A PICTURE.

A picture hangs on my study wall
Of a stately maiden, fair and tall;
Like a graceful flower, on supple stem,
Her head, with its regal diadem
Of braided strands in shaded brown,
Wears like a blossom fair nature's crown;
While fluffy tendrils about her brow,
The soft west wind seems lifting now.

I turn my ear to catch the word
(For a sound from those lips I surely heard),
While the eyes from their depths of tenderest hue,
As well as the lips are speaking, too!
No, I am deceived—she did not speak.
For the rounded outline of either cheek
Is unbroken by dimples, while at her throat
The filmy lace imprisons the note.

So, ivy wreathed among my books
A fair Minerva she sweetly looks.
While she silently watches me day by day,
My thoughts from the picture will wander away
To her fairer self—oh, painter's art!
You never can picture a woman's heart.
And a stranger who only her sweet face can see
Can never know what she is to me!

THE HISTORY OF A CRIME.

VICTOR HUGO'S MEMOIRS OF THE COUP D'ETAT OF LOUIS NAPOLEON.

How the French Republic Disappeared and the French Empire Was Established in a Single Night.

Victor Hugo's last book is a diary of the *coup d'etat* of December 1851, revised for publication in view of the late crisis in France, in which the old Republican thought he discovered a strong parallelism with those preceding Louis Napoleon's seizure of power, is perhaps his best, the most graphic and forcible work he has ever written. It begins *in medias res* and after the true fashion of Hugo:

December 1, 1851, Charras shrugged his shoulders and unloaded his pistols. Indeed, it was humiliating to think that a coup d'etat was possible. The hypothesis of illegal violence on the part of M. Louis Bonaparte vanished upon serious examination. Where was the man capable of dreaming of an attempt upon the republic and the people? For a tragedy an actor is needed, and here, good faith, the actor was wanting. To violate law, suppress the Assembly, abolish the constitution, strangle the republic, cast to earth the nation, soil the flag, dishonor the army, prostitute the clergy and magistracy, succeed, triumph, govern, administer, exile, banish, transport, ruin, assassinate, reign, with such complicities that the law ended by resembling the bed of a courtesan—what, all these enormities to be committed! And by whom? A Colossus? No; a dwarf. People had to laugh. They said no more "What a crime!" but "What a farce!" For certain crimes are too lofty for certain hands. To make an 18th Brumaire, one must have in his past an Arcola and in his future an Austerlitz. It is not given to the first comer to become a great bandit. * * * The material and moral impossibility of the coup d'etat was patent to all. Charras, as we have just seen—Charras, who had long been on his guard—gave up taking any precaution. Security was complete, unanimous. There were some of us in the Assembly who had our doubts and shook our heads, but we passed for fools.

It was on the 2d that Paris was to be rudely awakened from her fancied security. At 7 o'clock, when it was barely day, Versigny, a deputy from Haute-Saone, living at No. 4 Rue Leonie, was roused suddenly by a ring at his bell, repeated sharply after a moment. He went in his night-dress to open it, and found there, pale and agitated, two friends. "Dress quickly," they cried; "Baune has just been arrested." "Wah!" replied Versigny; "is this the affaire Mauguin over again?" but noticing their earnestness he added: "What does it mean?" There was another ring at the bell. "Here is somebody that can perhaps tell us," said Michel de Bourges. It was Pierre Lefranc, another Deputy. "Do you know what is afoot?" he said. "Yes; Baune is in prison." "It is the republic that is a prisoner. Have you read the placards?" and he went on to say that the walls were being covered with posters, one of which he had read, and that the deed was done. "The deed!" cried Michel; "say the crime." There was not a moment to be lost, and they hurried out to warn the representatives and collect them. Hugo received the news as he was writing in bed. This was at 8 o'clock.

As the clock struck 5 every infantry regiment in Paris had marched noiselessly out from its barracks, led by its colonel; the cavalry did not move till 5:15, lest the tramp of horses should arouse the sleeping city.

One colonel had hesitated, and Napoleon had placed a sealed package in his hands, saying: "Colonel, I admit we are taking grave risks. Here are 100,000 francs—in case of an emergency." The money was taken; the regiment marched. That night the colonel said to a woman, "this morning I earned 100,000 francs and a general's epaulets," and the woman drove him from her doors as one unworthy. "I am only a prostitute," she cries.

At 11 at night the detective force and 800 *sergents de ville* had been mustered at the Prefecture of Police, nominally for fear of an incursion of refugees from London. At 3 o'clock the forty-eight *commissaires* were summoned from their beds, and at 5 Maupas, the Prefect, gave each a brief audience, revealed the project, and indicated the work allotted. "Not one refused; some were grateful." Seventy-eight influential Democrats and possible chiefs of barricades were to be arrested, and sixteen representatives of the people, Thiers, Changarnier, Cavaignac, Lamoriciere, Leflo, Greppo and others. Warrants were ready, and at 5:30 carriages were driven up, in which the *commissaires* set out on their mission, each accompanied by a squad of detectives in private clothes and another of police officers.

At the Imprimerie Nationale, meanwhile, a strong guard had been placed. "What is the countersign to be?" asked the officer of M. de Beville, one of Napoleon's staff officers, who conducted the operations here. "Nothing can be simpler; whoever tries to go out or to open a window—shoot him." Then he set the printers to work, each between two gendarmes and in silence, upon the proclamation dissolving the Assembly and convoking the electors, the appeals to the army and the people, and the Prefect's proclamation. The first four were in Napoleon's handwriting. They were cut into small "takes" so that no printer could get the full sense of the document he was setting; Col. Beville pasted the proofs together and corrected them, then the forms were put to press and worked off under guard. There were then two hours before the blow was to be struck, and, "to judge of the probable effect," Beville took it into his head to parade the gendarmes and read the mysterious documents to them! They applauded. Had these 200 men, or a handful of them, disapproved, Napoleon would perhaps have found himself in Vincennes at dawn, and the course of French history might have been changed. At 6 o'clock the placards were taken to the prefecture and sent out to be posted.

The Forty-second Regiment meanwhile had marched stealthily—"as folk walk in a sick-room," said a witness—to the hall of the National Assembly, and as the soldiers slipped in past the stupefied porter Persigny said: "It is done."

Meunier, the commandant, hastened to the court-yard at the noise, saw in a moment what was afoot, and turning pale wrenched off his epaulets and broke his sword, and casting the pieces on the pavement cried to Espinasse, who commanded the Forty-second, "Colonel, you dishonor the regiment's number." "All right! That's all right!" answered Espinasse.

With a guard of chasseurs De Morny seized the Department of the Interior, arousing from his bed M. de Thorigny, who a few days before had warmly defended Napoleon from "the calumniators of the Mountain." "If the President should do that," he had said in Morny's hearing, "he would be a scoundrel." Now, when Morny awaked him to depose him, he rubbed his eyes and stammered, "Then he is a——!" "Yes," said Morny, laughing, "he is!" Morny who, says Hugo, "had all the frivolity reconcilable with assassination."

Leflo was arrested in bed. "General," stammered the officer, "I have a duty"——. "I understand," said Leflo; "you are a traitor." His little boy of seven knelt in his night-dress to the officer, begging "M. Bonaparte" to have mercy. Baze, the Questor, conjured his guard in the name of military honor. "Make no reply," hastily ordered the detectives. The official who arrested Charras pounced upon Charras' pistols, which were lying on the table. "Fool!" said Charras, "if they were loaded you would be dead." These were the pistols the charges of which he had drawn the night before.

Hugo then goes on to describe the gathering of the half-dazed representatives. "What are you going to do?" said to him Michel de Bourges. "Everything." "That is my advice, too," answered Michel. The word probably explained the situation, but in such a crisis "everything" is not the thing to do so much as something. De Bourges thought there was peril in precipitating a denouement, for the *coup d'etat* was organized while the people were not, and things were not as they had been in 1830. To hold off, be calm and wait for the people to rise, was his advice.

Hugo hurried to the Theatre Porte St. Martin, where as a regiment passed an immense crowd greeted it with cries of "Vive la Republique!" The soldiers wavered a moment and it seemed as if a favorable crisis had come. "What shall we do?" asked some workmen who recognized Hugo. "Begin by tearing down the traitorous posters." "The soldiers will fire on us." "Fire on them," and he made a short and fiery address, declaring Napoleon an outlaw they should hunt down and exterminate. It was received with cheers, and he thought then—perhaps, he says, he thinks so still—that the moment had come to begin the fight. "Look out," said Charamaule, "you will only cause a useless butchery. The people are unarmed. Here comes the artillery." The guns came rolling around the corner and the occasion was lost.

A brief but vigorous description of the clearing of the Assembly halls by the soldiers follows. Favolle, Teillard-Laterisse and Paulin Durrieu were the last thrust from the doors, against which was trained a loaded cannon. "Colonel," they cried to Garderous, who was in command, "you have violated the law three times." "Well, I will violate it six times," he answered, and arrested the three.

The judges of the upper court were sitting uneasily, not quite sure as yet whether high treason was law, when an officer entered the court-room with a guard, and said: "Gentlemen, disperse immediately." They asked him if he knew to whom he spoke. He said, "Yes," and showed his warrant. The judges pointed out that in his haste the prefect had drawn up a warrant directed against their predecessors, the members of the last court! The *commissaire* said that made no difference. Warrant or no warrant, they must go, and they had to go.

The representatives of the Left held their last session at the Mairie of the Tenth Arrondissement, the last regular session of the Assembly, whereat Napoleon's *decheance* was proclaimed, Dufaure being the first to sign the document, Betting de Lancastel the last. Pascal Duprat wrote at its head "Republique Francaise," words that had been omitted, and Bixio took charge of its printing and publication. Two members went to De Morny—of their own accord, however, not with an official mission—and, with refreshing innocence, invited him to surrender and conform with the law or the Assembly would do its duty and appeal to the people. The only reply they received was a laugh and the words, "If you raise the people and I catch representatives at the barricades, I shall shoot them to the last man."

It was not long before the officers invaded the Mairie, and the representatives were marched out. The national guardsmen cheered them, and were immediately disarmed. Two lines of fierce infantry, commanded by Oudinot, escorted them. The officers evaded the gaze of their prisoners. M. de Goislin called to one of them, "You dishonor your cloth," and the officer replied hotly, but a few moments afterwards, passing by him, whispered, "Sir, I have reflected—I was in the wrong." It was at first intended to conduct the members of the Assembly to Mazas, but the Minister of the Interior countermanded the order and the prisoners were marched to the old barracks of the Gardes du Corps. On the wall, beside the door through which they were compelled to enter, was a big placard, "Revision of the Constitution," an advertisement of a pamphlet published anonymously three or four days before. It demanded the restoration of the empire, and had been attributed to Napoleon. The two *commissaires* reported their "success" to M. de Morny, who replied, "Now the struggle is begun. That is well. Those are the last representatives we shall make prisoners of."

The imprisoned deputies took things as pleasantly as they might. At five francs a head they dined, 220 of them, at night, "poorly and gayly," on tough mutton, wine and cheese. Orleanists and Republicans chaffed each other amicably.

"Will your friends of the Left," asked Gustave de Beaumont, "save the country? Will there be at least an insurrection?"

Plates and glasses had to be shared. "This is the time for a fusion!" cried a young Legitimist.

"Equality and fraternity!" said the Marquis Sauvaire-Barthelemy, and Victor Hennequin replied, laughingly, to his toast, "But no liberty."

"Reconciliation," said Chamiot, as at bedtime he offered half of his mattress to the Duc de Luynes, who had an estate of two millions a year. But at 10:30 the "Black Maria" drove up, escorted by cavalry, and the prisoners were removed. The Legitimists, who were in no danger whatever, made some tragic partings, and when one of their orators was removed clung to him almost with tears, repeating "Do not go! Do you know whither they are taking you? Remember the ditches of Vincennes!"

The prisoners were removed to Mazas and locked up in small cells, where "the first impression was of darkness, the second of cold." For all furniture each had a straw-bottomed chair. Emile Leroux, a member with Bonapartist leanings, arrested by mistake, was crying with rage. Five hours passed thus ere a ration of coarse, black bread, mouldy too, and of thickened warm water of horrible smell, but disguised a soup, was served to them. Most of them, unable to stomach the food, flung the bread on the floor and spilled the contents of their panikins, but some hours later they were glad to find and eat the rejected bread, and one member tells how he ravenously licked the interior of his foul trencher. At 8 o'clock at night each was given wherein to sleep, a hammock; Thiers had a bed; Grevy, his successor, had not. Thus passed at Mazas the days and nights of the representatives of the people.

In the remaining chapters of the first book Hugo tells of the meeting on the Boulevard St. Martin, where he drew up and Schoelcher and others signed the decree of outlawry against Napoleon. He had written "Louis Napoleon Bonaparte is a traitor," Jules Favre had him strike out "Napoleon," as that was a glorious name, fatally powerful with the people and army. In an omnibus on the Boulevard Hugo tried to rouse the people. Some passengers cried, "be quiet, or you will have us all killed;" one in terror began to shout, "Vive l'Empereur!" The soldiers listened in sullen silence; the crowd in stupefaction. It was too soon or too late. In conclusion he says:

"Such was that first day. Let us look at it closely. It is the anniversary of Austerlitz; the nephew keeps the uncle's feast. Austerlitz is the most splendid battle of history; the nephew sets himself this problem: To make a gloom as great as that glory. He succeeds in doing so. The first day is the most frightful attempt at dragging things back that was ever attempted. Never was such a down-crushing of civilization seen. All that was an edifice is now a ruin, cumbering the soil. In one night the inviolability of the law, the rights of the citizen, the dignity of the judge, the honor of the soldier have disappeared. These have been frightfully replaced. There was an oath; there is perjury. There was a flag; there is a rag. There was the army; there is a horde. There was justice; there is crime. There was a code; there is the sabre. There was a government; there is a band of thieves. And this is called a rescued society! It is the saving of the traveler by the highwayman. France was passing by. Bonaparte stopped her.

"The hypocrisy which preceded the crime equals in deformity the effrontery which succeeded it. History records nothing like the 2d of December. There is no glory here, nothing but abjectness. There is naught to deceive the eye. We said we were honest; we say we are infamous—nothing is simpler. The day, almost unintelligible in its success, has proved that politics has its obscenity. We have seen the nakedness of an unclean soul. Louis Bonaparte has shown himself without a mask, which has shown a horror; without a veil, which has shown a sewer. He has taken oaths; he takes others. Imagine Joan of Arc admitting that she is Messalina. That is the 2d of December.

"Women are mixed up with this crime. It is murder dashed with the boudoir. Across the smell of the blood comes a faint odor of patchouli. The accomplices of this brigand are pleasant men—Ronnier, Morny. Falling in debt has led to falling into crime.

"Europe was stupefied. It was a thief's thunderbolt. Palmerston, the traitor, approved it; old Metternich, dreaming in his villa of Rennweg, shook his head. As for Soult, the man of Austerlitz next to Napoleon, he did what it was his place to do—at the day of this crime he died. Alas, and Austerlitz died, too!"

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