good qualities there is power *semper virens*,” continued the priest, not averse to show that he had a little Latin, “nothing in this world can resist you. I have taken enough of a liking for you already ——”

Lucien smiled incredulously.

“Yes,” said the priest, in answer to the smile, “you interest me as much as if you had been my son; and I am strong enough to afford to talk to you as openly as you have just done to me. Do you know what it is that I like about you? — This: you have made a sort of *tabula rasa* within yourself, and are ready to hear a sermon on morality that you will hear nowhere else; for mankind in the mass are even more consummate hypocrites than any one individual can be when his interests demand a piece of acting. Most of us spend a good part of our lives in clearing our minds of the notions that sprang up unchecked during our nonage. This is called ‘getting our experience.’”

Lucien, listening, thought within himself, “Here is some old intriguer delighted with a chance of amusing himself on a journey. He is pleased with the idea of bringing about a change of opinion in a poor wretch on the brink of suicide; and when he is tired of his amusement, he will drop me. Still he understands paradox, and seems to be quite a match for Blondet or Lousteau.”

But in spite of these sage reflections, the diplomate’s poison had sunk deeply into Lucien’s soul; the ground was ready to receive it, and the havoc wrought was the greater because such famous examples were cited. Lucien fell under the charm of his companion’s cynical talk, and clung the more willingly to life because he felt that this arm which drew him up from the depths was a strong one.

In this respect the ecclesiastic had evidently won the day; and, indeed, from time to time a malicious smile bore his cynical anecdotes company.

“If your system of morality at all resembles your manner of regarding history,” said Lucien, “I should dearly like to know the motive of your present act of charity, for such it seems to be.”

“There, young man, I have come to the last head of my sermon; you will

permit me to reserve it, for in that case we shall not part company today," said the canon, with the tact of the priest who sees that his guile has succeeded.

"Very well, talk morality," said Lucien. To himself he said, "I will draw him out."

"Morality begins with the law," said the priest. "If it were simply a question of religion, laws would be superfluous; religious peoples have few laws. The laws of statecraft are above civil law. Well, do you care to know the inscription which a politician can read, written at large over your nineteenth century? In 1793 the French invented the idea of the sovereignty of the people — and the sovereignty of the people came to an end under the absolute ruler in the Emperor. So much for your history as a nation. Now for your private manners. Mme. Tallien and Mme. Beauharnais both acted alike. Napoleon married the one, and made her your Empress; the other he would never receive at court, princess though she was. The sans-culotte of 1793 takes the Iron Crown in 1804. The fanatical lovers of Equality or Death conspire fourteen years afterwards with a Legitimist aristocracy to bring back Louis XVIII. And that same aristocracy, lording it today in the Faubourg Saint–Germain, has done worse — has been merchant, usurer, pastry-cook, farmer, and shepherd. So in France systems political and moral have started from one point and reached another diametrically opposed; and men have expressed one kind of opinion and acted on another. There has been no consistency in national policy, nor in the conduct of individuals. You cannot be said to have any morality left. Success is the supreme justification of all actions whatsoever. The fact in itself is nothing; the impression that it makes upon others is everything. Hence, please observe a second precept: Present a fair exterior to the world, keep the seamy side of life to yourself, and turn a resplendent countenance upon others. Discretion, the motto of every ambitious man, is the watchword of our Order; take it for your own. Great men are guilty of almost as many base deeds as poor outcasts; but they are careful to do these things in shadow and to parade their virtues in the light, or they would not be great men. Your insignificant man leaves his virtues in the shade; he publicly displays his pitiable side, and is despised accordingly. You, for instance, have hidden your titles to greatness and made a display of your worst failings. You openly took an actress for your mistress, lived with her and upon her; you were by no means to blame for this; everybody admitted that both of you were perfectly free to do as you liked; but you ran full tilt against the ideas of the world, and the world has not shown you the

consideration that is shown to those who obey the rules of the game. If you had left Coralie to this M. Camusot, if you had hidden your relations with her, you might have married Mme. de Bargeton; you would now be prefect of Angouleme and Marquis de Rubempre.

“Change your tactics, bring your good looks, your charm, your wit, your poetry to the front. If you indulge in small discreditable courses, let it be within four walls, and you will never again be guilty of a blot on the decorations of this great theatrical scene called society. Napoleon called this ‘washing dirty linen at home.’ The corollary follows naturally on this second precept — Form is everything. Be careful to grasp the meaning of that word ‘form.’ There are people who, for want of knowing better, will help themselves to money under pressure of want, and take it by force. These people are called criminals; and, perforce, they square accounts with Justice. A poor man of genius discovers some secret, some invention as good as a treasure; you lend him three thousand francs (for that, practically, the Cointets have done; they hold your bills, and they are about to rob your brother-inlaw); you torment him until he reveals or partly reveals his secret; you settle your accounts with your own conscience, and your conscience does not drag you into the assize court.

“The enemies of social order, beholding this contrast, take occasion to yap at justice, and wax wroth in the name of the people, because, forsooth, burglars and fowl-stealers are sent to the hulks, while a man who brings whole families to ruin by a fraudulent bankruptcy is let off with a few months’ imprisonment. But these hypocrites know quite well that the judge who passes sentence on the thief is maintaining the barrier set between the poor and the rich, and that if that barrier were overturned, social chaos would ensue; while, in the case of the bankrupt, the man who steals an inheritance cleverly, and the banker who slaughters a business for his own benefit, money merely changes hands, that is all.

“Society, my son, is bound to draw those distinctions which I have pointed out for your benefit. The one great point is this — you must be a match for society. Napoleon, Richelieu, and the Medicis were a match for their generations. And as for you, you value yourself at twelve thousand francs! You of this generation in France worship the golden calf; what else is the religion of your Charter that will not recognize a man politically unless he owns property? What is this but the command, ‘Strive to be rich?’ Some day, when you shall have made a fortune

without breaking the law, you will be rich; you will be the Marquis de Rubempre, and you can indulge in the luxury of honor. You will be so extremely sensitive on the point of honor that no one will dare to accuse you of past shortcomings if in the process of making your way you should happen to smirch it now and again, which I myself should never advise," he added, patting Lucien's hand.

"So what must you put in that comely head of yours? Simply this and nothing more — propose to yourself a brilliant and conspicuous goal, and go towards it secretly; let no one see your methods or your progress. You have behaved like a child; be a man, be a hunter, lie in wait for your quarry in the world of Paris, wait for your chance and your game; you need not be particular nor mindful of your dignity, as it is called; we are all of us slaves to something, to some failing of our own or to necessity; but keep that law of laws — secrecy."

"Father, you frighten me," said Lucien; "this seems to me to be a highwayman's theory."

"And you are right," said the canon, "but it is no invention of mine. All *parvenus* reason in this way — the house of Austria and the house of France alike. You have nothing, you say? The Medicis, Richelieu, and Napoleon started from precisely your standpoint; but *they*, my child, considered that their prospects were worth ingratitude, treachery, and the most glaring inconsistencies. You must dare all things to gain all things. Let us discuss it. Suppose that you sit down to a game of *bouillotte*, do you begin to argue over the rules of the game? There they are, you accept them."

"Come, now," thought Lucien, "he can play *bouillotte*."

"And what do you do?" continued the priest; "do you practise openness, that fairest of virtues? Not merely do you hide your tactics, but you do your best to make others believe that you are on the brink of ruin as soon as you are sure of winning the game. In short, you dissemble, do you not? You lie to win four or five louis d'or. What would you think of a player so generous as to proclaim that he held a hand full of trumps? Very well; the ambitious man who carries virtue's precepts into the arena when his antagonists have left them behind is behaving like a child. Old men of the world might say to him, as card-players would say to the man who declines to take advantage of his trumps, 'Monsieur, you ought not to play at *bouillotte*.'

“Did you make the rules of the game of ambition? Why did I tell you to be a match for society? — Because, in these days, society by degrees has usurped so many rights over the individual, that the individual is compelled to act in self-defence. There is no question of laws now, their place has been taken by custom, which is to say grimacings, and forms must always be observed.”

Lucien started with surprise.

“Ah, my child!” said the priest, afraid that he had shocked Lucien’s innocence; “did you expect to find the Angel Gabriel in an Abbe loaded with all the iniquities of the diplomacy and counter-diplomacy of two kings? I am an agent between Ferdinand VII. and Louis XVIII., two — kings who owe their crowns to profound — er — combinations, let us say. I believe in God, but I have a still greater belief in our Order, and our Order has no belief save in temporal power. In order to strengthen and consolidate the temporal power, our Order upholds the Catholic Apostolic and Roman Church, which is to say, the doctrines which dispose the world at large to obedience. We are the Templars of modern times; we have a doctrine of our own. Like the Templars, we have been dispersed, and for the same reasons; we are almost a match for the world. If you will enlist as a soldier, I will be your captain. Obey me as a wife obeys her husband, as a child obeys his mother, and I will guarantee that you shall be Marquis de Rubempre in less than six months; you shall marry into one of the proudest houses in the Faubourg Saint–Germain, and some day you shall sit on a bench with peers of France. What would you have been at this moment if I had not amused you by my conversation? — An undiscovered corpse in a deep bed of mud. Well and good, now for an effort of imagination ——”

Lucien looked curiously at his protector.

“Here, in this caleche beside the Abbe Carlos Herrera, canon of Toledo, secret envoy from His Majesty Ferdinand VII. to his Majesty the King of France, bearer of a despatch thus worded it may be —‘When you have delivered me, hang all those whom I favor at this moment, more especially the bearer of this despatch, for then he can tell no tales’— well, beside this envoy sits a young man who has nothing in common with that poet recently deceased. I have fished you out of the water, I have brought you to life again, you belong to me as the creature belongs to the creator, as the efrits of fairytales belong to the genii, as the janissary to the Sultan, as the soul to the body. I will sustain you in the way to power with a strong

hand; and at the same time I promise that your life shall be a continual course of pleasure, honors, and enjoyment. You shall never want for money. You shall shine, you shall go bravely in the eyes of the world; while I, crouching in the mud, will lay a firm foundation for the brilliant edifice of your fortunes. For I love power for its own sake. I shall always rejoice in your enjoyment, forbidden to me. In short, my self shall become your self! Well, if a day should come when this pact between man and the tempter, this agreement between the child and the diplomatist should no longer suit your ideas, you can still look about for some quiet spot, like that pool of which you were speaking, and drown yourself; you will only be as you are now, or a little more or a little less wretched and dishonored."

"This is not like the Archbishop of Granada's homily," said Lucien as they stopped to change horses.

"Call this concentrated education by what name you will, my son, for you are my son, I adopt you henceforth, and shall make you my heir; it is the Code of ambition. God's elect are few and far between. There is no choice, you must bury yourself in the cloister (and there you very often find the world again in miniature) or accept the Code."

"Perhaps it would be better not to be so wise," said Lucien, trying to fathom this terrible priest.

"What!" rejoined the canon. "You begin to play before you know the rules of the game, and now you throw it up just as your chances are best, and you have a substantial godfather to back you! And you do not even care to play a return match? You do not mean to say that you have no mind to be even with those who drove you from Paris?"

Lucien quivered; the sounds that rang through every nerve seemed to come from some bronze instrument, some Chinese gong.

"I am only a poor priest," returned his mentor, and a grim expression, dreadful to behold, appeared for a moment on a face burned to a copper-red by the sun of Spain, "I am only a poor priest; but if I had been humiliated, vexed, tormented, betrayed, and sold as you have been by the scoundrels of whom you have told me, I should do like an Arab of the desert — I would devote myself body and soul to vengeance. I might end by dangling from a gibbet, garroted, impaled, guillotined in your French fashion, I should not care a rap; but they should not

have my head until I had crushed my enemies under my heel."

Lucien was silent; he had no wish to draw the priest out any further.

"Some are descended from Cain and some from Abel," the canon concluded; "I myself am of mixed blood — Cain for my enemies, Abel for my friends. Woe to him that shall awaken Cain! After all, you are a Frenchman; I am a Spaniard, and, what is more, a canon."

"What a Tartar!" thought Lucien, scanning the protector thus sent to him by Heaven.

There was no sign of the Jesuit, nor even of the ecclesiastic, about the Abbe Carlos Herrera. His hands were large, he was thick-set and broad-chested, evidently he possessed the strength of a Hercules; his terrific expression was softened by benignity assumed at will; but a complexion of impenetrable bronze inspired feelings of repulsion rather than attachment for the man.

The strange diplomatist looked somewhat like a bishop, for he wore powder on his long, thick hair, after the fashion of the Prince de Talleyrand; a gold cross, hanging from a strip of blue ribbon with a white border, indicated an ecclesiastical dignitary. The outlines beneath the black silk stockings would not have disgraced an athlete. The exquisite neatness of his clothes and person revealed an amount of care which a simple priest, and, above all, a Spanish priest, does not always take with his appearance. A three-cornered hat lay on the front seat of the carriage, which bore the arms of Spain.

In spite of the sense of repulsion, the effect made by the man's appearance was weakened by his manner, fierce and yet winning as it was; he evidently laid himself out to please Lucien, and the winning manner became almost coaxing. Yet Lucien noticed the smallest trifles uneasily. He felt that the moment of decision had come; they had reached the second stage beyond Ruffec, and the decision meant life or death.

The Spaniard's last words vibrated through many chords in his heart, and, to the shame of both, it must be said that all that was worst in Lucien responded to an appeal deliberately made to his evil impulses, and the eyes that studied the poet's beautiful face had read him very clearly. Lucien beheld Paris once more; in imagination he caught again at the reins of power let fall from his unskilled hands, and he avenged himself! The comparisons which he himself had drawn so lately

between the life of Paris and life in the provinces faded from his mind with the more painful motives for suicide; he was about to return to his natural sphere, and this time with a protector, a political intriguer unscrupulous as Cromwell.

"I was alone, now there will be two of us," he told himself. And then this priest had been more and more interested as he told of his sins one after another. The man's charity had grown with the extent of his misdoings; nothing had astonished this confessor. And yet, what could be the motive of a mover in the intrigues of kings? Lucien at first was fain to be content with the banal answer — the Spanish are a generous race. The Spaniard is generous! even so the Italian is jealous and a poisoner, the Frenchman fickle, the German frank, the Jew ignoble, and the Englishman noble. Reverse these verdicts and you shall arrive within a reasonable distance of the truth! The Jews have monopolized the gold of the world; they compose *Robert the Devil*, act *Phedre*, sing *William Tell*, give commissions for pictures and build palaces, write *Reisebilder* and wonderful verse; they are more powerful than ever, their religion is accepted, they have lent money to the Holy Father himself! As for Germany, a foreigner is often asked whether he has a contract in writing, and this is in the smallest matters, so tricky are they in their dealings. In France the spectacle of national blunders has never lacked national applause for the past fifty years; we continue to wear hats which no mortal can explain, and every change of government is made on the express condition that things shall remain exactly as they were before. England flaunts her perfidy in the face of the world, and her abominable treachery is only equaled by her greed. All the gold of two Indies passed through the hands of Spain, and now she has nothing left. There is no country in the world where poison is so little in request as in Italy, no country where manners are easier or more gentle. As for the Spaniard, he has traded largely on the reputation of the Moor.

As the Canon of Toledo returned to the caleche, he had spoken a word to the post-boy. "Drive post-haste," he said, "and there will be three francs for drink-money for you." Then, seeing that Lucien hesitated, "Come! come!" he exclaimed, and Lucien took his place again, telling himself that he meant to try the effect of the *argumentum ad hominem*.

"Father," he began, "after pouring out, with all the coolness in the world, a series of maxims which the vulgar would consider profoundly immoral ——"

"And so they are," said the priest; "that is why Jesus Christ said that it must

needs be that offences come, my son; and that is why the world displays such horror of offences."

"A man of your stamp will not be surprised by the question which I am about to ask?"

"Indeed, my son, you do not know me," said Carlos Herrera. "Do you suppose that I should engage a secretary unless I knew that I could depend upon his principles sufficiently to be sure that he would not rob me? I like you. You are as innocent in every way as a twenty-year-old suicide. Your question?"

"Why do you take an interest in me? What price do you set on my obedience? Why should you give me everything? What is your share?"

The Spaniard looked at Lucien, and a smile came over his face.

"Let us wait till we come to the next hill; we can walk up and talk out in the open. The back seat of a traveling carriage is not the place for confidences."

They traveled in silence for sometime; the rapidity of the movement seemed to increase Lucien's moral intoxication.

"Here is a hill, father," he said at last awakening from a kind of dream.

"Very well, we will walk." The Abbe called to the postilion to stop, and the two sprang out upon the road.

"You child," said the Spaniard, taking Lucien by the arm, "have you ever thought over Otway's *Venice Preserved*? Did you understand the profound friendship between man and man which binds Pierre and Jaffier each to each so closely that a woman is as nothing in comparison, and all social conditions are changed? — Well, so much for the poet."

"So the canon knows something of the drama," thought Lucien. "Have you read Voltaire?" he asked.

"I have done better," said the other; "I put his doctrine in practice."

"You do not believe in God?"

"Come! it is I who am the atheist, is it?" the Abbe said, smiling. "Let us come to practical matters, my child," he added, putting an arm round Lucien's waist. "I am forty-six years old, I am the natural son of a great lord; consequently, I have no family, and I have a heart. But, learn this, carve it on that still so soft brain of

yours — man dreads to be alone. And of all kinds of isolation, inward isolation is the most appalling. The early anchorite lived with God; he dwelt in the spirit world, the most populous world of all. The miser lives in a world of imagination and fruition; his whole life and all that he is, even his sex, lies in his brain. A man's first thought, be he leper or convict, hopelessly sick or degraded, is to find another with a like fate to share it with him. He will exert the utmost that is in him, every power, all his vital energy, to satisfy that craving; it is his very life. But for that tyrannous longing, would Satan have found companions? There is a whole poem yet to be written, a first part of *Paradise Lost*; Milton's poem is only the apology for the revolt."

"It would be the Iliad of Corruption," said Lucien.

"Well, I am alone, I live alone. If I wear the priest's habit, I have not a priest's heart. I like to devote myself to some one; that is my weakness. That is my life, that is how I came to be a priest. I am not afraid of ingratitude, and I am grateful. The Church is nothing to me; it is an idea. I am devoted to the King of Spain, but you cannot give affection to a King of Spain; he is my protector, he towers above me. I want to love my creature, to mould him, fashion him to my use, and love him as a father loves his child. I shall drive in your tilbury, my boy, enjoy your success with women, and say to myself, 'This fine young fellow, this Marquis de Rubempre, my creation whom I have brought into this great world, is my very Self; his greatness is my doing, he speaks or is silent with my voice, he consults me in everything.' The Abbe de Vermont felt thus for Marie–Antoinette."

"He led her to the scaffold."

"He did not love the Queen," said the priest. "HE only loved the Abbe de Vermont."

"Must I leave desolation behind me?"

"I have money, you shall draw on me."

"I would do a great deal just now to rescue David Sechard," said Lucien, in the tone of one who has given up all idea of suicide.

"Say but one word, my son, and by tomorrow morning he shall have money enough to set him free."

"What! Would you give me twelve thousand francs?"

“Ah! child, do you not see that we are traveling on at the rate of four leagues an hour? We shall dine at Poitiers before long, and there, if you decide to sign the pact, to give me a single proof of obedience, a great proof that I shall require, then the Bordeaux coach shall carry fifteen thousand francs to your sister ——”

“Where is the money?”

The Spaniard made no answer, and Lucien said within himself, “There I had him; he was laughing at me.”

In another moment they took their places. Neither of them said a word. Silently the Abbe groped in the pocket of the coach, and drew out a traveler’s leather pouch with three divisions in it; thence he took a hundred Portuguese moidores, bringing out his large hand filled with gold three times.

“Father, I am yours,” said Lucien, dazzled by the stream of gold.

“Child!” said the priest, and set a tender kiss on Lucien’s forehead. “There is twice as much still left in the bag, besides the money for traveling expenses.”

“And you are traveling alone!” cried Lucien.

“What is that?” asked the Spaniard. “I have more than a hundred thousand crowns in drafts on Paris. A diplomatist without money is in your position of this morning — a poet without a will of his own!”

As Lucien took his place in the caleche beside the so-called Spanish diplomatist, Eve rose to give her child a draught of milk, found the fatal letter in the cradle, and read it. A sudden cold chilled the damps of morning slumber, dizziness came over her, she could not see. She called aloud to Marion and Kolb.

“Has my brother gone out?” she asked, and Kolb answered at once with, “Yes, Montame, pefore tay.”

“Keep this that I am going to tell you a profound secret,” said Eve. “My brother has gone no doubt to make away with himself. Hurry, both of you, make inquiries cautiously, and look along the river.”

Eve was left alone in a dull stupor, dreadful to see. Her trouble was at its height when Petit–Claud came in at seven o’clock to talk over the steps to be taken in David’s case. At such a time, any voice in the world may speak, and we let them speak.

“Our poor, dear David is in prison, madame,” so began Petit–Claud. “I foresaw all along that it would end in this. I advised him at the time to go into partnership with his competitors the Cointets; for while your husband has simply the idea, they have the means of putting it into practical shape. So as soon as I heard of his arrest yesterday evening, what did I do but hurry away to find the Cointets and try to obtain such concessions as might satisfy you. If you try to keep the discovery to yourselves, you will continue to live a life of shifts and chicanery. You must give in, or else when you are exhausted and at the last gasp, you will end by making a bargain with some capitalist or other, and perhaps to your own detriment, whereas today I hope to see you make a good one with MM. Cointet. In this way you will save yourselves the hardships and the misery of the inventor’s duel with the greed of the capitalist and the indifference of the public. Let us see! If the MM. Cointet should pay your debts — if, over and above your debts, they should pay you a further sum of money down, whether or no the invention succeeds; while at the same time it is thoroughly understood that if it succeeds a certain proportion of the profits of working the patent shall be yours, would you not be doing very well? — You yourself, madame, would then be the proprietor of the plant in the printing-office. You would sell the business, no doubt; it is quite worth twenty thousand francs. I will undertake to find you a buyer at that price.

“Now if you draw up a deed of partnership with the MM. Cointet, and receive fifteen thousand francs of capital; and if you invest it in the funds at the present moment, it will bring you in an income of two thousand francs. You can live on two thousand francs in the provinces. Bear in mind, too, madame, that, given certain contingencies, there will be yet further payments. I say ‘contingencies,’ because we must lay our accounts with failure.

“Very well,” continued Petit–Claud, “now these things I am sure that I can obtain for you. First of all, David’s release from prison; secondly, fifteen thousand francs, a premium paid on his discovery, whether the experiments fail or succeed; and lastly, a partnership between David and the MM. Cointet, to be taken out after private experiment made jointly. The deed of partnership for the working of the patent should be drawn up on the following basis: The MM. Cointet to bear all the expenses, the capital invested by David to be confined to the expenses of procuring the patent, and his share of the profits to be fixed at twenty-five per cent. You are a clear-headed and very sensible woman, qualities which are not often found combined with great beauty; think over these proposals, and you will

see that they are very favorable."

Poor Eve in her despair burst into tears. "Ah, sir! why did you not come yesterday evening to tell me this? We should have been spared disgrace and — and something far worse ——"

"I was talking with the Cointets until midnight. They are behind Metivier, as you must have suspected. But how has something worse than our poor David's arrest happened since yesterday evening?"

"Here is the awful news that I found when I awoke this morning," she said, holding out Lucien's letter. "You have just given me proof of your interest in us; you are David's friend and Lucien's; I need not ask you to keep the secret ——"

"You need not feel the least anxiety," said Petit–Claud, as he returned the letter. "Lucien will not take his life. Your husband's arrest was his doing; he was obliged to find some excuse for leaving you, and this exit of his looks to me like a piece of stage business."

The Cointets had gained their ends. They had tormented the inventor and his family, until, worn out by the torture, the victims longed for a respite, and then seized their opportunity and made the offer. Not every inventor has the tenacity of the bull-dog that will perish with his teeth fast set in his capture; the Cointets had shrewdly estimated David's character. The tall Cointet looked upon David's imprisonment as the first scene of the first act of the drama. The second act opened with the proposal which Petit–Claud had just made. As arch-schemer, the attorney looked upon Lucien's frantic folly as a bit of unhoped-for luck, a chance that would finally decide the issues of the day.

Eve was completely prostrated by this event; Petit–Claud saw this, and meant to profit by her despair to win her confidence, for he saw at last how much she influenced her husband. So far from discouraging Eve, he tried to reassure her, and very cleverly diverted her thoughts to the prison. She should persuade David to take the Cointets into partnership.

"David told me, madame, that he only wished for a fortune for your sake and your brother's; but it should be clear to you by now that to try to make a rich man of Lucien would be madness. The youngster would run through three fortunes."

Eve's attitude told plainly enough that she had no more illusions left with regard to her brother. The lawyer waited a little so that her silence should have the

weight of consent.

“Things being so, it is now a question of you and your child,” he said. “It rests with you to decide whether an income of two thousand francs will be enough for your welfare, to say nothing of old Sechard’s property. Your father-inlaw’s income has amounted to seven or eight thousand francs for a long time past, to say nothing of capital lying out at interest. So, after all, you have a good prospect before you. Why torment yourself?”

Petit–Claud left Eve Sechard to reflect upon this prospect. The whole scheme had been drawn up with no little skill by the tall Cointet the evening before.

“Give them the glimpse of a possibility of money in hand,” the lynx had said, when Petit–Claud brought the news of the arrest; “once let them grow accustomed to that idea, and they are ours; we will drive a bargain, and little by little we shall bring them down to our price for the secret.”

The argument of the second act of the commercial drama was in a manner summed up in that speech.

Mme. Sechard, heartbroken and full of dread for her brother’s fate, dressed and came downstairs. An agony of terror seized her when she thought that she must cross Angouleme alone on the way to the prison. Petit–Claud gave little thought to his fair client’s distress. When he came back to offer his arm, it was from a tolerably Machiavellian motive; but Eve gave him credit for delicate consideration, and he allowed her to thank him for it. The little attention, at such a moment, from so hard a man, modified Mme. Sechard’s previous opinion of Petit–Claud.

“I am taking you round by the longest way,” he said, “and we shall meet nobody.”

“For the first time in my life, monsieur, I feel that I have no right to hold up my head before other people; I had a sharp lesson given to me last night ——”

“It will be the first and the last.”

“Oh! I certainly shall not stay in the town now ——”

“Let me know if your husband consents to the proposals that are all but definitely offered by the Cointets,” said Petit–Claud at the gate of the prison; “I will come at once with an order for David’s release from Cachan, and in all

likelihood he will not go back again to prison."

This suggestion, made on the very threshold of the jail, was a piece of cunning strategy — a *combinazione*, as the Italians call an indefinable mixture of treachery and truth, a cunningly planned fraud which does not break the letter of the law, or a piece of deft trickery for which there is no legal remedy. St. Bartholomew's for instance, was a political combination.

Imprisonment for debt, for reasons previously explained, is such a rare occurrence in the provinces, that there is no house of detention, and a debtor is perforce imprisoned with the accused, convicted, and condemned — the three graduated subdivisions of the class generically styled criminal. David was put for the time being in a cell on the ground floor from which some prisoner had probably been recently discharged at the end of his time. Once inscribed on the jailer's register, with the amount allowed by the law for a prisoner's board for one month, David confronted a big, stout man, more powerful than the King himself in a prisoner's eyes; this was the jailer.

An instance of a thin jailer is unknown in the provinces. The place, to begin with, is almost a sinecure, and a jailer is a kind of innkeeper who pays no rent and lives very well, while his prisoners fare very ill; for, like an innkeeper, he gives them rooms according to their payments. He knew David by name, and what was more, knew about David's father, and thought that he might venture to let the printer have a good room on credit for one night; for David was penniless.

The prison of Angouleme was built in the Middle Ages, and has no more changed than the old cathedral. It is built against the old *presidial*, or ancient court of appeal, and people still call it the *maison de justice*. It boasts the conventional prison gateway, the solid-looking, nail-studded door, the low, worn archway which the better deserves the qualification "cyclopean," because the jailer's peephole or *judas* looks out like a single eye from the front of the building. As you enter you find yourself in a corridor which runs across the entire width of the building, with a row of doors of cells that give upon the prison yard and are lighted by high windows covered with a square iron grating. The jailer's house is separated from these cells by an archway in the middle, through which you catch a glimpse of the iron gate of the prison yard. The jailer installed David in a cell next to the archway, thinking that he would like to have a man of David's stamp as a near neighbor for the sake of company.

“This is the best room,” he said. David was struck dumb with amazement at the sight of it.

The stone walls were tolerably damp. The windows, set high in the wall, were heavily barred; the stone-paved floor was cold as ice, and from the corridor outside came the sound of the measured tramp of the warder, monotonous as waves on the beach. “You are a prisoner! you are watched and guarded!” said the footsteps at every moment of every hour. All these small things together produce a prodigious effect upon the minds of honest folk. David saw that the bed was execrable, but the first night in a prison is full of violent agitation, and only on the second night does the prisoner notice that his couch is hard. The jailer was graciously disposed; he naturally suggested that his prisoner should walk in the yard until nightfall.

David’s hour of anguish only began when he was locked into his cell for the night. Lights are not allowed in the cells. A prisoner detained on arrest used to be subjected to rules devised for malefactors, unless he brought a special exemption signed by the public prosecutor. The jailer certainly might allow David to sit by his fire, but the prisoner must go back to his cell at locking-up time. Poor David learned the horrors of prison life by experience, the rough coarseness of the treatment revolted him. Yet a revulsion, familiar to those who live by thought, passed over him. He detached himself from his loneliness, and found a way of escape in a poet’s waking dream.

At last the unhappy man’s thoughts turned to his own affairs. The stimulating influence of a prison upon conscience and self-scrutiny is immense. David asked himself whether he had done his duty as the head of a family. What despairing grief his wife must feel at this moment! Why had he not done as Marion had said, and earned money enough to pursue his investigations at leisure?

“How can I stay in Angouleme after such a disgrace? And when I come out of prison, what will become of us? Where shall we go?”

Doubts as to his process began to occur to him, and he passed through an agony which none save inventors can understand. Going from doubt to doubt, David began to see his real position more clearly; and to himself he said, as the Cointets had said to old Sechard, as Petit–Claud had just said to Eve, “Suppose that all should go well, what does it amount to in practice? The first thing to be done is to take out a patent, and money is needed for that — and experiments

must be tried on a large scale in a paper-mill, which means that the discovery must pass into other hands. Oh! Petit–Claud was right!"

A very vivid light sometimes dawns in the darkest prison.

"Pshaw!" said David; "I shall see Petit–Claud tomorrow no doubt," and he turned and slept on the filthy mattress covered with coarse brown sacking.

So when Eve unconsciously played into the hands of the enemy that morning, she found her husband more than ready to listen to proposals. She put her arms about him and kissed him, and sat down on the edge of the bed (for there was but one chair of the poorest and commonest kind in the cell). Her eyes fell on the unsightly pail in a corner, and over the walls covered with inscriptions left by David's predecessors, and tears filled the eyes that were red with weeping. She had sobbed long and very bitterly, but the sight of her husband in a felon's cell drew fresh tears.

"And the desire of fame may lead one to this!" she cried. "Oh! my angel, give up your career. Let us walk together along the beaten track; we will not try to make haste to be rich, David. . . . I need very little to be very happy, especially now, after all that we have been through. . . . And if you only knew — the disgrace of arrest is not the worst. . . . Look."

She held out Lucien's letter, and when David had read it, she tried to comfort him by repeating Petit–Claud's bitter comment.

"If Lucien has taken his life, the thing is done by now," said David; "if he has not made away with himself by this time, he will not kill himself. As he himself says, 'his courage cannot last longer than a morning ——'"

"But the suspense!" cried Eve, forgiving almost everything at the thought of death. Then she told her husband of the proposals which Petit–Claud professed to have received from the Cointets. David accepted them at once with manifest pleasure.

"We shall have enough to live upon in a village near L'Houmeau, where the Cointets' paper-mill stands. I want nothing now but a quiet life," said David. "If Lucien has punished himself by death, we can wait so long as father lives; and if Lucien is still living, poor fellow, he will learn to adapt himself to our narrow ways. The Cointets certainly will make money by my discovery; but, after all, what am I compared with our country? One man in it, that is all; and if the whole country is

benefited, I shall be content. There! dear Eve, neither you nor I were meant to be successful in business. We do not care enough about making a profit; we have not the dogged objection to parting with our money, even when it is legally owing, which is a kind of virtue of the counting-house, for these two sorts of avarice are called prudence and a faculty of business."

Eve felt overjoyed; she and her husband held the same views, and this is one of the sweetest flowers of love; for two human beings who love each other may not be of the same mind, nor take the same view of their interests. She wrote to Petit–Claud telling him that they both consented to the general scheme, and asked him to release David. Then she begged the jailer to deliver the message.

Ten minutes later Petit–Claud entered the dismal place. "Go home, madame," he said, addressing Eve, "we will follow you. — Well, my dear friend" (turning to David), "so you allowed them to catch you! Why did you come out? How came you to make such a mistake?"

"Eh! how could I do otherwise? Look at this letter that Lucien wrote."

David held out a sheet of paper. It was Cerizet's forged letter.

Petit–Claud read it, looked at it, fingered the paper as he talked, and still taking, presently, as if through absence of mind, folded it up and put it in his pocket. Then he linked his arm in David's, and they went out together, the order for release having come during the conversation.

It was like heaven to David to be at home again. He cried like a child when he took little Lucien in his arms and looked round his room after three weeks of imprisonment, and the disgrace, according to provincial notions, of the last few hours. Kolb and Marion had come back. Marion had heard in L'Houmeau that Lucien had been seen walking along on the Paris road, somewhere beyond Marsac. Some country folk, coming in to market, had noticed his fine clothes. Kolb, therefore, had set out on horseback along the highroad, and heard at last at Mansle that Lucien was traveling post in a caleche — M. Marron had recognized him as he passed.

"What did I tell you?" said Petit–Claud. "That fellow is not a poet; he is a romance in heaven knows how many chapters."

"Traveling post!" repeated Eve. "Where can he be going this time?"

“Now go to see the Cointets, they are expecting you,” said Petit–Claud, turning to David.

“Ah, monsieur!” cried the beautiful Eve, “pray do your best for our interests; our whole future lies in your hands.”

“If you prefer it, madame, the conference can be held here. I will leave David with you. The Cointets will come this evening, and you shall see if I can defend your interests.”

“Ah! monsieur, I should be very glad,” said Eve.

“Very well,” said Petit–Claud; “this evening, at seven o’clock.”

“Thank you,” said Eve; and from her tone and glance Petit–Claud knew that he had made great progress in his fair client’s confidence.

“You have nothing to fear; you see I was right,” he added. “Your brother is a hundred miles away from suicide, and when all comes to all, perhaps you will have a little fortune this evening. A *bona-fide* purchaser for the business has turned up.”

“If that is the case,” said Eve, “why should we not wait awhile before binding ourselves to the Cointets?”

Petit–Claud saw the danger. “You are forgetting, madame,” he said, “that you cannot sell your business until you have paid M. Metivier; for a distress warrant has been issued.”

As soon as Petit–Claud reached home he sent for Cerizet, and when the printer’s foreman appeared, drew him into the embrasure of the window.

“To-morrow evening,” he said, “you will be the proprietor of the Sechards’ printing-office, and then there are those behind you who have influence enough to transfer the license;” (then in a lowered voice), “but you have no mind to end in the hulks, I suppose?”

“The hulks! What’s that? What’s that?”

“Your letter to David was a forgery. It is in my possession. What would Henriette say in a court of law? I do not want to ruin you,” he added hastily, seeing how white Cerizet’s face grew.

“You want something more of me?” cried Cerizet.

“Well, here it is,” said Petit–Claud. “Follow me carefully. You will be a master printer in Angouleme in two months’ time . . . but you will not have paid for your business — you will not pay for it in ten years. You will work a long while yet for those that have lent you the money, and you will be the cat’s-paw of the Liberal party. . . . Now *I* shall draw up your agreement with Gannerac, and I can draw it up in such a way that you will have the business in your own hands one of these days. But — if the Liberals start a paper, if you bring it out, and if I am deputy public prosecutor, then you will come to an understanding with the Cointets and publish articles of such a nature that they will have the paper suppressed.. .. The Cointets will pay you handsomely for that service. . . . I know, of course, that you will be a hero, a victim of persecution; you will be a personage among the Liberals — a Sergeant Mercier, a Paul–Louis Courier, a Manual on a small scale. I will take care that they leave you your license. In fact, on the day when the newspaper is suppressed, I will burn this letter before your eyes. . . . Your fortune will not cost you much.”

A working man has the haziest notions as to the law with regard to forgery; and Cerizet, who beheld himself already in the dock, breathed again.

“In three years’ time,” continued Petit–Claud, “I shall be public prosecutor in Angouleme. You may have need of me some day; bear that in mind.”

“It’s agreed,” said Cerizet, “but you don’t know me. Burn that letter now and trust to my gratitude.”

Petit–Claud looked Cerizet in the face. It was a duel in which one man’s gaze is a scalpel with which he essays to probe the soul of another, and the eyes of that other are a theatre, as it were, to which all his virtue is summoned for display.

Petit–Claud did not utter a word. He lighted a taper and burned the letter. “He has his way to make,” he said to himself.

“Here is one that will go through fire and water for you,” said Cerizet.

David awaited the interview with the Cointets with a vague feeling of uneasiness; not, however, on account of the proposed partnership, nor for his own interests — he felt nervous as to their opinion of his work. He was in something the same position as a dramatic author before his judges. The inventor’s pride in the discovery so nearly completed left no room for any other feelings.

At seven o’clock that evening, while Mme. du Chatelet, pleading a sick

headache, had gone to her room in her unhappiness over the rumors of Lucien's departure; while M. de Comte, left to himself, was entertaining his guests at dinner — the tall Cointet and his stout brother, accompanied by Petit–Claud, opened negotiations with the competitor who had delivered himself up, bound hand and foot.

A difficulty awaited them at the outset. How was it possible to draw up a deed of partnership unless they knew David's secret? And if David divulged his secret, he would be at the mercy of the Cointets. Petit–Claud arranged that the deed of partnership should be the first drawn up. Thereupon the tall Cointet asked to see some specimens of David's work, and David brought out the last sheet that he had made, guaranteeing the price of production.

"Well," said Petit–Claud, "there you have the basis of the agreement ready made. You can go into partnership on the strength of those samples, inserting a clause to protect yourselves in case the conditions of the patent are not fulfilled in the manufacturing process."

"It is one thing to make samples of paper on a small scale in your own room with a small mould, monsieur, and another to turn out a quantity," said the tall Cointet, addressing David. "Quite another thing, as you may judge from this single fact. We manufacture colored papers. We buy parcels of coloring absolutely identical. Every cake of indigo used for 'blueing' our post-demy is taken from a batch supplied by the same maker. Well, we have never yet been able to obtain two batches of precisely the same shade. There are variations in the material which we cannot detect. The quantity and the quality of the pulp modify every question at once. Suppose that you have in a caldron a quantity of ingredients of some kind (I don't ask to know what they are), you can do as you like with them, the treatment can be uniformly applied, you can manipulate, knead, and pestle the mass at your pleasure until you have a homogeneous substance. But who will guarantee that it will be the same with a batch of five hundred reams, and that your plan will succeed in bulk?"

David, Eve, and Petit–Claud looked at one another; their eyes said many things.

"Take a somewhat similar case," continued the tall Cointet after a pause. "You cut two or three trusses of meadow hay, and store it in a loft before 'the heat is out of the grass,' as the peasants say; the hay ferments, but no harm comes of it. You

follow up your experiment by storing a couple of thousand trusses in a wooden barn — and, of course, the hay smoulders, and the barn blazes up like a lighted match. You are an educated man," continued Cointet; "you can see the application for yourself. So far, you have only cut your two trusses of hay; we are afraid of setting fire to our paper-mill by bringing in a couple of thousand trusses. In other words, we may spoil more than one batch, make heavy losses, and find ourselves none the better for laying out a good deal of money."

David was completely floored by this reasoning. Practical wisdom spoke in matter-of-fact language to theory, whose word is always for the future.

"Devil fetch me, if I'll sign such a deed of partnership!" the stout Cointet cried bluntly. "You may throw away your money if you like, Boniface; as for me, I shall keep mine. Here is my offer — to pay M. Sechard's debts *and* six thousand francs, and another three thousand francs in bills at twelve and fifteen months," he added. "That will be quite enough risk to run. — We have a balance of twelve thousand francs against Metivier. That will make fifteen thousand francs. — That is all that I would pay for the secret if I were going to exploit it for myself. So this is the great discovery that you were talking about, Boniface! Many thanks! I thought you had more sense. No, you can't call this business."

"The question for you," said Petit–Claud, undismayed by the explosion, "resolves itself into this: 'Do you care to risk twenty thousand francs to buy a secret that may make rich men of you?' Why, the risk usually is in proportion to the profit, gentlemen. You stake twenty thousand francs on your luck. A gambler puts down a louis at roulette for a chance of winning thirty-six, but he knows that the louis is lost. Do the same."

"I must have time to think it over," said the stout Cointet; "I am not so clever as my brother. I am a plain, straight-forward sort of chap, that only knows one thing — how to print prayer-books at twenty sous and sell them for two francs. Where I see an invention that has only been tried once, I see ruin. You succeed with the first batch, you spoil the next, you go on, and you are drawn in; for once put an arm into that machinery, the rest of you follows," and he related an anecdote very much to the point — how a Bordeaux merchant had ruined himself by following a scientific man's advice, and trying to bring the Landes into cultivation; and followed up the tale with half-a-dozen similar instances of agricultural and commercial failures nearer home in the departments of the

Charente and Dordogne. He waxed warm over his recitals. He would not listen to another word. Petit–Claud's demurs, so far from soothing the stout Cointet, appeared to irritate him.

"I would rather give more for a certainty, if I made only a small profit on it," he said, looking at his brother. "It is my opinion that things have gone far enough for business," he concluded.

"Still you came here for something, didn't you?" asked Petit–Claud. "What is your offer?"

"I offer to release M. Sechard, and, if his plan succeeds, to give him thirty per cent of the profits," the stout Cointet answered briskly.

"But, monsieur," objected Eve, "how should we live while the experiments were being made? My husband has endured the disgrace of imprisonment already; he may as well go back to prison, it makes no difference now, and we will pay our debts ourselves ——"

Petit–Claud laid a finger on his lips in warning.

"You are unreasonable," said he, addressing the brothers. "You have seen the paper; M. Sechard's father told you that he had shut his son up, and that he had made capital paper in a single night from materials that must have cost a mere nothing. You are here to make an offer. Are you purchasers, yes or no?"

"Stay," said the tall Cointet, "whether my brother is willing or no, I will risk this much myself. I will pay M. Sechard's debts, I will pay six thousand francs over and above the debts, and M. Sechard shall have thirty per cent of the profits. But mind this — if in the space of one year he fails to carry out the undertakings which he himself will make in the deed of partnership, he must return the six thousand francs, and we shall keep the patent and extricate ourselves as best we may."

"Are you sure of yourself?" asked Petit–Claud, taking David aside.

"Yes," said David. He was deceived by the tactics of the brothers, and afraid lest the stout Cointet should break off the negotiations on which his future depended.

"Very well, I will draft the deed," said Petit–Claud, addressing the rest of the party. "Each of you shall have a copy to-night, and you will have all tomorrow morning in which to think it over. To-morrow afternoon at four o'clock, when the

court rises, you will sign the agreement. You, gentlemen, will withdraw Metivier's suit, and I, for my part, will write to stop proceedings in the Court–Royal; we will give notice on either side that the affair has been settled out of court."

David Sechard's undertakings were thus worded in the deed:—

> "M. David Sechard, printer of Angouleme, affirming that he has discovered a method of sizing paper-pulp in the vat, and also a method of affecting a reduction of fifty per cent in the price of all kinds of manufactured papers, by introducing certain vegetable substances into the pulp, either by intermixture of such substances with the rags already in use, or by employing them solely without the addition of rags: a partnership for working the patent to be presently applied for is entered upon by M. David Sechard and the firm of Cointet Brothers, subject to the following conditional clauses and stipulations."

One of the clauses so drafted that David Sechard forfeited all his rights if he failed to fulfil his engagements within the year; the tall Cointet was particularly careful to insert that clause, and David Sechard allowed it to pass.

When Petit–Claud appeared with a copy of the agreement next morning at half-past seven o'clock, he brought news for David and his wife. Cerizet offered twenty-two thousand francs for the business. The whole affair could be signed and settled in the course of the evening. "But if the Cointets knew about it," he added, "they would be quite capable of refusing to sign the deed of partnership, of harassing you, and selling you up."

"Are you sure of payment?" asked Eve. She had thought it hopeless to try to sell the business; and now, to her astonishment, a bargain which would have been their salvation three months ago was concluded in this summary fashion.

"The money has been deposited with me," he answered succinctly.

"Why, here is magic at work!" said David, and he asked Petit–Claud for an explanation of this piece of luck.

"No," said Petit–Claud, "it is very simple. The merchants in L'Houmeau want a newspaper."

"But I am bound not to publish a paper," said David.

"Yes, you are bound, but is your successor? — However it is," he continued, "do not trouble yourself at all; sell the business, pocket the proceeds, and leave Cerizet to find his way through the conditions of the sale — he can take care of

himself."

"Yes," said Eve.

"And if it turns out that you may not print a newspaper in Angouleme," said Petit–Claud, "those who are finding the capital for Cerizet will bring out the paper in L'Houmeau."

The prospect of twenty-two thousand francs, of want now at end, dazzled Eve. The partnership and its hopes took a second place. And, therefore, M. and Mme. Sechard gave way on a final point of dispute. The tall Cointet insisted that the patent should be taken out in the name of any one of the partners. What difference could it make? The stout Cointet said the last word.

"He is finding the money for the patent; he is bearing the expenses of the journey — another two thousand francs over and above the rest of the expenses. He must take it out in his own name, or we will not stir in the matter."

The lynx gained a victory at all points. The deed of partnership was signed that afternoon at half-past four.

The tall Cointet politely gave Mme. Sechard a dozen thread-pattern forks and spoons and a beautiful Ternaux shawl, by way of pin-money, said he, and to efface any unpleasant impression made in the heat of discussion. The copies of the draft had scarcely been made out, Cachan had barely had time to send the documents to Petit–Claud, together with the three unlucky forged bills, when the Sechards heard a deafening rumble in the street, a dray from the Messageries stopped before the door, and Kolb's voice made the staircase ring again.

"Montame! montame! vifteen tausend vrancs, vrom Boidiers" (Poitiers). "Goot money! vrom Monziere Lucien!"

"Fifteen thousand francs!" cried Eve, throwing up her arms.

"Yes, madame," said the carman in the doorway, "fifteen thousand francs, brought by the Bordeaux coach, and they didn't want any more neither! I have two men downstairs bringing up the bags. M. Lucien Chardon de Rubempre is the sender. I have brought up a little leather bag for you, containing five hundred francs in gold, and a letter it's likely."

Eve thought that she must be dreaming as she read:—

"MY DEAR SISTER— Here are fifteen thousand francs. Instead of

taking my life, I have sold it. I am no longer my own; I am only the secretary of a Spanish diplomatist; I am his creature. A new and dreadful life is beginning for me. Perhaps I should have done better to drown myself.

"Good-bye. David will be released, and with the four thousand francs he can buy a little paper-mill, no doubt, and make his fortune. Forget me, all of you. This is the wish of your unhappy brother.
"LUCIEN."

"It is decreed that my poor boy should be unlucky in everything, and even when he does well, as he said himself," said Mme. Chardon, as she watched the men piling up the bags.

"We have had a narrow escape!" exclaimed the tall Cointet, when he was once more in the Place du Murier. "An hour later the glitter of the silver would have thrown a new light on the deed of partnership. Our man would have fought shy of it. We have his promise now, and in three months' time we shall know what to do."

That very evening, at seven o'clock, Cerizet bought the business, and the money was paid over, the purchaser undertaking to pay rent for the last quarter. The next day Eve sent forty thousand francs to the Receiver–General, and bought two thousand five hundred francs of *rentes* in her husband's name. Then she wrote to her father-inlaw and asked him to find a small farm, worth about ten thousand francs, for her near Marsac. She meant to invest her own fortune in this way.

The tall Cointet's plot was formidably simple. From the very first he considered that the plan of sizing the pulp in the vat was impracticable. The real secret of fortune lay in the composition of the pulp, in the cheap vegetable fibre as a substitute for rags. He made up his mind, therefore, to lay immense stress on the secondary problem of sizing the pulp, and to pass over the discovery of cheap raw material, and for the following reasons:

The Angouleme paper-mills manufacture paper for stationers. Notepaper, foolscap, crown, and post-demy are all necessarily sized; and these papers have been the pride of the Angouleme mills for a long while past, stationery being the specialty of the Charente. This fact gave color to the Cointet's urgency upon the point of sizing in the pulping-trough; but, as a matter of fact, they cared nothing for this part of David's researches. The demand for writing-paper is exceedingly small compared with the almost unlimited demand for unsized paper for printers.

As Boniface Cointet traveled to Paris to take out the patent in his own name, he was projecting plans that were like to work a revolution in his paper-mill. Arrived in Paris, he took up his quarters with Metivier, and gave his instructions to his agent. Metivier was to call upon the proprietors of newspapers, and offer to deliver paper at prices below those quoted by all other houses; he could guarantee in each case that the paper should be a better color, and in every way superior to the best kinds hitherto in use. Newspapers are always supplied by contract; there would be time before the present contracts expired to complete all the subterranean operations with buyers, and to obtain a monopoly of the trade. Cointet calculated that he could rid himself of Sechard while Metivier was taking orders from the principal Paris newspapers, which even then consumed two hundred reams daily. Cointet naturally offered Metivier a large commission on the contracts, for he wished to secure a clever representative on the spot, and to waste no time in traveling to and fro. And in this manner the fortunes of the firm of Metivier, one of the largest houses in the paper trade, were founded. The tall Cointet went back to Angouleme to be present at Petit–Claud's wedding, with a mind at rest as to the future.

Petit–Claud had sold his professional connection, and was only waiting for M. Milaud's promotion to take the public prosecutor's place, which had been promised to him by the Comtesse du Chatelet. The public prosecutor's second deputy was appointed first deputy to the Court of Limoges, the Keeper of the Seals sent a man of his own to Angouleme, and the post of first deputy was kept vacant for a couple of months. The interval was Petit–Claud's honeymoon.

While Boniface Cointet was in Paris, David made a first experimental batch of unsized paper far superior to that in common use for newspapers. He followed it up with a second batch of magnificent vellum paper for fine printing, and this the Cointets used for a new edition of their diocesan prayer-book. The material had been privately prepared by David himself; he would have no helpers but Kolb and Marion.

When Boniface came back the whole affair wore a different aspect; he looked at the samples, and was fairly satisfied.

"My good friend," he said, "the whole trade of Angouleme is in crown paper. We must make the best possible crown paper at half the present price; that is the first and foremost question for us."

Then David tried to size the pulp for the desired paper, and the result was a harsh surface with grains of size distributed all over it. On the day when the experiment was concluded and David held the sheets in his hand, he went away to find a spot where he could be alone and swallow his bitter disappointment. But Boniface Cointet went in search of him and comforted him. Boniface was delightfully amiable.

"Do not lose heart," he said; "go on! I am a good fellow, I understand you; I will stand by you to the end."

"Really," David said to his wife at dinner, "we are with good people; I should not have expected that the tall Cointet would be so generous." And he repeated his conversation with his wily partner.

Three months were spent in experiments. David slept at the mill; he noted the effects of various preparations upon the pulp. At one time he attributed his non-success to an admixture of rag-pulp with his own ingredients, and made a batch entirely composed of the new material; at another, he endeavored to size pulp made exclusively from rags; persevering in his experiments under the eyes of the tall Cointet, whom he had ceased to mistrust, until he had tried every possible combination of pulp and size. David lived in the paper-mill for the first six months of 1823 — if it can be called living, to leave food untasted, and go in neglect of person and dress. He wrestled so desperately with the difficulties, that anybody but the Cointets would have seen the sublimity of the struggle, for the brave fellow was not thinking of his own interests. The moment had come when he cared for nothing but the victory. With marvelous sagacity he watched the unaccountable freaks of the semi-artificial substances called into existence by man for ends of his own; substances in which nature had been tamed, as it were, and her tacit resistance overcome; and from these observations drew great conclusions; finding, as he did, that such creations can only be obtained by following the laws of the more remote affinities of things, of "a second nature," as he called it, in substances.

Towards the end of August he succeeded to some extent in sizing the paper pulp in the vat; the result being a kind of paper identical with a make in use for printers' proofs at the present day — a kind of paper that cannot be depended upon, for the sizing itself is not always certain. This was a great result, considering the condition of the paper trade in 1823, and David hoped to solve the final

difficulties of the problem, but — it had cost ten thousand francs.

Singular rumors were current at this time in Angouleme and L'Houmeau. It was said that David Sechard was ruining the firm of Cointet Brothers. Experiments had eaten up twenty thousand francs; and the result, said gossip, was wretchedly bad paper. Other manufacturers took fright at this, hugged themselves on their old-fashioned methods, and, being jealous of the Cointets, spread rumors of the approaching fall of that ambitious house. As for the tall Cointet, he set up the new machinery for making lengths of paper in a ribbon, and allowed people to believe that he was buying plant for David's experiments. Then the cunning Cointet used David's formula for pulp, while urging his partner to give his whole attention to the sizing process; and thousands of reams of the new paper were despatched to Metivier in Paris.

When September arrived, the tall Cointet took David aside, and, learning that the latter meditated a crowning experiment, dissuaded him from further attempts.

"Go to Marsac, my dear David, see your wife, and take a rest after your labors; we don't want to ruin ourselves," said Cointet in the friendliest way. "This great triumph of yours, after all, is only a starting-point. We shall wait now for awhile before trying any new experiments. To be fair! see what has come of them. We are not merely paper-makers, we are printers besides and bankers, and people say that you are ruining us."

David Sechard's gesture of protest on behalf of his good faith was sublime in its simplicity.

"Not that fifty thousand francs thrown into the Charente would ruin us," said Cointet, in reply to mute protest, "but we do not wish to be obliged to pay cash for everything in consequence of slanders that shake our credit; *that* would bring us to a standstill. We have reached the term fixed by our agreement, and we are bound on either side to think over our position."

"He is right," thought David. He had forgotten the routine work of the business, thoroughly absorbed as he had been in experiments on a large scale.

David went to Marsac. For the past six months he had gone over on Saturday evening, returning again to L'Houmeau on Tuesday morning. Eve, after much counsel from her father-inlaw, had bought a house called the Verberie, with three acres of land and a croft planted with vines, which lay like a wedge in the old

man's vineyard. Here, with her mother and Marion, she lived a very frugal life, for five thousand francs of the purchase money still remained unpaid. It was a charming little domain, the prettiest bit of property in Marsac. The house, with a garden before it and a yard at the back, was built of white tufa ornamented with carvings, cut without great expense in that easily wrought stone, and roofed with slate. The pretty furniture from the house in Angouleme looked prettier still at Marsac, for there was not the slightest attempt at comfort or luxury in the country in those days. A row of orange-trees, pomegranates, and rare plants stood before the house on the side of the garden, set there by the last owner, an old general who died under M. Marron's hands.

David was enjoying his holiday sitting under an orange-tree with his wife, and father, and little Lucien, when the bailiff from Mansle appeared. Cointet Brothers gave their partner formal notice to appoint an arbitrator to settle disputes, in accordance with a clause in the agreement. The Cointets demanded that the six thousand francs should be refunded, and the patent surrendered in consideration of the enormous outlay made to no purpose.

"People say that you are ruining them," said old Sechard. "Well, well, of all that you have done, that is the one thing that I am glad to know."

At nine o'clock the next morning Eve and David stood in Petit–Claud's waiting-room. The little lawyer was the guardian of the widow and orphan by virtue of his office, and it seemed to them that they could take no other advice. Petit–Claud was delighted to see his clients, and insisted that M. and Mme. Sechard should do him the pleasure of breakfasting with him.

"Do the Cointets want six thousand francs of you?" he asked, smiling. "How much is still owing of the purchase-money of the Verberie?"

"Five thousand francs, monsieur," said Eve, "but I have two thousand ——"

"Keep your money," Petit–Claud broke in. "Let us see: five thousand — why, you want quite another ten thousand francs to settle yourselves comfortably down yonder. Very good, in two hours' time the Cointets shall bring you fifteen thousand francs ——"

Eve started with surprise.

"If you will renounce all claims to the profits under the deed of partnership, and come to an amicable settlement," said Petit–Claud. "Does that suit you?"

“Will it really be lawfully ours?” asked Eve.

“Very much so,” said the lawyer, smiling. “The Cointets have worked you trouble enough; I should like to make an end of their pretensions. Listen to me; I am a magistrate now, and it is my duty to tell you the truth. Very good. The Cointets are playing you false at this moment, but you are in their hands. If you accept battle, you might possibly gain the lawsuit which they will bring. Do you wish to be where you are now after ten years of litigation? Experts’ fees and expenses of arbitration will be multiplied, the most contradictory opinions will be given, and you must take your chance. And,” he added, smiling again, “there is no attorney here that can defend you, so far as I see. My successor has not much ability. There, a bad compromise is better than a successful lawsuit.”

“Any arrangement that will give us a quiet life will do for me,” said David.

Petit–Claud called to his servant.

“Paul! go and ask M. Segaud, my successor, to come here. — He shall go to see the Cointets while we breakfast” said Petit–Claud, addressing his former clients, “and in a few hours’ time you will be on your way home to Marsac, ruined, but with minds at rest. Ten thousand francs will bring you in another five hundred francs of income, and you will live comfortably on your bit of property.”

Two hours later, as Petit–Claud had prophesied, Maitre Segaud came back with an agreement duly drawn up and signed by the Cointets, and fifteen notes each for a thousand francs.

“We are much indebted to you,” said Sechard, turning to Petit–Claud.

“Why, I have just this moment ruined you,” said Petit–Claud, looking at his astonished former clients. “I tell you again, I have ruined you, as you will see as time goes on; but I know you, you would rather be ruined than wait for a fortune which perhaps might come too late.”

“We are not mercenary, monsieur,” said Madame Eve. “We thank you for giving us the means of happiness; we shall always feel grateful to you.”

“Great heavens! don’t call down blessings on *me*!” cried Petit–Claud. “It fills me with remorse; but today, I think, I have made full reparation. If I am a magistrate, it is entirely owing to you; and if anybody is to feel grateful, it is I. Good-bye.”

As time went on, Kolb changed his opinion of Sechard senior; and as for the old man, he took a liking to Kolb when he found that, like himself, the Alsacien could neither write nor read a word, and that it was easy to make him tipsy. The old "bear" imparted his ideas on vine culture and the sale of a vintage to the ex-cuirassier, and trained him with a view to leaving a man with a head on his shoulders to look after his children when he should be gone; for he grew childish at the last, and great were his fears as to the fate of his property. He had chosen Courtois the miller as his confidant. "You will see how things will go with my children when I am under ground. Lord! it makes me shudder to think of it."

Old Sechard died in the month of March, 1929, leaving about two hundred thousand francs in land. His acres added to the Verberie made a fine property, which Kolb had managed to admiration for some two years.

David and his wife found nearly a hundred thousand crowns in gold in the house. The department of the Charente had valued old Sechard's money at a million; rumor, as usual, exaggerating the amount of a hoard. Eve and David had barely thirty thousand francs of income when they added their little fortune to the inheritance; they waited awhile, and so it fell out that they invested their capital in Government securities at the time of the Revolution of July.

Then, and not until then, could the department of the Charente and David Sechard form some idea of the wealth of the tall Cointet. Rich to the extent of several millions of francs, the elder Cointet became a deputy, and is at this day a peer of France. It is said that he will be Minister of Commerce in the next Government; for in 1842 he married Mlle. Popinot, daughter of M. Anselme Popinot, one of the most influential statesmen of the dynasty, deputy and mayor of an arrondissement in Paris.

David Sechard's discovery has been assimilated by the French manufacturing world, as food is assimilated by a living body. Thanks to the introduction of materials other than rags, France can produce paper more cheaply than any other European country. Dutch paper, as David foresaw, no longer exists. Sooner or later it will be necessary, no doubt, to establish a Royal Paper Manufactory; like the Gobelins, the Sevres porcelain works, the Savonnerie, and the Imprimerie royale, which so far have escaped the destruction threatened by *bourgeois* vandalism.

David Sechard, beloved by his wife, father of two boys and a girl, has the good

taste to make no allusion to his past efforts. Eve had the sense to dissuade him from following his terrible vocation; for the inventor like Moses on Mount Horeb, is consumed by the burning bush. He cultivates literature by way of recreation, and leads a comfortable life of leisure, befitting the landowner who lives on his own estate. He has bidden farewell for ever to glory, and bravely taken his place in the class of dreamers and collectors; for he dabbles in entomology, and is at present investigating the transformations of insects which science only knows in the final stage.

Everybody has heard of Petit–Claud's success as attorney-general; he is the rival of the great Vinet of Provins, and it is his ambition to be President of the Court–Royal of Poitiers.

Cerizet has been in trouble so frequently for political offences that he has been a good deal talked about; and as one of the boldest *enfants perdus* of the Liberal party he was nicknamed the "Brave Cerizet." When Petit–Claud's successor compelled him to sell his business in Angouleme, he found a fresh career on the provincial stage, where his talents as an actor were like to be turned to brilliant account. The chief stage heroine, however, obliged him to go to Paris to find a cure for love among the resources of science, and there he tried to curry favor with the Liberal party.

As for Lucien, the story of his return to Paris belongs to the *Scenes of Parisian* life.