BOOK THE SECOND.

GWYNPLAINE AND DEA.

CHAPTER I.

WHEREIN WE SEE THE FACE OF HIM OF WHOM WE HAVE HITHERTO SEEN ONLY THE ACTS.

Nature had been prodigal of her kindness to Gwynplaine. She had bestowed on him a mouth opening to his ears, ears folding over to his eyes, a shapeless nose to support the spectacles of the grimace maker, and a face that no one could look upon without laughing.

We have just said that nature had loaded Gwynplaine with her gifts. But was it nature? Had she not been assisted?

Two slits for eyes, a hiatus for a mouth, a snub protuberance with two holes for nostrils, a flattened face, all having for the result an appearance of laughter; it is certain that nature never produces such perfection single-handed.

But is laughter a synonym of joy?

If, in the presence of this mountebank—for he was one—the first impression of gaiety wore off, and the man were observed with attention, traces of art were to be recognized. Such a face could never have been created by chance; it must have resulted from intention. Such perfect completeness is not in nature. Man can do nothing to create beauty, but everything to produce ugliness. A Hottentot profile cannot be changed into a Roman outline, but out of a Grecian nose you may make a Calmuck's. It only requires to obliterate the root of the nose and to flatten the nostrils. The dog Latin of the Middle Ages had a reason for its creation of the verb *denasare*. Had Gwynplaine when a child been so worthy of attention that his face had been subjected to transmutation? Why not? Needed there a greater motive than the speculation of his future exhibition? According to all appearance, industrious manipulators of children had worked upon his face. It seemed evident that a mysterious and probably occult science, which was to surgery what alchemy was to chemistry, had chiselled his flesh, evidently at a very tender age, and manufactured his countenance with premeditation. That science, clever with the knife, skilled in

obtusions and ligatures, had enlarged the mouth, cut away the lips, laid bare the gums, distended the ears, cut the cartilages, displaced the eyelids and the cheeks, enlarged the zygomatic muscle, pressed the scars and cicatrices to a level, turned back the skin over the lesions whilst the face was thus stretched, from all which resulted that powerful and profound piece of sculpture, the mask, Gwynplaine.

Man is not born thus.

However it may have been, the manipulation of Gwynplaine had succeeded admirably. Gwynplaine was a gift of Providence to dispel the sadness of man.

Of what providence? Is there a providence of demons as well as of God? We put the question without answering it.

Gwynplaine was a mountebank. He showed himself on the platform. No such effect had ever before been produced. Hypochondriacs were cured by the sight of him alone. He was avoided by folks in mourning, because they were compelled to laugh when they saw him, without regard to their decent gravity. One day the executioner came, and Gwynplaine made him laugh. Every one who saw Gwynplaine held his sides; he spoke, and they rolled on the ground. He was removed from sadness as is pole from pole. Spleen at the one; Gwynplaine at the other.

Thus he rose rapidly in the fair ground and at the cross roads to the very satisfactory renown of a horrible man.

It was Gwynplaine's laugh which created the laughter of others, yet he did not laugh himself. His face laughed; his thoughts did not. The extraordinary face which chance or a special and weird industry had fashioned for him, laughed alone. Gwynplaine had nothing to do with it. The outside did not depend on the interior. The laugh which he had not placed, himself, on his brow, on his eyelids, on his mouth, he could not remove. It had been stamped for ever on his face. It was automatic, and the more irresistible because it seemed petrified. No one could escape from this rictus. Two convulsions of the face are infectious; laughing and yawning. By virtue of the mysterious operation to which Gwynplaine had probably been subjected in his infancy, every part of his face contributed to that rictus; his whole physiognomy led to that result, as a wheel centres in the nave. All his emotions, whatever they might have been, augmented his strange face of joy, or to speak more correctly, aggravated it. Any astonishment which might seize him, any suffering which he might feel, any anger which might take possession of him, any pity which might move him, would only increase this hilarity of his muscles. If he wept, he laughed; and whatever Gwynplaine was, whatever he wished to be, whatever he thought, the moment that he raised his

head, the crowd, if crowd there was, had before them one impersonation: an overwhelming burst of laughter.

It was like a head of Medusa, but Medusa hilarious. All feeling or thought in the mind of the spectator was suddenly put to flight by the unexpected apparition, and laughter was inevitable. Antique art formerly placed on the outsides of the Greek theatre a joyous brazen face, called comedy. It laughed and occasioned laughter, but remained pensive. All parody which borders on folly, all irony which borders on wisdom, were condensed and amalgamated in that face. The burden of care, of disillusion, anxiety, and grief were expressed in its impassive countenance, and resulted in a lugubrious sum of mirth. One corner of the mouth was raised, in mockery of the human race; the other side, in blasphemy of the gods. Men confronted that model of the ideal sarcasm and exemplification of the irony which each one possesses within him; and the crowd, continually renewed round its fixed laugh, died away with delight before its sepulchral immobility of mirth.

One might almost have said that Gwynplaine was that dark, dead mask of ancient comedy adjusted to the body of a living man. That infernal head of implacable hilarity he supported on his neck. What a weight for the shoulders of a man—an everlasting laugh!

An everlasting laugh!

Let us understand each other; we will explain. The Manichæans believed the absolute occasionally gives way, and that God Himself sometimes abdicates for a time. So also of the will. We do not admit that it can ever be utterly powerless. The whole of existence resembles a letter modified in the postscript. For Gwynplaine the postscript was this: by the force of his will, and by concentrating all his attention, and on condition that no emotion should come to distract and turn away the fixedness of his effort, he could manage to suspend the everlasting rictus of his face, and to throw over it a kind of tragic veil, and then the spectator laughed no longer; he shuddered.

This exertion Gwynplaine scarcely ever made. It was a terrible effort, and an insupportable tension. Moreover, it happened that on the slightest distraction, or the slightest emotion, the laugh, driven back for a moment, returned like a tide with an impulse which was irresistible in proportion to the force of the adverse emotion.

With this exception, Gwynplaine's laugh was everlasting.

On seeing Gwynplaine, all laughed. When they had laughed they turned away their heads. Women especially shrank from him with horror. The man was frightful. The joyous convulsion of laughter was as a tribute paid; they submitted to it gladly, but

almost mechanically. Besides, when once the novelty of the laugh had passed over, Gwynplaine was intolerable for a woman to see, and impossible to contemplate. But he was tall, well made, and agile, and no way deformed, excepting in his face.

This led to the presumption that Gwynplaine was rather a creation of art than a work of nature. Gwynplaine, beautiful in figure, had probably been beautiful in face. At his birth he had no doubt resembled other infants. They had left the body intact, and retouched only the face.

Gwynplaine had been made to order—at least, that was probable. They had left him his teeth; teeth are necessary to a laugh. The death's head retains them. The operation performed on him must have been frightful. That he had no remembrance of it was no proof that it had not taken place. Surgical sculpture of the kind could never have succeeded except on a very young child, and consequently on one having little consciousness of what happened to him, and who might easily take a wound for a sickness. Besides, we must remember that they had in those times means of putting patients to sleep, and of suppressing all suffering; only then it was called magic, while now it is called anæsthesia.

Besides this face, those who had brought him up had given him the resources of a gymnast and an athlete. His articulations usefully displaced and fashioned to bending the wrong way, had received the education of a clown, and could, like the hinges of a door, move backwards and forwards. In appropriating him to the profession of mountebank nothing had been neglected. His hair had been dyed with ochre once for all; a secret which has been rediscovered at the present day. Pretty women use it, and that which was formerly considered ugly is now considered an embellishment. Gwynplaine had yellow hair. His hair having probably been dyed with some corrosive preparation, had left it woolly and rough to the touch. Its yellow bristles, rather a mane than a head of hair, covered and concealed a lofty brow, evidently made to contain thought. The operation, whatever it had been, which had deprived his features of harmony, and put all their flesh into disorder, had had no effect on the bony structure of his head. The facial angle was powerful and surprisingly grand. Behind his laugh there was a soul, dreaming, as all our souls dream.

However, his laugh was to Gwynplaine quite a talent. He could do nothing with it, so he turned it to account. By means of it he gained his living.

Gwynplaine, as you have doubtless already guessed, was the child abandoned one winter evening on the coast of Portland, and received into a poor caravan at Weymouth.

CHAPTER II.

DEA.

That boy was at this time a man. Fifteen years had elapsed. It was in 1705. Gwynplaine was in his twenty-fifth year.

Ursus had kept the two children with him. They were a group of wanderers. Ursus and Homo had aged. Ursus had become quite bald. The wolf was growing gray. The age of wolves is not ascertained like that of dogs. According to Molière, there are wolves which live to eighty, amongst others the little koupara, and the rank wolf, the *Canis nubilus* of Say.

The little girl found on the dead woman was now a tall creature of sixteen, with brown hair, slight, fragile, almost trembling from delicacy, and almost inspiring fear lest she should break; admirably beautiful, her eyes full of light, yet blind. That fatal winter night which threw down the beggar woman and her infant in the snow had struck a double blow. It had killed the mother and blinded the child. Gutta serena had for ever paralysed the eyes of the girl, now become woman in her turn. On her face, through which the light of day never passed, the depressed corners of the mouth indicated the bitterness of the privation. Her eyes, large and clear, had a strange quality: extinguished for ever to her, to others they were brilliant. They were mysterious torches lighting only the outside. They gave light but possessed it not. These sightless eyes were resplendent. A captive of shadow, she lighted up the dull place she inhabited. From the depth of her incurable darkness, from behind the black wall called blindness, she flung her rays. She saw not the sun without, but her soul was perceptible from within.

In her dead look there was a celestial earnestness. She was the night, and from the irremediable darkness with which she was amalgamated she came out a star.

Ursus, with his mania for Latin names, had christened her Dea. He had taken his wolf into consultation. He had said to him, "You represent man, I represent the beasts. We are of the lower world; this little one shall represent the world on high. Such feebleness is all-powerful. In this manner the universe shall be complete in our hut in

its three orders—human, animal, and Divine." The wolf made no objection. Therefore the foundling was called Dea.

As to Gwynplaine, Ursus had not had the trouble of inventing a name for him. The morning of the day on which he had realized the disfigurement of the little boy and the blindness of the infant he had asked him, "Boy, what is your name?" and the boy had answered, "They call me Gwynplaine." "Be Gwynplaine, then," said Ursus.

Dea assisted Gwynplaine in his performances. If human misery could be summed up, it might have been summed up in Gwynplaine and Dea. Each seemed born in a compartment of the sepulchre; Gwynplaine in the horrible, Dea in the darkness. Their existences were shadowed by two different kinds of darkness, taken from the two formidable sides of night. Dea had that shadow in her, Gwynplaine had it on him. There was a phantom in Dea, a spectre in Gwynplaine. Dea was sunk in the mournful, Gwynplaine in something worse. There was for Gwynplaine, who could see, a heartrending possibility that existed not for Dea, who was blind; he could compare himself with other men. Now, in a situation such as that of Gwynplaine, admitting that he should seek to examine it, to compare himself with others was to understand himself no more. To have, like Dea, empty sight from which the world is absent, is a supreme distress, yet less than to be an enigma to oneself; to feel that something is wanting here as well, and that something, oneself; to see the universe and not to see oneself. Dea had a veil over her, the night; Gwynplaine a mask, his face. Inexpressible fact, it was by his own flesh that Gwynplaine was masked! What his visage had been, he knew not. His face had vanished. They had affixed to him a false self. He had for a face, a disappearance. His head lived, his face was dead. He never remembered to have seen it. Mankind was for Gwynplaine, as for Dea, an exterior fact. It was far-off. She was alone, he was alone. The isolation of Dea was funereal, she saw nothing; that of Gwynplaine sinister, he saw all things. For Dea creation never passed the bounds of touch and hearing; reality was bounded, limited, short, immediately lost. Nothing was infinite to her but darkness. For Gwynplaine to live was to have the crowd for ever before him and outside him. Dea was the proscribed from light, Gwynplaine the banned of life. They were beyond the pale of hope, and had reached the depth of possible calamity; they had sunk into it, both of them. An observer who had watched them would have felt his reverie melt into immeasurable pity. What must they not have suffered! The decree of misfortune weighed visibly on these human creatures, and never had fate encompassed two beings who had done nothing to deserve it, and more clearly turned destiny into torture, and life into hell.

They were in a Paradise.

They were in love.

Gwynplaine adored Dea. Dea idolized Gwynplaine.

"How beautiful you are!" she would say to him.

CHAPTER III.

"OCULOS NON HABET, ET VIDET."

Only one woman on earth saw Gwynplaine. It was the blind girl. She had learned what Gwynplaine had done for her, from Ursus, to whom he had related his rough journey from Portland to Weymouth, and the many sufferings which he had endured when deserted by the gang. She knew that when an infant dying upon her dead mother, suckling a corpse, a being scarcely bigger than herself had taken her up; that this being, exiled, and, as it were, buried under the refusal of the universe to aid him, had heard her cry; that all the world being deaf to him, he had not been deaf to her; that the child, alone, weak, cast off, without resting-place here below, dragging himself over the waste, exhausted by fatigue, crushed, had accepted from the hands of night a burden, another child: that he, who had nothing to expect in that obscure distribution which we call fate, had charged himself with a destiny; that naked, in anguish and distress, he had made himself a Providence; that when Heaven had closed he had opened his heart; that, himself lost, he had saved; that having neither roof-tree nor shelter, he had been an asylum; that he had made himself mother and nurse; that he who was alone in the world had responded to desertion by adoption; that lost in the darkness he had given an example; that, as if not already sufficiently burdened, he had added to his load another's misery; that in this world, which seemed to contain nothing for him, he had found a duty; that where every one else would have hesitated, he had advanced; that where every one else would have drawn back, he consented; that he had put his hand into the jaws of the grave and drawn out her—Dea. That, himself half naked, he had given her his rags, because she was cold; that famished, he had thought of giving her food and drink; that for one little creature, another little creature had combated death; that he had fought it under every form; under the form of winter and snow, under the form of solitude, under the form of terror, under the form of cold, hunger, and thirst, under the form of whirlwind, and that for her, Dea, this

Titan of ten had given battle to the immensity of night. She knew that as a child he had done this, and that now as a man, he was strength to her weakness, riches to her poverty, healing to her sickness, and sight to her blindness. Through the mist of the unknown by which she felt herself encompassed, she distinguished clearly his devotion, his abnegation, his courage. Heroism in immaterial regions has an outline; she distinguished this sublime outline. In the inexpressible abstraction in which thought lives unlighted by the sun, Dea perceived this mysterious lineament of virtue. In the surrounding of dark things put in motion, which was the only impression made on her by reality; in the uneasy stagnation of a creature, always passive, yet always on the watch for possible evil; in the sensation of being ever defenceless, which is the life of the blind—she felt Gwynplaine above her; Gwynplaine never cold, never absent, never obscured; Gwynplaine sympathetic, helpful, and sweet-tempered. Dea quivered with certainty and gratitude, her anxiety changed into ecstasy, and with her shadowy eyes she contemplated on the zenith from the depth of her abyss the rich light of his goodness. In the ideal, kindness is the sun; and Gwynplaine dazzled Dea.

To the crowd, which has too many heads to have a thought, and too many eyes to have a sight—to the crowd who, superficial themselves, judge only of the surface, Gwynplaine was a clown, a merry-andrew, a mountebank, a creature grotesque, a little more and a little less than a beast. The crowd knew only the face.

For Dea, Gwynplaine was the saviour, who had gathered her into his arms in the tomb, and borne her out of it; the consoler, who made life tolerable; the liberator, whose hand, holding her own, guided her through that labyrinth called blindness. Gwynplaine was her brother, friend, guide, support; the personification of heavenly power; the husband, winged and resplendent. Where the multitude saw the monster, Dea recognized the archangel. It was that Dea, blind, perceived his soul.

CHAPTER IV.

WELL-MATCHED LOVERS.

Ursus being a philosopher understood. He approved of the fascination of Dea. He said, The blind see the invisible. He said, Conscience is vision. Then, looking at Gwynplaine, he murmured, Semi-monster, but demi-god.

Gwynplaine, on the other hand, was madly in love with Dea.

There is the invisible eye, the spirit, and the visible eye, the pupil. He saw her with the visible eye. Dea was dazzled by the ideal; Gwynplaine, by the real. Gwynplaine was not ugly; he was frightful. He saw his contrast before him: in proportion as he was terrible, Dea was sweet. He was horror; she was grace. Dea was his dream. She seemed a vision scarcely embodied. There was in her whole person, in her Grecian form, in her fine and supple figure, swaying like a reed; in her shoulders, on which might have been invisible wings; in the modest curves which indicated her sex, to the soul rather than to the senses; in her fairness, which amounted almost to transparency; in the august and reserved serenity of her look, divinely shut out from earth; in the sacred innocence of her smile—she was almost an angel, and yet just a woman.

Gwynplaine, we have said, compared himself and compared Dea.

His existence, such as it was, was the result of a double and unheard-of choice. It was the point of intersection of two rays—one from below and one from above—a black and a white ray. To the same crumb, perhaps pecked at at once by the beaks of evil and good, one gave the bite, the other the kiss. Gwynplaine was this crumb—an atom, wounded and caressed. Gwynplaine was the product of fatality combined with Providence. Misfortune had placed its finger on him; happiness as well. Two extreme destinies composed his strange lot. He had on him an anathema and a benediction. He was the elect, cursed. Who was he? He knew not. When he looked at himself, he saw one he knew not; but this unknown was a monster. Gwynplaine lived as it were beheaded, with a face which did not belong to him. This face was frightful, so frightful that it was absurd. It caused as much fear as laughter. It was a hell-concocted absurdity. It was the shipwreck of a human face into the mask of an animal. Never had been seen so total an eclipse of humanity in a human face; never parody more complete; never had apparition more frightful grinned in nightmare; never had everything repulsive to woman been more hideously amalgamated in a man. The unfortunate heart, masked and calumniated by the face, seemed for ever condemned to solitude under it, as under a tombstone.

Yet no! Where unknown malice had done its worst, invisible goodness had lent its aid. In the poor fallen one, suddenly raised up, by the side of the repulsive, it had placed the attractive; on the barren shoal it had set the loadstone; it had caused a soul to fly with swift wings towards the deserted one; it had sent the dove to console the creature whom the thunderbolt had overwhelmed, and had made beauty adore deformity. For this to be possible it was necessary that beauty should not see the

disfigurement. For this good fortune, misfortune was required. Providence had made Dea blind.

Gwynplaine vaguely felt himself the object of a redemption. Why had he been persecuted? He knew not. Why redeemed? He knew not. All he knew was that a halo had encircled his brand. When Gwynplaine had been old enough to understand, Ursus had read and explained to him the text of Doctor Conquest *de Denasatis*, and in another folio, Hugo Plagon, the passage, *Naves habensmutilas;* but Ursus had prudently abstained from "hypotheses," and had been reserved in his opinion of what it might mean. Suppositions were possible. The probability of violence inflicted on Gwynplaine when an infant was hinted at, but for Gwynplaine the result was the only evidence. His destiny was to live under a stigma. Why this stigma? There was no answer.

Silence and solitude were around Gwynplaine. All was uncertain in the conjectures which could be fitted to the tragical reality; excepting the terrible fact, nothing was certain. In his discouragement Dea intervened a sort of celestial interposition between him and despair. He perceived, melted and inspirited by the sweetness of the beautiful girl who turned to him, that, horrible as he was, a beautified wonder affected his monstrous visage. Having been fashioned to create dread, he was the object of a miraculous exception, that it was admired and adored in the ideal by the light; and, monster that he was, he felt himself the contemplation of a star.

Gwynplaine and Dea were united, and these two suffering hearts adored each other. One nest and two birds—that was their story. They had begun to feel a universal law—to please, to seek, and to find each other.

Thus hatred had made a mistake. The persecutors of Gwynplaine, whoever they might have been—the deadly enigma, from wherever it came—had missed their aim. They had intended to drive him to desperation; they had succeeded in driving him into enchantment. They had affianced him beforehand to a healing wound. They had predestined him for consolation by an infliction. The pincers of the executioner had softly changed into the delicately-moulded hand of a girl. Gwynplaine was horrible—artificially horrible—made horrible by the hand of man. They had hoped to exile him for ever: first, from his family, if his family existed, and then from humanity. When an infant, they had made him a ruin; of this ruin Nature had repossessed herself, as she does of all ruins. This solitude Nature had consoled, as she consoles all solitudes. Nature comes to the succour of the deserted; where all is lacking, she gives back her whole self. She flourishes and grows green amid ruins; she has ivy for the stones and love for man.

Profound generosity of the shadows!

CHAPTER V.

THE BLUE SKY THROUGH THE BLACK CLOUD.

Thus lived these unfortunate creatures together—Dea, relying; Gwynplaine, accepted. These orphans were all in all to each other, the feeble and the deformed. The widowed were betrothed. An inexpressible thanksgiving arose out of their distress. They were grateful. To whom? To the obscure immensity. Be grateful in your own hearts. That suffices. Thanksgiving has wings, and flies to its right destination. Your prayer knows its way better than you can.

How many men have believed that they prayed to Jupiter, when they prayed to Jehovah! How many believers in amulets are listened to by the Almighty! How many atheists there are who know not that, in the simple fact of being good and sad, they pray to God!

Gwynplaine and Dea were grateful. Deformity is expulsion. Blindness is a precipice. The expelled one had been adopted; the precipice was habitable.

Gwynplaine had seen a brilliant light descending on him, in an arrangement of destiny which seemed to put, in the perspective of a dream, a white cloud of beauty having the form of a woman, a radiant vision in which there was a heart; and the phantom, almost a cloud and yet a woman, clasped him; and the apparition embraced him; and the heart desired him. Gwynplaine was no longer deformed. He was beloved. The rose demanded the caterpillar in marriage, feeling that within the caterpillar there was a divine butterfly. Gwynplaine the rejected was chosen. To have one's desire is everything. Gwynplaine had his, Dea hers.

The abjection of the disfigured man was exalted and dilated into intoxication, into delight, into belief; and a hand was stretched out towards the melancholy hesitation of the blind girl, to guide her in her darkness.

It was the penetration of two misfortunes into the ideal which absorbed them. The rejected found a refuge in each other. Two blanks, combining, filled each other up.

They held together by what they lacked: in that in which one was poor, the other was rich. The misfortune of the one made the treasure of the other. Had Dea not been blind, would she have chosen Gwynplaine? Had Gwynplaine not been disfigured, would he have preferred Dea? She would probably have rejected the deformed, as he would have passed by the infirm. What happiness for Dea that Gwynplaine was hideous! What good fortune for Gwynplaine that Dea was blind! Apart from their providential matching, they were impossible to each other. A mighty want of each other was at the bottom of their loves, Gwynplaine saved Dea. Dea saved Gwynplaine. Apposition of misery produced adherence. It was the embrace of those swallowed in the abyss; none closer, none more hopeless, none more exquisite.

Gwynplaine had a thought—"What should I be without her?" Dea had a thought—"What should I be without him?" The exile of each made a country for both. The two incurable fatalities, the stigmata of Gwynplaine and the blindness of Dea, joined them together in contentment. They sufficed to each other. They imagined nothing beyond each other. To speak to one another was a delight, to approach was beatitude; by force of reciprocal intuition they became united in the same reverie, and thought the same thoughts. In Gwynplaine's tread Dea believed that she heard the step of one deified. They tightened their mutual grasp in a sort of sidereal *chiaroscuro*, full of perfumes, of gleams, of music, of the luminous architecture of dreams. They belonged to each other; they knew themselves to be for ever united in the same joy and the same ecstasy; and nothing could be stranger than this construction of an Eden by two of the damned.

They were inexpressibly happy. In their hell they had created heaven. Such was thy power, O Love! Dea heard Gwynplaine's laugh; Gwynplaine saw Dea's smile. Thus ideal felicity was found, the perfect joy of life was realized, the mysterious problem of happiness was solved; and by whom? By two outcasts.

For Gwynplaine, Dea was splendour. For Dea, Gwynplaine was presence. Presence is that profound mystery which renders the invisible world divine, and from which results that other mystery—confidence. In religions this is the only thing which is irreducible; but this irreducible thing suffices. The great motive power is not seen; it is felt.

Gwynplaine was the religion of Dea. Sometimes, lost in her sense of love towards him, she knelt, like a beautiful priestess before a gnome in a pagoda, made happy by her adoration.

Imagine to yourself an abyss, and in its centre an oasis of light, and in this oasis two creatures shut out of life, dazzling each other. No purity could be compared to their loves. Dea was ignorant what a kiss might be, though perhaps she desired it; because

blindness, especially in a woman, has its dreams, and though trembling at the approaches of the unknown, does not fear them all. As to Gwynplaine, his sensitive youth made him pensive. The more delirious he felt, the more timid he became. He might have dared anything with this companion of his early youth, with this creature as innocent of fault as of the light, with this blind girl who saw but one thing—that she adored him! But he would have thought it a theft to take what she might have given; so he resigned himself with a melancholy satisfaction to love angelically, and the conviction of his deformity resolved itself into a proud purity.

These happy creatures dwelt in the ideal. They were spouses in it at distances as opposite as the spheres. They exchanged in its firmament the deep effluvium which is in infinity attraction, and on earth the sexes. Their kisses were the kisses of souls.

They had always lived a common life. They knew themselves only in each other's society. The infancy of Dea had coincided with the youth of Gwynplaine. They had grown up side by side. For a long time they had slept in the same bed, for the hut was not a large bedchamber. They lay on the chest, Ursus on the floor; that was the arrangement. One fine day, whilst Dea was still very little, Gwynplaine felt himself grown up, and it was in the youth that shame arose. He said to Ursus, "I will also sleep on the floor." And at night he stretched himself, with the old man, on the bear skin. Then Dea wept. She cried for her bed-fellow; but Gwynplaine, become restless because he had begun to love, decided to remain where he was. From that time he always slept by the side of Ursus on the planks. In the summer, when the nights were fine, he slept outside with Homo.

When thirteen, Dea had not yet become resigned to the arrangement. Often in the evening she said, "Gwynplaine, come close to me; that will put me to sleep." A man lying by her side was a necessity to her innocent slumbers.

Nudity is to see that one is naked. She ignored nudity. It was the ingenuousness of Arcadia or Otaheite. Dea untaught made Gwynplaine wild. Sometimes it happened that Dea, when almost reaching youth, combed her long hair as she sat on her bed—her chemise unfastened and falling off revealed indications of a feminine outline, and a vague commencement of Eve—and would call Gwynplaine. Gwynplaine blushed, lowered his eyes, and knew not what to do in presence of this innocent creature. Stammering, he turned his head, feared, and fled. The Daphnis of darkness took flight before the Chloe of shadow.

Such was the idyll blooming in a tragedy.

Ursus said to them,—"Old brutes, adore each other!"

CHAPTER VI.

URSUS AS TUTOR, AND URSUS AS GUARDIAN.

Ursus added,—

"Some of these days I will play them a nasty trick. I will marry them."

Ursus taught Gwynplaine the theory of love. He said to him,—

"Do you know how the Almighty lights the fire called love? He places the woman underneath, the devil between, and the man at the top. A match—that is to say, a look—and behold, it is all on fire."

"A look is unnecessary," answered Gwynplaine, thinking of Dea.

And Ursus replied,—

"Booby! Do souls require mortal eyes to see each other?"

Ursus was a good fellow at times. Gwynplaine, sometimes madly in love with Dea, became melancholy, and made use of the presence of Ursus as a guard on himself. One day Ursus said to him,—

"Bah! do not put yourself out. When in love, the cock shows himself."

"But the eagle conceals himself," replied Gwynplaine.

At other times Ursus would say to himself, apart,—

"It is wise to put spokes in the wheels of the Cytherean car. They love each other too much. This may have its disadvantages. Let us avoid a fire. Let us moderate these hearts."

Then Ursus had recourse to warnings of this nature, speaking to Gwynplaine when Dea slept, and to Dea when Gwynplaine's back was turned:—

"Dea, you must not be so fond of Gwynplaine. To live in the life of another is perilous. Egoism is a good root of happiness. Men escape from women. And then Gwynplaine

might end by becoming infatuated with you. His success is so great! You have no idea how great his success is!"

"Gwynplaine, disproportions are no good. So much ugliness on one side and so much beauty on another ought to compel reflection. Temper your ardour, my boy. Do not become too enthusiastic about Dea. Do you seriously consider that you are made for her? Just think of your deformity and her perfection! See the distance between her and yourself. She has everything, this Dea. What a white skin! What hair! Lips like strawberries! And her foot! her hand! Those shoulders, with their exquisite curve! Her expression is sublime. She walks diffusing light; and in speaking, the grave tone of her voice is charming. But for all this, to think that she is a woman! She would not be such a fool as to be an angel. She is absolute beauty. Repeat all this to yourself, to calm your ardour."

These speeches redoubled the love of Gwynplaine and Dea, and Ursus was astonished at his want of success, just as one who should say, "It is singular that with all the oil I throw on fire I cannot extinguish it."

Did he, then, desire to extinguish their love, or to cool it even?

Certainly not. He would have been well punished had he succeeded. At the bottom of his heart this love, which was flame for them and warmth for him, was his delight.

But it is natural to grate a little against that which charms us; men call it wisdom.

Ursus had been, in his relations with Gwynplaine and Dea, almost a father and a mother. Grumbling all the while, he had brought them up; grumbling all the while, he had nourished them. His adoption of them had made the hut roll more heavily, and he had been oftener compelled to harness himself by Homo's side to help to draw it.

We may observe, however, that after the first few years, when Gwynplaine was nearly grown up, and Ursus had grown quite old, Gwynplaine had taken his turn, and drawn Ursus.

Ursus, seeing that Gwynplaine was becoming a man, had cast the horoscope of his deformity. "*It has made your fortune!*" he had told him.

This family of an old man and two children, with a wolf, had become, as they wandered, a group more and more intimately united. There errant life had not hindered education. "To wander is to grow," Ursus said. Gwynplaine was evidently made to exhibit at fairs. Ursus had cultivated in him feats of dexterity, and had encrusted him as much as possible with all he himself possessed of science and wisdom.

Ursus, contemplating the perplexing mask of Gwynplaine's face, often growled,—

"He has begun well." It was for this reason that he had perfected him with every ornament of philosophy and wisdom.

He repeated constantly to Gwynplaine,—

"Be a philosopher. To be wise is to be invulnerable. You see what I am, I have never shed a tears. This is the result of my wisdom. Do you think that occasion for tears has been wanting, had I felt disposed to weep?"

Ursus, in one of his monologues in the hearing of the wolf, said,—

"I have taught Gwynplaine everything, Latin included. I have taught Dea nothing, music included."

He had taught them both to sing. He had himself a pretty talent for playing on the oaten reed, a little flute of that period. He played on it agreeably, as also on the *chiffonie*, a sort of beggar's hurdy-gurdy, mentioned in the Chronicle of Bertrand Duguesclin as the "truant instrument," which started the symphony. These instruments attracted the crowd. Ursus would show them the chiffonie, and say, "It is called organistrum in Latin."

He had taught Dea and Gwynplaine to sing, according to the method of Orpheus and of Egide Binchois. Frequently he interrupted the lessons with cries of enthusiasm, such as "Orpheus, musician of Greece! Binchois, musician of Picardy!"

These branches of careful culture did not occupy the children so as to prevent their adoring each other. They had mingled their hearts together as they grew up, as two saplings planted near mingle their branches as they become trees.

"No matter," said Ursus. "I will marry them."

Then he grumbled to himself,—

"They are quite tiresome with their love."

The past—their little past, at least—had no existence for Dea and Gwynplaine. They knew only what Ursus had told them of it. They called Ursus father. The only remembrance which Gwynplaine had of his infancy was as of a passage of demons over his cradle. He had an impression of having been trodden in the darkness under deformed feet. Was this intentional or not? He was ignorant on this point. That which he remembered clearly and to the slightest detail were his tragical adventures when deserted at Portland. The finding of Dea made that dismal night a radiant date for him.

The memory of Dea, even more than that of Gwynplaine, was lost in clouds. In so young a child all remembrance melts away. She recollected her mother as something cold. Had she ever seen the sun? Perhaps so. She made efforts to pierce into the blank which was her past life.

"The sun!—what was it?"

She had some vague memory of a thing luminous and warm, of which Gwynplaine had taken the place.

They spoke to each other in low tones. It is certain that cooing is the most important thing in the world. Dea often said to Gwynplaine,—

"Light means that you are speaking."

Once, no longer containing himself, as he saw through a muslin sleeve the arm of Dea, Gwynplaine brushed its transparency with his lips—ideal kiss of a deformed mouth! Dea felt a deep delight; she blushed like a rose. This kiss from a monster made Aurora gleam on that beautiful brow full of night. However, Gwynplaine sighed with a kind of terror, and as the neckerchief of Dea gaped, he could not refrain from looking at the whiteness visible through that glimpse of Paradise.

Dea pulled up her sleeve, and stretching towards Gwynplaine her naked arm, said,—

"Again!"

Gwynplaine fled.

The next day the game was renewed, with variations.

It was a heavenly subsidence into that sweet abyss called love.

At such things heaven smiles philosophically.

CHAPTER VII.

BLINDNESS GIVES LESSONS IN CLAIRVOYANCE.

At times Gwynplaine reproached himself. He made his happiness a case of conscience. He fancied that to allow a woman who could not see him to love him was to deceive her.

What would she have said could she have suddenly obtained her sight? How she would have felt repulsed by what had previously attracted her! How she would have recoiled from her frightful loadstone! What a cry! What covering of her face! What a flight! A bitter scruple harassed him. He told himself that such a monster as he had no right to love. He was a hydra idolized by a star. It was his duty to enlighten the blind star.

One day he said to Dea,—

"You know that I am very ugly."

"I know that you are sublime," she answered.

He resumed,—

"When you hear all the world laugh, they laugh at me because I am horrible."

"I love you," said Dea.

After a silence, she added,—

"I was in death; you brought me to life. When you are here, heaven is by my side. Give me your hand, that I may touch heaven."

Their hands met and grasped each other. They spoke no more, but were silent in the plenitude of love.

Ursus, who was crabbed, had overheard this. The next day, when the three were together, he said,—

"For that matter, Dea is ugly also."

The word produced no effect. Dea and Gwynplaine were not listening. Absorbed in each other, they rarely heeded such exclamations of Ursus. Their depth was a dead loss.

This time, however, the precaution of Ursus, "Dea is also ugly," indicated in this learned man a certain knowledge of women. It is certain that Gwynplaine, in his loyalty, had been guilty of an imprudence. To have said, *I am ugly*, to any other blind girl than Dea might have been dangerous. To be blind, and in love, is to be twofold blind. In such a situation dreams are dreamt. Illusion is the food of dreams. Take

illusion from love, and you take from it its aliment. It is compounded of every enthusiasm, of both physical and moral admiration.

Moreover, you should never tell a woman a word difficult to understand. She will dream about it, and she often dreams falsely. An enigma in a reverie spoils it. The shock caused by the fall of a careless word displaces that against which it strikes. At times it happens, without our knowing why, that because we have received the obscure blow of a chance word the heart empties itself insensibly of love. He who loves perceives a decline in his happiness. Nothing is to be feared more than this slow exudation from the fissure in the vase.

Happily, Dea was not formed of such clay. The stuff of which other women are made had not been used in her construction. She had a rare nature. The frame, but not the heart, was fragile. A divine perseverance in love was in the heart of her being.

The whole disturbance which the word used by Gwynplaine had produced in her ended in her saying one day,—

"To be ugly—what is it? It is to do wrong. Gwynplaine only does good. He is handsome."

Then, under the form of interrogation so familiar to children and to the blind, she resumed,—

"To see—what is it that you call seeing? For my own part, I cannot see; I know. It seems that *to see* means to hide."

"What do you mean?" said Gwynplaine.

Dea answered,—

"To see is a thing which conceals the true."

"No," said Gwynplaine.

"But yes," replied Dea, "since you say you are ugly."

She reflected a moment, and then said, "Story-teller!"

Gwynplaine felt the joy of having confessed and of not being believed. Both his conscience and his love were consoled.

Thus they had reached, Dea sixteen, Gwynplaine nearly twenty-five. They were not, as it would now be expressed, "more advanced" than the first day. Less even; for it may be remembered that on their wedding night she was nine months and he ten years

old. A sort of holy childhood had continued in their love. Thus it sometimes happens that the belated nightingale prolongs her nocturnal song till dawn.

Their caresses went no further than pressing hands, or lips brushing a naked arm. Soft, half-articulate whispers sufficed them.

Twenty-four and sixteen! So it happened that Ursus, who did not lose sight of the ill turn he intended to do them, said,—

"One of these days you must choose a religion."

"Wherefore?" inquired Gwynplaine.

"That you may marry."

"That is already done," said Dea.

Dea did not understand that they could be more man and wife than they were already.

At bottom, this chimerical and virginal content, this innocent union of souls, this celibacy taken for marriage, was not displeasing to Ursus.

Besides, were they not already married? If the indissoluble existed anywhere, was it not in their union? Gwynplaine and Dea! They were creatures worthy of the love they mutually felt, flung by misfortune into each other's arms. And as if they were not enough in this first link, love had survened on misfortune, and had attached them, united and bound them together. What power could ever break that iron chain, bound with knots of flowers? They were indeed bound together.

Dea had beauty, Gwynplaine had sight. Each brought a dowry. They were more than coupled—they were paired: separated solely by the sacred interposition of innocence.

Though dream as Gwynplaine would, however, and absorb all meaner passions as he could in the contemplation of Dea and before the tribunal of conscience, he was a man. Fatal laws are not to be eluded. He underwent, like everything else in nature, the obscure fermentations willed by the Creator. At times, therefore, he looked at the women who were in the crowd, but he immediately felt that the look was a sin, and hastened to retire, repentant, into his own soul.

Let us add that he met with no encouragement. On the face of every woman who looked upon him he saw aversion antipathy, repugnance, and rejection. It was clear that no other than Dea was possible for him. This aided his repentance.

CHAPTER VIII.

NOT ONLY HAPPINESS, BUT PROSPERITY.

What true things are told in stories! The burnt scar of the invisible fiend who has touched you is remorse for a wicked thought. In Gwynplaine evil thoughts never ripened, and he had therefore no remorse. Sometimes he felt regret.

Vague mists of conscience.

What was this?

Nothing.

Their happiness was complete—so complete that they were no longer even poor.

From 1680 to 1704 a great change had taken place.

It happened sometimes, in the year 1704, that as night fell on some little village on the coast, a great, heavy van, drawn by a pair of stout horses, made its entry. It was like the shell of a vessel reversed—the keel for a roof, the deck for a floor, placed on four wheels. The wheels were all of the same size, and high as wagon wheels. Wheels, pole, and van were all painted green, with a rhythmical gradation of shades, which ranged from bottle green for the wheels to apple green for the roofing. This green colour had succeeded in drawing attention to the carriage, which was known in all the fair grounds as The Green Box. The Green Box had but two windows, one at each extremity, and at the back a door with steps to let down. On the roof, from a tube painted green like the rest, smoke arose. This moving house was always varnished and washed afresh. In front, on a ledge fastened to the van, with the window for a door, behind the horses and by the side of an old man who held the reins and directed the team, two gipsy women, dressed as goddesses, sounded their trumpets. The astonishment with which the villagers regarded this machine was overwhelming.

This was the old establishment of Ursus, its proportions augmented by success, and improved from a wretched booth into a theatre. A kind of animal, between dog and wolf, was chained under the van. This was Homo. The old coachman who drove the horses was the philosopher himself.

Whence came this improvement from the miserable hut to the Olympic caravan?

From this—Gwynplaine had become famous.

It was with a correct scent of what would succeed amongst men that Ursus had said to Gwynplaine,—

"They made your fortune."

Ursus, it may be remembered, had made Gwynplaine his pupil. Unknown people had worked upon his face; he, on the other hand, had worked on his mind, and behind this well-executed mask he had placed all that he could of thought. So soon as the growth of the child had rendered him fitted for it, he had brought him out on the stage—that is, he had produced him in front of the van.

The effect of his appearance had been surprising. The passers-by were immediately struck with wonder. Never had anything been seen to be compared to this extraordinary mimic of laughter. They were ignorant how the miracle of infectious hilarity had been obtained. Some believed it to be natural, others declared it to be artificial, and as conjecture was added to reality, everywhere, at every cross-road on the journey, in all the grounds of fairs and fêtes, the crowd ran after Gwynplaine. Thanks to this great attraction, there had come into the poor purse of the wandering group, first a rain of farthings, then of heavy pennies, and finally of shillings. The curiosity of one place exhausted, they passed on to another. Rolling does not enrich a stone but it enriches a caravan; and year by year, from city to city, with the increased growth of Gwynplaine's person and of his ugliness, the fortune predicted by Ursus had come.

"What a good turn they did you there, my boy!" said Ursus.

This "fortune" had allowed Ursus, who was the administrator of Gwynplaine's success, to have the chariot of his dreams constructed—that is to say, a caravan large enough to carry a theatre, and to sow science and art in the highways. Moreover, Ursus had been able to add to the group composed of himself, Homo, Gwynplaine, and Dea, two horses and two women, who were the goddesses of the troupe, as we have just said, and its servants. A mythological frontispiece was, in those days, of service to a caravan of mountebanks.

"We are a wandering temple," said Ursus.

These two gipsies, picked up by the philosopher from amongst the vagabondage of cities and suburbs, were ugly and young, and were called, by order of Ursus, the one Phoebe, and the other Venus.

For these read Fibi and Vinos, that we may conform to English pronunciation.

Phoebe cooked; Venus scrubbed the temple.

Moreover, on days of performance they dressed Dea.

Mountebanks have their public life as well as princes, and on these occasions Dea was arrayed, like Fibi and Vinos, in a Florentine petticoat of flowered stuff, and a woman's jacket without sleeves, leaving the arms bare. Ursus and Gwynplaine wore men's jackets, and, like sailors on board a man-of-war, great loose trousers. Gwynplaine had, besides, for his work and for his feats of strength, round his neck and over his shoulders, an esclavine of leather. He took charge of the horses. Ursus and Homo took charge of each other.

Dea, being used to the Green Box, came and went in the interior of the wheeled house, with almost as much ease and certainty as those who saw.

The eye which could penetrate within this structure and its internal arrangements might have perceived in a corner, fastened to the planks, and immovable on its four wheels, the old hut of Ursus, placed on half-pay, allowed to rust, and from thenceforth dispensed the labour of rolling as Ursus was relieved from the labour of drawing it.

This hut, in a corner at the back, to the right of the door, served as bedchamber and dressing-room to Ursus and Gwynplaine. It now contained two beds. In the opposite corner was the kitchen.

The arrangement of a vessel was not more precise and concise than that of the interior of the Green Box. Everything within it was in its place—arranged, foreseen, and intended.

The caravan was divided into three compartments, partitioned from each other. These communicated by open spaces without doors. A piece of stuff fell over them, and answered the purpose of concealment. The compartment behind belonged to the men, the compartment in front to the women; the compartment in the middle, separating the two sexes, was the stage. The instruments of the orchestra and the properties were kept in the kitchen. A loft under the arch of the roof contained the scenes, and on opening a trap-door lamps appeared, producing wonders of light.

Ursus was the poet of these magical representations; he wrote the pieces. He had a diversity of talents; he was clever at sleight of hand. Besides the voices he imitated, he produced all sorts of unexpected things—shocks of light and darkness; spontaneous formations of figures or words, as he willed, on the partition; vanishing figures in chiaroscuro; strange things, amidst which he seemed to meditate, unmindful of the crowd who marvelled at him.

One day Gwynplaine said to him,—

"Father, you look like a sorcerer!"

And Ursus replied,—

"Then I look, perhaps, like what I am."

The Green Box, built on a clear model of Ursus's, contained this refinement of ingenuity—that between the fore and hind wheels the central panel of the left side turned on hinges by the aid of chains and pulleys, and could be let down at will like a drawbridge. As it dropped it set at liberty three legs on hinges, which supported the panel when let down, and which placed themselves straight on the ground like the legs of a table, and supported it above the earth like a platform. This exposed the stage, which was thus enlarged by the platform in front.

This opening looked for all the world like a "mouth of hell," in the words of the itinerant Puritan preachers, who turned away from it with horror. It was, perhaps, for some such pious invention that Solon kicked out Thespis.

For all that Thespis has lasted much longer than is generally believed. The travelling theatre is still in existence. It was on those stages on wheels that, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, they performed in England the ballets and dances of Amner and Pilkington; in France, the pastorals of Gilbert Colin; in Flanders, at the annual fairs, the double choruses of Clement, called Non Papa; in Germany, the "Adam and Eve" of Theiles; and, in Italy, the Venetian exhibitions of Animuccia and of Cafossis, the "Silvæ" of Gesualdo, the "Prince of Venosa," the "Satyr" of Laura Guidiccioni, the "Despair of Philene," the "Death of Ugolina," by Vincent Galileo, father of the astronomer, which Vincent Galileo sang his own music, and accompanied himself on his *viol de gamba;* as well as all the first attempts of the Italian opera which, from 1580, substituted free inspiration for the madrigal style.

The chariot, of the colour of hope, which carried Ursus, Gwynplaine, and their fortunes, and in front of which Fibi and Vinos trumpeted like figures of Fame, played its part of this grand Bohemian and literary brotherhood. Thespis would no more have disowned Ursus than Congrio would have disowned Gwynplaine.

Arrived at open spaces in towns or villages, Ursus, in the intervals between the too-tooing of Fibi and Vinos, gave instructive revelations as to the trumpetings.

"This symphony is Gregorian," he would exclaim. "Citizens and townsmen, the Gregorian form of worship, this great progress, is opposed in Italy to the Ambrosial

ritual, and in Spain to the Mozarabic ceremonial, and has achieved its triumph over them with difficulty."

After which the Green Box drew up in some place chosen by Ursus, and evening having fallen, and the panel stage having been let down, the theatre opened, and the performance began.

The scene of the Green Box represented a landscape painted by Ursus; and as he did not know how to paint, it represented a cavern just as well as a landscape. The curtain, which we call drop nowadays, was a checked silk, with squares of contrasted colours.

The public stood without, in the street, in the fair, forming a semicircle round the stage, exposed to the sun and the showers; an arrangement which made rain less desirable for theatres in those days than now. When they could, they acted in an inn yard, on which occasions the windows of the different stories made rows of boxes for the spectators. The theatre was thus more enclosed, and the audience a more paying one. Ursus was in everything—in the piece, in the company, in the kitchen, in the orchestra. Vinos beat the drum, and handled the sticks with great dexterity. Fibi played on the *morache*, a kind of guitar. The wolf had been promoted to be a utility gentleman, and played, as occasion required, his little parts. Often when they appeared side by side on the stage—Ursus in his tightly-laced bear's skin, Homo with his wolf's skin fitting still better—no one could tell which was the beast. This flattered Ursus.

CHAPTER IX.

ABSURDITIES WHICH FOLKS WITHOUT TASTE CALL POETRY.

The pieces written by Ursus were interludes—a kind of composition out of fashion nowadays. One of these pieces, which has not come down to us, was entitled "Ursus Rursus." It is probable that he played the principal part himself. A pretended exit, followed by a reappearance, was apparently its praiseworthy and sober subject. The titles of the interludes of Ursus were sometimes Latin, as we have seen, and the poetry frequently Spanish. The Spanish verses written by Ursus were rhymed, as was

nearly all the Castilian poetry of that period. This did not puzzle the people. Spanish was then a familiar language; and the English sailors spoke Castilian even as the Roman sailors spoke Carthaginian (see Plautus). Moreover, at a theatrical representation, as at mass, Latin, or any other language unknown to the audience, is by no means a subject of care with them. They get out of the dilemma by adapting to the sounds familiar words. Our old Gallic France was particularly prone to this manner of being devout. At church, under cover of an *Immolatus*, the faithful chanted, "I will make merry;" and under a *Sanctus*, "Kiss me, sweet."

The Council of Trent was required to put an end to these familiarities.

Ursus had composed expressly for Gwynplaine an interlude, with which he was well pleased. It was his best work. He had thrown his whole soul into it. To give the sum of all one's talents in the production is the greatest triumph that any one can achieve. The toad which produces a toad achieves a grand success. You doubt it? Try, then, to do as much.

Ursus had carefully polished this interlude. This bear's cub was entitled "Chaos Vanquished." Here it was:—A night scene. When the curtain drew up, the crowd, massed around the Green Box, saw nothing but blackness. In this blackness three confused forms moved in the reptile state—wolf, a bear, and a man. The wolf acted the wolf; Ursus, the bear; Gwynplaine, the man. The wolf and the bear represented the ferocious forces of Nature—unreasoning hunger and savage ignorance. Both rushed on Gwynplaine. It was chaos combating man. No face could be distinguished. Gwynplaine fought infolded, in a winding-sheet, and his face was covered by his thickly-falling locks. All else was shadow. The bear growled, the wolf gnashed his teeth, the man cried out. The man was down; the beasts overwhelmed him. He cried for aid and succour; he hurled to the unknown an agonized appeal. He gave a death-rattle. To witness this agony of the prostrate man, now scarcely distinguishable from the brutes, was appalling. The crowd looked on breathless; in one minute more the wild beasts would triumph, and chaos reabsorb man. A struggle—cries—howlings; then, all at once, silence.

A song in the shadows. A breath had passed, and they heard a voice. Mysterious music floated, accompanying this chant of the invisible; and suddenly, none knowing whence or how, a white apparition arose. This apparition was a light; this light was a woman; this woman was a spirit. Dea—calm, fair, beautiful, formidable in her serenity and sweetness—appeared in the centre of a luminous mist. A profile of brightness in a dawn! She was a voice—a voice light, deep, indescribable. She sang in the new-born light—she, invisible, made visible. They thought that they heard the hymn of an angel

or the song of a bird. At this apparition the man, starting up in his ecstasy, struck the beasts with his fists, and overthrew them.

Then the vision, gliding along in a manner difficult to understand, and therefore the more admired, sang these words in Spanish sufficiently pure for the English sailors who were present:—

"Ora! llora!

De palabra

Nace razon.

De luz el son."[13]

Then looking down, as if she saw a gulf beneath, she went on,—

"Noche, quita te de alli!

El alba canta hallali."[14]

As she sang, the man raised himself by degrees; instead of lying he was now kneeling, his hands elevated towards the vision, his knees resting on the beasts, which lay motionless, and as if thunder-stricken.

She continued, turning towards him,—

"Es menester a cielos ir,

Y tu que llorabas reir."[15]

And approaching him with the majesty of a star, she added,—

"Gebra barzon;

Deja, monstruo,

A tu negro

Caparazon."[16]

And she put hot hand on his brow. Then another voice arose, deeper, and consequently still sweeter—a voice broken and enwrapt with a gravity both tender and wild. It was the human chant responding to the chant of the stars. Gwynplaine, still in obscurity, his head under Dea's hand, and kneeling on the vanquished bear and wolf, sang,—

"O ven! ama!

Eres alma,

Soy corazon."[17]

And suddenly from the shadow a ray of light fell full upon Gwynplaine. Then, through the darkness, was the monster full exposed.

To describe the commotion of the crowd is impossible.

A sun of laughter rising, such was the effect. Laughter springs from unexpected causes, and nothing could be more unexpected than this termination. Never was sensation comparable to that produced by the ray of light striking on that mask, at once ludicrous and terrible. They laughed all around his laugh. Everywhere—above, below, behind, before, at the uttermost distance; men, women, old gray-heads, rosy-faced children; the good, the wicked, the gay, the sad, everybody. And even in the streets, the passers-by who could see nothing, hearing the laughter, laughed also. The laughter ended in clapping of hands and stamping of feet. The curtain dropped: Gwynplaine was recalled with frenzy. Hence an immense success. Have you seen "Chaos Vanquished?" Gwynplaine was run after. The listless came to laugh, the melancholy came to laugh, evil consciences came to laugh—a laugh so irresistible that it seemed almost an epidemic. But there is a pestilence from which men do not fly, and that is the contagion of joy. The success, it must be admitted, did not rise higher than the populace. A great crowd means a crowd of nobodies. "Chaos Vanquished" could be seen for a penny. Fashionable people never go where the price of admission is a penny.

Ursus thought a good deal of his work, which he had brooded over for a long time. "It is in the style of one Shakespeare," he said modestly.

The juxtaposition of Dea added to the indescribable effect produced by Gwynplaine. Her white face by the side of the gnome represented what might have been called divine astonishment. The audience regarded Dea with a sort of mysterious anxiety. She had in her aspect the dignity of a virgin and of a priestess, not knowing man and knowing God. They saw that she was blind, and felt that she could see. She seemed to stand on the threshold of the supernatural. The light that beamed on her seemed half earthly and half heavenly. She had come to work on earth, and to work as heaven works, in the radiance of morning. Finding a hydra, she formed a soul. She seemed like a creative power, satisfied but astonished at the result of her creation; and the audience fancied that they could see in the divine surprise of that face desire of the cause and wonder at the result. They felt that she loved this monster. Did she know that he was one? Yes; since she touched him. No; since she accepted him. This depth

of night and this glory of day united, formed in the mind of the spectator a chiaroscuro in which appeared endless perspectives. How much divinity exists in the germ, in what manner the penetration of the soul into matter is accomplished, how the solar ray is an umbilical cord, how the disfigured is transfigured, how the deformed becomes heavenly—all these glimpses of mysteries added an almost cosmical emotion to the convulsive hilarity produced by Gwynplaine. Without going too deep—for spectators do not like the fatigue of seeking below the surface—something more was understood than was perceived. And this strange spectacle had the transparency of an avatar.

As to Dea, what she felt cannot be expressed by human words. She knew that she was in the midst of a crowd, and knew not what a crowd was. She heard a murmur, that was all. For her the crowd was but a breath. Generations are passing breaths. Man respires, aspires, and expires. In that crowd Dea felt herself alone, and shuddering as one hanging over a precipice. Suddenly, in this trouble of innocence in distress, prompt to accuse the unknown, in her dread of a possible fall, Dea, serene notwithstanding, and superior to the vague agonies of peril, but inwardly shuddering at her isolation, found confidence and support. She had seized her thread of safety in the universe of shadows; she put her hand on the powerful head of Gwynplaine.

Joy unspeakable! she placed her rosy fingers on his forest of crisp hair. Wool when touched gives an impression of softness. Dea touched a lamb which she knew to be a lion. Her whole heart poured out an ineffable love. She felt out of danger—she had found her saviour. The public believed that they saw the contrary. To the spectators the being loved was Gwynplaine, and the saviour was Dea. What matters? thought Ursus, to whom the heart of Dea was visible. And Dea, reassured, consoled and delighted, adored the angel whilst the people contemplated the monster, and endured, fascinated herself as well, though in the opposite sense, that dread Promethean laugh.

True love is never weary. Being all soul it cannot cool. A brazier comes to be full of cinders; not so a star. Her exquisite impressions were renewed every evening for Dea, and she was ready to weep with tenderness whilst the audience was in convulsions of laughter. Those around her were but joyful; she was happy.

The sensation of gaiety due to the sudden shock caused by the rictus of Gwynplaine was evidently not intended by Ursus. He would have preferred more smiles and less laughter, and more of a literary triumph. But success consoles. He reconciled himself every evening to his excessive triumph, as he counted how many shillings the piles of farthings made, and how many pounds the piles of shillings; and besides, he said,

after all, when the laugh had passed, "Chaos Vanquished" would be found in the depths of their minds, and something of it would remain there.

Perhaps he was not altogether wrong: the foundations of a work settle down in the mind of the public. The truth is, that the populace, attentive to the wolf, the bear, to the man, then to the music, to the howlings governed by harmony, to the night dissipated by dawn, to the chant releasing the light, accepted with a confused, dull sympathy, and with a certain emotional respect, the dramatic poem of "Chaos Vanquished," the victory of spirit over matter, ending with the joy of man.

Such were the vulgar pleasures of the people.

They sufficed them. The people had not the means of going to the noble matches of the gentry, and could not, like lords and gentlemen, bet a thousand guineas on Helmsgail against Phelem-ghe-madone.

CHAPTER X.

AN OUTSIDER'S VIEW OF MEN AND THINGS.

Man has a notion of revenging himself on that which pleases him. Hence the contempt felt for the comedian.

This being charms me, diverts, distracts, teaches, enchants, consoles me; flings me into an ideal world, is agreeable and useful to me. What evil can I do him in return? Humiliate him. Disdain is a blow from afar. Let us strike the blow. He pleases me, therefore he is vile. He serves me, therefore I hate him. Where can I find a stone to throw at him? Priest, give me yours. Philosopher, give me yours. Bossuet, excommunicate him. Rousseau, insult him. Orator, spit the pebbles from your mouth at him. Bear, fling your stone. Let us cast stones at the tree, hit the fruit and eat it. "Bravo!" and "Down with him!" To repeat poetry is to be infected with the plague. Wretched playactor, we will put him in the pillory for his success. Let him follow up his triumph with our hisses. Let him collect a crowd and create a solitude. Thus it is that the wealthy, termed the higher classes, have invented for the actor that form of isolation, applause.

The crowd is less brutal. They neither hated nor despised Gwynplaine. Only the meanest calker of the meanest crew of the meanest merchantman, anchored in the meanest English seaport, considered himself immeasurably superior to this amuser of the "scum," and believed that a calker is as superior to an actor as a lord is to a calker.

Gwynplaine was, therefore, like all comedians, applauded and kept at a distance. Truly, all success in this world is a crime, and must be expiated. He who obtains the medal has to take its reverse side as well.

For Gwynplaine there was no reverse. In this sense, both sides of his medal pleased him. He was satisfied with the applause, and content with the isolation. In applause he was rich, in isolation happy.

To be rich in his low estate means to be no longer wretchedly poor—to have neither holes in his clothes, nor cold at his hearth, nor emptiness in his stomach. It is to eat when hungry and drink when thirsty. It is to have everything necessary, including a penny for a beggar. This indigent wealth, enough for liberty, was possessed by Gwynplaine. So far as his soul was concerned, he was opulent. He had love. What more could he want? Nothing.

You may think that had the offer been made to him to remove his deformity he would have grasped at it. Yet he would have refused it emphatically. What! to throw off his mask and have his former face restored; to be the creature he had perchance been created, handsome and charming? No, he would never have consented to it. For what would he have to support Dea? What would have become of that poor child, the sweet blind girl who loved him? Without his rictus, which made him a clown without parallel, he would have been a mountebank, like any other; a common athlete, a picker up of pence from the chinks in the pavement, and Dea would perhaps not have had bread every day. It was with deep and tender pride that he felt himself the protector of the helpless and heavenly creature. Night, solitude, nakedness, weakness, ignorance, hunger, and thirst—seven yawning jaws of misery—were raised around her, and he was the St. George fighting the dragon. He triumphed over poverty. How? By his deformity. By his deformity he was useful, helpful, victorious, great. He had but to show himself, and money poured in. He was a master of crowds, the sovereign of the mob. He could do everything for Dea. Her wants he foresaw; her desires, her tastes, her fancies, in the limited sphere in which wishes are possible to the blind, he fulfilled. Gwynplaine and Dea were, as we have already shown, Providence to each other. He felt himself raised on her wings; she felt herself carried in his arms. To protect the being who loves you, to give what she requires to her who shines on you as your star,

can anything be sweeter? Gwynplaine possessed this supreme happiness, and he owed it to his deformity. His deformity had raised him above all. By it he had gained the means of life for himself and others; by it he had gained independence, liberty, celebrity, internal satisfaction and pride. In his deformity he was inaccessible. The Fates could do nothing beyond this blow in which they had spent their whole force, and which he had turned into a triumph. This lowest depth of misfortune had become the summit of Elysium. Gwynplaine was imprisoned in his deformity, but with Dea. And this was, as we have already said, to live in a dungeon of paradise. A wall stood between them and the living world. So much the better. This wall protected as well as enclosed them. What could affect Dea, what could affect Gwynplaine, with such a fortress around them? To take from him his success was impossible. They would have had to deprive him of his face. Take from him his love. Impossible. Dea could not see him. The blindness of Dea was divinely incurable. What harm did his deformity do Gwynplaine? None. What advantage did it give him? Every advantage. He was beloved, notwithstanding its horror, and perhaps for that very cause. Infirmity and deformity had by instinct been drawn towards and coupled with each other. To be beloved, is not that everything? Gwynplaine thought of his disfigurement only with gratitude. He was blessed in the stigma. With joy he felt that it was irremediable and eternal. What a blessing that it was so! While there were highways and fairgrounds, and journeys to take, the people below and the sky above, they would be sure to live, Dea would want nothing, and they should have love. Gwynplaine would not have changed faces with Apollo. To be a monster was his form of happiness.

Thus, as we said before, destiny had given him all, even to overflowing. He who had been rejected had been preferred.

He was so happy that he felt compassion for the men around him. He pitied the rest of the world. It was, besides, his instinct to look about him, because no one is always consistent, and a man's nature is not always theoretic; he was delighted to live within an enclosure, but from time to time he lifted his head above the wall. Then he retreated again with more joy into his loneliness with Dea, having drawn his comparisons. What did he see around him?

What were those living creatures of which his wandering life showed him so many specimens, changed every day? Always new crowds, always the same multitude, ever new faces, ever the same miseries. A jumble of ruins. Every evening every phase of social misfortune came and encircled his happiness.

The Green Box was popular.

Low prices attract the low classes. Those who came were the weak, the poor, the little. They rushed to Gwynplaine as they rushed to gin. They came to buy a pennyworth of forgetfulness. From the height of his platform Gwynplaine passed those wretched people in review. His spirit was enwrapt in the contemplation of every succeeding apparition of widespread misery. The physiognomy of man is modelled by conscience, and by the tenor of life, and is the result of a crowd of mysterious excavations. There was never a suffering, not an anger, not a shame, not a despair, of which Gwynplaine did not see the wrinkle. The mouths of those children had not eaten. That man was a father, that woman a mother, and behind them their families might be guessed to be on the road to ruin. There was a face already marked by vice, on the threshold of crime, and the reasons were plain—ignorance and indigence. Another showed the stamp of original goodness, obliterated by social pressure, and turned to hate. On the face of an old woman he saw starvation; on that of a girl, prostitution. The same fact, and although the girl had the resource of her youth, all the sadder for that! In the crowd were arms without tools; the workers asked only for work, but the work was wanting. Sometimes a soldier came and seated himself by the workmen, sometimes a wounded pensioner; and Gwynplaine saw the spectre of war. Here Gwynplaine read want of work; there man-farming, slavery. On certain brows he saw an indescribable ebbing back towards animalism, and that slow return of man to beast, produced on those below by the dull pressure of the happiness of those above. There was a break in the gloom for Gwynplaine. He and Dea had a loophole of happiness; the rest was damnation. Gwynplaine felt above him the thoughtless trampling of the powerful, the rich, the magnificent, the great, the elect of chance. Below he saw the pale faces of the disinherited. He saw himself and Dea, with their little happiness, so great to themselves, between two worlds. That which was above went and came, free, joyous, dancing, trampling under foot; above him the world which treads, below the world which is trodden upon. It is a fatal fact, and one indicating a profound social evil, that light should crush the shadow! Gwynplaine thoroughly grasped this dark evil. What! a destiny so reptile? Shall a man drag himself thus along with such adherence to dust and corruption, with such vicious tastes, such an abdication of right, or such abjectness that one feels inclined to crush him under foot? Of what butterfly is, then, this earthly life the grub?

What! in the crowd which hungers and which denies everywhere, and before all, the questions of crime and shame (the inflexibility of the law producing laxity of conscience), is there no child that grows but to be stunted, no virgin but matures for sin, no rose that blooms but for the slime of the snail?

His eyes at times sought everywhere, with the curiosity of emotion, to probe the depths of that darkness, in which there died away so many useless efforts, and in which there struggled so much weariness: families devoured by society, morals tortured by the laws, wounds gangrened by penalties, poverty gnawed by taxes, wrecked intelligence swallowed up by ignorance, rafts in distress alive with the famished, feuds, dearth, death-rattles, cries, disappearances. He felt the vague oppression of a keen, universal suffering. He saw the vision of the foaming wave of misery dashing over the crowd of humanity. He was safe in port himself, as he watched the wreck around him. Sometimes he laid his disfigured head in his hands and dreamed.

What folly to be happy! How one dreams! Ideas were born within him. Absurd notions crossed his brain.

Because formerly he had succoured an infant, he felt a ridiculous desire to succour the whole world. The mists of reverie sometimes obscured his individuality, and he lost his ideas of proportion so far as to ask himself the question, "What can be done for the poor?" Sometimes he was so absorbed in his subject as to express it aloud. Then Ursus shrugged his shoulders and looked at him fixedly. Gwynplaine continued his reverie.

"Oh; were I powerful, would I not aid the wretched? But what am I? An atom. What can I do? Nothing."

He was mistaken. He was able to do a great deal for the wretched. He could make them laugh; and, as we have said, to make people laugh is to make them forget. What a benefactor on earth is he who can bestow forgetfulness!

CHAPTER XI.

GWYNPLAINE THINKS JUSTICE, AND URSUS TALKS TRUTH.

A philosopher is a spy. Ursus, a watcher of dreams, studied his pupil.

Our monologues leave on our brows a faint reflection, distinguishable to the eye of a physiognomist. Hence what occurred to Gwynplaine did not escape Ursus. One day, as Gwynplaine was meditating, Ursus pulled him by his jacket, and exclaimed,—

"You strike me as being an observer! You fool! Take care; it is no business of yours. You have one thing to do—to love Dea. You have two causes of happiness—the first is, that the crowd sees your muzzle; the second is, that Dea does not. You have no right to the happiness you possess, for no woman who saw your mouth would consent to your kiss; and that mouth which has made your fortune, and that face which has given you riches, are not your own. You were not born with that countenance. It was borrowed from the grimace which is at the bottom of the infinite. You have stolen your mask from the devil. You are hideous; be satisfied with having drawn that prize in the lottery. There are in this world (and a very good thing too) the happy by right and the happy by luck. You are happy by luck. You are in a cave wherein a star is enclosed. The poor star belongs to you. Do not seek to leave the cave, and guard your star, O spider! You have in your web the carbuncle, Venus. Do me the favour to be satisfied. I see your dreams are troubled. It is idiotic of you. Listen; I am going to speak to you in the language of true poetry. Let Dea eat beefsteaks and mutton chops, and in six months she will be as strong as a Turk; marry her immediately, give her a child, two children, three children, a long string of children. That is what I call philosophy. Moreover, it is happiness, which is no folly. To have children is a glimpse of heaven. Have brats—wipe them, blow their noses, dirt them, wash them, and put them to bed. Let them swarm about you. If they laugh, it is well; if they howl, it is better—to cry is to live. Watch them suck at six months, crawl at a year, walk at two, grow tall at fifteen, fall in love at twenty. He who has these joys has everything For myself, I lacked the advantage; and that is the reason why I am a brute. God, a composer of beautiful poems and the first of men of letters, said to his fellow-workman, Moses, 'Increase and multiply.' Such is the text. Multiply, you beast! As to the world, it is as it is; you cannot make nor mar it. Do not trouble yourself about it. Pay no attention to what goes on outside. Leave the horizon alone. A comedian is made to be looked at, not to look. Do you know what there is outside? The happy by right. You, I repeat, are the happy by chance. You are the pickpocket of the happiness of which they are the proprietors. They are the legitimate possessors; you are the intruder. You live in concubinage with luck. What do you want that you have not already? Shibboleth help me! This fellow is a rascal. To multiply himself by Dea would be pleasant, all the same. Such happiness is like a swindle. Those above who possess happiness by privilege do not like folks below them to have so much enjoyment. If they ask you what right you have to be happy, you will not know what to answer. You have no patent, and they have. Jupiter, Allah,

Vishnu, Sabaoth, it does not matter who, has given them the passport to happiness. Fear them. Do not meddle with them, lest they should meddle with you. Wretch! do you know what the man is who is happy by right? He is a terrible being. He is a lord. A lord! He must have intrigued pretty well in the devil's unknown country before he was born, to enter life by the door he did. How difficult it must have been to him to be born! It is the only trouble he has given himself; but, just heavens, what a one!—to obtain from destiny, the blind blockhead, to mark him in his cradle a master of men. To bribe the box-keeper to give him the best place at the show. Read the memoranda in the old hut, which I have placed on half-pay. Read that breviary of my wisdom, and you will see what it is to be a lord. A lord is one who has all and is all. A lord is one who exists above his own nature. A lord is one who has when young the rights of an old man; when old, the success in intrigue of a young one; if vicious, the homage of respectable people; if a coward, the command of brave men; if a do-nothing, the fruits of labour; if ignorant, the diploma of Cambridge or Oxford; if a fool, the admiration of poets; if ugly, the smiles of women; if a Thersites, the helm of Achilles; if a hare, the skin of a lion. Do not misunderstand my words. I do not say that a lord must necessarily be ignorant, a coward, ugly, stupid, or old. I only mean that he may be all those things without any detriment to himself. On the contrary. Lords are princes. The King of England is only a lord, the first peer of the peerage; that is all, but it is much. Kings were formerly called lords—the Lord of Denmark, the Lord of Ireland, the Lord of the Isles. The Lord of Norway was first called king three hundred years ago. Lucius, the most ancient king in England, was spoken to by Saint Telesphonis as my Lord Lucius. The lords are peers—that is to say, equals—of whom? Of the king. I do not commit the mistake of confounding the lords with parliament. The assembly of the people which the Saxons before the Conquest called *wittenagemote*, the Normans, after the Conquest, entitled *parliamentum*. By degrees the people were turned out. The king's letters clause convoking the Commons, addressed formerly *ad concilium impendendum*, are now addressed *ad consentiendum*. To say yes is their liberty. The peers can say no; and the proof is that they have said it. The peers can cut off the king's head. The people cannot. The stroke of the hatchet which decapitated Charles I. is an encroachment, not on the king, but on the peers, and it was well to place on the gibbet the carcass of Cromwell. The lords have power. Why? Because they have riches. Who has turned over the leaves of the Doomsday Book? It is the proof that the lords possess England. It is the registry of the estates of subjects, compiled under William the Conqueror; and it is in the charge of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. To copy anything in it you have to pay twopence a line. It is a proud book. Do you know that I was domestic doctor to a lord, who was called Marmaduke, and who had thirty-six thousand a year? Think of that, you hideous idiot! Do you know that, with rabbits

only from the warrens of Earl Lindsay, they could feed all the riffraff of the Cinque Ports? And the good order kept! Every poacher is hung. For two long furry ears sticking out of a game bag I saw the father of six children hanging on the gibbet. Such is the peerage. The rabbit of a great lord is of more importance than God's image in a man.

"Lords exist, you trespasser, do you see? and we must think it good that they do; and even if we do not, what harm will it do them? The people object, indeed! Why? Plautus himself would never have attained the comicality of such an idea. A philosopher would be jesting if he advised the poor devil of the masses to cry out against the size and weight of the lords. Just as well might the gnat dispute with the foot of an elephant. One day I saw a hippopotamus tread upon a molehill; he crushed it utterly. He was innocent. The great soft-headed fool of a mastodon did not even know of the existence of moles. My son, the moles that are trodden on are the human race. To crush is a law. And do you think that the mole himself crushes nothing? Why, it is the mastodon of the fleshworm, who is the mastodon of the globeworm. But let us cease arguing. My boy, there are coaches in the world; my lord is inside, the people under the wheels; the philosopher gets out of the way. Stand aside, and let them pass. As to myself, I love lords, and shun them. I lived with one; the beauty of my recollections suffices me. I remember his country house, like a glory in a cloud. My dreams are all retrospective. Nothing could be more admirable than Marmaduke Lodge in grandeur, beautiful symmetry, rich avenues, and the ornaments and surroundings of the edifice. The houses, country seats, and palaces of the lords present a selection of all that is greatest and most magnificent in this flourishing kingdom. I love our lords. I thank them for being opulent, powerful, and prosperous. I myself am clothed in shadow, and I look with interest upon the shred of heavenly blue which is called a lord. You enter Marmaduke Lodge by an exceedingly spacious courtyard, which forms an oblong square, divided into eight spaces, each surrounded by a balustrade; on each side is a wide approach, and a superb hexagonal fountain plays in the midst; this fountain is formed of two basins, which are surmounted by a dome of exquisite openwork, elevated on six columns. It was there that I knew a learned Frenchman, Monsieur l'Abbé du Cros, who belonged to the Jacobin monastery in the Rue Saint Jacques. Half the library of Erpenius is at Marmaduke Lodge, the other half being at the theological gallery at Cambridge. I used to read the books, seated under the ornamented portal. These things are only shown to a select number of curious travellers. Do you know, you ridiculous boy, that William North, who is Lord Grey of Rolleston, and sits fourteenth on the bench of Barons, has more forest trees on his mountains than you have hairs on your horrible noddle? Do you know that Lord Norreys of Rycote, who is Earl of Abingdon, has a square keep a hundred feet high, having this device—*Virtus*

ariete fortior; which you would think meant that virtue is stronger than a ram, but which really means, you idiot, that courage is stronger than a battering-machine. Yes, I honour, accept, respect, and revere our lords. It is the lords who, with her royal Majesty, work to procure and preserve the advantages of the nation. Their consummate wisdom shines in intricate junctures. Their precedence over others I wish they had not; but they have it. What is called principality in Germany, grandeeship in Spain, is called peerage in England and France. There being a fair show of reason for considering the world a wretched place enough, heaven felt where the burden was most galling, and to prove that it knew how to make happy people, created lords for the satisfaction of philosophers. This acts as a set-off, and gets heaven out of the scrape, affording it a decent escape from a false position. The great are great. A peer, speaking of himself, says *we*. A peer is a plural. The king qualifies the peer *consanguinei nostri*. The peers have made a multitude of wise laws; amongst others, one which condemns to death any one who cuts down a three-year-old poplar tree. Their supremacy is such that they have a language of their own. In heraldic style, black, which is called sable for gentry, is called saturne for princes, and diamond for peers. Diamond dust, a night thick with stars, such is the night of the happy! Even amongst themselves these high and mighty lords have their own distinctions. A baron cannot wash with a viscount without his permission. These are indeed excellent things, and safeguards to the nation. What a fine thing it is for the people to have twenty-five dukes, five marquises, seventy-six earls, nine viscounts, and sixty-one barons, making altogether a hundred and seventy-six peers, of which some are your grace, and some my lord! What matter a few rags here and there, withal: everybody cannot be dressed in gold. Let the rags be. Cannot you see the purple? One balances the other. A thing must be built of something. Yes, of course, there are the poor—what of them! They line the happiness of the wealthy. Devil take it! our lords are our glory! The pack of hounds belonging to Charles, Baron Mohun, costs him as much as the hospital for lepers in Moorgate, and for Christ's Hospital, founded for children, in 1553, by Edward VI. Thomas Osborne, Duke of Leeds, spends yearly on his liveries five thousand golden guineas. The Spanish grandees have a guardian appointed by law to prevent their ruining themselves. That is cowardly. Our lords are extravagant and magnificent. I esteem them for it. Let us not abuse them like envious folks. I feel happy when a beautiful vision passes. I have not the light, but I have the reflection. A reflection thrown on my ulcer, you will say. Go to the devil! I am a Job, delighted in the contemplation of Trimalcion. Oh, that beautiful and radiant planet up there! But the moonlight is something. To suppress the lords was an idea which Orestes, mad as he was, would not have dared to entertain. To say that the lords are mischievous or useless is as much as to say that the state should be revolutionized, and that men are

not made to live like cattle, browsing the grass and bitten by the dog. The field is shorn by the sheep, the sheep by the shepherd. It is all one to me. I am a philosopher, and I care about life as much as a fly. Life is but a lodging. When I think that Henry Bowes Howard, Earl of Berkshire, has in his stable twenty-four state carriages, of which one is mounted in silver and another in gold—good heavens! I know that every one has not got twenty-four state carriages; but there is no need to complain for all that. Because you were cold one night, what was that to him? It concerns you only. Others besides you suffer cold and hunger. Don't you know that without that cold, Dea would not have been blind, and if Dea were not blind she would not love you? Think of that, you fool! And, besides, if all the people who are lost were to complain, there would be a pretty tumult! Silence is the rule. I have no doubt that heaven imposes silence on the damned, otherwise heaven itself would be punished by their everlasting cry. The happiness of Olympus is bought by the silence of Cocytus. Then, people, be silent! I do better myself; I approve and admire. Just now I was enumerating the lords, and I ought to add to the list two archbishops and twenty-four bishops. Truly, I am quite affected when I think of it! I remember to have seen at the tithe-gathering of the Rev. Dean of Raphoe, who combined the peerage with the church, a great tithe of beautiful wheat taken from the peasants in the neighbourhood, and which the dean had not been at the trouble of growing. This left him time to say his prayers. Do you know that Lord Marmaduke, my master, was Lord Grand Treasurer of Ireland, and High Seneschal of the sovereignty of Knaresborough in the county of York? Do you know that the Lord High Chamberlain, which is an office hereditary in the family of the Dukes of Ancaster, dresses the king for his coronation, and receives for his trouble forty yards of crimson velvet, besides the bed on which the king has slept; and that the Usher of the Black Rod is his deputy? I should like to see you deny this, that the senior viscount of England is Robert Brent, created a viscount by Henry V. The lords' titles imply sovereignty over land, except that of Earl Rivers, who takes his title from his family name. How admirable is the right which they have to tax others, and to levy, for instance, four shillings in the pound sterling income-tax, which has just been continued for another year! And all the time taxes on distilled spirits, on the excise of wine and beer, on tonnage and poundage, on cider, on perry, on mum, malt, and prepared barley, on coals, and on a hundred things besides. Let us venerate things as they are. The clergy themselves depend on the lords. The Bishop of Man is subject to the Earl of Derby. The lords have wild beasts of their own, which they place in their armorial bearings. God not having made enough, they have invented others. They have created the heraldic wild boar, who is as much above the wild boar as the wild boar is above the domestic pig and the lord is above the priest. They have created the griffin, which is an eagle to lions, and a lion to eagles, terrifying lions by his wings, and eagles

by his mane. They have the guivre, the unicorn, the serpent, the salamander, the tarask, the dree, the dragon, and the hippogriff. All these things, terrible to us, are to them but an ornament and an embellishment. They have a menagerie which they call the blazon, in which unknown beasts roar. The prodigies of the forest are nothing compared to the inventions of their pride. Their vanity is full of phantoms which move as in a sublime night, armed with helm and cuirass, spurs on their heels and the sceptres in their hands, saying in a grave voice, 'We are the ancestors!' The canker-worms eat the roots, and panoplies eat the people. Why not? Are we to change the laws? The peerage is part of the order of society. Do you know that there is a duke in Scotland who can ride ninety miles without leaving his own estate? Do you know that the Archbishop of Canterbury has a revenue of £40,000 a year? Do you know that her Majesty has £700,000 sterling from the civil list, besides castles, forests, domains, fiefs, tenancies, freeholds, prebendaries, tithes, rent, confiscations, and fines, which bring in over a million sterling? Those who are not satisfied are hard to please."

"Yes," murmured Gwynplaine sadly, "the paradise of the rich is made out of the hell of the poor."

CHAPTER XII.

URSUS THE POET DRAGS ON URSUS THE PHILOSOPHER.

Then Dea entered. He looked at her, and saw nothing but her. This is love; one may be carried away for a moment by the importunity of some other idea, but the beloved one enters, and all that does not appertain to her presence immediately fades away, without her dreaming that perhaps she is effacing in us a world.

Let us mention a circumstance. In "Chaos Vanquished," the word *monstruo*, addressed to Gwynplaine, displeased Dea. Sometimes, with the smattering of Spanish which every one knew at the period, she took it into her head to replace it by *quiero*, which signifies, "I wish it." Ursus tolerated, although not without an expression of impatience, this alteration in his text. He might have said to Dea, as in our day Moessard said to Vissot, *Tu manques de respect au repertoire*.

"The Laughing Man."

Such was the form of Gwynplaine's fame. His name, Gwynplaine, little known at any time, had disappeared under his nickname, as his face had disappeared under its grin.

His popularity was like his visage—a mask.

His name, however, was to be read on a large placard in front of the Green Box, which offered the crowd the following narrative composed by Ursus:—

"Here is to be seen Gwynplaine, deserted at the age of ten, on the night of the 29th of January, 1690, by the villainous Comprachicos, on the coast of Portland. The little boy has grown up, and is called now, THE LAUGHING MAN."

The existence of these mountebanks was as an existence of lepers in a leper-house, and of the blessed in one of the Pleiades. There was every day a sudden transition from the noisy exhibition outside, into the most complete seclusion. Every evening they made their exit from this world. They were like the dead, vanishing on condition of being reborn next day. A comedian is a revolving light, appearing one moment, disappearing the next, and existing for the public but as a phantom or a light, as his life circles round. To exhibition succeeded isolation. When the performance was finished, whilst the audience were dispersing, and their murmur of satisfaction was dying away in the streets, the Green Box shut up its platform, as a fortress does its drawbridge, and all communication with mankind was cut off. On one side, the universe; on the other, the caravan; and this caravan contained liberty, clear consciences, courage, devotion, innocence, happiness, love—all the constellations.

Blindness having sight and deformity beloved sat side by side, hand pressing hand, brow touching brow, and whispered to each other, intoxicated with love.

The compartment in the middle served two purposes—for the public it was a stage, for the actors a dining-room.

Ursus, ever delighting in comparisons, profited by the diversity of its uses to liken the central compartment in the Green Box to the arradach in an Abyssinian hut.

Ursus counted the receipts, then they supped. In love all is ideal. In love, eating and drinking together affords opportunities for many sweet promiscuous touches, by which a mouthful becomes a kiss. They drank ale or wine from the same glass, as they might drink dew out of the same lily. Two souls in love are as full of grace as two birds. Gwynplaine waited on Dea, cut her bread, poured out her drink, approached her too close.

"Hum!" cried Ursus, and he turned away, his scolding melting into a smile.

The wolf supped under the table, heedless of everything which did actually not concern his bone.

Fibi and Vinos shared the repast, but gave little trouble. These vagabonds, half wild and as uncouth as ever, spoke in the gipsy language to each other.

At length Dea re-entered the women's apartment with Fibi and Vinos. Ursus chained up Homo under the Green Box; Gwynplaine looked after the horses, the lover becoming a groom, like a hero of Homer's or a paladin of Charlemagne's. At midnight, all were asleep, except the wolf, who, alive to his responsibility, now and then opened an eye. The next morning they met again. They breakfasted together, generally on ham and tea. Tea was introduced into England in 1678. Then Dea, after the Spanish fashion, took a siesta, acting on the advice of Ursus, who considered her delicate, and slept some hours, while Gwynplaine and Ursus did all the little jobs of work, without and within, which their wandering life made necessary. Gwynplaine rarely wandered away from the Green Box, except on unfrequented roads and in solitary places. In cities he went out only at night, disguised in a large, slouched hat, so as not to exhibit his face in the street.

His face was to be seen uncovered only on the stage.

The Green Box had frequented cities but little. Gwynplaine at twenty-four had never seen towns larger than the Cinque Ports. His renown, however, was increasing. It began to rise above the populace, and to percolate through higher ground. Amongst those who were fond of, and ran after, strange foreign curiosities and prodigies, it was known that there was somewhere in existence, leading a wandering life, now here, now there, an extraordinary monster. They talked about him, they sought him, they asked where he was. The laughing man was becoming decidedly famous. A certain lustre was reflected on "Chaos Vanquished."

So much so, that, one day, Ursus, being ambitious, said,—

"We must go to London."

BOOK THE THIRD.

THE BEGINNING OF THE FISSURE.

CHAPTER I.

THE TADCASTER INN.

At that period London had but one bridge—London Bridge, with houses built upon it. This bridge united London to Southwark, a suburb which was paved with flint pebbles taken from the Thames, divided into small streets and alleys, like the City, with a great number of buildings, houses, dwellings, and wooden huts jammed together, a pell-mell mixture of combustible matter, amidst which fire might take its pleasure, as 1666 had proved. Southwark was then pronounced Soudric, it is now pronounced Sousouorc, or near it; indeed, an excellent way of pronouncing English names is not to pronounce them. Thus, for Southampton, say Stpntn.

It was the time when "Chatham" was pronounced *je t'aime*.

The Southwark of those days resembles the Southwark of to-day about as much as Vaugirard resembles Marseilles. It was a village—it is a city. Nevertheless, a considerable trade was carried on there. The long old Cyclopean wall by the Thames was studded with rings, to which were anchored the river barges.

This wall was called the Effroc Wall, or Effroc Stone. York, in Saxon times, was called Effroc. The legend related that a Duke of Effroc had been drowned at the foot of the wall. Certainly the water there was deep enough to drown a duke. At low water it was six good fathoms. The excellence of this little anchorage attracted sea vessels, and the old Dutch tub, called the *Vograat*, came to anchor at the Effroc Stone.
The *Vograat* made the crossing from London to Rotterdam, and from Rotterdam to London, punctually once a week. Other barges started twice a day, either for Deptford, Greenwich, or Gravesend, going down with one tide and returning with the next. The voyage to Gravesend, though twenty miles, was performed in six hours.

The *Vograat* was of a model now no longer to be seen, except in naval museums. It was almost a junk. At that time, while France copied Greece, Holland copied China. The *Vograat*, a heavy hull with two masts, was partitioned perpendicularly, so as to be water-tight, having a narrow hold in the middle, and two decks, one fore and the other aft. The decks were flush as in the iron turret-vessels of the present day, the advantage of which is that in foul weather, the force of the wave is diminished, and the inconvenience of which is that the crew is exposed to the action of the sea, owing to

there being no bulwarks. There was nothing to save any one on board from falling over. Hence the frequent falls overboard and the losses of men, which have caused the model to fall into disuse. The *Vograat* went to Holland direct, and did not even call at Gravesend.

An old ridge of stones, rock as much as masonry, ran along the bottom of the Effroc Stone, and being passable at all tides, was used as a passage on board the ships moored to the wall. This wall was, at intervals, furnished with steps. It marked the southern point of Southwark. An embankment at the top allowed the passers-by to rest their elbows on the Effroc Stone, as on the parapet of a quay. Thence they could look down on the Thames; on the other side of the water London dwindled away into fields.

Up the river from the Effroc Stone, at the bend of the Thames which is nearly opposite St. James's Palace, behind Lambeth House, not far from the walk then called Foxhall (Vauxhall, probably), there was, between a pottery in which they made porcelain, and a glass-blower's, where they made ornamental bottles, one of those large unenclosed spaces covered with grass, called formerly in France *cultures* and *mails*, and in England bowling-greens. Of bowling-green, a green on which to roll a ball, the French have made *boulingrin*. Folks have this green inside their houses nowadays, only it is put on the table, is a cloth instead of turf, and is called billiards.

It is difficult to see why, having boulevard (boule-vert), which is the same word as bowling-green, the French should have adopted *boulingrin*. It is surprising that a person so grave as the Dictionary should indulge in useless luxuries.

The bowling-green of Southwark was called Tarrinzeau Field, because it had belonged to the Barons Hastings, who are also Barons Tarrinzeau and Mauchline. From the Lords Hastings the Tarrinzeau Field passed to the Lords Tadcaster, who had made a speculation of it, just as, at a later date, a Duke of Orleans made a speculation of the Palais Royal. Tarrinzeau Field afterwards became waste ground and parochial property.

Tarrinzeau Field was a kind of permanent fair ground covered with jugglers, athletes, mountebanks, and music on platforms; and always full of "fools going to look at the devil," as Archbishop Sharp said. To look at the devil means to go to the play.

Several inns, which harboured the public and sent them to these outlandish exhibitions, were established in this place, which kept holiday all the year round, and thereby prospered. These inns were simply stalls, inhabited only during the day. In the evening the tavern-keeper put into his pocket the key of the tavern and went away.

One only of these inns was a house, the only dwelling in the whole bowling-green, the caravans of the fair ground having the power of disappearing at any moment, considering the absence of any ties in the vagabond life of all mountebanks.

Mountebanks have no roots to their lives.

This inn, called the Tadcaster, after the former owners of the ground, was an inn rather than a tavern, an hotel rather than an inn, and had a carriage entrance and a large yard.

The carriage entrance, opening from the court on the field, was the legitimate door of the Tadcaster Inn, which had, beside it, a small bastard door, by which people entered. To call it bastard is to mean preferred. This lower door was the only one used, It opened into the tavern, properly so called, which was a large taproom, full of tobacco smoke, furnished with tables, and low in the ceiling. Over it was a window on the first floor, to the iron bars of which was fastened and hung the sign of the inn. The principal door was barred and bolted, and always remained closed.

It was thus necessary to cross the tavern to enter the courtyard.

At the Tadcaster Inn there was a landlord and a boy. The landlord was called Master Nicless, the boy Govicum. Master Nicless—Nicholas, doubtless, which the English habit of contraction had made Nicless, was a miserly widower, and one who respected and feared the laws. As to his appearance, he had bushy eyebrows and hairy hands. The boy, aged fourteen, who poured out drink, and answered to the name of Govicum, wore a merry face and an apron. His hair was cropped close, a sign of servitude.

He slept on the ground floor, in a nook in which they formerly kept a dog. This nook had for window a bull's-eye looking on the bowling-green.

CHAPTER II.

OPEN-AIR ELOQUENCE.

One very cold and windy evening, on which there was every reason why folks should hasten on their way along the street, a man, who was walking in Tarrinzeau Field close

under the walls of the tavern, stopped suddenly. It was during the last months of winter between 1704 and 1705. This man, whose dress indicated a sailor, was of good mien and fine figure, things imperative to courtiers, and not forbidden to common folk.

Why did he stop? To listen. What to? To a voice apparently speaking in the court on the other side of the wall, a voice a little weakened by age, but so powerful notwithstanding that it reached the passer-by in the street. At the same time might be heard in the enclosure, from which the voice came, the hubbub of a crowd.

This voice said,—

"Men and women of London, here I am! I cordially wish you joy of being English. You are a great people. I say more: you are a great populace. Your fisticuffs are even better than your sword thrusts. You have an appetite. You are the nation which eats other nations—a magnificent function! This suction of the world makes England preeminent. As politicians and philosophers, in the management of colonies, populations, and industry, and in the desire to do others any harm which may turn to your own good, you stand alone. The hour will come when two boards will be put up on earth—inscribed on one side, Men; on the other, Englishmen. I mention this to your glory, I, who am neither English nor human, having the honour to be a bear. Still more—I am a doctor. That follows. Gentlemen, I teach. What? Two kinds of things—things which I know, and things which I do not. I sell my drugs and I sell my ideas. Approach and listen. Science invites you. Open your ear; if it is small, it will hold but little truth; if large, a great deal of folly will find its way in. Now, then, attention! I teach the Pseudoxia Epidemica. I have a comrade who will make you laugh, but I can make you think. We live in the same box, laughter being of quite as old a family as thought. When people asked Democritus, 'How do you know?' he answered, 'I laugh.' And if I am asked, 'Why do you laugh?' I shall answer, 'I know.' However, I am not laughing. I am the rectifier of popular errors. I take upon myself the task of cleaning your intellects. They require it. Heaven permits people to deceive themselves, and to be deceived. It is useless to be absurdly modest. I frankly avow that I believe in Providence, even where it is wrong. Only when I see filth—errors are filth—I sweep them away. How am I sure of what I know? That concerns only myself. Every one catches wisdom as he can. Lactantius asked questions of, and received answers from, a bronze head of Virgil. Sylvester II. conversed with birds. Did the birds speak? Did the Pope twitter? That is a question. The dead child of the Rabbi Elcazer talked to Saint Augustine. Between ourselves, I doubt all these facts except the last. The dead child might perhaps talk, because under its tongue it had a gold plate, on which were engraved divers constellations. Thus he deceived people. The fact explains itself. You see my moderation. I separate the true from the false. See! here are other errors in

which, no doubt, you partake, poor ignorant folks that you are, and from which I wish to free you. Dioscorides believed that there was a god in the henbane; Chrysippus in the cynopaste; Josephus in the root bauras; Homer in the plant moly. They were all wrong. The spirits in herbs are not gods but devils. I have tested this fact. It is not true that the serpent which tempted Eve had a human face, as Cadmus relates. Garcias de Horto, Cadamosto, and John Hugo, Archbishop of Treves, deny that it is sufficient to saw down a tree to catch an elephant. I incline to their opinion. Citizens, the efforts of Lucifer are the cause of all false impressions. Under the reign of such a prince it is natural that meteors of error and of perdition should arise. My friends, Claudius Pulcher did not die because the fowls refused to come out of the fowl house. The fact is, that Lucifer, having foreseen the death of Claudius Pulcher, took care to prevent the birds feeding. That Beelzebub gave the Emperor Vespasian the virtue of curing the lame and giving sight to the blind, by his touch, was an act praiseworthy in itself, but of which the motive was culpable. Gentlemen, distrust those false doctors, who sell the root of the bryony and the white snake, and who make washes with honey and the blood of a cock. See clearly through that which is false. It is not quite true that Orion was the result of a natural function of Jupiter. The truth is that it was Mercury who produced this star in that way. It is not true that Adam had a navel. When St. George killed the dragon he had not the daughter of a saint standing by his side. St. Jerome had not a clock on the chimney-piece of his study; first, because living in a cave, he had no study; secondly, because he had no chimney-piece; thirdly, because clocks were not yet invented. Let us put these things right. Put them right. O gentlefolks, who listen to me, if any one tells you that a lizard will be born in your head if you smell the herb valerian; that the rotting carcase of the ox changes into bees, and that of the horse into hornets; that a man weighs more when dead than when alive; that the blood of the he-goat dissolves emeralds; that a caterpillar, a fly, and a spider, seen on the same tree, announces famine, war, and pestilence; that the falling sickness is to be cured by a worm found in the head of a buck—do not believe him. These things are errors. But now listen to truths. The skin of a sea-calf is a safeguard against thunder. The toad feeds upon earth, which causes a stone to come into his head. The rose of Jericho blooms on Christmas Eve. Serpents cannot endure the shadow of the ash tree. The elephant has no joints, and sleeps resting upright against a tree. Make a toad sit upon a cock's egg, and he will hatch a scorpion which will become a salamander. A blind person will recover sight by putting one hand on the left side of the altar and the other on his eyes. Virginity does not hinder maternity. Honest people, lay these truths to heart. Above all, you can believe in Providence in either of two ways, either as thirst believes in the orange, or as the ass believes in the whip. Now I am going to introduce you to my family."

Here a violent gust of wind shook the window-frames and shutters of the inn, which stood detached. It was like a prolonged murmur of the sky. The orator paused a moment, and then resumed.

"An interruption; very good. Speak, north wind. Gentlemen, I am not angry. The wind is loquacious, like all solitary creatures. There is no one to keep him company up there, so he jabbers. I resume the thread of my discourse. Here you see associated artists. We are four—*a lupo principium*. I begin by my friend, who is a wolf. He does not conceal it. See him! He is educated, grave, and sagacious. Providence, perhaps, entertained for a moment the idea of making him a doctor of the university; but for that one must be rather stupid, and that he is not. I may add that he has no prejudices, and is not aristocratic. He chats sometimes with bitches; he who, by right, should consort only with she-wolves. His heirs, if he have any, will no doubt gracefully combine the yap of their mother with the howl of their father. Because he does howl. He howls in sympathy with men. He barks as well, in condescension to civilization—a magnanimous concession. Homo is a dog made perfect. Let us venerate the dog. The dog—curious animal! sweats with its tongue and smiles with its tail. Gentlemen, Homo equals in wisdom, and surpasses in cordiality, the hairless wolf of Mexico, the wonderful xoloïtzeniski. I may add that he is humble. He has the modesty of a wolf who is useful to men. He is helpful and charitable, and says nothing about it. His left paw knows not the good which his right paw does. These are his merits. Of the other, my second friend, I have but one word to say. He is a monster. You will admire him. He was formerly abandoned by pirates on the shores of the wild ocean. This third one is blind. Is she an exception? No, we are all blind. The miser is blind; he sees gold, and he does not see riches. The prodigal is blind; he sees the beginning, and does not see the end. The coquette is blind; she does not see her wrinkles. The learned man is blind; he does not see his own ignorance. The honest man is blind; he does not see the thief. The thief is blind; he does not see God. God is blind; the day that he created the world He did not see the devil manage to creep into it. I myself am blind; I speak, and do not see that you are deaf. This blind girl who accompanies us is a mysterious priestess. Vesta has confided to her her torch. She has in her character depths as soft as a division in the wool of a sheep. I believe her to be a king's daughter, though I do not assert it as a fact. A laudable distrust is the attribute of wisdom. For my own part, I reason and I doctor, I think and I heal. *Chirurgus sum*. I cure fevers, miasmas, and plagues. Almost all our melancholy and sufferings are issues, which if carefully treated relieve us quietly from other evils which might be worse. All the same I do not recommend you to have an anthrax, otherwise called carbuncle. It is a stupid malady, and serves no good end. One dies of it—that is all. I am neither uncultivated nor rustic.

I honour eloquence and poetry, and live in an innocent union with these goddesses. I conclude by a piece of advice. Ladies and gentlemen, on the sunny side of your dispositions, cultivate virtue, modesty, honesty, probity, justice, and love. Each one here below may thus have his little pot of flowers on his window-sill. My lords and gentlemen, I have spoken. The play is about to begin."

The man who was apparently a sailor, and who had been listening outside, entered the lower room of the inn, crossed it, paid the necessary entrance money, reached the courtyard which was full of people, saw at the bottom of it a caravan on wheels, wide open, and on the platform an old man dressed in a bearskin, a young man looking like a mask, a blind girl, and a wolf.

"Gracious heaven!" he cried, "what delightful people!"

CHAPTER III.

WHERE THE PASSER-BY REAPPEARS.

The Green Box, as we have just seen, had arrived in London. It was established at Southwark. Ursus had been tempted by the bowling-green, which had one great recommendation, that it was always fair-day there, even in winter.

The dome of St. Paul's was a delight to Ursus.

London, take it all in all, has some good in it. It was a brave thing to dedicate a cathedral to St. Paul. The real cathedral saint is St. Peter. St. Paul is suspected of imagination, and in matters ecclesiastical imagination means heresy. St. Paul is a saint only with extenuating circumstances. He entered heaven only by the artists' door.

A cathedral is a sign. St. Peter is the sign of Rome, the city of the dogma; St. Paul that of London, the city of schism.

Ursus, whose philosophy had arms so long that it embraced everything, was a man who appreciated these shades of difference, and his attraction towards London arose, perhaps, from a certain taste of his for St. Paul.

The yard of the Tadcaster Inn had taken the fancy of Ursus. It might have been ordered for the Green Box. It was a theatre ready-made. It was square, with three sides built round, and a wall forming the fourth. Against this wall was placed the Green Box, which they were able to draw into the yard, owing to the height of the gate. A large wooden balcony, roofed over, and supported on posts, on which the rooms of the first story opened, ran round the three fronts of the interior façade of the house, making two right angles. The windows of the ground floor made boxes, the pavement of the court the pit, and the balcony the gallery. The Green Box, reared against the wall, was thus in front of a theatre. It was very like the Globe, where they played "Othello," "King Lear," and "The Tempest."

In a corner behind the Green Box was a stable.

Ursus had made his arrangements with the tavern keeper, Master Nicless, who, owing to his respect for the law, would not admit the wolf without charging him extra.

The placard, "Gwynplaine, the Laughing Man," taken from its nail in the Green Box, was hung up close to the sign of the inn. The sitting-room of the tavern had, as we have seen, an inside door which opened into the court. By the side of the door was constructed off-hand, by means of an empty barrel, a box for the money-taker, who was sometimes Fibi and sometimes Vinos. This was managed much as at present. Pay and pass in. Under the placard announcing the Laughing Man was a piece of wood, painted white, hung on two nails, on which was written in charcoal in large letters the title of Ursus's grand piece, "Chaos Vanquished."

In the centre of the balcony, precisely opposite the Green Box, and in a compartment having for entrance a window reaching to the ground, there had been partitioned off a space "for the nobility." It was large enough to hold, in two rows, ten spectators.

"We are in London," said Ursus. "We must be prepared for the gentry."

He had furnished this box with the best chairs in the inn, and had placed in the centre a grand arm-chair of yellow Utrecht velvet, with a cherry-coloured pattern, in case some alderman's wife should come.

They began their performances. The crowd immediately flocked to them, but the compartment for the nobility remained empty. With that exception their success became so great that no mountebank memory could recall its parallel. All Southwark ran in crowds to admire the Laughing Man.

The merry-andrews and mountebanks of Tarrinzeau Field were aghast at Gwynplaine. The effect he caused was as that of a sparrow-hawk flapping his wings in a cage of goldfinches, and feeding in their seed-trough. Gwynplaine ate up their public.

Besides the small fry, the swallowers of swords and the grimace makers, real performances took place on the green. There was a circus of women, ringing from morning till night with a magnificent peal of all sorts of instruments—psalteries, drums, rebecks, micamons, timbrels, reeds, dulcimers, gongs, chevrettes, bagpipes, German horns, English eschaqueils, pipes, flutes, and flageolets.

In a large round tent were some tumblers, who could not have equalled our present climbers of the Pyrenees—Dulma, Bordenave, and Meylonga—who from the peak of Pierrefitte descend to the plateau of Limaçon, an almost perpendicular height. There was a travelling menagerie, where was to be seen a performing tiger, who, lashed by the keeper, snapped at the whip and tried to swallow the lash. Even this comedian of jaws and claws was eclipsed in success.

Curiosity, applause, receipts, crowds, the Laughing Man monopolized everything. It happened in the twinkling of an eye. Nothing was thought of but the Green Box.

"'Chaos Vanquished' is 'Chaos Victor,'" said Ursus, appropriating half Gwynplaine's success, and taking the wind out of his sails, as they say at sea. That success was prodigious. Still it remained local. Fame does not cross the sea easily. It took a hundred and thirty years for the name of Shakespeare to penetrate from England into France. The sea is a wall; and if Voltaire—a thing which he very much regretted when it was too late—had not thrown a bridge over to Shakespeare, Shakespeare might still be in England, on the other side of the wall, a captive in insular glory.

The glory of Gwynplaine had not passed London Bridge. It was not great enough yet to re-echo throughout the city. At least not at first. But Southwark ought to have sufficed to satisfy the ambition of a clown. Ursus said,—

"The money bag grows palpably bigger."

They played "Ursus Rursus" and "Chaos Vanquished."

Between the acts Ursus exhibited his power as an engastrimist, and executed marvels of ventriloquism. He imitated every cry which occurred in the audience—a song, a cry, enough to startle, so exact the imitation, the singer or the crier himself; and now and then he copied the hubbub of the public, and whistled as if there were a crowd of people within him. These were remarkable talents. Besides this he harangued like

Cicero, as we have just seen, sold his drugs, attended sickness, and even healed the sick.

Southwark was enthralled.

Ursus was satisfied with the applause of Southwark, but by no means astonished.

"They are the ancient Trinobantes," he said.

Then he added, "I must not mistake them, for delicacy of taste, for the Atrobates, who people Berkshire, or the Belgians, who inhabited Somersetshire, nor for the Parisians, who founded York."

At every performance the yard of the inn, transformed into a pit, was filled with a ragged and enthusiastic audience. It was composed of watermen, chairmen, coachmen, and bargemen, and sailors, just ashore, spending their wages in feasting and women. In it there were felons, ruffians, and blackguards, who were soldiers condemned for some crime against discipline to wear their red coats, which were lined with black, inside out, and from thence the name of blackguard, which the French turn into *blagueurs*. All these flowed from the street into the theatre, and poured back from the theatre into the tap. The emptying of tankards did not decrease their success.

Amidst what it is usual to call the scum, there was one taller than the rest, bigger, stronger, less poverty-stricken, broader in the shoulders; dressed like the common people, but not ragged.

Admiring and applauding everything to the skies, clearing his way with his fists, wearing a disordered periwig, swearing, shouting, joking, never dirty, and, at need, ready to blacken an eye or pay for a bottle.

This frequenter was the passer-by whose cheer of enthusiasm has been recorded.

This connoisseur was suddenly fascinated, and had adopted the Laughing Man. He did not come every evening, but when he came he led the public—applause grew into acclamation—success rose not to the roof, for there was none, but to the clouds, for there were plenty of them. Which clouds (seeing that there was no roof) sometimes wept over the masterpiece of Ursus.

His enthusiasm caused Ursus to remark this man, and Gwynplaine to observe him.

They had a great friend in this unknown visitor.

Ursus and Gwynplaine wanted to know him; at least, to know who he was.

One evening Ursus was in the side scene, which was the kitchen-door of the Green Box, seeing Master Nicless standing by him, showed him this man in the crowd, and asked him,—

"Do you know that man?"

"Of course I do."

"Who is he?"

"A sailor."

"What is his name?" said Gwynplaine, interrupting.

"Tom-Jim-Jack," replied the inn-keeper.

Then as he redescended the steps at the back of the Green Box, to enter the inn, Master Nicless let fall this profound reflection, so deep as to be unintelligible,—

"What a pity that he should not be a lord. He would make a famous scoundrel."

Otherwise, although established in the tavern, the group in the Green Box had in no way altered their manner of living, and held to their isolated habits. Except a few words exchanged now and then with the tavern-keeper, they held no communication with any of those who were living, either permanently or temporarily, in the inn; and continued to keep to themselves.

Since they had been at Southwark, Gwynplaine had made it his habit, after the performance and the supper of both family and horses—when Ursus and Dea had gone to bed in their respective compartments—to breathe a little the fresh air of the bowling-green, between eleven o'clock and midnight.

A certain vagrancy in our spirits impels us to take walks at night, and to saunter under the stars. There is a mysterious expectation in youth. Therefore it is that we are prone to wander out in the night, without an object.

At that hour there was no one in the fair-ground, except, perhaps, some reeling drunkard, making staggering shadows in dark corners. The empty taverns were shut up, and the lower room in the Tadcaster Inn was dark, except where, in some corner, a solitary candle lighted a last reveller. An indistinct glow gleamed through the window-shutters of the half-closed tavern, as Gwynplaine, pensive, content, and dreaming, happy in a haze of divine joy, passed backwards and forwards in front of the half-open door.

Of what was he thinking? Of Dea—of nothing—of everything—of the depths.

He never wandered far from the Green Box, being held, as by a thread, to Dea. A few steps away from it was far enough for him.

Then he returned, found the whole Green Box asleep, and went to bed himself.

CHAPTER IV.

CONTRARIES FRATERNIZE IN HATE.

Success is hateful, especially to those whom it overthrows. It is rare that the eaten adore the eaters.

The Laughing Man had decidedly made a hit. The mountebanks around were indignant. A theatrical success is a syphon—it pumps in the crowd and creates emptiness all round. The shop opposite is done for. The increased receipts of the Green Box caused a corresponding decrease in the receipts of the surrounding shows. Those entertainments, popular up to that time, suddenly collapsed. It was like a low-water mark, showing inversely, but in perfect concordance, the rise here, the fall there. Theatres experience the effect of tides: they rise in one only on condition of falling in another. The swarming foreigners who exhibited their talents and their trumpetings on the neighbouring platforms, seeing themselves ruined by the Laughing Man, were despairing, yet dazzled. All the grimacers, all the clowns, all the merry-andrews envied Gwynplaine. How happy he must be with the snout of a wild beast! The buffoon mothers and dancers on the tight-rope, with pretty children, looked at them in anger, and pointing out Gwynplaine, would say, "What a pity you have not a face like that!" Some beat their babes savagely for being pretty. More than one, had she known the secret, would have fashioned her son's face in the Gwynplaine style. The head of an angel, which brings no money in, is not as good as that of a lucrative devil. One day the mother of a little child who was a marvel of beauty, and who acted a cupid, exclaimed,—

"Our children are failures! They only succeeded with Gwynplaine." And shaking her fist at her son, she added, "If I only knew your father, wouldn't he catch it!"

Gwynplaine was the goose with the golden eggs! What a marvellous phenomenon! There was an uproar through all the caravans. The mountebanks, enthusiastic and

exasperated, looked at Gwynplaine and gnashed their teeth. Admiring anger is called envy. Then it howls! They tried to disturb "Chaos Vanquished;" made a cabal, hissed, scolded, shouted! This was an excuse for Ursus to make out-of-door harangues to the populace, and for his friend Tom-Jim-Jack to use his fists to re-establish order. His pugilistic marks of friendship brought him still more under the notice and regard of Ursus and Gwynplaine. At a distance, however, for the group in the Green Box sufficed to themselves, and held aloof from the rest of the world, and because Tom-Jim-Jack, this leader of the mob, seemed a sort of supreme bully, without a tie, without a friend; a smasher of windows, a manager of men, now here, now gone, hail-fellow-well-met with every one, companion of none.

This raging envy against Gwynplaine did not give in for a few friendly hits from Tom-Jim-Jack. The outcries having miscarried, the mountebanks of Tarrinzeau Field fell back on a petition. They addressed to the authorities. This is the usual course. Against an unpleasant success we first try to stir up the crowd and then we petition the magistrate.

With the merry-andrews the reverends allied themselves. The Laughing Man had inflicted a blow on the preachers. There were empty places not only in the caravans, but in the churches. The congregations in the churches of the five parishes in Southwark had dwindled away. People left before the sermon to go to Gwynplaine. "Chaos Vanquished," the Green Box, the Laughing Man, all the abominations of Baal, eclipsed the eloquence of the pulpit. The voice crying in the desert, *vox clamantis in deserto*, is discontented, and is prone to call for the aid of the authorities. The clergy of the five parishes complained to the Bishop of London, who complained to her Majesty.

The complaint of the merry-andrews was based on religion. They declared it to be insulted. They described Gwynplaine as a sorcerer, and Ursus as an atheist. The reverend gentlemen invoked social order. Setting orthodoxy aside they took action on the fact that Acts of Parliament were violated. It was clever. Because it was the period of Mr. Locke, who had died but six months previously—28th October, 1704—and when scepticism, which Bolingbroke had imbibed from Voltaire, was taking root. Later on Wesley came and restored the Bible, as Loyola restored the papacy.

Thus the Green Box was battered on both sides; by the merry-andrews, in the name of the Pentateuch, and by chaplains in the name of the police. In the name of Heaven and of the inspectors of nuisances. The Green Box was denounced by the priests as an obstruction, and by the jugglers as sacrilegious.

Had they any pretext? Was there any excuse? Yes. What was the crime? This: there was the wolf. A dog was allowable; a wolf forbidden. In England the wolf is an outlaw. England admits the dog which barks, but not the dog which howls—a shade of difference between the yard and the woods.

The rectors and vicars of the five parishes of Southwark called attention in their petitions to numerous parliamentary and royal statutes putting the wolf beyond the protection of the law. They moved for something like the imprisonment of Gwynplaine and the execution of the wolf, or at any rate for their banishment. The question was one of public importance, the danger to persons passing, etc. And on this point, they appealed to the Faculty. They cited the opinion of the Eighty physicians of London, a learned body which dates from Henry VIII., which has a seal like that of the State, which can raise sick people to the dignity of being amenable to their jurisdiction, which has the right to imprison those who infringe its law and contravene its ordinances, and which, amongst other useful regulations for the health of the citizens, put beyond doubt this fact acquired by science; that if a wolf sees a man first, the man becomes hoarse for life. Besides, he may be bitten.

Homo, then, was a pretext.

Ursus heard of these designs through the inn-keeper. He was uneasy. He was afraid of two claws—the police and the justices. To be afraid of the magistracy, it is sufficient to be afraid, there is no need to be guilty. Ursus had no desire for contact with sheriffs, provosts, bailiffs, and coroners. His eagerness to make their acquaintance amounted to nil. His curiosity to see the magistrates was about as great as the hare's to see the greyhound.

He began to regret that he had come to London. "'Better' is the enemy of 'good,'" murmured he apart. "I thought the proverb was ill-considered. I was wrong. Stupid truths are true truths."

Against the coalition of powers—merry-andrews taking in hand the cause of religion, and chaplains, indignant in the name of medicine—the poor Green Box, suspected of sorcery in Gwynplaine and of hydrophobia in Homo, had only one thing in its favour (but a thing of great power in England), municipal inactivity. It is to the local authorities letting things take their own course that Englishmen owe their liberty. Liberty in England behaves very much as the sea around England. It is a tide. Little by little manners surmount the law. A cruel system of legislation drowned under the wave of custom; a savage code of laws still visible through the transparency of universal liberty: such is England.

The Laughing Man, "Chaos Vanquished," and Homo might have mountebanks, preachers, bishops, the House of Commons, the House of Lords, her Majesty, London, and the whole of England against them, and remain undisturbed so long as Southwark permitted.

The Green Box was the favourite amusement of the suburb, and the local authorities seemed disinclined to interfere. In England, indifference is protection. So long as the sheriff of the county of Surrey, to the jurisdiction of which Southwark belongs, did not move in the matter, Ursus breathed freely, and Homo could sleep on his wolf's ears.

So long as the hatred which it excited did not occasion acts of violence, it increased success. The Green Box was none the worse for it, for the time. On the contrary, hints were scattered that it contained something mysterious. Hence the Laughing Man became more and more popular. The public follow with gusto the scent of anything contraband. To be suspected is a recommendation. The people adopt by instinct that at which the finger is pointed. The thing which is denounced is like the savour of forbidden fruit; we rush to eat it. Besides, applause which irritates some one, especially if that some one is in authority, is sweet. To perform, whilst passing a pleasant evening, both an act of kindness to the oppressed and of opposition to the oppressor is agreeable. You are protecting at the same time that you are being amused. So the theatrical caravans on the bowling-green continued to howl and to cabal against the Laughing Man. Nothing could be better calculated to enhance his success. The shouts of one's enemies are useful and give point and vitality to one's triumph. A friend wearies sooner in praise than an enemy in abuse. To abuse does not hurt. Enemies are ignorant of this fact. They cannot help insulting us, and this constitutes their use. They cannot hold their tongues, and thus keep the public awake.

The crowds which flocked to "Chaos Vanquished" increased daily.

Ursus kept what Master Nicless had said of intriguers and complaints in high places to himself, and did not tell Gwynplaine, lest it should trouble the ease of his acting by creating anxiety. If evil was to come, he would be sure to know it soon enough.

CHAPTER V.

THE WAPENTAKE.

Once, however, he thought it his duty to derogate from this prudence, for prudence' sake, thinking that it might be well to make Gwynplaine uneasy. It is true that this idea arose from a circumstance much graver, in the opinion of Ursus, than the cabals of the fair or of the church.

Gwynplaine, as he picked up a farthing which had fallen when counting the receipts, had, in the presence of the innkeeper, drawn a contrast between the farthing, representing the misery of the people, and the die, representing, under the figure of Anne, the parasitical magnificence of the throne—an ill-sounding speech. This observation was repeated by Master Nicless, and had such a run that it reached to Ursus through Fibi and Vinos. It put Ursus into a fever. Seditious words, lèse Majesté. He took Gwynplaine severely to task. "Watch over your abominable jaws. There is a rule for the great—to do nothing; and a rule for the small—to say nothing. The poor man has but one friend, silence. He should only pronounce one syllable: 'Yes.' To confess and to consent is all the right he has. 'Yes,' to the judge; 'yes,' to the king. Great people, if it pleases them to do so, beat us. I have received blows from them. It is their prerogative; and they lose nothing of their greatness by breaking our bones. The ossifrage is a species of eagle. Let us venerate the sceptre, which is the first of staves. Respect is prudence, and mediocrity is safety. To insult the king is to put oneself in the same danger as a girl rashly paring the nails of a lion. They tell me that you have been prattling about the farthing, which is the same thing as the liard, and that you have found fault with the august medallion, for which they sell us at market the eighth part of a salt herring. Take care; let us be serious. Consider the existence of pains and penalties. Suck in these legislative truths. You are in a country in which the man who cuts down a tree three years old is quietly taken off to the gallows. As to swearers, their feet are put into the stocks. The drunkard is shut up in a barrel with the bottom out, so that he can walk, with a hole in the top, through which his head is passed, and with two in the bung for his hands, so that he cannot lie down. He who strikes another one in Westminster Hall is imprisoned for life and has his goods confiscated. Whoever strikes any one in the king's palace has his hand struck off. A fillip on the nose chances to bleed, and, behold! you are maimed for life. He who is convicted of heresy in the bishop's court is burnt alive. It was for no great matter that Cuthbert Simpson was quartered on a turnstile. Three years since, in 1702, which is not long ago, you see, they placed in the pillory a scoundrel, called Daniel Defoe, who had had the audacity to print the names of the Members of Parliament who had spoken on the previous evening. He who commits high treason is disembowelled alive, and they tear out his heart and buffet his cheeks with it. Impress on yourself

notions of right and justice. Never allow yourself to speak a word, and at the first cause of anxiety, run for it. Such is the bravery which I counsel and which I practise. In the way of temerity, imitate the birds; in the way of talking, imitate the fishes. England has one admirable point in her favour, that her legislation is very mild."

His admonition over, Ursus remained uneasy for some time. Gwynplaine not at all. The intrepidity of youth arises from want of experience. However, it seemed that Gwynplaine had good reason for his easy mind, for the weeks flowed on peacefully, and no bad consequences seemed to have resulted from his observations about the queen.

Ursus, we know, lacked apathy, and, like a roebuck on the watch, kept a lookout in every direction. One day, a short time after his sermon to Gwynplaine, as he was looking out from the window in the wall which commanded the field, he became suddenly pale.

"Gwynplaine?"

"What?"

"Look."

"Where?"

"In the field."

"Well."

"Do you see that passer-by?"

"The man in black?"

"Yes."

"Who has a kind of mace in his hand?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

"Well, Gwynplaine, that man is a wapentake."

"What is a wapentake?"

"He is the bailiff of the hundred."

"What is the bailiff of the hundred?"

"He is the *proepositus hundredi*."

"And what is the *proepositus hundredi*?"

"He is a terrible officer."

"What has he got in his hand?"

"The iron weapon."

"What is the iron weapon?"

"A thing made of iron."

"What does he do with that?"

"First of all, he swears upon it. It is for that reason that he is called the wapentake."

"And then?"

"Then he touches you with it."

"With what?"

"With the iron weapon."

"The wapentake touches you with the iron weapon?"

"Yes."

"What does that mean?"

"That means, follow me."

"And must you follow?"

"Yes."

"Whither?"

"How should I know?"

"But he tells you where he is going to take you?"

"No."

"How is that?"

"He says nothing, and you say nothing."

"But—"

"He touches you with the iron weapon. All is over then. You must go."

"But where?"

"After him."

"But where?"

"Wherever he likes, Gwynplaine."

"And if you resist?"

"You are hanged."

Ursus looked out of the window again, and drawing a long breath, said,—

"Thank God! He has passed. He was not coming here."

Ursus was perhaps unreasonably alarmed about the indiscreet remark, and the consequences likely to result from the unconsidered words of Gwynplaine.

Master Nicless, who had heard them, had no interest in compromising the poor inhabitants of the Green Box. He was amassing, at the same time as the Laughing Man, a nice little fortune. "Chaos Vanquished" had succeeded in two ways. While it made art triumph on the stage, it made drunkenness prosper in the tavern.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MOUSE EXAMINED BY THE CATS.

Ursus was soon afterwards startled by another alarming circumstance. This time it was he himself who was concerned. He was summoned to Bishopsgate before a commission composed of three disagreeable countenances. They belonged to three doctors, called overseers. One was a Doctor of Theology, delegated by the Dean of Westminster; another, a Doctor of Medicine, delegated by the College of Surgeons; the third, a Doctor in History and Civil Law, delegated by Gresham College. These three experts *in omni re scibili* had the censorship of everything said in public throughout the bounds of the hundred and thirty parishes of London, the seventy-three of Middlesex, and, by extension, the five of Southwark.

Such theological jurisdictions still subsist in England, and do good service. In December, 1868, by sentence of the Court of Arches, confirmed by the decision of the Privy Council, the Reverend Mackonochie was censured, besides being condemned in costs, for having placed lighted candles on a table. The liturgy allows no jokes.

Ursus, then, one fine day received from the delegated doctors an order to appear before them, which was, luckily, given into his own hands, and which he was therefore enabled to keep secret. Without saying a word, he obeyed the citation, shuddering at the thought that he might be considered culpable to the extent of having the appearance of being suspected of a certain amount of rashness. He who had so recommended silence to others had here a rough lesson. *Garrule, sana te ipsum*.

The three doctors, delegated and appointed overseers, sat at Bishopsgate, at the end of a room on the ground floor, in three armchairs covered with black leather, with three busts of Minos, Æacus, and Rhadamanthus, in the wall above their heads, a table before them, and at their feet a form for the accused.

Ursus, introduced by a tipstaff, of placid but severe expression, entered, perceived the doctors, and immediately in his own mind, gave to each of them the name of the judge of the infernal regions represented by the bust placed above his head. Minos, the president, the representative of theology, made him a sign to sit down on the form.

Ursus made a proper bow—that is to say, bowed to the ground; and knowing that bears are charmed by honey, and doctors by Latin, he said, keeping his body still bent respectfully,—

"*Tres faciunt capitulum!*"

Then, with head inclined (for modesty disarms) he sat down on the form.

Each of the three doctors had before him a bundle of papers, of which he was turning the leaves.

Minos began.

"You speak in public?"

"Yes," replied Ursus.

"By what right?"

"I am a philosopher."

"That gives no right."

"I am also a mountebank," said Ursus.

"That is a different thing."

Ursus breathed again, but with humility.

Minos resumed,—

"As a mountebank, you may speak; as a philosopher, you must keep silence."

"I will try," said Ursus.

Then he thought to himself.

"I may speak, but I must be silent. How complicated."

He was much alarmed.

The same overseer continued,—

"You say things which do not sound right. You insult religion. You deny the most evident truths. You propagate revolting errors. For instance, you have said that the fact of virginity excludes the possibility of maternity."

Ursus lifted his eyes meekly, "I did not say that. I said that the fact of maternity excludes the possibility of virginity."

Minos was thoughtful, and mumbled, "True, that is the contrary."

It was really the same thing. But Ursus had parried the first blow.

Minos, meditating on the answer just given by Ursus, sank into the depths of his own imbecility, and kept silent.

The overseer of history, or, as Ursus called him, Rhadamanthus, covered the retreat of Minos by this interpolation, "Accused! your audacity and your errors are of two sorts. You have denied that the battle of Pharsalia would have been lost because Brutus and Cassius had met a negro."

"I said," murmured Ursus "that there was something in the fact that Cæsar was the better captain."

The man of history passed, without transition, to mythology.

"You have excused the infamous acts of Actæon."

"I think," said Ursus, insinuatingly, "that a man is not dishonoured by having seen a naked woman."

"Then you are wrong," said the judge severely. Rhadamanthus returned to history.

"Apropos of the accidents which happened to the cavalry of Mithridates, you have contested the virtues of herbs and plants. You have denied that a herb like the securiduca, could make the shoes of horses fall off."

"Pardon me," replied Ursus. "I said that the power existed only in the herb sferra cavallo. I never denied the virtue of any herb," and he added, in a low voice, "nor of any woman."

By this extraneous addition to his answer Ursus proved to himself that, anxious as he was, he was not disheartened. Ursus was a compound of terror and presence of mind.

"To continue," resumed Rhadamanthus; "you have declared that it was folly in Scipio, when he wished to open the gates of Carthage, to use as a key the herb æthiopis, because the herb æthiopis has not the property of breaking locks."

"I merely said that he would have done better to have used the herb lunaria."

"That is a matter of opinion," murmured Rhadamanthus, touched in his turn. And the man of history was silent.

The theologian, Minos, having returned to consciousness, questioned Ursus anew. He had had time to consult his notes.

"You have classed orpiment amongst the products of arsenic, and you have said that it is a poison. The Bible denies this."

"The Bible denies, but arsenic affirms it," sighed Ursus.

The man whom Ursus called Æacus, and who was the envy of medicine, had not yet spoken, but now looking down on Ursus, with proudly half-closed eyes, he said,—

"The answer is not without some show of reason."

Ursus thanked him with his most cringing smile. Minos frowned frightfully. "I resume," said Minos. "You have said that it is false that the basilisk is the king of serpents, under the name of cockatrice."

"Very reverend sir," said Ursus, "so little did I desire to insult the basilisk that I have given out as certain that it has a man's head."

"Be it so," replied Minos severely; "but you added that Poerius had seen one with the head of a falcon. Can you prove it?"

"Not easily," said Ursus.

Here he had lost a little ground.

Minos, seizing the advantage, pushed it.

"You have said that a converted Jew has not a nice smell."

"Yes. But I added that a Christian who becomes a Jew has a nasty one."

Minos lost his eyes over the accusing documents.

"You have affirmed and propagated things which are impossible. You have said that Elien had seen an elephant write sentences."

"Nay, very reverend gentleman! I simply said that Oppian had heard a hippopotamus discuss a philosophical problem."

"You have declared that it is not true that a dish made of beech-wood will become covered of itself with all the viands that one can desire."

"I said, that if it has this virtue, it must be that you received it from the devil."

"That I received it!"

"No, most reverend sir. I, nobody, everybody!"

Aside, Ursus thought, "I don't know what I am saying."

But his outward confusion, though extreme, was not distinctly visible. Ursus struggled with it.

"All this," Minos began again, "implies a certain belief in the devil."

Ursus held his own.

"Very reverend sir, I am not an unbeliever with regard to the devil. Belief in the devil is the reverse side of faith in God. The one proves the other. He who does not believe a little in the devil, does not believe much in God. He who believes in the sun must believe in the shadow. The devil is the night of God. What is night? The proof of day."

Ursus here extemporized a fathomless combination of philosophy and religion. Minos remained pensive, and relapsed into silence.

Ursus breathed afresh.

A sharp onslaught now took place. Æacus, the medical delegate, who had disdainfully protected Ursus against the theologian, now turned suddenly from auxiliary into

assailant. He placed his closed fist on his bundle of papers, which was large and heavy. Ursus received this apostrophe full in the breast,—

"It is proved that crystal is sublimated ice, and that the diamond is sublimated crystal. It is averred that ice becomes crystal in a thousand years, and crystal diamond in a thousand ages. You have denied this."

"Nay," replied Ursus, with sadness, "I only said that in a thousand years ice had time to melt, and that a thousand ages were difficult to count."

The examination went on; questions and answers clashed like swords.

"You have denied that plants can talk."

"Not at all. But to do so they must grow under a gibbet."

"Do you own that the mandragora cries?"

"No; but it sings."

"You have denied that the fourth finger of the left hand has a cordial virtue."

"I only said that to sneeze to the left was a bad sign."

"You have spoken rashly and disrespectfully of the phoenix."

"Learned judge, I merely said that when he wrote that the brain of the phoenix was a delicate morsel, but that it produced headache, Plutarch was a little out of his reckoning, inasmuch as the phoenix never existed."

"A detestable speech! The cinnamalker which makes its nest with sticks of cinnamon, the rhintacus that Parysatis used in the manufacture of his poisons, the manucodiatas which is the bird of paradise, and the semenda, which has a threefold beak, have been mistaken for the phoenix; but the phoenix has existed."

"I do not deny it."

"You are a stupid ass."

"I desire to be thought no better."

"You have confessed that the elder tree cures the quinsy, but you added that it was not because it has in its root a fairy excrescence."

"I said it was because Judas hung himself on an elder tree."

"A plausible opinion," growled the theologian, glad to strike his little blow at Æacus.

Arrogance repulsed soon turns to anger. Æacus was enraged.

"Wandering mountebank! you wander as much in mind as with your feet. Your tendencies are out of the way and suspicious. You approach the bounds of sorcery. You have dealings with unknown animals. You speak to the populace of things that exist but for you alone, and the nature of which is unknown, such as the hoemorrhoüs."

"The hoemorrhoüs is a viper which was seen by Tremellius."

This repartee produced a certain disorder in the irritated science of Doctor Æacus.

Ursus added, "The existence of the hoemorrhoüs is quite as true as that of the odoriferous hyena, and of the civet described by Castellus."

Æacus got out of the difficulty by charging home.

"Here are your own words, and very diabolical words they are. Listen."

With his eyes on his notes, Æacus read,—

"Two plants, the thalagssigle and the aglaphotis, are luminous in the evening, flowers by day, stars by night;" and looking steadily at Ursus, "What have you to say to that?"

Ursus answered,—

"Every plant is a lamp. Its perfume is its light." Æacus turned over other pages.

"You have denied that the vesicles of the otter are equivalent to castoreum."

"I merely said that perhaps it may be necessary to receive the teaching of Ætius on this point with some reserve."

Æacus became furious.

"You practise medicine?"

"I practise medicine," sighed Ursus timidly.

"On living things?"

"Rather than on dead ones," said Ursus.

Ursus defended himself stoutly, but dully; an admirable mixture, in which meekness predominated. He spoke with such gentleness that Doctor Æacus felt that he must insult him.

"What are you murmuring there?" said he rudely.

Ursus was amazed, and restricted himself to saying,—

"Murmurings are for the young, and moans for the aged. Alas, I moan!"

Æacus replied,—

"Be assured of this—if you attend a sick person, and he dies, you will be punished by death."

Ursus hazarded a question.

"And if he gets well?"

"In that case," said the doctor, softening his voice, "you will be punished by death."

"There is little difference," said Ursus.

The doctor replied,—

"If death ensues, we punish gross ignorance; if recovery, we punish presumption. The gibbet in either case."

"I was ignorant of the circumstance," murmured Ursus. "I thank you for teaching me. One does not know all the beauties of the law."

"Take care of yourself."

"Religiously," said Ursus.

"We know what you are about."

"As for me," thought Ursus, "that is more than I always know myself."

"We could send you to prison."

"I see that perfectly, gentlemen."

"You cannot deny your infractions nor your encroachments."

"My philosophy asks pardon."

"Great audacity has been attributed to you."

"That is quite a mistake."

"It is said that you have cured the sick."

"I am the victim of calumny."

The three pairs of eyebrows which were so horribly fixed on Ursus contracted. The three wise faces drew near to each other, and whispered. Ursus had the vision of a vague fool's cap sketched out above those three empowered heads. The low and requisite whispering of the trio was of some minutes' duration, during which time Ursus felt all the ice and all the scorch of agony. At length Minos, who was president, turned to him and said angrily,—

"Go away!"

Ursus felt something like Jonas when he was leaving the belly of the whale.

Minos continued,—

"You are discharged."

Ursus said to himself,—

"They won't catch me at this again. Good-bye, medicine!"

And he added in his innermost heart,—

"From henceforth I will carefully allow them to die."

Bent double, he bowed everywhere; to the doctors, to the busts, the tables, the walls, and retiring backwards through the door, disappeared almost as a shadow melting into air.

He left the hall slowly, like an innocent man, and rushed from the street rapidly, like a guilty one. The officers of justice are so singular and obscure in their ways that even when acquitted one flies from them.

As he fled he mumbled,—

"I am well out of it. I am the savant untamed; they the savants civilized. Doctors cavil at the learned. False science is the excrement of the true, and is employed to the destruction of philosophers. Philosophers, as they produce sophists, produce their own scourge. Of the dung of the thrush is born the mistletoe, with which is made birdlime, with which the thrush is captured. *Turdus sibi malum cacat*."

We do not represent Ursus as a refined man. He was imprudent enough to use words which expressed his thoughts. He had no more taste than Voltaire.

When Ursus returned to the Green Box, he told Master Nicless that he had been delayed by following a pretty woman, and let not a word escape him concerning his adventure.

Except in the evening when he said in a low voice to Homo,—

"See here, I have vanquished the three heads of Cerberus."