CHAPTER XXI.

Whilst the scene which Thaddeus has just described was passing behind the camp, I had succeeded with some of my men in climbing the opposite hills, by aid of the brushwood, until we had reached a point called Peacock Peak, from the brilliant tints of the mica which coated the surface of the rock.

From this position, which was opposite a rock covered with negroes, we opened a withering fire. The insurgents, who were not so well armed as we were, could not reply warmly to our volleys, and in a short time began to grow discouraged. We redoubled our efforts, and our enemies soon evacuated the neighbouring rocks, first hurling the dead bodies of their comrades upon our army, the greater proportion of which was still drawn up on the hill. Then we cut down several trees, and binding the trunks together with fibres of the palm, we improvised a bridge, and by it crossed over to the deserted positions of the enemy, and thus managed to secure a good post of vantage. This operation completely quenched the courage of the rebels. Our fire continued. Shouts of grief arose from them, in which the name of Bug-Jargal was frequently repeated. Many negroes of the army of Morne-Rouge appeared on the rock upon which the blood-red banner still floated; they prostrated themselves before it, tore it from its resting-place, and then precipitated it and themselves into the depths of the Grande-Riviere. This seemed to signify that their chief was either killed or a prisoner.

Our confidence had now risen to such a pitch that I resolved to drive them from their last position at the point of the bayonet, and at the head of my men I dashed into the midst of the negroes. The soldiers were about to follow me across the temporary bridge that I had caused to be thrown from peak to peak, when one of the rebels with a blow of his axe broke the bridge to atoms, and the ruins fell into the abyss with a terrible noise.

I turned my head—in a moment I was surrounded, and seized by six or seven negroes, who disarmed me in a moment. I struggled like a lion, but they bound me with cords made of bark, heedless of the hail of bullets that my soldiers poured upon them.

My despair was somewhat soothed by the cries of victory which I heard from our men, and I soon saw the negroes and mulattoes ascending the steep sides of the rocks with all the precipitation of fear, uttering cries of terror.

My captors followed their example. The strongest amongst them placed me on their shoulders, and carried me in the direction of the forest, leaping from rock to rock with the agility of wild goats. The flames soon ceased to light the scene, and it was by the pale rays of the moon that we pursued our course.

CHAPTER XXII.

After passing through jungle, and crossing many a torrent, we arrived in a valley situated in the higher part of the hills, of a singular wild and savage appearance. The spot was absolutely unknown to me. The valley was situated in the heart of the hills, in what is called the *double mountains*. It was a large green plain, imprisoned by walls of bare rock, and dotted with clumps of pines and palm-trees. The cold, which at this height is very severe, was increased by the morning air, the day having just commenced to break, but the valley was still plunged in darkness, and was only lighted by flashes from the negroes' fires; evidently this spot was their headquarters. The shattered remains of their army had begun to reassemble, and every now and then bands of negroes and mulattoes arrived, uttering groans of distress and cries of rage. New fires were speedily lighted, and the camp began to increase in size. The negro whose prisoner I was had placed me at the foot of an oak, whence I surveyed this strange spectacle with entire carelessness. The black had bound me with his belt to the trunk of the tree, against which I was leaning, and carefully tightening the knots in the cords which impeded my movements, he placed on my head his own red woollen cap, as if to indicate that I was his property, and after making sure that I could not escape or be carried off by others, was preparing to leave me, when I determined to address him, and speaking in the Creole dialect I asked him if he belonged to the band of Dondon, or of Morne-Rouge. He stopped at once, and in a tone of pride replied "*Morne-Rouge*." Then an idea entered my head. I had often heard of the generosity of the chief Bug-Jargal, and though I had made up my mind that death would soon end all my troubles, yet the thought of the tortures that would inevitably precede it should I fall into the hands of Biassou, filled me with horror. All I wanted was to be put to death without torment. It was perhaps a weakness, but I believe that the mind of man ever revolts at such a death. I thought then, that if I could be taken from Biassou, Bug-Jargal might give me what I desired—a soldier's death. I therefore asked the negro of Morne-Rouge to lead me to Bug-Jargal. He started. "Bug-Jargal," he repeated, striking on his forehead in anguish; then, as if rage had suddenly overtaken him, he shook his fist, and shouting "Biassou, Biassou," he left me hastily.

The mingled rage and grief of the negro recalled to my mind the events of the day, and the certainty we had acquired of either the death or capture of the chief of the band of Morne-Rouge. I felt that all hope was over, and resigned myself to the threatened vengeance of Biassou.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A group of negresses came near the tree to which I was fastened, and lit a fire. By the numerous bracelets of blue, red, and violet glass which ornamented their arms and ankles, by the rings which weighed down their ears and adorned their toes and fingers, by the amulets on their bosoms and the collar of charms suspended round their necks, and by the aprons of variegated feathers which were their sole coverings, I at once recognized them as *griotes*. You are perhaps ignorant that amongst the African blacks there exists a certain class with a rude talent for poetry and improvisation, which approaches closely to madness. These unhappy creatures, wandering from one African kingdom to another, are in these barbarian countries looked upon in the same light as the *minstrels* of England, the *minnesingers* of Germany, and the *troubadours* of France. They are called *griots*, and their wives *griotes*. The *griotes* accompany the barbaric songs of their husbands with lascivious dances, and form a grotesque parody on the *nautch girls* of India and the *almes* of Egypt. It was a group of these women who came and sat down near me, with their legs crossed under them according to their custom, and their hideous faces lighted up by the red light of a fire of withered branches. When they had formed a complete circle they all took hands, and the eldest, who had a heron's plume stuck in her hair, began to exclaim "*Ouanga*." I at once understood that they were going through one of their performances of pretended witchcraft. Then the leader of the band, after a moment's silence, plucked a lock of hair from her head and threw it into the fire, crying out these words, "Malé o guiab," which in the jargon of the Creoles means, "I shall go to the devil." All the *griotes* imitated their leader, and throwing locks of their hair in the fire, repeated gravely, "Malé o guiab." This strange invocation, and the extraordinary grimaces that accompanied it, caused me to burst into one of those hysterical fits of laughter which so often seize on one even at the most serious moments. It was in vain that I endeavoured to restrain it—it would have vent; and this laugh which escaped from so sad a heart brought about a gloomy and terrifying scene.

Disturbed in their incantations, the negresses sprang to their feet. Until then they had not noticed me, but now they rushed close up to me, screaming "Blanco, Blanco." I have never seen so hideous a collection of faces, contorted as they were with passion, their white teeth gleaming, and their eyes almost starting from their heads. They were, I believe, about to tear me to pieces, when the old woman with the beaver's plume on her head stopped them with a sign of her hand, and exclaimed seven times, "Zoté cordé!" ("Do you agree?") The wretched creatures stopped at once, and, to my surprise, tore off their feather aprons, which they flung upon the ground, and commenced the lascivious dance which the negroes call "*La chica*."

This dance, which should only consist of attitudes and movements expressive of gaiety and pleasure, assumed a very different complexion when performed by these naked sorceresses. In turn, each of them would place her face close to mine, and, with a frightful expression of countenance, would detail the horrible punishment that awaited the white man who had profaned the mysteries of their *Ouanga*.

I recollected that savage nations had a custom of dancing round the victims that they were about to sacrifice, and I patiently awaited the conclusion of the performance which I knew would be sealed with my blood; and yet I could not repress a shudder as I perceived each *griote*, in strict unison with the time, thrust into the fire the point of a sabre, the blade of an axe, a long sail-maker's needle, a pair of pincers, and the teeth of a saw.

The dance was approaching its conclusion, and the instruments of torture were glowing red with heat.

At a signal from the old woman, each negress in turn withdrew an implement from the fire, whilst those who had none furnished themselves with a blazing stick. Then I understood clearly what my punishment was to be, and that in each of the dancers I should find an executioner. Again the word of command was given, and the last figure of the dance was commenced. I closed my eyes that I might not see the frantic evolutions of these female demons, who, in measured cadence, clashed the red-hot weapons over their heads. A dull, clinking sound followed, whilst the sparks flew out in myriads. I waited, nerving myself for the moment when I should feel my flesh quiver in agony, my bones calcine, and my muscles writhe under the burning tortures of the nippers and the saws. It was an awful moment. Fortunately it did not last long.

In the distance I heard the voice of the negro whose prisoner I was, shouting, "*Que haceis, mujeres, ne demonio, que haceis alli, devais mi prisonero?*" I opened my eyes again; it was already broad daylight. The negro hurried towards me, gesticulating angrily. The *griotes* paused, but they seemed less influenced by the threats of my captor than by the presence of a strange-looking person by whom the negro was accompanied.

It was a very stout and very short man—a species of dwarf—whose face was entirely concealed by a white veil, pierced with three holes for the eyes and mouth. The veil hung down to his shoulders, and displayed a hairy, copper-hued breast, upon which was hung by a golden chain the mutilated sun of a monstrance.

The cross-hilt of a heavy dagger peeped from a scarlet belt, which also supported a kind of petticoat striped with green, yellow, and black, the hem of which hung down to his large and ill-shaped feet.

His arms, like his breast, were bare; he carried a white staff, and a rosary of amber beads was suspended from his belt, in close proximity to the handle of his dagger. His head was surmounted by a pointed cap adorned with bells, and when he came close I was not surprised in recognizing in it the *gorra* of Habibrah; and amongst the hieroglyphics with which it was covered, I could see many spots of gore: without doubt, it was the blood of the faithful fool. These bloodstains gave me fresh proofs of his death, and awakened in me once again a fresh feeling of regret for his loss.

Directly the *griotes* recognized the wearer of Habibrah's cap, they cried out all at once, "The Obi," and prostrated themselves before him. I guessed at once that this was a sorcerer attached to Biassou's force.

"Basta, basta" ("enough"), said he, in a grave and solemn voice, as he came close up to them. "Devais el prisonero de Biassou" ("Let the prisoner be taken to Biassou").

All the negresses leapt to their feet and cast their implements of torture on one side, put on their aprons, and, at a gesture of the Obi, fled like a cloud of grasshoppers.

At this instant the glance of the Obi fell upon me. He started back a pace, and half waved his white staff in the direction of the retiring *griotes*, as if he wished to recall them; then, muttering between his teeth the word "*Maldicho*" ("accursed"), he whispered a few words in the ear of the negro, and, crossing his arms, retired slowly, apparently buried in deep thought.

CHAPTER XXIV.

My captor informed me that Biassou had asked to see me, and that in an hour I should be brought before him. This, I calculated, gave me another hour in which to live. Until that time had elapsed, I allowed my glances to wander over the rebel camp, the singular appearance of which the daylight permitted me to observe. Had I been in any other position, I should have laughed heartily at the ostentatious vanity of the negroes, who were nearly all decked out in fragments of clerical and military dress, the spoils of their victims. The greater portion of these ornaments were not new, consisting of torn and blood-stained rags. A gorget could often be seen shining over a stole, whilst an epaulet looked strange when contrasted with a chasuble.

To make amends for former years of toil, the negroes remained in a state of utter inaction: some of them slept exposed to the rays of the sun, their heads close to a

burning fire; others, with eyes that were sometimes full of listlessness, and at others blazed with fury, sat chanting a monotonous air at the doors of their *ajoupas*—a species of hut with conical roofs somewhat resembling our artillery tents, but thatched with palm or banana leaves.

Their black or copper-coloured wives, aided by the negro-children, prepared the food for the fighting-men. I could see them stirring up with long forks, ignames, bananas, yams, peas, cocus and maize, and other vegetables indigenous to the country, which boiled with joints of pork, turtle, and dog in the great boilers stolen from the dwellings of the planters. In the distance, on the outskirts of the camp, the *griots* and *griotes* formed large circles round the fires, and the wind every now and then brought to my ears strange fragments of their barbaric songs, mingled with notes from their tambourines and guitars. A few videttes posted on the high ground watched over the headquarters of the General Biassou: the only defence of which in case of attack was a circle of waggons filled with plunder and ammunition. These black sentries posted on the summits of the granite pyramids, with which the valley bristled, turned about like the weathercocks in Gothic spires, and with all the strength of their lungs shouted one to the other the cry of "*Nada, nada*" ("Nothing, nothing"), which showed that the camp was in full security. Every now and then groups of negroes, inspired by curiosity, collected round me, but all looked upon me with a threatening expression of countenance.

CHAPTER XXV.

At length an escort of negro soldiers very fairly equipped arrived. The negro whose property I appeared to be, unfastened me from the oak to which I was bound, and handed me over to the escort, receiving in exchange a bag full of piastres. As he lay upon the grass counting them with every appearance of delight, I was led away by the soldiers. My escort wore a uniform of coarse cloth, of a reddish-brown colour, with yellow facings; their head-dress was a Spanish cap called a *montera*, ornamented with a large red cockade. Instead of a cartouche case, they had a species of game-bag slung at their sides. Their arms were a heavy musket, a sabre, and a dagger. I afterwards learned that these men formed the body-guard of Biassou.

After a circuitous route through the rows of *ajoupas*, which were scattered all over the place, I came to a cave which nature had hollowed out in one of those masses of rock with which the meadow was full. A large curtain of some material from the looms of Thibet, which the negroes called *Katchmir*, and which is remarkable less for the brilliancy of its colouring than for the softness of its material, concealed the interior of

the cavern from the vulgar gaze. The entrance was guarded by a double line of negroes, dressed like those who had escorted me thither.

After the countersign had been exchanged with the sentries who marched backwards and forwards before the cave, the commander of the escort raised the curtain sufficiently for me to enter, and then let it drop behind me. A copper lamp with six lights hung by a chain from the roof of the grotto, casting a flickering light upon the damp walls. Between the ranks of mulatto soldiers I perceived a coloured man sitting upon a large block of mahogany, which was partially covered with a carpet made of parrots' feathers. His dress was of the most absurd kind. A splendid silk girdle, from which hung a cross of Saint Louis, held up a pair of common blue trousers, whilst a waistcoat of white linen which did not meet the waistband of the trousers completed the strange costume. He wore high boots, and a round hat with a red cockade, and epaulets, one of gold with silver stars like those worn by brigadiers, whilst the other was of red worsted with two copper stars, which seemed to have been taken from a pair of spurs, fixed upon it, evidently to render it more worthy of its resplendent neighbour. A sabre and a pair of richly chased pistols lay by his side.

Behind the throne were two white children dressed in the costume of slaves, bearing large fans of peacock feathers.

Two squares of crimson velvet, which seemed to have been stolen from some church, were placed on either side of the mahogany block. One of these was occupied by the Obi who had rescued me from the frenzy of the *griotes*. He was seated with his legs crossed under him, holding in his hand his white wand; and not moving a muscle, he looked like a porcelain idol in a Chinese pagoda, but through the holes in his veil I could see his flashing eyes fixed steadfastly upon mine.

Upon each side of the general were trophies of flags, banners, and pennons of all kinds; among them I noticed the white flag with the lilies, the tricolour, and the banner of Spain. The others were covered with fancy devices. I also perceived a large standard entirely black.

At the end of the grotto, I saw a portrait of the mulatto Ogé who, together with his lieutenant Jean Charanne, had been broken on the wheel the year previous, for the crime of rebellion. Twenty of his accomplices, blacks and mulattoes, suffered with him.

In this painting Ogé, the son of a butcher at Cap, was represented in the uniform of a lieutenant-colonel, and decorated with the star of St. Louis, and the Order of Merit of the Lion, which last he had purchased from the Prince of Limburg.

The negro general into whose presence I had been introduced was short and of vulgar aspect, whilst his face showed a strange mixture of cunning and cruelty. After looking at me for some time in silence, with a bitter omen on his face, he said—

“I am Biassou.”

I expected this, but I could not hear it from his mouth, distorted as it was by a cruel smile, without an inward trembling; but my face remained unchanged, and I made no reply.

“Well,” continued he, in his bad French, “have they already impaled you, that you are unable to bend before Biassou, generalissimo of this conquered land, and brigadier of His Most Catholic Majesty?” (The rebel chiefs sometimes affected to be acting for the King of France, sometimes for the Republic, and at others for the King of Spain.)

I crossed my arms upon my chest, and looked him firmly in the face.

He again sneered. “Ho, ho,” said he, “*me pareces hombre de buen corazon* (“You seem a courageous man”); well, listen to my questions. Were you born in the island?”

“No, I am a Frenchman.”

My calmness irritated him.

“All the better; I see by your uniform that you are an officer. How old are you?”

“Twenty.”

“When were you twenty?”

To this question, which aroused in me all the recollection of my misery, I could not at first find words to reply. He repeated it imperiously.

“The day upon which Leogri was hung,” answered I.

An expression of rage passed over his face as he answered,

“It is twenty-three days since Leogri was executed. Frenchman, when you meet him this evening you may tell him from me that you lived twenty-four days longer than he did. I will spare you for to-day, I wish you to tell him of the liberty that his brethren have gained, and what you have seen at the headquarters of General Jean Biassou.”

Then he ordered me to sit down in one corner between two of his guards, and with a motion of his hand to some of his men, who wore the uniform of aide-de-camps, he said,

“Let the assembly be sounded, that we may inspect the whole of our troops; and you, your Reverence,” he added, turning to the Obi, “put on your priestly vestments, and perform for our army the holy sacrament of the Mass.”

The Obi rose, bowed profoundly, and whispered a word or two in the general’s ear.

“What,” cried the latter, “no altar! but never mind, the good Giu has no need of a magnificent temple for His worship. Gideon and Joshua adored Him before masses of rock, let us do as they did; all that is required is that the hearts should be true. No altar, you say—why not make one of that great chest of sugar which we took yesterday from Dubussion’s house?”

This suggestion of Biassou was promptly carried into execution. In an instant the interior of the cave was arranged for a burlesque of the divine ceremony. A pyx and a monstrance stolen from the parish church of Acul were promptly produced (the very church in which my nuptials with Marie had been celebrated, and where we had received heaven’s blessing which had so soon changed to a curse).

The stolen chest of sugar was speedily made into an altar and covered with a white cloth, through which, however, the words Dubussion and Company for Nantes could be plainly perceived.

When the sacred vessels had been placed on the altar, the Obi perceived that the crucifix was wanting. He drew his dagger which had a cross handle, and stuck it into the wood of the case in front of the pyx. Then without removing his cap or veil, he threw the cope which had been stolen from the priest of Acul over his shoulders and bare chest, opened the missal with its silver clasps from which the prayers had been read on my ill-fated marriage day; and turning towards Biassou, whose seat was a few paces from the altar, announced to him that all was ready.

On a sign from the general the Katchmir curtains were drawn aside, and the insurgent army was seen drawn up in close column before the entrance to the grotto.

Biassou removed his hat and knelt before the altar.

“On your knees,” he cried, in a loud voice.

“On your knees!” repeated the commander of the battalions.

The drums were beaten, and all the insurgents fell upon their knees.

I alone refused to move, disgusted at this vile profanation about to be enacted under my very eyes; but the two powerful mulattoes who guarded me pulled my seat from under me, and pressed heavily upon my shoulders so that I fell on my knees,

compelled to pay a semblance of respect to this parody of a religious ceremony. The Obi performed his duties with affected solemnity, whilst the two white pages of Biassou officiated as deacon and sub-deacon. The insurgents, prostrated before the altar, assisted at the ceremony with the greatest enthusiasm, the general setting the example.

At the moment of the exaltation of the host, the Obi, raising in his hands the consecrated vessel, exclaimed in his Creole jargon,

“Zoté coné bon Giu; ce li mo fé zoté voer. Blan touyé li, touyé blan yo toute!” (“You see your good God; I am showing Him to you. The white men killed Him; kill all the whites!”)

At these words, pronounced in a loud voice, the tones of which had something in them familiar to my ear, all the rebels uttered a loud shout, and clashed their weapons together. Had it not been for Biassou’s influence that hour would have been my last. To such atrocities may men be driven who use the dagger for a cross, and upon whose mind the most trivial event makes a deep and profound impression.

CHAPTER XXVI.

At the termination of the ceremony the Obi bowed respectfully to Biassou; then the general rose and, addressing me in French, said—

“We are accused of having no religion. You see it is a falsehood, and that we are good Catholics.”

I do not know whether he spoke ironically or in good faith. A few moments he called for a glass bowl filled with grains of black maize; on the top he threw some white maize, then he raised it high in his hand so that all the army might see it.

“Brothers,” cried he, “you are the black maize; your enemies are the white maize.”

With these words he shook the bowl, and in an instant the white grains had disappeared beneath the black; and, as though inspired, he cried out, “Where are the white now?”

The mountains re-echoed with the shouts with which the illustration of the general was received; and Biassou continued his harangue, mixing up French, Creole dialect, and Spanish alternately.

“The season for temporising has passed; for a long time we have been as patient as the sheep to whose wool the whites compare our hair; let us now be as implacable as the panthers or the tigers of the countries from which they have torn us. Force alone

can obtain for us our rights, and everything can be obtained by those who use their force without pity. Saint Loup (Wolf) has two days in the year consecrated to him in the Gregorian calendar whilst the Paschal Lamb has but one. Am not I correct, your reverence?"

The Obi bowed in sign of corroboration.

"They have come," continued Biassou, "these enemies of ours have come as enemies of the regeneration of humanity; these whites, these planters, these men of business, veritable devils vomited from the mouth of hell. They came in the insolence of their pride, in their fine dresses, their uniforms, their feathers, their magnificent arms; they despised us because we were black and naked in their overbearing haughtiness; they thought that they could drive us before them as easily as these peacock's feathers disperse the swarms of sandflies and mosquitoes."

As he uttered these concluding words, he snatched from the hands of his white slaves one of the large fans, and waved it over his head with a thousand eccentric gesticulations. Then he continued—

"But, my brethren, we burst upon them like flies upon a carcase; they have fallen in their fine uniforms beneath the strokes of our naked arms, which they believed to be without power, ignorant that good wood is the stronger when the bark is stripped off; and now these accursed tyrants tremble, and are filled with fear."

A triumphant yell rose in answer to the general's speech, and all the army repeated, "They are filled with fear."

"Blacks, Creoles, and Congos," added Biassou, "vengeance and liberty! Mulattoes, do not be led away by the temptations of the white men. Your fathers serve in their ranks, but your mothers are with us; besides, 'O bermanos de mi alma' ('O brethren of my soul'), have they ever acted as fathers to you? Have they not rather been cruel masters, and treated you as slaves, because you had the blood of your mothers in your veins? Whilst a miserable cotton garment covered your bodies scorched by the sun, your cruel fathers went about in straw hats and nankeen clothes on work days, and in cloth and velvet on holidays and feasts. Curses be on their unnatural hearts. But as the holy commandments forbid you to strike your father, abstain from doing so; but in the day of battle what hinders you from turning to your comrade and saying, 'Touyé papa moé, ma touyé quena toué?' ('Kill my father, and I will kill yours?') Vengeance then, my brethren, and liberty for all men. This cry has found an echo in every part of the island; it has roused Tobago and Cuba. It was Bouckmann, a negro from Jamaica, the leader of the twenty-five fugitive slaves of the Blue Mountain, who

raised the standard of revolt amongst us. A glorious victory was the first proof that he gave of his brotherhood with the negroes of Saint Domingo. Let us follow his noble example, with an axe in one hand and a torch in the other. No mercy for the whites, no mercy for the planters; let us massacre their families, and destroy their plantations! Do not allow a tree to remain standing on their estates; let us upturn the very earth itself that it may swallow up our white oppressors! Courage then, friends and brethren; we shall fight them and sweep them from the face of the earth. We will conquer or die. As victors, we shall enjoy all the pleasures of life; and if we fall, the saints are ready to receive us in heaven, where each warrior will receive a double ration of brandy, and a silver piastre each day!"

This warlike discourse, which to you appears perfectly ridiculous, had a tremendous effect on the insurgents. It is true that Biassou's wild gesticulations, the manner in which his voice rose and fell, and the strange sneer which every now and then appeared on his lips, imparted to his speech a strange amount of power and fascination. The skill with which he alluded to those points which would have the greatest weight with the negroes, added a degree of force which told well with his audience.

I will not attempt to describe to you the outburst of determined enthusiasm which the harangue of Biassou roused amongst the rebels.

There arose at once a discordant chorus of howls, yells, and shouts. Some beat their naked breasts, others dashed their clubs and sabres together. Many threw themselves on their knees, and remained in that position as though in rapt ecstasy. The negresses tore their breasts and arms with their fish-bone combs. The sounds of drums, tom-toms, guitars, and tambourines were mingled with the discharge of firearms. It was a veritable witches' Sabbath.

Biassou raised his hand, and, as if by enchantment, the tumult was stilled, and each negro returned to his place in the ranks in silence. The discipline which Biassou had imposed upon his equals by the exercise of his power of will struck me, I may say, with admiration. All the soldiers of the force seemed to exist only to obey the wishes of their chief, as the notes of the harpsichord under the fingers of the musician.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The spectacle of another example of the powers of fascination and deception now attracted my attention, this was the healing of the wounded. The Obi, who in the army performed the double functions of healer of souls and bodies, began his inspection of his patients.

He had taken off his sacerdotal robes, and was seated before a large box in which he kept his drugs and instruments. He used the latter very rarely, but occasionally drew blood skilfully enough with a lancet made of fish-bone, but he appeared to me to use the knife which in his hands replaced the scalpel rather clumsily. In most cases he contented himself with prescribing orange flower water, or sarsaparilla, and a mouthful of old rum. His favourite remedy, however, and one which he said was an infallible panacea for all ills, was composed of three glasses of red wine in which was some grated nutmeg and the yolk of an egg boiled hard. He employed this specific for almost every malady. You will understand that his knowledge of medicine was as great a farce as his pretended religion, and it is probable that the small number of cures that he effected would not have secured the confidence of the negroes had he not had recourse to all sorts of mummeries and incantations, and acted as much upon their imaginations as upon their bodies. Thus, he never examined their wounds without performing some mysterious signs, whilst at other times he skilfully mingled together religion and negro superstition, and would put into their wounds a little *fetish* stone wrapped in a morsel of lint, and the patient would credit the stone with the healing effects of the lint. If any one came to announce to him the death of a patient he would answer solemnly, “I foresaw it; he was a traitor; in the burning of such and such a house he spared a white man’s life; his death was a judgment.” And the wondering crowd of rebels applauded him as he thus increased their deadly hatred for their adversaries. This impostor, amongst other methods, employed one which amused me by its singularity. One of the negro chiefs had been badly wounded in the last action. The Obi examined the wound attentively, dressed it as well as he was able, then, mounting the altar, exclaimed, “All this is nothing.” He then tore two or three leaves from the missal, burnt them to ashes, and mingling them with some wine in the sacramental cup, cried to the wounded man, “Drink; this is the true remedy.” The patient, stupidly fixing his eyes on the impostor, drank, whilst the Obi with raised hands seemed to call down blessings on his head, and it may be the conviction that he was healed brought about his cure.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Another scene in which the Obi also played the principal part succeeded to this. The physician had taken the place of the priest, and the sorcerer now replaced the physician.

“Listen, men!” cried the Obi, leaping with incredible agility upon the improvised altar, and sinking down with his legs crossed under his striped petticoat. “Listen; who will dive into the book of fate? I can foretell the future. ‘*He estudiado la cienca de los Gitanos*’ (‘I have studied the sciences of the gipsies’).”

A crowd of mulattoes and negroes hurriedly crowded up to him.

“One by one,” said the Obi, in that voice which called to my mind some remembrances that I could not quite collect. “If you come all together, altogether you will enter the tomb.”

They stopped. Just then a coloured man dressed in a white jacket and trousers, with a bandana handkerchief tied round his head, entered the cave. Consternation was depicted on his countenance.

“Well, Rigaud,” said the general, “what is it?”

Rigaud, sometimes called General Rigaud, was the head of the mulatto insurgents at Lagu. A man who concealed much cunning under an appearance of candour, and cruelty beneath the mask of humanity. I looked upon him with much attention.

“General,” whispered Rigaud, but as I was close to them I could catch every word, “on the outskirts of the camp there is a messenger from Jean François who has brought the news that Bouckmann has been killed in a battle with the whites under M. de Touzard, and that his head has been set upon the gates of the town as a trophy.”

“Is that all?” asked Biassou, his eyes sparkling with delight at learning the diminution of the number of chiefs and the consequent increase of his own importance.

“The emissary of Jean François has in addition a message for you.”

“That is all right,” replied the general; “but get rid of this air of alarm, my good Rigaud.”

“But,” said Rigaud, “do you not fear the effect that the death of Bouckmann will have on the army?”

“You wish to appear more simple than you are, but you shall see what Biassou will do. Keep the messenger back for a quarter of an hour and all will go well.”

Then he approached the Obi, who during this conversation had been exercising his functions as fortune-teller, questioning the wondering negroes, examining the lines on their hands and foreheads, and distributing more or less good luck according to the size and colour of the piece of money thrown by each negro into a silver-gilt basin which stood on one side. Biassou whispered a few words in his ear, and without making any reply the Obi continued his prophetic observations.

“He,” cried the Obi, “who has in the middle of his forehead a little square or triangular figure will make a large fortune without work or toil. The figure of three interlaced S’s on the forehead is a fatal sign; he who has it will certainly be drowned if he does not

carefully avoid water. Four lines from the top of the nose, and turning round two by two towards the eyes, announces that you will be taken prisoner, and for a long time languish in a foreign prison."

Here the Obi paused.

"Friends," continued he, "I have observed this sign in the forehead of Bug-Jargal, the brave chief of Morne-Rouge."

These words, which convinced me that Bug-Jargal had been made prisoner, were followed by a cry of grief from a band of negroes who wore short scarlet breeches. They belonged to the band of Morne-Rouge.

Then the Obi began again—

"If you have on the right side of the forehead in the line of the moon a mark resembling a fork, do not remain idle, and avoid dissipation of all kinds. A small mark like the Arabic cypher 3 in the line of the sun betokens blows with a stick."

An old negro here interrupted the magician, and dragging himself to his feet begged him to dress his wound. He had been wounded in the face, and one of his eyes almost torn from the socket hung upon his cheek. The Obi had forgotten him when going through his patients. Directly, however, he saw him he cried out—

"Round marks on the right side of the forehead in the line of the moon foretell misfortunes to the sight. My man, let me see your hand."

"Alas, excellent sir," answered the other, "it is my eye that I want you to look at."

"Old man," replied the Obi, crossly, "it is not necessary to see your eye, give me your hand, I say."

The miserable wretch obeyed, moaning, "My eye, my eye."

"Good," cried the Obi; "if you see on the line of life a spot surrounded by a circle you will lose an eye. There is the mark. You will become blind of an eye."

"I am so already," answered the negro, piteously.

But the Obi had merged the physician in the sorcerer, and thrusting him roughly on one side continued—

"Listen, my men. If the seven lines on the forehead are slight, twisted, and lightly marked, they announce a short life. He who has between his eyebrows on the line of the moon the figure of two crossed arrows will be killed in battle. If the line of life

which intersects the hand has a cross at its junction it foretells death on the scaffold, and here I must tell you, my brethren," said the Obi, interrupting himself, "that one of the bravest defenders of our liberties, Bouckmann, has all these fatal marks."

At these words all the negroes held their breath, and gazed on the impostor with glances of stupid admiration.

"Only," continued the Obi, "I cannot reconcile the two opposing signs, death on the battle-field and also on the scaffold, and yet my science is infallible."

He stopped and cast a meaning glance at Biassou, who whispered something to an officer, who at once quitted the cavern.

"A gaping mouth," continued the Obi, turning on his audience a malicious glance, "a slouching carriage, and arms hanging down by the side, announces natural stupidity, emptiness, and want of reasoning powers."

Biassou gave a sneer of delight; at that moment the aide-de-camp returned, bringing with him a negro covered with mud and dust, whose feet, wounded by the roots and flints, showed that he had just come off a long journey.

This was the messenger whose arrival Rigaud had announced. He held in one hand a letter, and in the other a document sealed with the design of a flaming heart. Round it was a monogram, composed of the letters M and N interlaced, no doubt intended as an emblem of the union of the free mulattos and the negro slaves. Underneath I could read this motto, "Prejudice conquered, the rod of iron broken, long live the king!" This document was a safe conduct given by Jean François.

The messenger handed his letter to Biassou, who hastily tore it open and perused the contents, then with an appearance of deep grief he exclaimed, "My brothers!" All bowed respectfully.

"My brothers, this is a despatch to Jean Biassou, generalissimo of the conquered states, Brigadier-General of His Catholic Majesty, from Jean François, Grand Admiral of France, Lieutenant-General of the army of the King of Spain and the Indies.

"Bouckmann, chief of the hundred and twenty negroes of the Blue Mountain, whose liberty was recognized by the Governor-General of Belle Combe, has fallen in the glorious struggle of liberty and humanity against tyranny and barbarism. This gallant chief has been slain in an action with the white brigands of the infamous Touzard. The monsters have cut off his head, and have announced their intention of exposing it on a scaffold in the main square of the town of Cap. Vengeance!"

A gloomy silence succeeded the reading of this despatch; but the Obi leapt on his altar, and waving his white wand, exclaimed in accents of triumph—

“Solomon, Zerobabel, Eleazar Thaleb, Cardau, Judas Bowthericht, Avenoes, Albert the Great, Bohabdil, Jean de Hagul, Anna Baratio, Daniel Ogromof, Rachel Flintz, Allornino, I give you thanks. The science of the spirits has not deceived me; sons, friends, brothers, boys, children, mothers, all of you listen to me. What was it that I predicted? the marks on the forehead of Bouckmann announced that his life would be a short one, that he would die in battle, and that he would appear on the scaffold. The revelations of my art have turned out true to the letter, and those points which seemed the most obscure are now the most plain. Brethren, wonder and admire!”

The panic of the negroes changed during this discourse to a sort of admiring terror. They listened to the Obi with a species of confidence mingled with fear, whilst the latter, carried away by his own enthusiasm, walked up and down the sugar case, which presented plenty of space for his short steps.

A sneer passed over Biassou’s face as he addressed the Obi.

“Your reverence, since you know what is to come, will you be good enough to tell me the future of Jean Biassou, Brigadier-General?”

The Obi halted on the top of his strange altar, which the credulity of the negroes looked upon as something divine, and answered, “*Venga vuestra merced*” (“Come, your Excellency”). At this moment the Obi was the most important man in the army; the military power bowed to the spiritual.

“Your hand, general?” said the Obi, stooping to grasp it. “*Empezo* (“I begin”). The line of junction equally marked in its full length promises you riches and happiness; the line of life strongly developed announces a life exempt from ills, and a happy old age. Its narrowness shows your wisdom and your superior talents, as well as the generosity of your heart; and, lastly, I see what chiromancers call the luckiest of all signs, a number of little wrinkles in the shape of a tree with its branches extending upwards, this promises health and wealth, it also prognosticates courage. General, it curves in the direction of the little finger, this is the sign of wholesome severity.”

As he said this the eyes of the Obi glanced at me through the apertures of his veil, and I fancied that I could catch a well-known voice under the habitual gravity of his intonation, as he continued—

“The line of health, marked with a number of small circles, announces that you will have, for the sake of the cause, to order a number of executions; divided here by a

half-moon, shows that you will be exposed to great danger from ferocious beasts, that is to say, from the whites, if you do not exterminate them. The line of fortune surrounded, like the line of life, by little branches rising towards the upper part of the hand, confirms the position of power and supremacy to which you have been called; turning to the right, it is a symbol of your administrative capacity. The fifth line, that of the triangle prolonged to the root of the middle finger, promises you success in all your undertakings. Let me see your fingers: the thumb marked with little lines from the point to the nail shows that you will receive a noble heritage, that of the glory of the unfortunate Bouckmann, no doubt," added the Obi, in a loud voice. "The slight swelling at the root of the forefinger, lightly marked with lines, promises honours and dignities. The middle finger shows nothing. Your little finger is covered with lines crossing each other, you will vanquish all your enemies, and rise high above your rivals. These lines form the cross of Saint Andrew, a mark of genius and foresight. I also notice the figure of a circle, another token of your arrival at the highest power and dignity. 'Happy the man,' says Eleazar Thaleb, 'who possesses all these signs. Destiny has its choicest gifts in store for him, and his fortunate star announces the talent which will bring him glory.' And now, general, let me look at your forehead? 'He,' says Rachel Flintz, of Bohemia, 'who bears on his forehead, on the line of the sun, a square or a triangular mark, will make a great fortune.' Here is another prediction, 'If the mark is on the right, it refers to an important succession;' that of Bouckmann is, of course, again referred to. The mark in the shape of a horseshoe between the eyebrows, on the line of the moon, means that prompt vengeance will be taken for insult and tyranny. I have this mark as well as you."

The curious manner in which the Obi uttered these words, "I have this mark," attracted my attention.

"The mark of a lion's claw which you have on your left eyelid is only noticeable amongst men of undoubted courage; but to close this, General Jean Biassou, your forehead shows every sign of the most unexampled success, and on it is a combination of lines which form the letter M, the commencement of the name of the Blessed Virgin. In whatever part of the forehead, and in whatever line of the face, such a sign appears, the signification is the same—genius, glory, and power. He who bears it will always bring success to whatever cause he embraces, and those under his command will never have to regret any loss. He alone is worth all the soldiers of his army. You, general, are the elect of Fate."

"Thanks, your reverence," said Biassou, preparing to return to his mahogany throne.

“Stay a moment, general,” said the Obi, “I forgot one last sign: the line of the sun, which is so strongly marked on your forehead, proves that you understand the way of the world, that you possess the wish to make others happy, that you have much liberality, and like to do things in a magnificent manner.”

Biassou at once recognized his forgetfulness, and drawing from his pocket a heavy purse, he threw it into the plate, so as to prove that the line of the sun never lies.

But this miraculous horoscope of the general’s had produced its effect upon the army. All the insurgents who, since the news of the death of Bouckmann attached greater weight than ever to the words of the Obi, lost their feelings of uneasiness and became violently enthusiastic, and trusting blindly in their infallible sorcerer and their predestined chief, began to shout, “Long live our Obi! long live our general!”

The Obi and Biassou glanced at each other, and I almost thought I could hear the stifled laugh of the one replied to by the sardonic chuckle of the other. I do not know how it was, but this Obi tormented me dreadfully; I had a feeling that I had seen or heard him before, and I made up my mind to speak to him.

“Ho, Obi, your reverence, doctor, here!” cried I to him.

He turned sharply round.

“There is some one here whose lot you have not yet cast—it is mine.”

He crossed his arms over the silver sun that covered his hairy breast, but he made no reply.

I continued, “I would gladly know what you prophesy with regard to my future, but your worthy comrades have taken my watch and my purse, and I suppose you will not give me a specimen of your skill for nothing?”

He advanced quickly to me, and muttered hoarsely in my ear—

“You deceive yourself, let me see your hand.”

I gave it, looking fixedly at him; his eyes sparkled as he bent over my hand.

“If the line of life,” said he, “is cut by two transverse lines, it is the sign of immediate death, your life will be a short one. If the line of health is not in the centre of the hand, and if there is only the line of life, and the line of fortune united so as to form an angle, a natural death cannot be looked for. Do not, therefore, look for a natural death! If the bottom of the forefinger has a long line cutting it, a violent death will be the result. Prepare yourself for a violent death!”

There was a ring of pleasure in his sepulchral voice as he thus announced my death, but I listened to him with contempt and indifference.

“Sorcerer,” said I, with a disdainful smile, “you are skilful, for you are speaking of a certainty.”

Once more he came closer to me.

“You doubt my science,” cried he; “listen, then, once more. The severance of the line of the sun on your forehead shows me that you take an enemy for a friend, and a friend for an enemy.”

These words seemed to refer to the treacherous Pierrot, whom I loved, but who had betrayed me, and to the faithful Habibrah, who I had hated, and whose blood-stained garments attested his fidelity and his devotion.

“What do you say?” exclaimed I.

“Listen until the end,” continued the Obi. “I spoke of the future, listen to the past. The line of the moon on your forehead is slightly curved—that signifies that your wife has been carried off.”

I trembled, and endeavoured to spring from my seat, but my guards held me back.

“You have but little patience,” continued the sorcerer; “listen to the end. The little cross that cuts the extremity of that curve shows me all; your wife was carried off on the very night of your nuptials.”

“Wretch,” cried I, “you know where she is! Who are you?”

I strove again to free myself, and to tear away his veil, but I had to yield to numbers and to force, and I had the mortification of seeing the mysterious Obi move away repeating, “Do you believe me now? Prepare for immediate death.”

CHAPTER XXIX.

As if to draw my attention from the perplexity into which I had been thrown by the strange scene that had just passed, a new and more terrible drama succeeded to the farce that had been played between Biassou and the Obi. Biassou had again taken his place upon his mahogany throne, whilst Rigaud and the Obi were seated on his right and left; the latter, with his arms crossed on his breast, seemed to have given himself up to deep thought. Biassou and Rigaud were chewing tobacco, and an aide-de-camp had just asked if he should order a general march past of the forces, when a tumultuous crowd of negroes, with hideous shouts, arrived at the entrance of the

grotto. They had brought with them three white prisoners to be judged by Biassou, but what they desired was easily shown by the cries of “Muerte! Muerte!” “Death, death!” the latter, no doubt, emanating from the English negroes of Bouckmann’s band, many of whom had by this time arrived to join the French and Spanish negroes of Biassou.

The general with a gesture of his hand commanded silence, and ordered the three captives to be brought to the entrance of the grotto. I recognized two of them with considerable surprise; one was the Citizen General C——, that philanthropist who was in correspondence with all the lovers of the negro race in different parts of the globe, and who had proposed so cruel a mode of suppressing the insurrection to the governor. The other was the planter of doubtful origin, who manifested so great a dislike to the mulattoes, amongst whom the whites insisted on classing him. The third appeared to belong to a section called “poor whites”—that is to say, white men who had to work for their living: he wore a leathern apron, and his sleeves were turned up to his elbows. All the prisoners had been taken at different times, endeavouring to hide themselves in the mountains.

The “poor white” was the first one that was questioned.

“Who are you?” asked Biassou.

“I am Jacques Belin, carpenter to the Hospital of the Fathers, at Cap.”

Surprise and shame struggled for the mastery in the features of the general.

“Jacques Belin!” repeated he, biting his lips.

“Yes,” replied the carpenter; “do you not recognize me?”

“Begin,” retorted the general, furiously, “by recognizing *me* and saluting me.”

“I do not salute *my slave*,” replied the carpenter, sturdily.

“Your slave, wretch!” cried the general.

“Yes,” replied the carpenter; “yes, I was your first master, you pretend not to recognize me, but remember, Jean Biassou, that I sold you for thirty piastres in the Saint Domingo slave market.”

An expression of concentrated rage passed over Biassou’s face.

“Well,” continued the carpenter, “you appear ashamed of having worked for me; ought not Jean Biassou to feel proud of having belonged to Jacques Belin? Your mother, the old idiot, has often swept out my shop, but at last I sold her to the major-domo of the Hospital of the Fathers, and she was so old and decrepit, that he would only give me

thirty-two livres and six sous for her. There is my history and yours, but it seems as if the negroes and the mulattoes are growing proud, and that you have forgotten the time when you served Master Jacques Belin, the carpenter of Cap, on your knees."

Biassou listened to him with that sardonic smile that gave him the appearance of a tiger.

"Good," said he; then turning to the negroes who had captured Belin, "get two trestles, two planks, and a saw, and take this man away. Jacques Belin, carpenter of Cap, thank me, for you shall have a true carpenter's death."

His sardonic laugh too fully explained the horrible punishment that he destined for the pride of his former master, but Jacques Belin did not blench, and turning proudly to Biassou, cried—

"Yes, I ought to thank you, for I bought you for thirty piastres, and I got work out of you to a much greater amount."

They dragged him away.

CHAPTER XXX.

More dead than alive, the other two prisoners had witnessed this frightful prologue to their own chance. Their timid and terrified appearance contrasted with the courageous audacity of the carpenter; every limb quivered with affright.

Biassou looked at them one after the other with his fox-like glance, and, as if he took a pleasure in prolonging their agony, began a discussion with Rigaud upon the different kinds of tobacco, asserting that that of Havana was only good for manufacturing cigars, whilst for snuff he knew nothing better than the Spanish tobacco, two barrels of which Bouchmaun had sent him, being a portion of the plunder of M. Lebattre's stores in the island of Tortue. Then, turning sharply upon the Citizen General C——, he asked him—

"What do you think?"

This sudden address utterly confounded the timid citizen, and he stammered out.

"General, I am entirely of your Excellency's opinion."

"You flatter me," replied Biassou; "I want *your* opinion, not mine. Do you know any tobacco that makes better snuff than that of M. Lebattres?"

"No, my lord," answered C——, whose evident terror greatly amused Biassou.

"*General, Your Excellency, My Lord!* you are an aristocrat."

"Oh no, certainly not," exclaimed the citizen general. "I am a good patriot of '91, and an ardent *negrophile*."

"Negrophile!" interrupted the general. "Pray what is a negrophile?"

"It is a friend of the blacks," stammered the citizen.

"It is not enough to be a friend of the blacks; you must also be a friend of the men of colour."

"Men of colour is what I should have said," replied the lover of the blacks, humbly. "I am mixed up with all the most famous partisans of the negroes and the mulattoes——"

Delighted at the opportunity of humiliating a white man, Biassou again interrupted him:

"*Negroes and mulattoes!* What do you mean, pray? Do you wish to insult me by making use of those terms of contempt invented by the whites? There are only men of colour and blacks here—do you understand that, Mr. Planter?"

"It was a slip, a bad habit that I picked up in childhood," answered C——. "Pardon me, my lord, I had no wish to offend you."

"Leave off this *my lording* business; I have already told you that I don't like these aristocratic ways."

C—— again endeavoured to excuse himself, and began to stammer out a fresh explanation.

"If you knew, citizen——"

"Citizen indeed!" cried Biassou, in affected anger, "I detest all this Jacobin jargon. Are you by chance a Jacobin? Remember that you are speaking to the generalissimo of the king's troops."

The unhappy partisan of the negro race was dumbfounded, and did not know in what terms to address this man who equally disdained the titles of "my lord" or "citizen," and the aristocratic or republican modes of salutation. Biassou, whose anger was only assumed, cruelly enjoyed the predicament in which he had placed him. "Alas," at last said the citizen general, "you do not do me justice, noble defender of the unwritten rights of the larger portion of the human race."

In his perplexity to hit upon an acceptable mode of address to a man who appeared to disdain all titles, he had recourse to one of those sonorous periphrases which the republicans occasionally substituted for the name and title of the persons with whom they were in conversation.

Biassou looked at him steadily and said, “You love the blacks and the men of colour?”

“Do I love them?” exclaimed the citizen C——. “Why, I correspond with Brissot and——”

Biassou interrupted him with a sardonic laugh. “Ha, ha, I am glad to find in you so trusty a friend to our cause; you must, of course, thoroughly detest those wretched colonists who punished our insurrection by a series of the most cruel executions, and you, of course, think with us, that it is not the blacks, but the whites, who are the true rebels, since they are in arms against the laws of nature and humanity? You must execrate such monsters!”

“I do execrate them,” answered C——.

“Well,” continued Biassou, “what do you think of a man who, in his endeavours to crush the last efforts of the slaves to regain their liberty, placed the heads of fifty black men on each side of the avenue that led to his house?”

C—— grew fearfully pale.

“What do you think of a white man who would propose to surround the town of Cap with a circle of negro heads?”

“Mercy, mercy!” cried the terrified citizen general.

“Am I threatening you?” replied Biassou, coldly. “Let me finish; a circle of heads that would reach from Fort Picolet to Cape Caracol. What do you think of that? Answer me.”

The words of Biassou, “Do I threaten you,” had given a faint ray of hope to C——, for he fancied that the general might have heard of this terrible proposition without knowing the author of it; he therefore replied with all the firmness that he could muster, in order to remove any impression that the idea was his own: “I consider such a suggestion an atrocious crime.”

Biassou chuckled.

“Good, and what punishment should be inflicted on the man who proposed it?”

The unfortunate C—— hesitated.

“What!” cried Biassou, “you hesitate! Are you, or are you not, the friend of the blacks?”

Of the two alternatives the wretched man chose the least threatening one, and seeing no hostile light in Biassou’s eyes, he answered in a low voice—

“The guilty person deserves death.”

“Well answered,” replied Biassou, calmly, throwing aside the tobacco that he had been chewing.

His assumed air of indifference had completely deceived the unfortunate lover of the negro race, and he made another effort to dissipate any suspicions which might have been engendered against him.

“No one,” cried he, “has a more ardent desire for your success than I. I correspond with Brissot and Pruneau de Pomme-Gouge in France, with Magaw in America, with Peter Paulus in Holland, with the Abbé Tamburini in Italy.” And he was continuing to unfold the same string of names which he had formerly repeated, but with a different motive, at the council held at M. de Blanchelande’s, when Biassou interrupted him.

“What do I care with whom you correspond! Tell me rather where are your granaries and store-houses, for my army has need of supplies; your plantation is doubtless a rich one, and your business must be lucrative since you correspond with so many merchants.”

C—— ventured timidly to remark—

“Hero of humanity, they are not merchants, but philosophers, philanthropists, lovers of the race of blacks.”

“Then,” said Biassou, with a shake of his head, “if you have nothing that can be plundered, what good are you?”

This question afforded a chance of safety of which C—— eagerly availed himself.

“Illustrious warrior,” exclaimed he, “have you an economist in your army?”

“What is that?” asked the general.

“It is,” replied the prisoner, with as much calmness as his fears would permit him to assume, “a most necessary man, one whom all appreciate, one who follows out and classes in their proper order the respective material resources of an empire, and gives to each its real value, increasing and improving them by combining their sources and

results, and pouring them like fertilizing streams into the main river of general utility, which in its turn swells the great sea of public prosperity."

"*Caramba*," observed Biassou, leaning over towards the Obi. "What the deuce does he mean by all these words strung together like the beads on your rosary?"

The Obi shrugged his shoulders in sign of ignorance and disdain as citizen C—— continued—

"If you will permit me to observe, valiant chief of the regenerators of Saint Domingo, I have carefully studied the works of the greatest economists of the world—Turgot, Raynal, and Mirabeau the friend of man. I have put their theories into practice, I thoroughly understand the science indispensable for the government of kingdoms and states——"

"The economist is not economical of his words," observed Rigaud, with his bland and cunning smile.

"But you, eternal talker," cried Biassou, "tell me, have I any kingdoms or states to govern?"

"Not yet perhaps, great man, but they will come; and besides, my knowledge descends to all the useful details which are comprised in the interior economy of an army."

The general again interrupted him: "I have nothing to do with the interior economy of the army, I command it."

"Good," replied the citizen; "you shall be the commander, I will be the commissary; I have much special knowledge as to the increase of cattle——"

"Do you think we are going to breed cattle?" cried Biassou, with his sardonic laugh. "No, my good fellow, we are content with eating them; when cattle become scarce in the French colony I shall cross the line of mountains on the frontier and take the Spanish sheep and oxen from the plains of Cotury, of La Vega, of St. Jago, and from the banks of the Yuna; if necessary I will go as far as the Island of Jamaica, and to the back of the mountain of Cibos, and from the mouths of the Neybe to those of Santo Domingo; besides, I should be glad to punish those infernal Spanish planters for giving up Ogé to the French. You see I am not uneasy as regards provisions, and so have no need of *your knowledge*."

This open declaration rather disconcerted the poor economist; he made, however, one more effort for safety. "My studies," said he, "have not been limited to the

reproduction of cattle, I am acquainted with other special branches of knowledge that may be very useful to you; I can show you the method of manufacturing pitch and working coal mines."

"What do I care for that!" exclaimed Biassou. "When I want charcoal I burn a few leagues of forest."

"I can tell you the proper kinds of wood to use for shipbuilding—the *chicarm* and the *sabicca* for the keels, the *yabas* for the knees, the medlars for the framework, the *hacotnas*, the *gaïacs*, the cedars, the acomas——"

"*Que te lleven todos los demonios de los diez-y-siete infernos!*" ("May the devils of the thirty-seven hells fly away with you!"), cried Biassou, boiling over with impatience.

"I beg your pardon, my gracious patron," said the trembling economist, who did not understand Spanish.

"Listen," said Biassou, "I don't want to build vessels; there is only one vacancy that I can offer you, and that is not a very important one; I want a man to wait upon me; and now, Mr. Philosopher, tell me if that will suit you; you will have to serve me on your bended knees, you will prepare my pipe, cook my *calalou* and turtle soup, and you will stand behind me with a fan of peacock or parrot feathers like those two pages; now will the situation suit you?"

Citizen C——, whose only desire was to save his life, bent to the earth with a thousand expressions of joy and gratitude.

"You accept my offer, then?" asked Biassou.

"Can you ask such a question, generous master? do you think that I should hesitate for a moment in accepting so distinguished a post as that of being in constant attendance on you?"

At this reply the diabolical sneer of Biassou became more pronounced. He rose up with an air of triumph, crossed his arms on his chest, and thrusting aside with his foot the white man's head who was prostrate on the ground before him, he cried in a loud voice—

"I am delighted at being able to fathom how far the cowardice of the white man could go, I have already measured the extent of his cruelty. Citizen C——, it is to you that I owe this double experience. I knew all; how could you have been sufficiently besotted to think that I did not? It was you who presided at the executions of June, July, and August; it was you who placed fifty negro heads on each side of your avenue; it was

you who proposed to slaughter the five hundred negroes who were confined in irons after the revolt, and to encircle the town of Cap with their heads from Fort Picolet to Cape Caracol. If you could have done it you would have placed my head amongst them, and now you think yourself lucky if I will take you as my body-servant. No, no! I have more regard for your honour than you yourself have, and I will not inflict this affront on you; prepare to die!"

At a gesture of his hand the negroes removed the unhappy lover of the blacks to a position near me, where overwhelmed by the honour of his position, he fell to the ground without being able to articulate a word.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"It is your turn now," said the general, turning to the last of the prisoners, the planter who was accused by the white men of having black blood in his veins, and who had on that account sent me a challenge.

A general clamour drowned the reply of the planter. "Muerte! Death! Mort! Touyé!" cried the negroes, grinding their teeth, and shaking their fists at the unhappy captive.

"General," said a mulatto, making himself heard above the uproar, "he is a white man, and he must die."

The miserable planter, by cries and gesticulations, managed to edge in some words. "No, general, no, my brothers, it is an infamous calumny, I am a mulatto like yourselves, of mixed blood; my mother was a negress, like your mothers and sisters."

"He lies," cried the infuriated negroes, "he is a white man, he has always detested the coloured people."

"Never," retorted the prisoner; "it is the whites that I detest; I have always said with you, '*Negre cé blan, blan cé negre*' ('The negroes are the masters, the whites are the slaves')."

"Not at all," cried the crowd, "not at all; kill the white man, kill him!"

Still the unhappy wretch kept repeating in heart-rending accents, "I am a mulatto, I am one of yourselves."

"Give me a proof," was Biassou's sole reply.

"A proof," answered the prisoner, wildly, "the proof is that the whites have always despised me."

"That may be true," returned Biassou, "but you are an insolent hound to tell us so."

A young mulatto stepped to the front and addressed the planter in an excited manner.

“That the whites despised you is a fact; but, on the other hand, you affected to look down upon the mulattoes amongst whom they classed you. It has even been reported that you once challenged a white man who called you a half caste.”

A howl of execration arose from the crowd, and the cry of “death” was repeated more loudly than ever, whilst the planter, casting an appealing glance at me, continued, with tears in his eyes—

“It is a calumny, my greatest glory and happiness is in belonging to the blacks, I am a mulatto.”

“If you really were a mulatto,” observed Rigaud, quietly, “you would not make use of such an expression.”

“How do I know what I am saying?” asked the panic-stricken wretch. “General, the proof that I am of mixed blood is in the black circle that you see round the bottom of my nails.”

Biassou thrust aside the suppliant hand.

“I do not possess the knowledge of our chaplain, who can tell what a man is by looking at his hand. But listen to me: my soldiers accuse you—some, of being a white man; others, of being a false brother. If this is the case you ought to die. You, on the other hand, assert that you belong to our race, and that you have never denied it. There is one method by which you can prove your assertions. Take this dagger and stab these two white prisoners!”

As he spoke, with a wave of his hand, he designated the citizen C—— and myself.

The planter drew back from the dagger which, with a devilish smile on his face, Biassou presented to him.

“What,” said the general, “do you hesitate? It is your only chance of proving your assertion to the army that you are not a white, and are one of ourselves. Come, decide at once, for we have no time to lose.”

The prisoner’s eyes glared wildly; he stretched out his hand towards the dagger, then let his arm fall again, turning away his head, whilst every limb quivered with emotion.

“Come, come,” cried Biassou, in tones of impatience and anger, “I am in a hurry. Choose—either kill them, or die with them!”

The planter remained motionless, as if he had been turned to stone.

“Good!” said Biassou, turning towards the negroes, “he does not wish to be the executioner, let him be the victim. I can see that he is nothing but a white man—away with him!”

The negroes advanced to seize him. This movement impelled him to immediate choice between giving or receiving death.

Extreme cowardice produces a bastard species of courage.

Stepping forward, he snatched the dagger that Biassou still held out to him, and without giving himself time to reflect upon what he was about to do, he precipitated himself like a tiger upon citizen C——, who was lying on the ground near me. Then a terrible struggle commenced. The lover of the negro race, who had, at the conclusion of his interview with Biassou, remained plunged in a state of despair and stupor, had hardly noticed the scene between the general and the planter, so absorbed was he in the thought of his approaching death; but when he saw the man rush upon him, and the steel gleam above his head, the imminence of his danger aroused him at once. He started to his feet, grasped the arm of his would-be murderer, and exclaimed in a voice of terror—

“Pardon, pardon! What are you doing? What have I done?”

“You must die, sir,” said the half-caste, fixing his frenzied eyes upon his victim, and endeavouring to disengage his arm. “Let me do it; I will not hurt you.”

“Die by your hand,” cried the economist; “but why? Spare me; you wish perhaps to kill me because I used to say that you were a mulatto. But spare my life, and I vow that I will always declare that you are a white man. Yes, you are white, I will say so everywhere, but spare me!”

The unfortunate man had taken the wrong method of sueing for mercy.

“Silence, silence!” cried the half-caste, furious at the idea of the danger he was incurring, and fearing that the negroes would hear the assertion.

But the other cried louder than ever, that he knew that he was a white man, and of good family.

The half-caste made a last effort to impose silence on him; then finding his efforts vain, he thrust aside his arms, and pressed the dagger upon C——’s breast.

The unhappy man felt the point of the weapon, and in his despair bit the arm that was driving the dagger home.

“Monster! wretch!” exclaimed he, “you are murdering me.” Then casting a glance of supplication towards Biassou, he cried, “Defend me, avenger of humanity.”

Then the murderer pressed more heavily on the dagger; a gush of blood bubbled over his fingers, and spattered his face. The knees of the unhappy lover of the negro race bent beneath him, his arms fell by his side, his eyes closed, he uttered a stifled groan, and fell dead.

CHAPTER XXXII.

I was paralyzed with horror at this scene, in which I every moment expected to play an important part. The *Avenger of Humanity* had gazed on the struggle without a lineament of his features changing. When all was over, he turned to his terrified pages. “More tobacco,” said he, and began to chew calmly.

The Obi and Rigaud were equally impassible, but the negroes appeared terrified at the horrible drama that their general had caused to be enacted before them.

One white man, however, yet remained to be slaughtered—my turn had come. I cast a glance upon the murderer who was about to become my executioner, and a feeling of pity came over me. His lips were violet, his teeth chattered, a convulsive tremor caused every limb to quiver. By a mechanical movement his hand was continually passed over his forehead, as if to obliterate the traces of the blood which had so liberally sprinkled it; he looked with an air of terrified wonder at the bleeding body which lay at his feet, as though he were unable to detach his strained eyeballs from the spectacle of his victim.

I waited for the moment when he would resume his task of blood. The position was a strange one: he had already tried to kill me and failed, to prove that he was white, and now he was going to murder me to show that he was black.

“Come,” said Biassou, addressing him, “this is good; I am pleased with you, my friend.” Then glancing at me, he added. “You need not finish the other one; and now I declare you one of us, and name you executioner to the army.”

At these words a negro stepped out of the ranks, and bowing three times to the general, cried out in his jargon—which I will spare you—

“And I, general?”

“Well, what do you want?” asked Biassou.

“Are you going to do nothing for me, general?” asked the negro. “Here you give an important post to this dog of a white, who murders to save his own skin, and to prove that he is one of ourselves. Have you no post to give to me, who am a true black?”

This unexpected request seemed to embarrass Biassou, and Rigaud whispered to him in French—

“You can’t satisfy him; try to elude his request.”

“You wish for promotion, then?” asked Biassou of the *true black*. “Well, I am willing enough to grant it to you. What grade do you wish for?”

“I wish to be an officer.”

“An officer, eh?—and what are your claims to the epaulet founded on?”

“It was I,” answered the negro, emphatically, “who set fire to the house of Lagoscelte in the first days of August last. It was I who murdered M. Clement the planter, and carried the head of his sugar refiner on my pike. I killed ten white women and seven small children, one of whom on the point of a spear served as a standard for Bouckmann’s brave blacks. Later on I burnt alive the families of four colonists, whom I had locked up in the strong room of Fort Galifet. My father was broken on the wheel at Cap, my brother was hung at Rocrow, and I narrowly escaped being shot. I have burnt three coffee plantations, six indigo estates, and two hundred acres of sugar-cane; I murdered my master, M. Noé, and his mother——”

“Spare us the recital of your services,” said Rigaud, whose feigned benevolence was the mask for real cruelty, but who was ferocious with decency, and could not listen to this cynical confession of deeds of violence.

“I could quote many others,” continued the negro, proudly, “but you will no doubt consider that these are sufficient to insure my promotion, and to entitle me to wear a gold epaulet like my comrades there,” pointing to the staff of Biassou.

The general affected to reflect for a few minutes, and then gravely addressed the negro.

“I am satisfied with your services, and should be pleased to promote you, but you must satisfy me on one point. Do you understand Latin?”

The astonished negro opened his eyes widely.

“Eh, general?” said he.

“Yes,” repeated Biassou, quickly; “do you understand Latin?”

“La—Latin?” stammered the astonished negro.

“Yes, yes, yes, Latin; do you understand Latin?” said the cunning chief, and unfolding a banner upon which was embroidered the verse from the Psalms, “*In exitu Israël de Egypto*,” he added, “Explain the meaning of these words.”

The negro, in complete ignorance of what was meant, remained silent and motionless, fumbling with the waistband of his trousers, whilst his astonished eyes wandered from the banner to the general, and from the general back again to the banner.

“Come, go on,” exclaimed Biassou, impatiently.

The negro opened and shut his mouth several times, scratched his head, and at last said slowly—

“I don’t understand it, general.”

“How, scoundrel!” cried Biassou; “you wish to become an officer, and you do not understand Latin!”

“But, general,” stammered the puzzled negro.

“Silence,” roared Biassou, whose anger appeared to increase; “I do not know what prevents me from having you shot at once. Did you ever hear such a thing, Rigaud? he wants to be an officer, and does not understand Latin. Well then, idiot, as you do not understand, I will explain what is written on this banner: *In exitu*—every soldier, *Israël*—who does not understand Latin, *de Egypto*—cannot be made an officer. Is not that the translation, reverend sir?”

The Obi bowed his head in the affirmative, and Biassou continued—

“This brother of whom you are jealous, and whom I have appointed executioner, understands Latin!”

He turned to the new executioner—

“You know Latin, do you not? prove it to this blockhead. What is the meaning of *Dominus vobiscum*?”

The unhappy half-caste, roused from his gloomy reverie by the dreaded voice, raised his head, and though his brain was still troubled by the cowardly murder that he had just committed, terror compelled him to be obedient.

There was something pitiable in his manner, as his mind went back to his schooldays, and in the midst of his terrible feelings and remorse he repeated, in the tone of a child saying its lesson, "*Dominus vobiscum*—that means, 'May the Lord be with you.' "

"*Et cum spirito tuo*," added the mysterious Obi, solemnly.

"Amen," repeated Biassou; then resuming his angry manner, and mingling with his reproaches some Latin phrases to impress the negroes with the superior attainments of their chief, he cried, "Go to the rear rank, *sursum corda*; never attempt to enter the places of those who know Latin, *orate fratres*, or I will have you hung. *Bonus, bona, bonum!*"

The astonished and terrified negro slunk away, greeted by the hoots and hisses of his comrades, who were indignant at his presumption, and impressed with the deep learning of their general.

Burlesque though this scene was, it inspired me with a very high idea of Biassou's administrative capabilities. He had made ridicule the means of repressing ambitious aspirations, which are always so dangerous to authority in undisciplined bodies; and his cunning gave me a fuller idea of his mental powers, and the crass ignorance of the negroes under his command.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The breakfast hour had now arrived; the shell of a turtle was placed before Biassou, in which smoked a species of *olla-podrida* seasoned with bacon, in which turtle flesh took the place of lamb; an enormous carib cabbage floated on the surface of the stew, and in addition, on strips of bark, were dried raisins and water-melons, a loaf of maize bread; and a bottle of wine, bound round with tarred string, completed the feast. Biassou took from his pocket a few heads of garlic and rubbed his bread with them; then, without even ordering the bleeding form to be carried away, he began to eat, inviting Rigaud to do the same.

There was something terrible in Biassou's appetite.

The Obi did not join their repast; like others in his profession, I could easily understand that he never took anything in public, to induce a belief amongst the negroes that he lived entirely without food.

During breakfast, Biassou ordered one of his aides-de-camp to order the march past to commence, and the different corps began to defile past in fairly good order. The negroes of Morne-Rouge were the first; there were about four thousand of them, divided into companies commanded by chiefs, who were distinguished by their

scarlet breeches and sashes. This force was composed of tall and powerful negroes; some of them carried guns, axes, and sabres, but many had no other arms than bows and arrows, and javelins rudely fashioned by themselves. They carried no standard, and moved past in mournful silence. As they marched on, Biassou whispered to Rigaud—

“When will Blanchelande’s and Rouvray’s shot and shell free me from these bandits of Morne-Rouge? I hate them, they are nearly all of them *Congos*, and they only believe in killing in open battle—following the example of their chief Bug-Jargal, a young fool, who plays at being generous and magnanimous. You do not know him, Rigaud, and I hope you never will, for the whites have taken him prisoner, and they may perhaps rid me of him, as they did of Bouckmann.”

“Speaking of Bouckmann,” answered Rigaud, “there are the negroes of Macaya just passing, and I see in their ranks the negro whom Jean François sent to you with the news of Bouckmann’s death. Do you know that that man might upset all the prophecies of the Obi, if he were to say that he had been kept for more than half an hour at the outposts, and that he had told me the news before you sent for him?”

“Diabolo!” answered Biassou, “you are in the right, my friend; this man’s mouth must be shut. Wait a bit.”

Then raising his voice he called out “Macaya.” The leader of the division left the ranks, and approached the general with the stock of his firelock reversed, in token of respect.

“Make that man who does not belong to your division leave his rank and come forward.”

Macaya speedily brought the messenger of Jean François before the general, who at once assumed that appearance of anger which he knew so well how to simulate.

“Who are you?” cried he.

“General, I am a black.”

“Carramba, I can see that well enough; but what is your name?”

“My name is Vavelan, my patron saint is Sabas, deacon and martyr, whose feast is on the twentieth day before the Nativity of our Lord.”

Biassou interrupted him.

“How dare you present yourself on parade, amidst shining muskets and white cross-belts, with your sword without a sheath, your breeches torn, and your feet muddy?”

“General,” answered the negro, “it is not my fault. I was despatched by the Grand Admiral, Jean François, to bring you the news of the death of the chief of the English negroes; and if my clothes are torn and my feet bemired, it is because I have run, without stopping to take breath, to bring you the news as soon as possible, but they detained me at——”

Biassou frowned.

“I did not ask you about that, but how you dared to enter the ranks in so unbecoming a dress. Commend your soul to Saint Sabas, your patron, the deacon and martyr, and go and get yourself shot.”

And here I had another proof of the ascendency that Biassou exercised over the insurgents. The unfortunate man who was ordered to go and get himself executed did not utter a protest; he bowed his head, crossed his arms on his breast, saluted his pitiless judge three times, and after having knelt to the Obi, who gave him plenary absolution, he left the cavern.

A few minutes afterwards a volley of musketry told us that Biassou’s commands had been obeyed, and that the negro was no more.

Freed from all sources of uneasiness, the general turned to Rigaud, a gleam of pleasure in his eye, and gave a triumphant chuckle which seemed to say—“Admire me!”

CHAPTER XXXIV.

But the march past still continued. This army, which had presented so curious a spectacle in camp, had a no less extraordinary appearance under arms. Sometimes a horde of almost naked negroes would come along armed with clubs and tomahawks, marching to the notes of a goat’s horn like mere savages; then would come regiments of mulattoes, dressed in the English or Spanish manner, well armed and equipped, regulating the pace by the roll of the drum; then a band of negresses and their children carrying forks and spits, then some tag-rag bent under the weight of an old musket without lock or barrel; *griotes* with their feathered aprons, *griots* dancing with hideous contortions, and singing incoherent airs to the accompaniment of guitars, tom-toms, and balafos. Then would be a procession of priests, or Obi men, half-castes, quarter-castes, free mulattoes, or wandering hordes of escaped slaves with a proud look of liberty on their faces and shining muskets on their shoulders, dragging in their ranks well-filled waggons, or some artillery taken from the whites, which were looked on more as trophies than as military engines, and yelling out at the top of their voices the songs of Grand-Pré and Oua-Nassé. Above their heads floated flags, banners, and

standards of every form, colour, and device—white, red, tricolour, with the lilies, with the cap of liberty, bearing inscriptions—*Death to Priests and Nobles*; *Long live Religion*; *Liberty and Equality*; *Long live the King*; *Viva España*; *No more Tyrants*, &c.;—a confusion of sentiments which showed that the insurgents were a mere crowd collected together, with ideas as different as were the men who composed it. On passing in their turn before the cave the companies drooped their banners, and Biassou returned the salute. He addressed every band either in praise or censure, and each word that dropped from his mouth was received by his men with fanatical respect or superstitious dread.

The wave of savage soldiery passed away at last. I confess that the sight that had at first afforded some distraction to my feelings, finished by wearying me. The sun went down as the last ranks filed away, and his last rays cast a copper-coloured hue upon the granite portals of the cave.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Biassou seemed to be dreaming. When the review was concluded, his last orders had been given, and the insurgents had retired to the huts, he condescended to address me again.

“Young man,” said he, “you have now had the means of judging of my power and genius; the time has now arrived for you to bear the report to Leogri.”

“It is not my fault that he has not had it earlier,” answered I, coldly.

“You are right,” replied Biassou. He then paused, as if to note what the effect would be upon me of what he was going to say, and then added, “But it will depend upon yourself whether you ever carry the message or not.”

“What do you mean?” exclaimed I, in astonishment.

“Why,” replied he, “that your life depends upon yourself, and that you can save it if you will.”

This sudden paroxysm of pity—the first, and no doubt the last, which had ever possessed Biassou—surprised me much, and astonished the Obi so greatly that he leapt from the position which he had so long maintained, and, placing himself face to face with the general, addressed him in angry tones.

“What are you saying? Have you forgotten your promise? Neither God nor you can dispose of this life, for it belongs to me.”

At that instant I thought that I recognized the voice; but it was but a fleeting recollection, and in a moment had passed away.

Biassou got up from his seat without betraying any anger, spoke for a few moments in whispers to the Obi, and pointed to the black flag which I had already remarked, and after a little more conversation the Obi nodded in sign of assent. Both of them then reverted to their former positions.

“Listen to me,” said the general, drawing from his pocket the dispatch which Jean François had sent to him. “Things are going ill. Bouckmann has been killed. The whites have slaughtered more than two thousand of our men in the district of Cul-de-Sac. The colonists are continuing to establish and to fortify military posts. By our own folly we have lost the chance of taking Cap, and it will be long before another occasion will present itself. On the eastern side our line of march has been cut by a river, and the whites have defended the passage by a pontoon battery and a fortified camp. On the south side they have planted artillery on the mountainous road called the Haut-du-Cap. The position is, in addition, defended by a strong stockade, at which all the inhabitants have laboured, and in front of it there is a strong *chevaux de frise*. Cap, therefore, is beyond our reach. Our ambush in the ravines of Dompté-Mulâtre was a failure; and, to add to all these misfortunes, the Siamese fever has devastated our camps. In consequence, the Grand Admiral (and I agree with him) has decided to treat with the Governor Blanchelande and the Colonial Assembly. Here is the letter that we have addressed to the assembly on this matter. Listen!

“ ‘Gentlemen of the House of Deputies,—

“ ‘In the great misfortunes which have afflicted this great and important colony we have also been enveloped, and there remains nothing for us to say in justification of our conduct. One day you will render us the justice that our conduct merits.

“ ‘According to us, the King of Spain is a good king who treats us well, and has *testified it to us by rewards*; so we shall continue to serve him with zeal and devotion.

“ ‘We see by the law of September 28, 1791, that the National Assembly and the King have agreed to settle definitely the status of slaves, and the political situation of people of colour. We will defend the decrees of the National Assembly with the last drop of our blood.

“ ‘It would be most interesting to us if you would declare, by an order sanctioned by your general, as to your intentions regarding the position of the slaves. Knowing that they are the objects of your solicitude through their chiefs, who send you this, they will be satisfied if the relations now broken are once again resumed.

“ ‘Do not count, gentlemen Deputies, upon our consenting to take up arms for the revolutionary Assemblies. We are the subjects of three kings—the King of Congo, the born master of all the blacks; the King of France, who represents our fathers; and the King of Spain, who is the representative of our mothers. These three kings are the descendants of those who, conducted by a star, worshipped the Man God. If we were to consent to serve the Assemblies, we might be forced to take up arms and to make war against our brothers, the subjects of those three kings to whom we have sworn fidelity. And, besides, we do not know what is meant by the will of the Nation, seeing that since the world has been in existence we have always executed that of the King. The Prince of France loves us; the King of Spain never ceases to help us. We aid them—they aid us; it is the cause of humanity; and, besides, if these kings should fail us we could soon *enthrone a king of our own*.

“ ‘Such are our intentions, although we now consent to make peace.

“ ‘*Signed*, Jean François, General; Biassou,
Brigadier; Desprez, Manzeau, Toussaint, Aubert, Commissaires; *ad hoc*.’ ”[3]

“You see,” said Biassou, after he had read this piece of negro diplomacy, every word of which has remained imprinted on my memory, “that our intentions are peaceable; but this is what we want you to do: neither Jean François nor I have been brought up in the schools of the whites, or learned the niceties of their language. We know how to fight, but not how to write. Now we do not wish that there should be anything in our letter at which our former masters could laugh. You seem to have learned those frivolous accomplishments in which we are lacking. Correct any faults you may find in this dispatch, so that it may excite no derision amongst the whites, and—I will give you your life!”

This proposition of becoming the corrector of Biassou’s faults of spelling and composition was too repugnant to my pride for me to hesitate for a moment; and besides, what did I care for life. I declined his offer. He appeared surprised.

“What!” exclaimed he, “you prefer death to scrawling a few marks with a pen on a piece of paper?”

“Yes,” replied I.

My determination seemed to embarrass him. After a few moments of thought he again addressed me.

“Listen, young fool. I am less obstinate than you are; I give you until to-morrow evening, up to the setting of the sun, when you shall again be brought before me. Think

well then, before you refuse to obey my wishes. Adieu. Let night bring reflection to you, and remember that with us death is not simply death—much comes before you reach it."

The frightful sardonic grin with which he concluded his last speech too plainly brought to my recollection the awful tortures which it was Biassou's greatest pleasure to inflict upon his prisoners.

"Candi," continued Biassou, "remove the prisoner, and give him in charge to the men of Morne-Rouge. I wish him to live for another day, and perhaps my other soldiers would not have the patience to let him do so." The mulatto Candi, who commanded the guard, caused my arms to be bound behind my back, a soldier took hold of the end of the cord, and we left the grotto.

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[3] It is a fact that this ridiculously characteristic letter was sent to the Assembly.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

When any extraordinary events, unexpected anxieties or catastrophes, intrude themselves suddenly into a life up to that period peaceful and happy, these unexpected emotions interrupt the repose of the soul which lay dreaming in the monotony of prosperity. Misfortune which comes on you in this manner does not seem like an awakening from bliss, but rather like a dream of evil. With the man who has been invariably happy, despair begins with stupor. Unexpected misery is like cramp—it clasps, and deadens everything. Men, acts, and things, at that time pass before us like a fantastic apparition, and move along as if in a dream. Everything in the horizon of our life is changed, both the atmosphere and the perspective, but it still goes on for a long time before our eyes have lost that sort of luminous image of past happiness which follows in its train, and interposes without cessation between it and the sombre present. Then everything that is, appears to be unreal and ridiculous, and we can scarcely believe in our own existence, because we find nothing around us that formerly used to compose our life, and we cannot understand how all can have gone away without taking us with it, and why nothing of our life remains to us.

Were this strained position of the soul to continue long, it would disturb the equilibrium of the brain and become madness—a state happier perhaps than that which remains, for life then is nothing but a vision of past misfortune, acting like a ghost.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Gentlemen, I hardly know why I lay before you my ideas upon such a subject; they are not those which you understand, or can be made to understand. To thoroughly comprehend them, you must have gone through what I have. But such was the state of my mind when the guards of Biassou handed me over to the negroes of Morne-Rouge. I was still in a dream: it appeared as if one body of phantoms passed me over to another, and without opposing any resistance I permitted them to bind me by the middle to a tree. They then gave me some boiled potatoes, which I ate with the mechanical instinct that God grants to man even in the midst of overwhelming thought.

The darkness had now come on, and my guards took refuge in their huts, with the exception of half a dozen who remained with me, lying before a large fire that they had lighted to preserve themselves from the cold night-air. In a few moments they were all buried in profound sleep.

The state of physical weakness into which I had fallen caused my thoughts to wander in a strange manner. I thought of those calm and peaceful days which, but a few weeks ago, I had passed with Marie, without being able to foresee any future but one of continued happiness. I compared them with the day that had just expired, a day in which so many strange events had occurred as almost to make me wonder whether I was not labouring under some delusion. I had been three times condemned to death, and still remained under sentence. I thought of my future, bounded only by the morrow, and which offered nothing but misfortune, and a death happily near at hand. I seemed to be the victim of some terrible nightmare. Again and again I asked myself if all that had happened was real: was I really in the power of the sanguinary Biassou, and was my Marie lost to me for ever? Could this prisoner, guarded by six savages, bound to a tree, and condemned to certain death, really be me? In spite of all my efforts to repel them, the thoughts of Marie would force themselves upon me. In anguish I thought of her fate, I strained my bonds in my efforts to break them, and to fly to her succour, ever hoping that the terrible dream would pass away; and that Heaven would not permit all the horrors that I dreaded to fall upon the head of her, who had been united to me in a sacred bond. In my sad preoccupation the thought of Pierrot returned to me, and rage nearly took away my senses; the pulses of my temples throbbed nearly to bursting. I hated him, I cursed him; I despised myself for having ever had friendship for Pierrot at the same time I had felt love for Marie; and without caring to seek for the motive which had urged him to cast himself into the waters of Grande-Riviere, I wept because he had escaped me. He was dead, and I was about to die, and all that I regretted was that I had been unable to wreak my vengeance upon him.

During the state of semi-somnolency into which my weakness had plunged me, these thoughts passed through my brain. I do not know how long it lasted, but I was aroused by a man's voice singing distinctly, but at some distance, the old Spanish song, "*Yo que soy contrabandista*." Quivering with emotion I opened my eyes; all was dark around me, the negroes slept, the fire was dying down. I could hear nothing more. I fancied that the voice must have been a dream, and my sleep-laden eyelids closed again. In a second I opened them; again I heard the voice singing sadly but much nearer, the same song—

'Twas on the field of Ocanen

That I fell in their power,

To Cotadilla taken,

Unhappy from that hour.

This time it was not a charm—it *was* Pierrot's voice. A few moments elapsed, then it rose again through the silence and the gloom, and once more I heard the well-known air of "*Yo soy que contrabandista*." A dog ran eagerly to greet me, and rolled at my feet in token of welcome; it was Rask! A tall negro stood facing me, and the glimmer of the fire threw his shadow, swelled to colossal proportions, upon the sward; it was Pierrot!

The thirst for vengeance fired my brain; surprise rendered me motionless and dumb. I was not asleep. Could the dead return? If not a dream, it must be an apparition. I turned from him with horror.

When he saw me do this, his head sank upon his breast.

"Brother," murmured he, "you promised that you would never doubt me when you heard me sing that song. My brother, have you forgotten your promise?"

Rage restored the power of speech to me.

"Monster," exclaimed I, "do I see you at last! Butcher, murderer of my uncle, ravisher of Marie, dare you call me your brother? Do not venture to approach me."

I forgot that I was too securely tied to make the slightest movement, and glanced to my left side as though to seek my sword.

My intention did not escape him, and he continued in a sorrowful tone of voice—

"No, I will not come near you—you are unhappy and I pity you; whilst you have no pity for me, though I am much more wretched than you are."

I shrugged my shoulders; he understood my feelings, and in a half dreamy manner continued—

“Yes, you have lost much; but, believe me, I have lost more than you have.”

But the sound of our conversation had aroused the negro guard. Perceiving a stranger they leapt to their feet, and seized their weapons; but as soon as they recognized the intruder they uttered a cry of surprise and joy, and cast themselves at his feet, striking the ground with their foreheads.

But the homage that the negroes rendered to Pierrot, and the fondlings of Rask, made no impression upon me at the moment. I was boiling over with passion, and maddened at the bonds that restrained me, and at length my fury found words. “Oh, how unhappy I am!” I exclaimed, shedding tears of rage. “I was grieving because I thought that this wretch had committed suicide, and robbed me of my just revenge; and now he is here to mock me, living and breathing under my very eyes, and I am powerless to stab him to the heart. Is there no one to free me from these accursed cords?”

Pierrot turned to the negroes, who where still prostrate before him.

“Comrades,” said he, “release the prisoner.”

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

He was promptly obeyed. With the greatest eagerness my guards cut asunder the ropes that confined me. I rose up free, but I remained motionless, for surprise rooted me to the spot.

“That is not all,” said Pierrot, and snatching a dagger from one of the negroes, he handed it to me. “You can now have your wish; Heaven would not be pleased should I dispute your right to dispose of my life. Three times you have preserved it. Strike, it is yours, I say, and if you wish, strike!”

There was no sign of anger or of bitterness in his face; he appeared resigned and mournful.

The very vengeance offered to me by the man with whom I had so much longed to stand face to face, prevented my seizing the opportunity. I felt that all my hatred for Pierrot, all my love for Marie, could not induce me to commit a cowardly murder; besides, however damning appearances might be, yet a voice from the depths of my heart warned me that no criminal, no guilty man, would thus dare to stand before me and brave my vengeance. Shall I confess it to you, there was a certain imperious

fascination about this extraordinary being which conquered me in spite of myself; I pushed aside the dagger he offered to me.

“Wretch,” cried I, “I wish to kill you in fair fight, but I am no assassin. Defend yourself.”

“Defend myself,” replied he, in tones of astonishment, “and against whom?”

“Against me!”

He started back. “Against you! that is the only thing in which I cannot obey you. Look at Rask there—I could easily kill him, for he would let me do it; but as for making him fight me, the thing would be impossible, he would not understand me if I told him to do so. I do not understand you; in your case I am Rask.”

After a short silence, he added, “I see the gleam of hate in your eyes, as you once saw it in mine. I know that you have suffered much, that your uncle has been murdered, your plantations burned, your friends slaughtered—yes, they have plundered your house, and devastated your inheritance; but it was not I that did these things, it was my people. Listen to me. I one day told you that your people had done me much injury, you said that you must not be blamed for the acts of others. What was my reply?”

His face grew brighter as he awaited my reply, evidently expecting that I should embrace him; but fixing an angry gaze upon him, I answered—

“You disdain all responsibility as to the acts of your people, but you say nothing about what you have yourself done.”

“What have I done?” asked he.

I stepped up close to him, and in a voice of thunder I demanded, “Where is Marie? what have you done with Marie?”

At this question a cloud passed over his face; he seemed momentarily embarrassed. At last he spoke. “Maria!” said he, “yes; you are right—but too many ears listen to us here.”

His embarrassment, the words “You are right,” raised the hell of jealousy in my heart, yet still he gazed upon me with a perfectly open countenance, and in a voice trembling with emotion said, “Do not suspect me, I implore you. Besides, I will tell you everything; love me, as I love you, with perfect trust.”

He paused to mark the effect of his words, and then added tenderly, “May I not again call you brother?”

But I was a prey to my jealous feelings, and his friendly words seemed to me but the deep machinations of a hypocrite, and only served to exasperate me more. “Dare you recall the time when you did so, you monster of ingratitude?” I exclaimed.

He interrupted me, a tear shining in his eye: “It is not I who am ungrateful.”

“Well then,” I continued, “tell me what you have done with Marie?”

“Not here, not here,” answered he, “other ears than ours listen to our words; besides, you would not believe me, and time presses. The day has come, and you must be removed from this. All is at an end. Since you doubt me, far better would it have been for you to take the dagger and finish all; but wait a little before you take what you call your vengeance—I must first free you. Come with me to Biassou.”

His manner, both in speaking and acting, concealed a mystery which I could not understand. In spite of all my prejudices against the man, his voice always made my heart vibrate. In listening to him a certain hidden power that he possessed subjugated me. I found myself hesitating between vengeance and pity, between the bitterest distrust and the blindest confidence. I followed him.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

We left the camp of the negroes of Morne-Rouge. I could not help thinking it strange to find myself at perfect liberty amongst a horde of savages, in a spot where the evening before each man had seemed only too ready to shed my blood. Far from seeking to bar our progress, both the negroes and the mulattoes prostrated themselves on all sides, with exclamations of surprise, joy, and respect. I was ignorant what rank Pierrot held in the army of the insurgents, but I remembered the influence that he used to exercise over his companions in slavery, and this appeared to me to account for the respect with which he was now treated.

On our arrival at the guard before the grotto, the mulatto Candi advanced before us with threatening gestures, demanding how we dared approach so near the general’s quarters; but when he came near enough to recognize my conductor, he hurriedly removed his gold-laced cap, as though terrified at his own audacity, bowed to the ground, and at once introduced us into Biassou’s presence, with a thousand apologies of which Pierrot took no heed.

The respect with which the simple negro soldiers had treated Pierrot excited my surprise very little, but seeing Candi, one of the principal officers of the army, humiliate himself thus before my uncle’s slave, made me ask myself who this man could be whose power was illimitable. How much more astonished was I, then, upon

being introduced into the presence of Biassou, who was alone when we entered, and was quietly enjoying his *calalou*. He started to his feet, concealing disappointment and surprise under the appearance of profound respect, bowed humbly to my companion, and offered him his mahogany throne.

Pierrot declined it. “No, Jean Biassou,” said he, “I have not come to take your place, but simply to ask a favour at your hands.”

“Your Highness,” answered Biassou, redoubling his obeisances, “you know well that all Jean Biassou has is yours, and that you can dispose as freely of all as you can of Jean Biassou himself.”

“I do not ask for so much,” replied Pierrot, quickly; “all I ask is the life and liberty of this prisoner,” and he pointed to me.

For a moment Biassou appeared embarrassed, but he speedily recovered himself.

“Your servant is in despair, your Highness, for you ask of him, to his great regret, more than he can grant; he is not Jean Biassou’s prisoner, does not belong to Jean Biassou, and has nothing to do with Jean Biassou.”

“What do you mean?” asked Pierrot, in severe tones, “by saying that he does not belong to you? Does any one else hold authority here except you?”

“Alas, yes, your Highness.”

“Who is it?”

“My army.”

The sly and obsequious manner in which Biassou eluded the frank and haughty questions of Pierrot, showed, had it depended solely upon himself, he would gladly have treated his visitor with far less respect than he felt himself now compelled to do.

“What!” exclaimed Pierrot, “your army; and do not you command it?”

Biassou, with every appearance of sincerity, replied—

“Does your Highness really think that we can command men who are in insurrection because they will not obey?”

I cared too little for my life to break the silence that I had imposed upon myself, else, having seen the day before the despotic authority that Biassou exercised over his men, I could have contradicted his assertions, and laid bare his duplicity to Pierrot.

“Well, if you have no authority over your men, and if they are your masters, what reason can they have for hating your prisoner?”

“Bouckmann has been killed by the white troops,” answered Biassou, endeavouring to conceal his sardonic smile under a mask of sorrow, “and my men are determined to avenge upon this white the death of the chief of the Jamaica negroes. They wish to show trophy against trophy, and desire that the head of this young officer should serve as a counterpoise to the head of Bouckmann in the scales in which the good *Giu* weighs both parties.”

“Do you still continue to carry on this horrible system of reprisals. Listen to me, Jean Biassou: it is these cruelties that are the ruin of our just cause. Prisoner as I was in the camp of the whites (from which I have managed to escape), I had not heard of the death of Bouckmann until you told me. It is the just punishment of heaven for his crimes. I will tell you another piece of news: Jeannot, the negro chief who served as a guide to draw the white troops into the ambush of Dompté-Mulâtre, Jeannot also is dead. You know—do not interrupt me, Biassou—that he rivalled you and Bouckmann in his atrocities; and pay attention to this, it was not the thunderbolt of heaven, nor the bullets of the whites, that struck him—it was Jean François himself who ordered this act of justice to be performed.”

Biassou, who had listened with an air of gloomy respect, uttered an exclamation of surprise. At this moment Rigaud entered, bowed respectfully to Pierrot, and whispered in Biassou’s ear.

The murmur of many voices was heard in the camp.

“Yes,” continued Pierrot, “Jean François, who has no fault except a preposterous love of luxury and show, whose carriage with its six horses takes him every day to hear mass at the Grande-Riviere, Jean François himself has put a stop to the crimes of Jeannot. In spite of the cowardly entreaties of the brigand, who clung in despair to the knees of the Priest of Marmalade, who attended him in his last moments, he was shot beneath the very tree upon which he used to hang his living victims upon iron hooks. Think upon this, Biassou. Why these massacres which provoke the whites to reprisals? Why all these juggleries which only tend to excite the passions of our unhappy comrades, already too much exasperated? There is at Trou-Coffi a mulatto impostor, called Romaine the Prophet, who is in command of a fanatical band of negroes; he profanes the holy sacrament of the mass, he pretends that he is in direct communication with the Virgin, and he urges on his men to murder and pillage in the name of Marie.”

There was a more tender inflection in the voice of Pierrot as he uttered this name than even religious respect would have warranted, and I felt annoyed and irritated at it.

“And you,” continued he, “you have in your camp some Obi, I hear—some impostor like this Romaine the Prophet. I well know that having to lead an army composed of so many heterogeneous materials, a common bond is necessary; but can it be found nowhere save in ferocious fanaticism and ridiculous superstition? Believe me, Biassou, the white men are not so cruel as we are. I have seen many planters protect the lives of their slaves. I am not ignorant that in some cases it was not the life of a man, but a sum of money that they desired to save, but at any rate their interest gave them the appearance of a virtue. Do not let us be less merciful than they are, for it is our interest to be so. Will our cause be more holy and more just because we exterminate the women, slaughter the children, and burn the colonists in their own houses? These, however, are every-day occurrences. Answer me, Biassou: must the traces of our progress be always marked by a line of blood and fire?”

He ceased; the fire of his glance, the accent of his voice, gave to his words a force of conviction and authority which it is impossible for me to imitate. Like a fox in the clutches of a lion, Biassou seemed to seek for some means of escape from the power that constrained him. Whilst he vainly sought for a pretext, the chief of the negroes of Cayer, Rigaud, who the evening before had calmly watched the horrors that had been perpetrated in his presence, seemed to be shocked at the picture that Pierrot had drawn, and exclaimed with a hypocritical affectation of grief—

“Great heavens! how terrible is a nation when roused to fury.”

CHAPTER XL.

The confusion in the camp appeared to increase, to the great uneasiness of Biassou. I heard afterwards that it was caused by the negroes of Morne-Rouge, who hurried from one end of the camp to the other, announcing the return of my liberator, and declaring their intention of supporting him in whatever object he had come to Biassou’s camp for. Rigaud had informed the generalissimo of this, and it was the fear of a fatal division in the camp that prompted Biassou to make some sort of concession to the wishes of Pierrot.

“Your Highness,” remarked he, with an air of injured innocence, “if we are hard on the whites, you are equally severe upon us. You are wrong in accusing us of being the cause of the torrent, for it is the torrent that drags us away with it; but *que podria hacer a hora* (“but what can I do at present”) that will please you?”

“I have already told you, Señor Biassou,” answered Pierrot; “let me take this prisoner away with me.”

Biassou remained for a few moments silent, as though in deep thought; then putting on an expression of as great frankness as he was able, he answered—

“Your Highness, I wish to prove to you that I have every wish to please you. Permit me to have two words in private with the prisoner, and he shall be free to follow you.”

“If that is all you ask, I agree,” replied Pierrot.

His eyes, which up to that moment had wandered about in a distrustful manner, glistened with delight, and he moved away a few paces to leave us to our conversation.

Biassou drew me on one side into a retired part of the cavern, and said in a low voice—

“I can only spare your life upon the condition that I proposed; are you ready to fulfil it?”

He showed me the dispatch of Jean François; to consent appeared to me too humiliating.

“Never,” answered I, firmly.

“Aha,” repeated he, with his sardonic chuckle, “are you always as firm? You have great confidence, then, in your protector. Do you know who he is?”

“I do,” answered I, quickly, “he is a monster, as you are, only he is a greater hypocrite.”

He started back in astonishment, seeking to read in my glance if I spoke seriously.

“What!” exclaimed he, “do you not know him then?”

With a disdainful look, I replied—

“I only know him as my uncle’s slave, and his name is Pierrot.”

Again Biassou smiled bitterly.

“Aha, that indeed is strange; he asks for your life and liberty, and you say that you only know him for a monster like myself.”

“What matters that?” I answered; “if I do gain a little liberty, it is not to save my own life, but to take his.”

“What is that you are saying?” asked Biassou. “And yet you seem to speak as you believe; I cannot think that you would trifle with your life. There is something beneath all this that I do not understand. You are protected by a man that you hate; he insists upon your life being spared, and you, are longing to take his. But it matters little to me; you desire a short spell of freedom—it is all that I can give you. I will leave you free to follow him, but swear to me by your honour, that you will return to me and reconstitute yourself my prisoner two hours before the sun sets. You are a Frenchman, and I will trust you.”

What shall I say, gentlemen. Life was a burden to me, and I hated the idea of owing it to Pierrot, for every circumstance pointed him out as a just object of my hatred. I do not think for a moment that Biassou (who did not easily permit his prey to escape him) would allow me to go free except upon his own conditions. All I desired was a few hours’ liberty which I could devote to discovering the fate of my beloved before my death. Biassou, relying upon my honour as a Frenchman, would grant me these, and without hesitation I pledged it.

“Your Highness,” said Biassou, in obsequious tones, “the white prisoner is at your disposal; you can take him with you, for he is free to accompany you wherever you wish.”

“Thanks, Biassou,” cried Pierrot, extending his hand. “You have rendered me a service which places me entirely at your disposal. Remain in command of our brethren of Morne-Rouge until my return.”

Then he turned towards me—I never saw so much happiness in his eyes before.

“Since you are free,” cried he, “come with me.” And with a strange earnestness he drew me away with him.

Biassou looked after us with blank astonishment, which was even perceptible through the respectful leave that he took of my companion.

CHAPTER XLI.

I was longing to be alone with Pierrot. His embarrassment when I had questioned him as to the fate of Marie, the ill-concealed tenderness with which he had dared to pronounce her name, had made those feelings of hatred and jealousy which had sprung up in my heart take far deeper root than at the time I saw him bearing away through the flames of Fort Galifet, her whom I could scarcely call my wife.

What did I care for the generous indignation with which he had reproved the cruelties of Biassou, the trouble which he had taken to preserve my life, and the curious

manner which marked all his words and actions. What cared I for the mystery that appeared to envelop him, which brought him living before my eyes, when I thought to have witnessed his death. He proved to be a prisoner of the white troops when I believed that he lay buried in the depths of Grande-Riviere—the slave become a king, the prisoner a liberator. Of all these incomprehensible things one was clear—Marie had been carried off by him; and I had this crime to punish, this outrage to avenge.

However strange were the events that had passed under my eyes, they were not sufficient to shake my determination, and I had waited with impatience for the moment when I could compel my rival to explain all. That moment had at last arrived.

We had passed through crowds of negroes, who cast themselves on the ground as we pursued our way, exclaiming in tones of surprise, "*Miraculo! ya no esta prisonero!*" ("A miracle! he is no longer a prisoner!"), but whether they referred to Pierrot or to myself I neither knew nor cared. We had gained the outskirts of the camp, and rocks and trees concealed from our view the outposts of Biassou; Rask in high good humour was running in front of us, and Pierrot was following him with rapid strides, when I stopped him.

"Listen to me," cried I; "it is useless to go any farther—the ears that you dreaded can no longer listen to us. What have you done with Marie? tell me!"

Concentrated emotion made my voice tremble. He gazed upon me kindly.

"Always the same question!" said he.

"Yes, always," returned I, furiously; "always. I will put that question to you as you draw your last breath, or as I utter my last sigh. Where is Marie?"

"Can nothing, then, drive away your doubts of my loyalty? But you shall know all soon."

"Soon, monster!" repeated I, "soon; it is now, at this instant, that I want to know all. Where is Marie? where is Marie? Answer, or stake your life against mine. Defend yourself."

"I have already told you," answered he, sadly, "that that is impossible; the stream will not struggle against its source, and my life, which you have three times saved, cannot contend against yours. Besides, even if I wished it the thing is impossible; we have but one dagger between us."

As he spoke, he drew the weapon from his girdle and offered it to me.

"Take it," said he.

I was beside myself with passion, I seized the dagger and placed the point on his breast, he never attempted to move.

“Wretch,” cried I, “do not force me to murder you; I will plunge this blade into your heart if you do not at once tell me where my wife is.”

He replied, in his calm way, “You are the master to do as you like, but with clasped hands I implore you to grant me one hour of life, and to follow me. Can you doubt him who thrice has owed his life to you, and whom you once called *brother*? Listen: if in one hour from this time you still doubt me, you shall be at perfect liberty to kill me. That will be time enough; you see that I do not attempt to resist you. I conjure you in the name of Maria—of your wife,” he added slowly, as though the victim of some painful recollection, “give me but another hour, I beg of you, not for my sake, but for yours.”

There was so much pathos in his entreaties that an inner feeling warned me to grant his request, and I yielded to that secret ascendency which he exercised over me, but which at that time I should have blushed to have confessed.

“Well,” said I, slowly, “I will grant you one hour, and I am ready to follow you;” and as I spoke I handed him his dagger.

“No,” answered he, “keep it; you still distrust me, but let us lose no time.”

CHAPTER XLII.

Again we started. Rask, who, during our conversation, had shown frequent signs of impatience to renew his journey, bounded joyously before us. We plunged into a virgin forest, and after half an hour’s walking we came out on a grassy opening in the wood. On one side was a waterfall dashing over rugged rocks, whilst the primeval trees of the forest surrounded it on all sides. Amongst the rocks was a cave, the grey face of which was shrouded by a mass of climbing plants. Rask ran towards it barking, but at a sign from Pierrot he became silent, and the latter taking me by the hand led me without a word to the entrance of the cave.

A woman with her back towards the light was seated on a mat: at the sound of our steps she turned——my friends——it was Marie! She wore the same white dress that she had done on the day of our marriage, and the wreath of orange blossoms was still on her head. She recognized me in a moment, and with a cry of joy threw herself into my arms. I was speechless with surprise and emotion. At her cry an old woman carrying a child in her arms hurried from an inner chamber formed in the depth of the cave, she was Marie’s nurse, and she carried my uncle’s youngest child.

Pierrot hastened to bring some water from the neighbouring spring, and threw a few drops in Marie's face, who was overcome by emotion; she speedily recovered, and opening her eyes, exclaimed—

"Leopold, my Leopold!"

"Marie," cried I, and my words were stifled in a kiss.

"Not before me, for pity's sake," cried a voice, in accents of agony.

We looked round; it came from Pierrot. The sight of our endearments appeared to inflict terrible torture on him, his bosom heaved, a cold perspiration bedewed his forehead, and every limb quivered. Suddenly he hid his face in his hands, and fled from the grotto repeating in tones of anguish—

"Not before me! not before me!"

Marie half raised herself in my arms, and following his retreating form with her eyes, exclaimed—

"Leopold, our happiness seems to trouble him; can it be that he loves me?"

The exclamation of the slave had showed that he was my rival, but Marie's speech proved that he was my trusty friend.

"Marie," answered I, as the wildest happiness mingled with the deepest regret filled my heart, "Marie, were you ignorant of it?"

"Until this moment I was," answered she, a blush overspreading her beautiful features. "Does he really love me, for he never let me know it."

I clasped her to my bosom, in all the madness of happiness.

"I have recovered both wife and friend; how happy am I, but how guilty, for I doubted him!"

"What!" cried Marie, in surprise, "had you doubts of Pierrot? oh, you have indeed been in fault. Twice has he saved my life, and perhaps more than life," she added, casting down her eyes; "without him the alligator would have devoured me, without him the negroes: it was Pierrot who rescued me from their hands, when they were about to send me to rejoin my unhappy father."

She broke off her speech with a flood of tears.

"And why," asked I, "did not Pierrot send you to Cap, to your husband?"

“He tried to do so,” replied she, “but it was impossible, compelled as he was to conceal me both from the whites and the blacks, his position was a most difficult one; and then, too, he was ignorant where you were. Some said that they had seen you killed, but Pierrot assured me that this was not the case, and a something convinced me that he spoke the truth, for I felt that had you been dead, I should have died at the same time.”

“Then, Pierrot brought you here?” asked I.

“Yes, my Leopold, this solitary cave is known only to him. At the same time that he rescued me, he saved all that remained alive of our family, my little brother and my old nurse, and hid us here.”

“The place is very nice, and now that the war has destroyed our house, and ruined us, I should like to live here with you. Pierrot supplied all our wants. He used to come very often; he wore a plume of red feathers on his head. He used to console me by talking of you, and always assured me that we should meet again, but for the past three days I have not seen him, and I was beginning to be uneasy, when to-day he came back with you. He had been seeking for you, had he not?”

“Yes,” replied I.

“But if so, how can he be in love with me? Are you sure of it?”

“Quite,” answered I, “it was he who was about to stab me beneath your window, and spared me lest it should afflict you; it was he who sang the love songs at the pavilion by the river.”

“Then he is your rival,” exclaimed Marie, with naïve surprise, “and the wicked man with the wild marigolds is Pierrot; I can hardly believe that. He was so respectful and humble to me, much more so than when he was our slave. It is true that sometimes he looked at me in a strange manner, but I attributed his sadness to our misfortunes. If you could only know with what tenderness he spoke of you, my Leopold. His friendship made him speak of you as much as my love did.”

These explanations of Marie enchanted and yet grieved me. I felt how cruelly I had treated the noble-hearted Pierrot, and I felt all the force of his gentle reproach, “*It is not I who am ungrateful*.”

At this instant Pierrot returned. His face was dark and gloomy, and he looked like a martyr returning from the place of torture, but yet retaining an air of triumph.

He came towards me, and pointing to the dagger in my belt, said—"The hour has passed!"

"Hour, what hour?" asked I.

"The one you granted me; it was necessary for me to have so much time allowed me in which to bring you here. Then I conjured you to spare my life, now I supplicate you to take it away."

The most tender feelings of the heart, love, gratitude, and friendship, united themselves together to torture me. Unable to say a word, but sobbing bitterly, I cast myself at the feet of the slave. He raised me up in haste.

"What are you doing?" cried he.

"I pay you the homage that is your due, but I am no longer worthy of friendship such as yours; can your friendship be pushed so far as to forgive me my ingratitude?"

For a time his expression remained stern, he appeared to be undergoing a violent mental contest. He took a step towards me; then drew back, and seemed on the point of speaking, but no words passed his lips. The struggle was a short one, he opened his arms to embrace me, saying—

"May I *now* call you brother?"

My only reply was to cast myself on his breast. After a short pause, he added—

"You were always kind, but misfortune had rendered you unjust."

"I have found my brother once again," said I. "I am unfortunate no longer, but I have been very guilty."

"Guilty, brother, I also have been guilty, and more so than you; you are no longer unhappy, but I shall be so for ever!"

CHAPTER XLIII.

The expression of pleasure which the renewal of our friendship had traced on his features, faded away and an appearance of deep grief once more pervaded them.

"Listen," said he, coldly; "my father was the King of Kakongo. Each day he sat at the door of his hut and dispensed justice amongst his subjects. After every judgment, according to the custom of the kings his ancestors, he drank a full goblet of palm wine. We were happy and powerful. But the Europeans came to our country; it was from them that I learnt the accomplishments which you appeared to be surprised at

my possessing. Our principal acquaintance amongst the Europeans was a Spanish captain; he promised my father territories far greater than those he now ruled over, treasure, and white women; my father believed him, and gathering his family together, followed him.... Brother, he sold us as slaves!"

The breast of the negro rose and fell, as he strove to restrain himself; his eyes shot forth sparks of fire; and without seeming to know what he did, he broke in his powerful grasp a fancy medlar tree that stood beside him.

"The master of Kakongo in his turn had a master, and his son toiled as a slave in the furrows of Saint Domingo. They tore the young lion from his father, that they might the more easily tame him; they separated the wife from the husband, and the little children from the mother who nursed them, and the father who used to bathe them in the torrents of their native land. In their place they found cruel masters and a sleeping place shared with the dogs!"

He was silent, though his lips moved as though he were still continuing his narrative; after a moment's pause he seized me roughly by the arm, and continued—

"Brother, do you understand, I have been sold to different masters like a beast of burden? Do you remember the punishment of Ogé? it was on that day that I saw my father after a long separation—*he was on the wheel*!"

I shuddered; he went on—

"My wife was outraged by white men, and she died calling for revenge. Must I tell you I was guilty towards her, for I loved another; but let that pass by. All my people urged me to deliver and avenge them; Rask brought me their messages, I could do nothing for them, I was fast in your uncle's prison. The day upon which you obtained my release, I hurried off to save my children from the power of a cruel master. Upon the very day that I arrived, the last of the grandchildren of the King of Kakongo had expired under the blows of the white man; he had followed the others!"

He interrupted his recital, and coldly asked me:

"Brother, what would you have done?"

This frightful tale froze me with horror. I replied by a threatening gesture. He understood me, and with a bitter smile he continued—

"The slaves rose against their master, and punished the murder of my children. They chose me for their chief. You know the frightful excesses that were perpetrated by the insurgents. I heard that your uncle's slaves were on the point of rising. I arrived at Acul

on the night upon which the insurrection broke out. You were away. Your uncle had been murdered in his bed, and the negroes had already set fire to the plantation. Not being able to restrain them—for in destroying your uncle's property they thought that they were avenging my injuries—I determined to save the survivors of his family. I entered the fort by the breach that I had made. I entrusted your wife's nurse to a faithful negro. I had more trouble in saving your Marie; she had hurried to the burning portion of the fort to save the youngest of her brothers, the sole survivor of the massacre. The insurgents surrounded her, and were about to kill her.... I burst upon them, and ordered them to leave her to my vengeance; they obeyed me, and retired. I took your wife in my arms, I entrusted the child to Rask, and I bore them both away to this cavern, of which I alone knew the existence and the access. Brother, such was my crime."

More than ever overwhelmed with gratitude and remorse, I would again have thrown myself at his feet, but he stopped me.

"Come," said he, "take your wife, and let us leave this, all of us."

In wonder I asked him whither he wished to conduct us.

"To the camp of the whites," answered he. "This retreat is no longer safe. To-morrow at break of day the camp of Biassou will be attacked, and the forest will assuredly be set on fire. Besides, I have no time to lose. Ten lives are in jeopardy until my return. We *can* hasten because you are free; we *must* hasten because I am not."

These words increased my surprise, and I pressed him for an explanation.

"Have you not heard that Bug-Jargal is a prisoner?" replied he, impatiently.

"Yes; but what has Bug-Jargal to do with you?"

In his turn he seemed astonished, and then in a grave voice he answered—

"*I am Bug-Jargal.*"

CHAPTER XLIV.

I had thought that nothing that related to this extraordinary man could have surprised me. I had experienced some feelings of astonishment in finding the slave Pierrot transformed into an African King, but my admiration reached its height, when from his own confession I learned that he was the courageous, and magnanimous Bug-Jargal, the chief of the insurgents of Morne-Rouge; and I understood the respectful demeanour shown by all the rebels, even by Biassou, to Bug-Jargal, the King of Kakongo. He did not notice the impression that his last words had made upon me.

“They told me,” continued he, “that you were a prisoner in Biassou’s camp, and I hastened to deliver you.”

“But you told me just now that you too were a prisoner.”

He glanced inquisitively at me, as though seeking my reason for putting this natural question.

“Listen,” answered he. “This morning I was a prisoner in the hands of your friends, but I heard a report that Biassou had announced his intention of executing, before sunset to-day, a young prisoner named Leopold d’Auverney. They doubled my guards, and I was informed that my execution would immediately follow yours, and that in the event of escape, ten of my comrades would suffer in my stead. So you see that I have no time to lose.”

I still detained him.

“You made your escape then?” asked I.

“How else could I have been here? it was necessary to save you. Did I not owe you my life? Come, let us set out, we are an hour’s march from the camp of the whites, and about the same distance from that of Biassou. See the shadow of the cocoa-nut trees are lengthening, and their round tops look on the pass like the egg of the giant condor. In three hours the sun will have set. Come, brother, time waits for no man.”

In three hours the sun will have set! These words froze my blood, like an apparition from the tomb. They recalled to my mind the fatal promise which bound me to Biassou. Alas! in the rapture of seeing Marie again, I had not thought of our approaching eternal separation. I had been overwhelmed with my happiness, a flood of joyful emotions had swept away my memory, and in the midst of my delight I had forgotten that the inexorable finger of death was beckoning to me. But the words of my friend recalled everything to my mind. *In three hours the sun will have set!* It would take an hour to reach Biassou’s camp. There could be no faltering with my duty. The villain had my word, and it would never do to give him the chance of despising what he seemed still to put trust in—the word of a Frenchman; better far to die. The alternative was a terrible one, and I confess that I hesitated for a moment before I chose the right course. Can you blame me, gentlemen?

CHAPTER XLV.

With a deep sigh, I placed one hand in that of Bug-Jargal, and the other in that of Marie, who gazed with anxiety on the sadness that had overspread my features.

“Bug-Jargal,” said I, struggling with emotion, “I entrust to you the only being in the world that I love more than you—my Marie. Return to the camp without me, for I may not follow you.”

“Great heavens!” exclaimed Marie, hardly able to breathe from her terror and anxiety, “what new misfortune is this?”

Bug-Jargal trembled, and a look of mingled sorrow and surprise passed over his face.

“Brother, what is this that you say?”

The terror that had seized upon Marie at the thought of the coming misfortune which her love for me had almost caused her to divine, made me determined to spare her the dreadful truth for the moment. I placed my mouth to Bug-Jargal’s ear, and whispered in hurried accents: “I am a prisoner. I swore to Biassou that two hours before sunset I would once more place myself in his hands; in fact, I have sworn to return to my death!”

Filled with rage, in a loud voice he exclaimed:

“The monster! This then was his motive for a secret interview with you—it was to bind you with this fatal promise. I ought to have distrusted the wretch. Why did I not foresee that there must be some treachery lurking in the request, for he is a mulatto, not a black.”

“What is this—what treachery? what promise?” said Marie, in an agony of terror. “And who is Biassou?”

“Silence, silence,” repeated I, in a low voice to Bug-Jargal; “do not let us alarm Marie.”

“Good,” answered he; “but why did you give such a pledge, how could you consent?”

“I thought that you had deceived me, and that Marie was lost to me for ever. What was life to me then?”

“But a simple promise cannot bind you to a brigand like that.”

“I gave my word of honour.”

He did not seem to understand me.

“Your word of honour,” repeated he; “but what is that? You did not drink out of the same cup; you have not broken a ring together, or a branch of the red-blossomed maple?”

“No, we have done none of these things.”

“Well, then, what binds you to him?”

“My honour!”

“I cannot understand you; nothing pledges you to Biassou; come with us?”

“I cannot, my brother, for I am bound by my promise.”

“No, you are not bound,” cried he, angrily. “Sister, add your prayers to mine, and entreat your husband not to leave you. He wishes to return to the negro camp from which I rescued him, on the plea that he has promised to place his life in Biassou’s hands.”

“What have you done?” cried I.

It was too late to stay the effects of the generous impulse that had prompted him to endeavour to save the life of his rival by the help of her he loved. Marie cast herself into my arms with a cry of anguish, her hands clasped my neck, and she hung upon my breast, speechless and breathless.

“Oh, my Leopold, what does he say?” murmured she, at last. “Is he not deceiving me? It is not immediately after our reunion that you must quit me again. Answer me quickly or I shall die. You have no right to throw away your life, for you have given it to me. You would not leave me, never to see me again.”

“Marie,” answered I, “we shall meet again, but it will be in another place.”

“In another place! Where?” she asked, in faltering accents.

“In heaven,” I answered; for to this angel I could not lie.

Again she fainted, but this time it was from grief. I raised her up, and placed her in the arms of Bug-Jargal, whose eyes were full of tears.

“Nothing can keep you back, then,” said he; “I will add nothing to my entreaties, this sight ought to be enough. How can you resist Marie? For one word like she has spoken I would have sacrificed the world, and you cannot even give up death for her.”

“Honour binds me,” answered I, sadly. “Farewell, Bug-Jargal, farewell, brother; I leave her to you.”

He grasped my hand, overwhelmed with grief, and appeared hardly to understand me.

“Brother,” said he, “in the camp of the whites there are some of your relations, I will give her over to them; for my part I cannot accept your legacy.”

He pointed to a rocky crag which towered high above the adjacent country.

“Do you see that rock?” asked he, “when the signal of your death shall float from it, it will promptly be answered by the volley that announces mine.”

Hardly understanding his last words, I embraced him, pressed a last kiss upon the pale lips of Marie, who was slowly recovering under the attentions of her nurse, and fled precipitately, fearing that another look or word would shake my resolution.

CHAPTER XLVI.

I fled away, and plunged into the depths of the forest, following the tracks that we had left but a short time before, and not daring to cast a last glance behind me.

To stifle the grief which oppressed my heart, I dashed, without a moment’s pause, through the thickets, past hill and plain, until I reached the crest of a rock from which I could see the camp of Biassou, with its lines of waggons and huts swarming with life, and looking in the distance like a vast ant-hill.

Then I halted, for I felt that I had reached the end of my journey, and my life at the same time. Fatigue and emotion had weakened my physical powers, and I leaned against a tree to save myself from falling, and allowed my eyes to wander over the plain, which was to be my place of execution.

Up to this moment I had imagined that I had drained the cup of bitterness and gall to the dregs, but I had not until then tasted the most cruel of all misfortunes, that of being constrained by powerful moral force to voluntarily renounce life when it appeared most sweet. Some hours before I cared not for the world; extreme despair is a simulation of death which makes the reality more earnestly desired.

Marie had been restored to me, my dead happiness had been resuscitated, my past had become my future, and all my overshadowed hopes had beamed forth more gloriously than ever, and again had a new life, a life of youth, and love, and enchantment, showed gloriously upon the horizon. I was ready to enter upon this life, everything invited me to it; no material obstacle, no hindrance, was apparent; I was free, I was happy, and yet—I was about to die. I had made but one step into paradise and a hidden duty compelled me to retrace it, and to enter upon a path the goal of which was Death!

Death has but few terrors for the crushed and broken spirit, but how heavy and icy is his hand when it grasps the heart which has just begun to live and revel in the joys of life. I felt that I had emerged from the tomb, and had for a moment enjoyed the

greatest delights of life, love, friendship, and liberty, and now the door of the sepulchre was again opened, and an unseen force compelled me once more to enter it for ever.

CHAPTER XLVII.

When the first bitter pang of grief had passed, a kind of fury took possession of me, and I entered the valley with a rapid step, for I felt the necessity of shortening the period of suspense. When I presented myself at the negro outpost the sergeant in command at first refused to permit me to pass. It seemed strange that I should have had to have recourse to entreaties to enable me to effect my object. At last two of them seized me by the arms and led me into Biassou's presence.

As I entered the grotto he was engaged in examining the springs of various instruments of torture with which he was surrounded. At the noise my guard made in introducing me he turned his head, but my presence did not seem to surprise him.

"Do you see these?" asked he, displaying the horrible engines which lay before him.

I remained calm and impassive, for I knew the cruel nature of the *hero of humanity*, and I was determined to endure to the end without blenching.

"Leogri was lucky in being only hung, was he not?" asked he, with his sardonic sneer.

I gazed upon him with cold disdain, but I made no reply.

"Tell his reverence the chaplain that the prisoner has returned," said he to an aide-de-camp.

During the absence of the negro, we both remained silent, but I could see that he watched me narrowly.

Just then Rigaud entered, he seemed agitated, and whispered a few words to the general.

"Summon the chiefs of the different bands," said Biassou, calmly.

A quarter of an hour afterwards, the different chiefs in their strange equipments, were assembled in the grotto. Biassou rose.

"Listen to me, friends and comrades, the whites will attack us here at daybreak, our position is a bad one, and we must quit it. At sunset we will march to the Spanish frontier; Macaya, you and your negroes will form the advanced guards; Padrejan, see that the guns taken at Pralato are spiked, we cannot take them into the mountains; the brave men of Croix-des-Bouquets will follow Macaya; Toussaint will come next with the blacks from Léogane and Trose. If the *griots* or the *griotes* make any disturbance, I

will hand them over to the executioner of the army. Lieutenant-Colonel Cloud will distribute the English muskets that were disembarked at Cape Cabron, and will lead the half-breeds through the byways of the Vista. Slaughter any prisoners that may remain, notch the bullets, and poison the arrows. Let three tons of arsenic be thrown into the wells; the colonists will take it for sugar, and drink without distrust. Block up the roads to the plain with rocks, line the hedges with marksmen, and set fire to the forest. Rigaud, you will remain with me; Candi, summon my body-guard. The negroes of Morne-Rouge will form the rear-guard, and will not evacuate the camp until sunrise."

He leaned over to Rigaud, and whispered hoarsely—

"They are Bug-Jargal's men; if they are killed, all the better. 'Muerta la tropa, muerte el gefe!' ('If the men die, the chief will die.') Go, my brethren," he added, rising, "you will receive instructions from Candi."

The chiefs left the grotto.

"General," remarked Rigaud, "we ought to send that dispatch of Jean François; affairs are going badly, and it would stop the advance of the whites."

Biassou drew it hastily from his pocket.

"I agree with you, but there are so many faults, both in grammar and spelling, that they will laugh at it."

He presented the paper to me.

"For the last time, will you save your life? My kindness gives you a last chance. Help me to correct this letter, and to re-write it in proper official style."

I shook my head.

"Do you mean no?" asked he.

"I do," I replied.

"Reflect," he answered, with a sinister glance at the instruments of torture.

"It is because I have reflected that I refuse," replied I. "You are alarmed for the safety of yourself and your men, and you count upon this letter to delay the just vengeance of the whites. I do not desire to retain a life which may perhaps have saved yours. Let my execution commence."

“Ha, boy,” exclaimed Biassou, touching the instruments of torture with his foot, “you are growing familiar with these, are you? I am sorry, but I have not the time to try them on you. Our position is a dangerous one, and we must get out of it as soon as we can. And so you refuse to act as my secretary? Well, you are right, for it would not after all have saved your miserable life, which, by the way, I have promised to his reverence my chaplain. Do you think that I would permit any one to live who holds the secrets of Biassou?”

He turned to the Obi, who just then entered.

“Good father, is your guard ready?”

The latter made a sign in the affirmative.

“Have you taken it from amongst the negroes of Morne-Rouge? for they are the only ones who are not occupied in preparations for departure.”

Again the Obi bowed his head.

Then Biassou pointed out to me the black flag which I had before remarked in a corner of the grotto.

“That will show your friends when the time comes to give your place to your lieutenant. But I have no more time to lose, I must be off. By the way, you have been for a little excursion; how did you like the neighbourhood?”

“I noticed that there were enough trees upon which to hang you and all your band.”

“Ah,” retorted he, with his hideous laugh, “there is one place that you have not seen, but with which the good father will make you acquainted. Adieu, my young captain, and give my compliments to Leogri.”

He bade me farewell with a chuckle that reminded me of the hiss of the rattlesnake, and turned his back as the negroes dragged me away.

The veiled Obi followed us, his rosary in his hand.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

I walked between my guards without offering any resistance, which would indeed have been hopeless; we ascended the shoulder of a hill on the western side of the plain, and then my escort sat down for a brief period of repose. As we did so I cast a last lingering look at the setting sun which would never rise again for me on this earth.

My guards rose to their feet, and I followed their example, and we descended into a little dell, the beauty of which under any other circumstances would have filled me with admiration. A mountain stream ran through the bottom of the dell, which by its refreshing coolness produced a thick and luxuriant growth of vegetation, and fell into one of those dark blue lakes with which the hills of St. Domingo abound. How often in happier days have I sat and dreamed on the borders of these beautiful lakes in the twilight hour, when beneath the influence of the moon their deep azure changed into a sheet of silver, or when the reflections of the stars sowed the surface with a thousand golden spangles! How lovely this valley appeared to me! There were magnificent plane-trees of gigantic growth, closely grown thickets of *mauritias*, a kind of palm, which allows no other vegetation to flourish beneath its shade, date-trees, and magnolias with the goblet-shaped flowers, the tall catalpa, with its polished and exquisitely chiselled blossoms, standing out in relief against the golden buds of the ebony-trees. The Canadian maple mingled its yellow flowers with the blue aureolas of that species of the wild honeysuckle which the negroes call *coali*. Thick curtains of luxurious creepers concealed the bare sides of the rocks, whilst from the virgin soil rose a soft perfume, such as the first man may have inhaled amidst Eden's groves.

We continued our way along a footpath traced on the brink of the torrent. I was surprised to notice that this path closed abruptly at the foot of a tall peak, in which was a natural archway, from which flowed a rapid torrent.

A dull roar of falling waters, and an impetuous wind issued from this natural tunnel. The negroes who escorted me took a path to the left which led into a cavern and seemed to be the bed of a torrent that had long been dried up. Overhead I could see the rugged roof, half hidden by masses of vegetation, and the same sound of falling waters filled the whole of the vault. As I took the first step into the cavern, the Obi came to my side, and whispered in a hoarse voice, "Listen to what I have to predict: one of us two only shall leave by this path and issue again from the entrance of the cave."

I disdained to make any reply, and we advanced further into the gloom.

The noise became louder, and drowned the sound of our footfalls. I fancied that there must be a waterfall near, and I was not deceived.

After moving through the darkness for nearly ten minutes, we found ourselves on a kind of internal platform caused by the central formation of the mountain. The larger portion of this platform, which was of a semicircular shape, was inundated by a torrent which burst from the interior of the mountain with a terrible din. Above this subterranean hall the roof rose into the shape of a dome, covered with moss of a

yellowish hue. A large opening was formed in the dome through which the daylight penetrated, and the sides of the crevice were fringed with green trees, gilded just now by the last rays of the setting sun. At the northern extremity of the platform the torrent fell with a frightful noise into a deep abyss, over which appeared to float, without being able to illuminate its depths, a feeble portion of the light which came through the aperture in the roof. Over this terrible precipice hung the trunk of an old tree whose top-most branches were filled with the foam of the waterfall, and whose knotty roots pierced through the rock two or three feet below the brink.

This tree, whose top and roots were both swept by the torrent, hung over the abyss like a skeleton arm, and was so destitute of foliage that I could not distinguish its species. It had a strange and weird appearance; the humidity which saturated its roots prevented it from dying, whilst the force of the cataract tore off its new shoots, and only left it with the branches that had strength to resist the force of the water.

CHAPTER XLIX.

In this terrible spot the negroes came to a halt, and I knew that my hour had come.

It was in this abyss, then, that was to be sunk all my hopes in this world. The image of the happiness which but a few hours before I had voluntarily renounced, brought to my heart a feeling of regret, almost one of remorse.

To pray for mercy was unworthy of me, but I could not refrain from giving utterance to my regrets.

“Friends,” said I to the negroes who surrounded me, “it is a sad thing to die at twenty years of age, full of life and strength, when one is loved by one whom in your turn you adore, and you leave behind you eyes that will even weep for your untimely end.”

A mocking burst of laughter hailed my expression of regret. It came from the little Obi. This species of evil spirit, this living mystery, approaches me roughly.

“Ha, ha, ha! you regret life then, *Labadosca Dios*. My only fear was that death would have no terrors for you.”

It was the same voice, the same laugh that had so often before baffled my conjectures.

“Wretch!” exclaimed I, “who *are* you?”

“You are going to learn,” replied he, in a voice of concentrated passion; and thrusting aside the silver sun that half concealed his brown chest, he exclaimed, “Look!” I bent forward.

Two names were written in white letters on the hairy chest of the Obi, showing but too clearly the hideous and ineffaceable brand of the heated iron. One of these names was *Effingham*, the other was that of my uncle and myself, *D'Auverney*!

I was struck dumb with surprise.

"Well, Leopold d'Auverney," asked the Obi, "does not your name tell you mine?"

"No," answered I, astonished to hear the man name me, and seeking to recall to my mind my thoughts. "These two names were only to be found thus united upon the chest of my uncle's fool. But the poor dwarf is dead, and besides that, he was devotedly attached to us. You cannot be Habibrah."

"No other," shrieked he, and casting aside the blood-stained cap, he raised his veil and showed me the hideous features of the household fool; but a threatening and sinister expression had usurped the half-imbecile smile which was formerly eternally imprinted on his features.

"Great God!" exclaimed I, overwhelmed with surprise, "do all the dead, then, come back to life! It is Habibrah, my uncle's fool."

"His fool—and also his murderer."

I recoiled from him in horror.

"His murderer, wretch—was it thus that you repaid his kindness?"

He interrupted me.

"His kindness! rather say his insults."

"What!" I again cried, "was it you, villain, who struck the fatal blow?"

"It was," he replied, with a terrible expression upon his face. "I plunged my knife so deeply into his heart that he had hardly time to cast aside sleep before death claimed him. He cried out feebly, 'Habibrah, come to me,' *but I was with him* already."

The cold-blooded manner in which he narrated the murder disgusted me.

"Wretch! cowardly assassin! You forgot, then, all his kindness, that you ate at his table, and slept at the foot of his bed——"

"Like a dog," interrupted Habibrah, roughly, "*como un perro*. I thought too much of what you call his kindness, but which I looked upon as insults. I took vengeance upon him, and I will do the same to you. Listen: do you think that because I am a mulatto and a deformed dwarf that I am not a man? Ah, I have a soul stronger, deeper, and

bolder than the one that I am about to set free from your girlish frame. I was given to your uncle as if I had been a pet monkey. I was his butt, I amused him, whilst he despised me. He loved me, do you say—yes, forsooth, I had a place in his heart between his dog and his parrot, but I found a better place there with my dagger." I shuddered.

"Yes," continued the dwarf, "it was I, I that did it all. Look me well in the face, Leopold d'Auverney; you have often laughed at me, now you shall tremble before me. And you dare to speak of your uncle's liking for me, a liking that carried degradation with it. If I entered the room a shout of contemptuous laughter was my greeting; my appearance, my deformities, my features, my costume—all furnished food for laughter to your accursed uncle and his accursed friends, whilst I was not allowed to remain silent, it was necessary for me to join in the laughter that was levelled at me; I foam with rage whilst I think of it.

"Answer me: do you think that after such humiliations I could feel anything but the deadliest hatred for the creature that inflicted them upon me? Do you not think that they were a thousand times harder to endure than the toil in the burning sun, the fetters, and the whip of the driver, which were the lot of the other slaves? Do you not think that they would cause ardent, implacable, and eternal hatred to spring up in the heart of man as lasting as the accursed brand which degrades my chest? Has not the vengeance that I have taken for my sufferings been short and insufficient. Why could I not make my tyrant suffer but a small portion of what I endured for so many years? Why could he not before his death know the bitterness of wounded pride, and feel what burning traces tears of shame leave upon a face condemned to wear a perpetual smile? Alas! it is too hard to have waited so long for the hour of vengeance, and then only to find it in a dagger thrust! Had he but only known the hand that struck him it would have been something; but I was too eager to hear his dying groan, and I drove the knife too quickly home; he died without having recognized me, and my eagerness baulked my vengeance. This time at least, however, it shall be more complete. You see me, do you not? though in point of fact you may be unable to recognize me in my new character. You have always been in the habit of seeing me laughing and joyous, but now nothing prevents me from letting my true nature appear on my face, and I do not greatly resemble my former self. You only knew my mask; look upon my real face!"

At that moment his appearance was truly terrible.

"Monster," exclaimed I, "you deceive yourself; there is more of buffoonery than heroism in your face even now, and nothing in your heart but cruelty."

"Do not speak of cruelty," retorted he, "think of your uncle——"

“Wretch,” returned I, “if he were cruel it was at your instigation. You, to pretend to pity the position of the poor slaves—why, then, did you exert all your influence to make their master treat them less harshly? Why did you never intercede in their favour?”

“I would not have done so for the world. Would I ever attempt to hinder a white man from blackening his soul by an act of cruelty? No, no, I urged him to inflict more and more punishment upon them, so as to hurry on the revolt, and so draw down a surer vengeance upon the heads of our oppressors. In seeming to injure my brethren I was serving them.”

I was thunderstruck at such a cunning act of diplomacy carried out by such a man.

“Well,” continued the dwarf, “do you believe now that I had the brain to conceive and the hand to execute? What do you think of Habibrah the buffoon? what do you think of your uncle’s fool?”

“Finish what you have begun so well,” replied I. “Let me die, but let there be no more delay.”

“And suppose I wish for delay? Suppose that it does my heart good to watch you in the agonies of suspense? You see Biassou owed me my share in the last plunder. When I saw you in our camp I asked for your life as my share, and he granted it willingly, and now you are mine; I am amusing myself with you. Soon you will follow the stream of the cataract into the abyss beneath; but before doing so let me tell you that I have discovered the spot where your wife is concealed, and it was I that advised Biassou to set the forest on fire; and the work, I imagine, is already begun. Thus your family will be swept from the face of the earth. Your uncle fell by steel, you will perish by water, and your Marie by fire!”

“Villain! villain!” I exclaimed, and I made an effort to seize him by the throat, but a wave of his hand summoned my guards.

“Bind him!” cried he; “he precipitates his hour of doom!” In dead silence the negroes commenced to bind me with the cords that they had carried with them. Suddenly I fancied that I heard the distant barking of a dog, but this sound might be only an illusion caused by the noise of the cascade.

The negroes had finished binding me, and placed me on the brink of the abyss into which I was so soon to be hurled.

The dwarf with folded arms gazed upon the scene with a sinister expression of joy.

I lifted my eyes to the opening in the roof so as to avoid the triumphant expression of malice painted on his countenance, and to take one last look at the blue sky. At that instant the barking was more distinctly heard, and the enormous head of Rask appeared at the opening.

I trembled; the dwarf exclaimed, “Finish with him!” and the negroes, who had not noticed the dog, raised me in their arms to hurl me into the hell of waters which roared and foamed beneath me.

CHAPTER L.

“Comrades!” cried a voice of thunder.

All looked at the spot from whence the sound proceeded: Bug-Jargal was standing on the edge of the opening, a crimson plume floating on his head.

“Comrades,” repeated he, “stay your hands!”

The negroes prostrated themselves upon the earth in token of submission.

“I am Bug-Jargal,” continued he.

The negroes struck the earth with their heads, uttering cries the meaning of which I could not comprehend.

“Unbind the prisoner,” commanded the chief.

But now the dwarf appeared to recover from the stupor into which the sudden appearance of Bug-Jargal had thrown him, and seized by the arm the negro who was preparing to cut the cords that bound me.

“What is the meaning of this? What are you doing?” cried he.

Then, raising his voice, he addressed Bug-Jargal: “Chief of Morne-Rouge,” cried he, “what are you doing here?”

“I have come to command my own men,” was the reply.

“Yes,” answered the dwarf, in tones of concentrated passion, “these negroes do certainly belong to your band; but,” added he, raising his voice again, “by what right do you interfere with my prisoner?”

The chief answered, “I am Bug-Jargal;” and again the negroes struck the ground with their foreheads.

“Bug-Jargal,” continued Habibrah, “cannot contravene the orders of Biassou; this white man was given to me by Biassou; I desire his death, and die he shall. Obey me,” he added, turning to the negroes, “and hurl him into the abyss.”

At the well-known voice of the Obi the negroes rose to their feet and took a step towards me. I thought all was lost.

“Unbind the prisoner!” cried Bug-Jargal again.

In an instant I was free. My surprise was equalled by the fury of the Obi. He attempted to throw himself upon me. The negroes interfered; then he burst out into imprecations and threats.

“ ‘Demonios! rabia! inferno de mi alma!’ How, wretches, you refuse to obey me! Do you not recognize my voice! Why did I lose time in talking to this accursed one? I ought to have had him hurled without delay to the fishes of the gulf. By wishing to make my vengeance more complete I have lost it all together. *Orabia de Satan*. Listen to me: if you do not obey me, and hurl him into the abyss, I will curse you; your hair shall grow white, the mosquitoes and sandflies shall eat you up alive, your legs and your arms shall bend like reeds, your breath shall burn your throat like red hot-sand, you shall die young, and after your death your spirits shall be compelled to turn a millstone as big as a mountain, in the moon where it is always cold.”

The scene was a strange one. The only one of my colour, in a damp and gloomy cavern surrounded by negroes with the aspect of demons, balanced as it were upon the edge of a bottomless gulf, and every now and then threatened by a deformed dwarf, by a hideous sorcerer upon whose striped garments and pointed cap the fading light shone faintly, yet protected by a tall negro who was standing at the only point from which daylight could be seen, it appeared to me that I was at the gates of hell, awaiting the conflict between my good and evil angels, to result in the salvation or the destruction of my soul. The negroes appeared to be terrified at the threats of the Obi, and he endeavoured to profit by their indecision.

“I desire the death of the white man, and he *shall* die; obey me.”

Bug-Jargal replied solemnly, “He shall live; I am Bug-Jargal, my father was the King of Kakongo, who dispensed justice at the gate of his palace.”

Again the negroes cast themselves upon the ground.

The chief continued.

“Brethren, go and tell Biassou not to unfurl the black banner upon the mountain-top which should announce to the whites the signal of this man’s death, for he was the saviour of Bug-Jargal’s life, and Bug-Jargal wills that he should live.”

They rose up. Bug-Jargal threw his red plume on the ground before them. The chief of the guard picked it up with every show of respect, and they left the cavern without a word; whilst the Obi, with a glance of rage, followed them down the subterranean avenue.

I will not attempt to describe my feelings at that moment. I fixed my eyes, wet with tears, upon Pierrot, who gazed upon me with a singular expression of love and tenderness. “God be praised,” said he, “you are saved. Brother, go back by the road by which you entered, you will meet me again in the valley.”

He waved his hand to me and disappeared from my sight.

CHAPTER LI.

Eager to arrive at the appointed meeting-place, and to learn by what fortunate means my saviour had been enabled to make his appearance at so opportune a moment, I prepared to leave the cavern in which my nerves had been so severely tried; but as I prepared to enter the subterranean passage an unexpected obstacle presented itself in my path.

It was Habibrah!

The revengeful Obi had not in reality followed the negroes as I had believed, but had concealed himself behind a rocky projection of the cave, waiting for a propitious moment for his vengeance; and this moment had come. He laughed bitterly as he showed himself. A dagger, the same that he was in the habit of using for a crucifix, shone in his right hand: at the sight of it I recoiled a step.

“Ha, accursed one, did you think to escape me? But the fool is not such a fool after all! I have you, and this time there shall be no delay. Your friend Bug-Jargal shall not wait for you long, you shall soon be at the meeting-place, but it will be the wave of the cataract that shall bear you there.”

As he spoke he dashed at me with uplifted weapon.

“Monster,” cried I, retreating to the platform, “just now you were only an executioner, now you are a murderer.”

“I am an avenger,” returned he, grinding his teeth.

I was on the edge of the precipice; he endeavoured to hurl me over with a blow of his dagger. I avoided it. His foot slipped on the treacherous moss which covered the rocks, he rolled into the slope polished and rounded by the constant flow of water.

“A thousand devils!” roared he.

He had fallen into the abyss.

I have already mentioned that the roots of the old tree projected through the crevices of the rocks, a little below the edge of the precipice. In his fall the dwarf struck against these, his striped petticoat caught in them, he grasped at them as a last hope of safety, and clung to them with all the energy of despair.

His pointed bonnet fell from his head; to maintain his position he had to let go his dagger, and the two together disappeared in the depths of the abyss.

Habibrah, suspended over the terrible gulf, strove vainly to regain the platform, but his short arms could not reach the rocky edge, and he broke his nails in useless efforts to obtain a hold on the muddy surface of the rocks which sloped down into the terrible abyss.

He howled with rage.

The slightest push on my part would have been sufficient to hurl him to destruction, but it would have been an act of cowardice, and I made no movement. This moderation on my part seemed to surprise him.

Thanking heaven for its mercies, I determined to abandon him to his fate, and was about to leave the cave when, in a voice broken with fear, and which appeared to come from the depths of the abyss, he addressed me.

“Master,” cried he, “master, do not go, for pity’s sake! do not, in the name of heaven, leave a guilty creature to perish, that it is in your power to save. Alas, my strength is failing me; the roots bend, and slip through my fingers, the weight of my body drags me down—I must let go, or my arms will break! Alas, master, the fearful gulfs boils and seethes beneath me! *Nombre santo de Dios!* Have you no pity for the poor fool? He has been very guilty, but prove that the white men are better than the mulattoes, the masters than the slaves, by saving him.”

I approached the brink of the precipice, and the feeble light that broke through the aperture in the roof showed me, on the repulsive features of the dwarf, an expression which I had never noticed before, that of prayer and supplication.

“Señor Leopold,” continued he, encouraged by the movement of pity that I showed, “can you see a fellow-creature in so terrible a position of peril, without stretching out a hand to save him? Give me your hand, master; with very slight assistance from you I can save myself—I only ask for a little help. Help me then, and my gratitude shall be as great as my crimes.”

I interrupted him.

“Unhappy wretch, do not recall them to my memory.”

“It is because I repent of them that I do so. Oh, be generous to me! O heavens, my hand relaxes its grasp, and I fall! *Ay desdichado!* The hand, your hand; in the name of the mother who bore you, give me your hand!”

I cannot describe the tone of agony in which he pleaded for help. In this moment of peril I forgot all; it was no longer an enemy, a traitor, and an assassin, but an unhappy fellow-creature, whom a slight exertion upon my part could rescue from a frightful death. He implored me in heart-rending accents. Reproaches would have been fruitless, and out of place. The necessity for help was urgent and immediate. I stooped, knelt down on the brink of the precipice, and grasping the trunk of the tree with one hand, I extended the other to Habibrah.

As soon as it was within his reach, he grasped it with both his hands, and hung on to it with all his strength. Far from attempting to aid me in my efforts to draw him up, I felt that he was exerting all his powers to draw me down with him into the abyss. If it had not been for the assistance afforded to me by the trunk of the tree, I must infallibly have been dragged over by the violent and unexpected jerk that the wretched man gave me.

“Villain!” cried I; “what are you doing?”

“Avenging myself,” answered he, with a peal of devilish laughter. “Aha! madman, have I got you in my clutches once more? You have of your own free-will placed yourself again in my power, and I hold you tight. You were saved and I was lost, and yet you of your own accord place your head between the jaws of the alligator, because it wept after having roared. I can bear death, since it will give me revenge. You are caught in the trap, *amigo*, and I shall take a companion with me to feed the fishes of the lake.”

“Ah, traitor!” cried I, struggling with all my strength. “Is it thus that you serve me when I was trying to save you?”

“Yes,” hissed he. “I know that we could have saved ourselves together, but I would rather that we should die at the same moment. I had rather compass your death, than save my life. Come down!”

As he spoke, his brown muscular hands grasped mine with unexpected strength, his eyes blazed, his mouth foamed; the strength, the departure of which he had before so piteously bewailed, had returned to him increased a thousandfold by the hope of revenge. His feet were planted like two perpendicular levers on a ledge of rock, and he struggled like a tiger against the root which, entangled in his clothes, supported him in spite of himself, for he was endeavouring with all his might to shake himself free, so as to bring all his weight to bear on me, and to drag me more quickly into the yawning gulf below.

In his rage he endeavoured to bite me, whilst his hideous features were rendered more terrible by their expression of satanic frenzy.

He looked like the demon of the cave seeking to drag down his victim to his abode of gloom and darkness.

One of my knees, by good fortune, was planted in a groove of the rock, and my arm was wrapped round the trunk of the tree, and I strove against the efforts of the dwarf with all the strength that the feeling of self-preservation could give me at such a moment.

Every now and then I drew a long breath, and shouted “Bug-Jargal” with all the force of my lungs. But the roar of the cascade, and the distance that he must be off, gave me but faint hopes of my voice reaching him.

But the dwarf, who had not anticipated so vigorous a resistance on my part, redoubled his efforts. I began to grow weak, though in reality the struggle had not taken so long as the narration of it. A violent pain paralyzed my arm, my sight grew dim, bright sparks flashed before my eyes, and a buzzing sound filled my ears. I heard the creaking of the root as it bent, mingled with the laugh of the monster, and the abyss seemed to rise up towards me as though eager to engulf its prey. But before I gave up all hope I made a last effort, and collecting together my exhausted forces, I once again shouted “Bug-Jargal.”

A loud bark replied to me; it was Rask who thus answered my appeal for help. I glanced upwards—Bug-Jargal and his dog were gazing at me from the orifice in the roof.

He saw my danger at once.

“Hold on!” cried he.

Habibrah, fearing that I might yet be saved, foamed with rage, and crying, “Come down there, come down!” renewed the attack with almost supernatural vigour.

At this moment, weakened by the long struggle, my arm lost its hold of the tree. All seemed over with me, when I felt myself seized from behind. It was Rask!

At a sign from his master he had leapt down on the platform, and seized me by the skirts of my uniform with his powerful teeth.

This unlooked-for aid saved me. Habibrah had exhausted all his strength in a last convulsive effort, whilst I put forth all mine and succeeded in withdrawing my hand from his cramped and swollen fingers. The root, which had been for some time yielding, now parted suddenly, Rask gave me a violent pull backwards, and the wretched dwarf disappeared in the foam of the cascade, hurling a curse at me which was swallowed up with him in the whirl of waters.

Such was the terrible end of my uncle’s fool.

CHAPTER LII.

The excitement of the last few hours, the terrible struggle and its awful conclusion, had utterly exhausted me, and I lay where I had fallen, almost deprived of sense or power of motion. The voice of Bug-Jargal restored me to myself.

“Brother,” cried he, “hasten to leave this place. In half an hour the sun will have set; I will meet you in the valley. Follow Rask.”

The words of my friend restored hope, strength, and courage to me. I rose to my feet. The great dog ran rapidly down the subterranean passage; I followed him, his bark guiding me through the darkness. After a time I saw a streak of light, and in a few minutes I gained the entrance, and breathed more freely as I passed through the archway. As I left the damp and gloomy vault behind me, I recalled to my mind the prediction of the dwarf, and its fatal fulfilment, “*One only of us shall return by this road*.” His attempt had failed, but the prophecy had been carried out.

CHAPTER LIII.

Bug-Jargal was waiting for me in the valley. I threw myself into his arms, but I had so many questions to put to him that I could not find words in which to express them.

“Listen to me,” said he. “Your wife, my sister, is in safety in the camp of the white men; I handed her over to a relation of yours who was in command of the outposts, and I

wished to again constitute myself a prisoner, lest they should execute the ten prisoners whose lives were security for my reappearance. But your relative told me to return, and, if possible, to prevent your execution; and that the ten negroes should not be executed until Biassou should announce the fact by displaying a black flag on one of the highest peaks of the mountains. Then I returned to do my best. Rask led me to where you were—thanks be to heaven, I arrived in time. You will live, and so shall I."

He extended his hand to me, adding—

"Brother, are you satisfied?"

I again clasped him to my breast; I entreated him not to leave me again, but to remain with the white troops, and I promised him to exert all my influence to procure him a commission in the colonial army. But he interrupted me with an angry air.

"Brother," asked he, "do I propose to you to join my army?"

I kept silence, for I felt that I had been guilty of a folly; then he added in a tone of affected gaiety—

"Come, let us hurry to the camp to reassure your wife."

This proposal was what I most ardently desired; we started at once. The negro knew the way, and took the lead; Rask followed us.

Here D'Auverney stopped suddenly, and cast a gloomy look around him; perspiration in large beads covered his forehead; he concealed his face with his hands. Rask looked at him with an air of uneasiness.

"Yes, you may well look at me like that," murmured he.

An instant afterwards he rose from his seat in a state of violent agitation, and, followed by the sergeant and the dog, rushed hurriedly from the tent.

CHAPTER LIV.

"I will lay a bet," said Henri, "that we are nearing the end of the drama; and I should really feel sorry if anything happened to Bug-Jargal, for he was really a famous fellow."

Paschal removed from his lips the mouth of his wicker-covered flask, and said—

"I would give twelve dozen of port to have seen the cocoa-nut cup that he emptied at a draught."

Alfred, who was gently humming the air of a love-song, interrupted himself by asking Henri to tie his aguilettes; then he added—

“The negro interests me very much, but I have not dared to ask D’Auverney if he knew the air of ‘Beautiful Padilla.’ ”

“What a villain that Biassou was,” continued Paschal; “but for all that he knew the value of a Frenchman’s word; but there are people more pitiless than Biassou—my creditors, for instance.”

“But what do you think of D’Auverney’s story?” asked Henri.

“Ma foi,” answered Alfred, “I have not paid much attention to it; but I certainly had expected something more interesting from D’Auverney’s lips, and then I want to know the air to which Bug-Jargal sang his songs. In fact, I must admit that the story has bored me a little.”

“You are right,” returned Paschal, the aide-de-camp. “Had I not had my pipe and my bottle, I should have passed but a dreary evening. Besides, there were a lot of absurdities in it; how can we believe, for instance, that that little thief of a sorcerer—I forget his name—would have drowned himself for the sake of destroying his enemy?”

Henri interrupted him with a smile.

“You cannot understand any one taking to water, can you, Captain Paschal? But what struck me more than anything was, that every time D’Auverney mentioned the name of Bug-Jargal his lame dog lifted up his head.”

The sound of the sentry carrying arms warned them of D’Auverney’s return. All remained silent. He walked up and down the tent for a few moments with folded arms, without a word.

Old Sergeant Thaddeus, who had returned with him, bent over Rask, and furtively caressed him, hoping by that means to conceal his countenance, which was full of anxiety, from the eyes of his captain. At length, after making a strong effort, D’Auverney continued his narrative.

CHAPTER LV.

Rask followed us. The highest rock in the valley was not yet lighted by the rays of the sun; a glimmer of light touched it for an instant, and then passed away.

The negro trembled, and grasped my hand firmly.

“Listen,” said he.

A dull sound like the discharge of a piece of artillery was heard, and was repeated by the echoes of the valleys.

“It is the signal,” said the negro in a gloomy voice. “It was a cannon shot, was it not?”

I nodded in sign of the affirmative.

In two bounds he sprang to the top of a lofty rock; I followed him. He crossed his arms and smiled sadly.

“Do you see that?” asked he.

I looked in the direction to which he pointed, and on the lofty peak to which he had drawn my attention during our last interview with Marie, and which was now glowing in the rays of the setting sun, I saw a huge black flag, its folds flapping idly in the breeze.

(At this point of his recital D’Auverney again paused.)

I learned afterwards that Biassou, in a hurry to leave his ground, had ordered the flag to be hoisted without waiting for the return of the negroes who had been despatched to assist at my execution. Bug-Jargal was still in the same position—his arms folded, and his eyes eagerly fixed upon the fatal signal.

Suddenly he started, and seemed about to descend from his post of observation.

“Great heavens! my unfortunate comrades!” cried he. “Did you hear the gun?”

I made no reply.

“It was the signal, my brother. They are leading them now to the place of execution.”

His head fell upon his breast; after a short pause, he said—

“Go, brother, and rejoice your wife; Rask will guide you to her;” and he whistled an African air, which Rask appeared to recognize, for he wagged his tail, and seemed ready to set out.

Bug-Jargal grasped my hand, and strove to smile, but his features were contracted, and his look was ghastly.

“Farewell for ever!” cried he, and dashed into the thicket by which we were surrounded.

I remained motionless; the little that I understood of the position made me fear the worst.

Rask, on seeing his master disappear, advanced to the edge of the rock, and, raising his head, uttered a plaintive howl. Then he turned to me, his tail was between his legs and his eyes were moist; he looked at me with an air of inquietude, and turned to the spot from which his master had disappeared, and barked several times. I understood him, and shared his fears. Suddenly he dashed off in pursuit of his master, and I should soon have lost sight of him, had he not every now and then halted to give me time to come up to him. In this manner we passed through many a valley and leafy glade; we climbed hills and crossed streams. At last——

D'Auverney's voice failed him, an expression of despair covered his face, and he could not find words to continue his narrative.

"Continue it, Thaddeus," said he, "for I can go on no further."

The old sergeant was not less distressed than his captain, but he made an effort to obey him.

"With your permission, gentlemen," said he, "and since it is your wish, captain, I must tell you, gentlemen, that Bug-Jargal—otherwise called Pierrot—was a tall negro, very strong, very gentle, and the bravest man in the world—except you, captain, if you please; but I was terribly prejudiced against him, for which I will never pardon myself, though you, captain, have forgiven me; so much so, that, when we heard that your execution had been fixed for the evening of the second day, I flew into a furious rage with the poor fellow, and I felt a fiendish pleasure in informing him that his death would pay for yours, or that, if he escaped, ten of his men would be shot by way of reprisal. He said nothing upon hearing this, but an hour afterwards he made his escape through a great hole which he pierced in the wall of his prison."

D'Auverney made a movement of impatience, and Thaddeus continued:

"Well, when we saw the great black flag hoisted on the mountain—and as the negro had not returned, a fact which surprised none of us—our officers ordered the signal gun to be fired, and I was ordered to conduct the ten negroes to the place of execution, a spot we call the Devil's Mouth, about—but it does not matter how far it was from the camp. Well, as you can imagine, we did not take them there to set them at liberty, but I had them bound, as is the custom, and paraded my firing party, when who should burst upon us but the tall negro. He was out of breath with the speed that he had made.

"Good evening, Thaddeus,' said he. 'I am in time.'

“No, gentlemen, he did not utter another word, but hastened to unbind his comrades. I stood there in stupefaction. Then—with your permission, captain—there was a good deal of generous argument between the other negroes and himself, which might have lasted longer but—well, it is no good hiding the fact, it was I that stopped it. At any rate, he took their place. Then the great dog came, poor Rask; he leapt at my throat: he ought to have held me longer, but Pierrot made a sign to him, and the poor brute released me, but his master could not prevent his taking his place at my feet. Then, believing that you were dead, captain—well, I was in a fine rage; I gave the word, Bug-Jargal fell, and a bullet broke the dog’s foot.

“Since that time, gentlemen,” continued the sergeant, sadly, “he has been lame. Then I heard groans in the adjacent wood; I reached it, and found you—a stray bullet had hit you as you were running forward to save the tall negro. Yes, captain, you were wounded, but Bug-Jargal was dead!

“We carried you back to the camp; you were not dangerously wounded, and the doctors soon cured you, but I believe Madame Marie’s nursing had a good deal to do with it.”

The sergeant stopped in his story, and D’Auverney, in a solemn voice, added—

“Bug-Jargal was dead!”

Thaddeus bowed his head.

“Yes,” said he, “he spared my life, and I—I killed him.”

EPILOGUE.

The reader, in general, is seldom satisfied with the conclusion of a narrative unless it enters into every detail in winding up the story. For this reason the minutest researches have been made into the facts having reference to the concluding details of the last scenes of Leopold d’Auverney’s life, as well as those of his sergeant and the dog Rask.

The reader is already aware that the captain’s feelings of melancholy arose partly from the death of Bug-Jargal, otherwise called Pierrot; but they are not acquainted with the fact that those feelings were terribly increased by the loss of his beloved Marie, who, after having been preserved from the horrors that attended the taking of Fort Galifet, perished in the burning of Cap which took place some weeks later.

The fate of Leopold d’Auverney may be briefly recapitulated. A great victory had been won by the Republican forces against one of those united European armies which so

often struggled vainly against our soldiers; and the General of Division, who was in command of the entire force, was seated in his tent drawing up, from the reports of his staff, the bulletin which was to be sent to the National Convention concerning the victory of the day before. As he was thus occupied, an aide-de-camp announced to him the arrival of a Representative of the People, who demanded an audience. The general loathed these ambassadors of the guillotine, who were sent by the party of the Mountain to humiliate the military officers, and too often to demand the heads of the most gallant of the men who had fought bravely for the Republic; looking upon them as chartered informers charged with the hateful mission of spying upon glory. But it would have been dangerous for him to have refused to admit him, especially after such a victory as had resulted to the arms of the Republic.

The gory idol which France had then set up almost invariably demanded victims of the highest lineage, and the executioners of the Place de la Revolution were delighted if they could at the same time cause a head and a coronet to fall—were it one of thorns, like that of Louis XVI.; of flowers, like those of the girls of Verdun; or of laurels like those of Custine or of André Chénier. The general, therefore, gave immediate orders that the Representative of the People should be introduced to his presence.

After a few clumsy congratulations regarding the recent victory, the Representative of the People came up close to the general, and muttered in a suppressed voice—

“But this is not all, Citizen General; it is not enough to destroy the foreign enemy—those nearer home must be also crushed.”

“What do you mean, Citizen Representative?” asked the astonished general.

“There is in your division,” answered the emissary of the Convention, in an unpleasant manner, “a captain named Leopold d’Auverney, who is serving in the 32nd Brigade; do you know him, general?”

“Know him, certainly I do,” replied the general; “only as you came in I was reading the report of the Adjutant General which refers to him. The 32nd Brigade had in him an excellent officer, and I was about to recommend him for promotion.”

“What, Citizen General?” interposed the representative, harshly, “were you thinking of promoting him?”

“Such was most certainly my intention, citizen.”

“Victory has blinded you, general,” cried the representative, imperiously; “take care what you say or do. If you cherish serpents who are the enemies of the people, take care that the people do not crush you and the serpents at the same moment. This

Leopold d'Auverney is an aristocrat, a hater of the revolution, a royalist, a Girondin! Public justice demands his head, and he must be given up to me on the spot."

"I cannot do so," replied the general, coldly.

"*How! you cannot do so?*" shouted the representative, whose rage was redoubled at this opposition. "Are you ignorant, general, of the extent of my power? I, in the name of the Republic, command you, and you have no option but to obey. Listen to me: in consideration of your recent success, I will read you the report which has been handed in regarding this D'Auverney, and which I shall send with him to the Public Prosecutor. 'Leopold Auverney (formerly known as D'Auverney), captain in the 32nd Brigade, is convicted of having, at a meeting of conspirators, narrated an anti-revolutionary tale, conducing to the ridicule of the true principles of Equality and Liberty, and exalting the worn-out superstitions known under the names of *royalty* and *religion*. Convicted, secondly, of having used expressions deservedly forbidden by all good republicans, to describe certain recent events, notably those referring to the negroes of Saint Domingo. Convicted thirdly, of having made use of the expression *Monsieur* instead of *Citizen* during the whole of his narrative; and, by the said narrative, of having endeavoured to bring into contempt the Republic one and indivisible, and also to propagate the infamous doctrines of the Girondins.' Death is the punishment for these crimes, and I demand his body. Do you hesitate, general, to hand this traitor over to me, to meet the well-merited punishment of his crimes?"

"Citizen," answered the general, with dignity, "this enemy of his country has given his life for her. As a contrast to your report, listen to an extract from mine. 'Leopold d'Auverney, captain in the 32nd Brigade, has contributed largely to the success that our arms have obtained. A formidable earthwork had been erected by the allies; it was the key to their position, and it was absolutely necessary to carry it at the point of the bayonet. It was an almost impregnable position, and the death of the stormers who led the attack was almost inevitable. Captain d'Auverney volunteered to lead the forlorn hope; he carried the earthwork, but was shot down at the moment of victory. Sergeant Thaddeus of the 32nd, and a large dog, were found dead within a few paces of him.' It was my intention to propose that the National Convention should pass a vote that the Captain Leopold d'Auverney had merited the thanks of his country. You see, Citizen Representative," continued the general, calmly, "that our duties differ slightly—we both send a report to the Convention. The same name appears in each list: you denounce him as a traitor, I hold him up to posterity as a hero. You devote him to ignominy, I to glory; you would erect a scaffold for him, whilst I propose a statue in his honour. He is fortunate in having, by death in action, escaped the infamy you proposed for him. He whose death you desired is dead—he has not waited for you."

Furious at seeing his conspiracy disappear with the conspirator, the Representative muttered—

“Dead, is he?—more’s the pity.”

The general caught his words, and in indignant tones exclaimed—

“There is still something left for you, Citizen Representative. Go seek for the body of Captain d’Auverney amongst the ruins of the redoubt. Who can tell if the bullets of the enemy may not have spared his head for his country’s guillotine?”

CLAUDE GUEUX.

CLAUDE GUEUX.

Claude Gueux was a poor workman, living in Paris about eight years ago, with his mistress and child. Although his education had been neglected, and he could not even read, the man was naturally clever and intelligent, and thought deeply over matters. Winter came with its attendant miseries—want of work, want of food, want of fuel. The man, the woman, the child, were frozen and famished. The man turned thief. I know not what he stole. What signifies, as the result was the same: to the woman and child it gave three days’ bread and firing; to the man five years’ imprisonment.

He was taken to Clairvaux, the abbey now converted into a prison, its cells into dungeons, and the altar itself into a pillory. This is called progress.

But to continue our story. Claude Gueux the honest workman, turned thief from force of circumstances, had a countenance which impressed you: a high forehead somewhat lined with care, dark hair already streaked with grey, deep-set eyes beaming with kindness; whilst the lower part clearly indicated firmness mingled with self-respect. He rarely spoke, yet there was a certain dignity in the man which commanded respect and obedience. A fine character, and we shall see what society made of it.

Over the prison workshop was an inspector, who rarely forgot that he was the gaoler also, to his subordinates, handing them the tools with one hand, and casting chains upon them with the other. A tyrant, never using even self-reasoning, with ideas against which there was no appeal, hard rather than firm, at times he could even be jocular;

doubtless a good father, a good husband, really not vicious, but *bad*. He was one of those men who never can grasp a fresh idea, who apparently fail to be moved by any emotion; yet with hatred and rage in their hearts they look like blocks of wood, heated on the one side but frozen on the other. This man's chief characteristic was obstinacy; and so proud was he of this very stubbornness that he compared himself to Napoleon—an optical delusion, like taking the mere flicker of a candle for a star. When he had made up his mind to a thing, however absurd, he would carry out that absurd idea. How often it happens, when a catastrophe occurs, if we inquire into the cause, we find it originated through the obstinacy of one with little ability, but having full faith in his own powers.

Such was the inspector of the prison workshop at Clairvaux; a man of flint placed by society over others, who hoped to strike sparks out of such material—but a spark from a like source is apt to end in a conflagration.

The inspector soon singled out Claude Gueux, who had been numbered and placed in the workshop, and, finding him clever, treated him well. Seeing Claude looking sad—for he was ever thinking of her he termed his wife—and being in a good humour, by way of pastime to console the prisoner, he told him the woman had become one of the unfortunate sisterhood, and taken to infamy; of the child nothing was known.

After a time Claude had accustomed himself to prison rule, and by his calmness of manner, and a certain amount of resolution clearly marked in his face, he had acquired a great ascendency over his companions, who so much admired him that they consulted, and tried in all ways to imitate him. The very expression in his eyes clearly indicated the man's character; besides, is not the eye the window to the soul, and what other result could be anticipated than that the intelligent spirit should lead men with few ideas, who yielded to the attraction as the metal does to the loadstone. In less than three months Claude was the virtual head of the workshop, and at times he almost doubted whether he was king or prisoner, treated something like a captive pope, surrounded by his cardinals. Such popularity ever has its attendant hatred, and though beloved by the prisoners, Claude was detested by the gaolers. To him two men's rations would have been scarcely sufficient. The inspector laughed at this, as his own appetite was large; but what would be mirth to a duke, to a prisoner would be a great misfortune. When a free man Claude Gueux could earn his daily four-pound loaf and enjoy it, but as a prisoner he daily worked, and for his labour received one pound and a-half of bread and four ounces of meat; it naturally followed that he was always hungry.

He had just finished his meagre fare, and was about to resume his labours, hoping in work to forget famine, when a weakly-looking young man came towards him, holding a knife and his untasted rations in his hand, but seemingly afraid to address him.

“What do you want?” said Claude, roughly.

“A favour at your hands,” timidly replied the young man.

“What is it?” said Claude.

“Help me with my rations, I have more than I can eat.”

For a moment Claude was taken aback, but without further ceremony he divided the food in two and at once partook of one half.

“Thank you,” said the young man, “and allow me to share my rations with you every day.”

“What is your name?” said Claude.

“Albin.”

“Why are you here?” added Claude.

“I robbed.”

“So did I,” said Claude.

The same scene took place daily between this man, old before his time—he was only thirty-six—and the boy of twenty, who looked at the most seventeen. The feeling was more like that of father and son than one brother to another; everything created a bond of union between them—the very toil they endured together, the fact of sleeping in the same quarters and taking exercise in the same courtyard. They were happy, for were they not all the world to each other!

The inspector of the workshop was so hated by the prisoners that he often had recourse to Claude Gueux to enforce his authority; and when a tumult was on the point of breaking out, a few words from Claude had more effect than the authority of ten warders. Although the inspector was glad to avail himself of this influence, he was jealous, and hated the improved robber with an envious and implacable feeling—an example of might over right, all the more fearful as it was secretly nourished. Claude cared so much for Albin that he thought little about the inspector.

One morning as the warders were going their rounds one of them summoned Albin, who was working with Claude, to go before the inspector.

“What are you wanted for?” said Claude.

“I do not know,” replied Albin, following the warder.

All day Claude looked in vain for his companion, and at night, finding him still absent, he broke through his ordinary reserve and addressed the turnkey.

“Is Albin ill?” said he.

“No,” replied the man.

“How is it that he has never put in an appearance to-day?”

“His quarters have been changed,” was the reply.

For a moment Claude trembled, then calmly continued—

“Who gave the order?”

“Monsieur D——.” This was the inspector’s name.

On the following night the inspector, Monsieur D——, went his rounds as usual; Claude, who had perceived him from the distance, rose, and hastened to raise his woollen cap and button his grey woollen vest to the throat—considered a mark of respect to superiors in prison discipline.

“Sir,” said Claude, as the inspector was about to pass him, “has Albin really been quartered elsewhere?”

“Yes,” replied the inspector.

“Sir, I cannot live without him. You know the rations are insufficient for me, and Albin divided his portion with me. Could you not manage to let him resume his old place near me?”

“Impossible, the order cannot be revoked.”

“By whom was it given?”

“By me.”

“Monsieur D——,” replied Claude, “on you my life depends.”

“I never cancel an order once given.”

“Sir, what have I ever done to you?”

“Nothing.”

“Why, then,” cried Claude, “separate me from Albin?”

“Because I do,” replied the inspector, and with that he passed on.

Claude’s head sunk down, like the poor caged lion deprived of his dog; but the grief, though so deeply felt, in no way changed his appetite—he was famished. Many offered to share their rations with him, but he steadily refused, and continued his usual routine in silence, breaking it only to ask the inspector daily, in tones of anguish mingled with rage, something between a prayer and a threat, these two words:

“And Albin?”

The inspector simply passed on, shrugging his shoulders, but had he only observed Claude he would have seen the evident change, noticeable to all present.

“Sir, listen to me; send my companion to me. It would be wise to do so, I can assure you. Remember my words.”

On Sunday he had sat for hours in the courtyard, with his head bowed in his hands, and when a prisoner called Faillette came up laughing, he said—

“I am judging someone.”

On the 25th of October, 1831, as the inspector went his rounds, Claude, to draw his attention, smashed a watch-glass he had found in the passage. This had the desired effect.

“It was I,” said Claude. “Sir, restore my comrade to me.”

“Impossible,” was the answer.

Looking the inspector full in the face, Claude firmly added—

“Now reflect; to-day is the 25th of October, I give you till the 4th of November.”

A warder remarked that Claude was threatening Monsieur D——, and ought at once to be locked up.

“No, it is not a case of blackhole,” replied the inspector, smiling disdainfully; “we must be considerate with people of this stamp.”

The following day Claude was again accosted by one of the prisoners named Pernot, as he was brooding in the courtyard.

“Well, Claude, you are sad indeed; what are you pondering over?”

“I fear some evil threatens that good Monsieur D——,” answered Claude.

Claude daily impressed the fact on the inspector how much Albin's absence affected him, but with no result save four-and-twenty hours' solitary confinement.

On the 4th of November he looked round his cell for the little that remained to remind him of his former life. A pair of scissors, and an old volume of the "Emile," belonging to the woman he had loved so well, the mother of his child—how useless to a man who could neither work nor read!

As Claude walked down the old cloisters, so dishonoured by its new inmates and its fresh white-washed walls, he noticed how earnestly the convict Ferrari was looking at the heavy iron bars which crossed the window.

"To-night I will cut through those bars with these scissors," pointing to the pair he still held in his hand.

Ferrari laughed incredulously, and Claude joined in the mirth. During the day he worked with more than ordinary ardour, wishing to finish a straw hat, which he had been paid for in advance by a tradesman at Troyes, M. Bressier.

Shortly before noon he made some excuse to go down into the carpenters' quarters, a story below his own, at the time the warders were absent.

Claude received a hearty welcome, as he was equally popular here as elsewhere.

"Can any one lend me an axe?"

"What for?"

Without exacting any promises of secrecy he at once replied—

"To kill the inspector with to-night."

He was at once offered several; choosing the smallest, he hid it beneath his waistcoat and left. Now there were twenty-seven prisoners present, and not one of those men betrayed him; they even refrained from talking upon the subject among themselves, waiting for the terrible event which must follow.

As Claude passed on he saw a young convict of sixteen yawning idly there, and he strongly advised him to learn how to read. Just then Faillette asked what he was hiding. Claude answered unhesitatingly—

"An axe to kill Monsieur D—— to-night; but can you see it?"

"A little," said Faillette.

At seven o'clock the prisoners were locked in their several workshops. It was then the custom for the warders to leave them, until the inspector had been his rounds.

In Claude's workshop a most extraordinary scene took place, the only one of the kind on record.

Claude rose and addressed his companions, eighty-four in number, in the following words:

"You all know Albin and I were like brothers. I liked him at first for sharing his rations with me, afterwards because he cared for me. Now I never have sufficient, though I spend the pittance I earn in bread. It could make no possible difference to the inspector, Monsieur D——, that we should be together; but he chose to separate us simply from a love of tormenting, for he is a bad man. I asked again and again for Albin to be sent back, without success; and when I gave him a stated time, the 4th of November, I was thrust into a dungeon. During that time I became his judge, and sentenced him to death on November the 4th. In two hours he will be here, and I warn you I intend to kill him. But have you anything to say?"

There was a dead silence. Claude then continued telling his comrades, the eighty-one thieves, his ideas on the subject.

That he was reduced to a fearful extremity, and compelled by that very necessity to take the law into his own hands. He knew full well he could not take the inspector's life without sacrificing his own; but as the cause was a just one, he would bear the consequences, having come to this conclusion after two months' calm reflection. If they considered resentment alone hurried him on to such a step, they were at once to say so, and to state their objections to the sentence being carried out.

One voice alone broke the silence which followed, saying—

"Before killing the inspector, Claude ought to give him a chance of relenting."

"That is but just," said Claude, "and he shall have the benefit of the doubt."

Claude then sorted the few things a poor prisoner is allowed, and gave them to the comrades he mostly cared for after Albin, keeping only the pair of scissors. He then embraced them all; some could not withhold their tears at such a moment. Claude continued calmly to converse during this last hour, and even gave way to a trick he had as a boy, of extinguishing the candle with a breath from his nose. Seeing him thus, his companions afterwards owned, they hoped he had abandoned his sinister idea.

One young convict looked at him fixedly, trembling for the coming event.

“Take courage, young fellow,” said Claude, gently, “it will be but the work of a minute.”

The workshop was a long room with a door at both ends, and windows each side overlooking the benches, thus leaving a pathway up the centre for the inspector to review the work on both sides of him.

Claude had now resumed his work—something like Jacques Clement, who did not fail to repeat his prayers.

As the clock sounded the last quarter to nine, Claude rose and placed himself near the entrance, apparently calm.

Amidst the most profound silence the clock struck nine; the door was thrown open, and the inspector came in as usual alone, looking quite jovial and self-satisfied, passing rapidly along, tossing his head at one, grinding words out to another, little heeding the eyes fixed so fiercely upon him.

Just then he heard Claude’s step, and turning quickly round said—

“What are you doing here? why are you not in your place?” just as he would have spoken to a dog.

Claude answered respectfully—

“I wish to speak to you, sir.”

“On what subject?”

“Albin.”

“Again!”

“Always the same,” said Claude.

“So then,” replied the inspector, walking along, “you have not had enough with twenty-four hours in the blackhole.”

Claude, following him closely, replied—

“Sir, return my companion to me.”

“Impossible.”

“Sir,” continued Claude, in a voice which would have moved Satan, “I implore you to send Albin back to me; you will then see how I will work. You are free, and it would matter but little to you; you do not know the feeling of having only one friend. To me it is everything, encircled by the prison walls. You can come and go at your pleasure; I

have but Albin. Pray let him come back to me! You know well he shared his food with me. What can it matter to you that a man named Claude Gueux should be in this hall, having another by his side called Albin? You have but to say 'Yes,' nothing more. Sir, my good sir, I implore you, in the name of heaven, to grant my prayer!"

Claude, overcome with emotion, waited for the answer.

"Impossible," replied the inspector, impatiently; "I will not recall my words. Now go, you annoyance."

And with that he hurried on towards the outer door, amidst the breathless silence maintained by the eighty-one thieves.

Claude, touching the inspector, gently asked—

"Let me at least know why I am condemned to death. Why did you separate us?"

"I have already answered you: because I chose."

With that he was about to lift the latch, when Claude raised the axe, and without one cry the inspector fell to the ground, with his skull completely cloven from three heavy blows dealt with the rapidity of lightning. A fourth completely disfigured his face, and Claude, in his mad fury, gave another and a useless blow, for the inspector was dead.

Claude, throwing the axe aside, cried out, "Now for the other."

The other was himself, and taking the scissors, *his wife's*, he plunged them into his breast; but the blade was short, and the chest was deep, and vainly he strove to give the fatal blow. At last, covered with blood, he fell fainting across the dead.

Which of the two would be considered the victim?

When Claude recovered consciousness he was in bed, surrounded by every care and covered with bandages. Near him were sisters of charity, and a recorder ready to take down his deposition, who with much interest inquired how he was.

Claude had lost a great deal of blood, but the scissors had done him a bad turn, inflicting wounds not one the least dangerous: the only mortal blows he had struck were on the body of Monsieur D——.

Then the interrogatory commenced.

"Did you kill the inspector of the prison workshops at Clairvaux?"

"Yes," was the reply.

“Why did you do so?”

“Because I did.”

Claude’s wounds now assumed a more serious aspect, and he was prostrated with fever which threatened his life. November, December, January, February passed, in nursing and preparations, and Claude in turn was visited by doctor and judge—the one to restore him to health, the other to glean the foundation for his scaffold.

On the 16th of March, 1832, perfectly cured, Claude appeared in court at Troyes, to answer the charge brought against him.

His appearance impressed the court favourably; he had been shaved and stood bareheaded, but still clad in prison garb.

The court was well guarded by a strong military guard, to keep the witnesses within bounds, as they were all convicts. But an unexpected difficulty occurred: not one of these men would give evidence; neither questions nor threats availed to make them break their silence, until Claude requested them to do so. Then they in turn gave a faithful account of the terrible event, and if one, from forgetfulness or affection for the accused, failed to relate the whole facts, Claude supplied the deficiency.

At one time the women’s tears fell fast. The usher now called the convict Albin. He came in trembling with emotion and sobbing painfully, and threw himself into Claude’s arms.

Turning to the Public Prosecutor, Claude said—

“Here is a convict who gives his food to the hungry,” and stooping, he kissed Albin’s hand.

All the witnesses having been examined, the counsel for the prosecution then rose to address the court.

“Gentlemen of the jury, society would be utterly put to confusion if a public prosecution did not condemn great culprits like him, who, &c.”

After a long address, Claude’s counsel rose. Then followed the usual pleading for and against, which ever takes place at the criminal court.

Claude, in his turn, gave evidence, and people were astonished at his intelligence; and there appeared far more of the orator about this poor workman than the assassin. In a clear and straightforward way he detailed the facts as they were—standing proudly there, resolved to tell the whole truth. At times the crowd was carried away by

his eloquence. This man, who could not read, would grasp the most difficult points of argument, yet treat the judges with all due deference. Once Claude lost his temper, when the counsel for the prosecution stated that he had assassinated the inspector without provocation.

“What!” cried Claude, “I had no provocation! Indeed: so a drunkard strikes me, I kill him, then you would allow there was provocation—the penalty of death would be changed for that of the galleys; but a man who wounds me in every way during four years, humiliates me for four years, taunts me daily, hourly, for four years, and heaps every insult on my head—what follows? You consider I have had no provocation. I had a wife for whom I robbed—he tortured me about her; I had a child for whom I robbed—he taunted me about this child; I was hungry, a friend shared his bread with me—he took away my friend. I begged him to return my friend to me; he cast me into a dungeon. I told him how much I suffered; he said it wearied him to listen. What then would you have me do? I took his life, and you look upon me as a monster for killing this man, and you decapitate me—then do so.”

Provocation such as this the law fails to acknowledge, because the blows have no marks to show.

The judge then summed up the case in a clear and impartial manner; dwelling on the life Claude had led, living openly with an improper character; then he had robbed, and ended by being a murderer. All this was true.

Before the jury retired, the judge asked Claude if he had any questions to ask, or anything to say.

“Very little,” said Claude, however. “I am a murderer, I am a thief; but I ask you, gentlemen of the jury, why did I kill? why did I steal?”

The jury retired for a quarter of an hour, and according to the judgment of these twelve countrymen—*gentlemen of the jury*, as they are styled—Claude Gueux was condemned to death.

At the very onset several of them were much impressed with the name of Gueux (vagabond), and that influenced their decision.

When the verdict was pronounced, Claude simply said—

“Very well; but there are two questions these gentlemen have not answered. Why did this man steal? What made him a murderer?”

He made a good supper that night, exclaiming, “Thirty-six years have now passed me.”

He refused to make any appeal until the last minute, but at the instance of one of the sisters who had nursed him he consented to do so.

She in her fulness of heart gave him a five-franc piece.

His fellow-prisoners, as we have already noticed, were devoted to him, and placed all the means at their disposal to help him to escape: they threw into his dungeon, through the air-hole, a nail, some wire, the handle of a pail—any one of these would have been enough for a man like Claude to free himself from his chains; he gave them up to the warder.

On the 8th of June, 1832, seven months and four days after the murder, the recorder of the court came, and Claude was told he had but one hour more to live, for his appeal had been rejected.

“Indeed,” said Claude, coldly; “I slept well last night, and doubtless I shall pass my next even better.”

First came the priest, then the executioner. He was humble to the priest, and listened to him with great attention, regretting much that he had not had the benefit of religious training; at the same time blaming himself for much in the past.

He was courteous in his manner to the executioner; in fact he gave up all—his soul to the priest, his body to the executioner.

Whilst his hair was being cut, some one mentioned how the cholera was spreading, and Troyes at any moment might become a prey to this fearful scourge. Claude joined in the conversation, saying, with a smile—“There is one thing to be said, I have no fear of the cholera.”

He had broken half of the scissors; what remained he asked the gaoler to give to Albin—the other half lay buried in his chest. He also wished the day’s rations to be taken to his friend.

The only trifle he retained was the five-franc piece that the sister had given him, which he kept in his right hand after he was bound.

At a quarter to eight, the dismal procession usual in such cases left the prison. Pale, but with a firm tread, Claude Gueux slowly mounted the scaffold, keeping his eyes fixed on the crucifix the priest carried—an emblem of the Saviour’s suffering. He wished to embrace the priest and the executioner, thanking the one and pardoning the other. The executioner simply repulsed him.

Just before he was bound to the infernal machine he gave the five-franc piece to the priest, saying, “For the poor.”

The hour had scarcely struck its eight chimes, when this man, so noble, so intelligent, received the fatal blow which severed his head from his body.

A market-day had been chosen for the time of execution, as there would be more people about, for there are still in France small towns who glory in having an execution. The guillotine that day remained, inflaming the imagination of the mob to that extent that one of the tax-gatherers was nearly murdered: such is the admirable effect of public executions.

We have given the history of Claude Gueux’s life, more to solve a difficult problem than for aught else. In his life there are two questions to be considered. Before his fall, and after his fall. What was his training, and what was the penalty? This must interest society generally, for this man was well gifted, his instincts were good: then what was wanting? On this revolves the grand problem which would place society on a firm basis.

What nature has commenced in the individual, let society carry out. Look at Claude Gueux. An intelligent and most noble-hearted man, placed in the midst of evil surroundings, he turned thief. Society placed him in a prison where the evil was yet greater, and he ended with becoming a murderer.

Can we really blame him, or ourselves?—questions which require deep thought, or the result will be that we shall be *compelled* to shirk this most important subject. The facts are now before us, and if the government gives no thought to the matter, what are the rulers about?

The Deputies are yearly much occupied. It is important to sift sinecures and to unravel the budget; to pass an act which compels me, disguised as a soldier, to mount guard at the Count de Lobau’s, whom I do not know, and to whom I wish to remain a stranger; or to go on parade under the command of my grocer, who has been made an officer. I wish to cast no reflections on the patrol, who keep order and protect our homes, but on the absurdity of making such parade and military hubbub about turning citizens into parodies of soldiers.

Deputies or ministers, it is important we should sound every subject, even though it end in nothing, to question and cross-question what we know but little about. Rulers and legislators, you pass your time in classical comparisons that would make a village schoolmaster smile. You assert that it is the habits of modern civilization that have engendered adultery, incest, parricide, infanticide, and poisoning—proving that you

know little of Jocasta Phedra, Œdipus, Medea, or Rodoguna. The great orators occupy themselves in lengthy discussions on Corneille and Racine, and get so heated in literary argument as to make the grossest mistakes in the French language.

Very important indeed all this is, but we consider there are subjects of far greater consequence.

In the midst of such useless arguments, what answer would the Deputies give if one rose and gravely addressed them in the following words:—

“Silence, all those who have been speaking—silence I say! You consider yourself acquainted with the question: you know nothing about it.

“The question is this. In the name of justice, scarcely a year ago, a man at Panners was cut to pieces; at Dijon a woman’s head was taken off; in Paris, at Saint Jacques, executions take place without number.

“This is the question! Now take your time to consider it, you who argue over the buttons of the national guard, whether they should be white or yellow, and if *security* is preferable to *certainty*!

“Gentlemen of the Right, gentleman of the Left, the great mass of the people suffer!

“Whether a republic or a monarchy, the fact remains the same—the people suffer!

“The people are famished, the people are frozen. Such misery leads them on to crime: the galleys take the sons, houses of ill-fame the daughters. You have too many convicts, too many unfortunates.

“What is the meaning of this social gangrene?

“You are near the patient: treat the malady. You are at fault: now study the matter more deeply.

“When you pass laws, what are they but expedients and palliatives? Half your codes result from routine.

“Branding but cauterizes the wound, and it mortifies, and what is the end? You stamp the crime for life on the criminal; you make two friends of them, two companions—inseparables. The convict prison is a blister which spreads far worse matter than ever it extracts; and as for the sentence of death, when carried out it is a barbarous amputation.

“Therefore, branding, penal servitude, and sentence of death are all of one class; you have done away with the branding, banish the rest. Why keep the chain and the

chopper now you have put aside the hot iron? Farinace was atrocious, but he was not ridiculous.

“Take down that worn ladder that leads to crime and to suffering. Revise your laws; revise your codes; rebuild your prisons; replace your judges. Make laws suited to the present time

“You are bent on economy; do not be so lavish in taking off the heads of so many during the year. Suppress the executioner; you could defray the expenses of six hundred schoolmasters with the wages you give your eighty executioners. Think of the multitude; then there would be schools for the children, workshops for the men.

“Do you know that in France there are fewer people who know how to read than in any other country in Europe? Fancy, Switzerland can read, Belgium can read, Denmark can read, Greece can read, Ireland can read—and France cannot read! It is a crying evil.

“Go into our convict prisons, examine each one of these condemned men, and you will observe by the profile, the shape of the head, how many could find their type in the lower animals. Here are the lynx, the cat, the monkey, the vulture, the hyena. Nature was first to blame, no doubt; but the want of training fostered the evil. Then give the people a fair education, and what there is of good in these ill-conditioned minds, let that be developed.

“People must be judged by their opportunities. Rome and Greece were educated: then brighten the people’s intellect.

“When France can read, then give the people encouragement for higher things. Ignorance is preferable to a little ill-directed knowledge; and remember, there is a book of far greater importance than the *Compère Mathieu*, more popular than the *Constitutionel*, and more worthy of perusal than the charter of 1830—that is the Bible.

“Whatever you may do for the people, the majority will always remain poor and unhappy. Theirs the work, the heavy burden to carry, to endure: all the miseries for the poor, all the pleasures for the rich.

“As such is life, ought not the State to lean to the weaker and helpless side.”

“In the midst of all this wretchedness, if you but throw hope in the balance, let the poor man learn there is a heaven where joy reigns, a paradise that he can share, and you raise him; he feels that he has a part in the rich man’s joys. And this was the teaching Jesus gave, and He knew more about it than Voltaire.

“Then give to these people who work, and who suffer here, the hope of a different world to come, and they will go on patiently. For patience but follows in the footsteps of hope.

“Then spread the Gospel in all our villages, let every cottage have its Bible; the seed thus sown will soon circulate. Encourage virtue, and from that will spring so much that now lies fallow.

“The man turned assassin under certain circumstances, if differently influenced would have served his country well.

“Then give the people all encouragement; improve the masses, enlighten them, guard their morals, make them useful, and to such heads as those you will not require to use cold steel.”