

wounded back of a *penitente*. Below the cross were the letters "A. D."

"Antonio Duran" I cried, aloud, as if he stood before me with his fierce, flashing eyes.

Wonder followed the shock of surprise. What did it mean? He a *penitente*, and an enemy at this time, and declaring it with his own hand on my wall?

No! not an enemy.

It came to me like a flash. His passion had given way to a better feeling. By the sign of the cross in his own blood he had declared it. He forgave as he hoped for forgiveness.

It was morning before silence and sleep came. The dream of that memorable dawn came to pass. In my sleep I had found a bride and lost an enemy.

VICTOR HUGO.

When the present century dawned on France, she was still smarting from the cruel blows of the First Revolution; but amid this general gloom, there was born a child whose name was destined to bring glory and renown to the torn and tortured land. In 1802, the royal heart of Victor Hugo began to beat in the old city of Besançon. The young Victor had flowing through his veins the red Republican blood of his father, and the blue blood of his Royalist mother; and, when old enough to take an interest in state affairs, his boyish worship of his mother led him to adopt her political opinions, and, it was not until after years that his judgment pointed out to him the truth of his father's creed.

His father, an army officer, was seldom with his little family, so the care and education of Victor devolved upon his mother, a woman of rare intellectual powers, but of inferior judgment.

Victor Hugo is one of the many great men whose early education depended on a mother's care; and his rare talent would have filled that mother's soul with joy had she but lived to see it. She died in the early days of his fame, and the devoted son was almost wholly given up to remorse; his father was as a stranger to him and could not console him in his sorrow. At this time, Victor found himself thrown on his own resources, and obliged to fight his way through the world. Work was what he needed to bring forth the talent that was in him; but, at length, his solitary life grew wearisome to him, so he wedded the young and beautiful Adèle Fouché, his former playmate and school friend. After his marriage, he exerted a great influence on literature, for from that time dates the real beginning of his literary life. His house was the meeting place of a number of talented young men,

who formed a literary society with the brilliant young couple. Frequent guests at the little house, on the Rue Vauguard, were such men as Soumet, Sainte Beuve, de Vigny, and Emile and Anthony Dechamps.

While Victor Hugo was in the morning of his glory, the Romantic School of French poetry began to assert its claims to recognition and approval, and found in him a powerful advocate and firm supporter. Such a position placed him in an unfavorable light before the public; but, dauntless, he adhered to his principles and boldly avowed his disapproval of classical fetters.

In support of his theories, he wrote the preface to "Cromwell," his first drama; then followed "Hernani," "Marion De Lorme," and others. "Hernani" is considered the best of all his dramatic attempts, and yet its appearance was greeted with a tempest of opposition. He defended himself eloquently, and continued to criticize the Classical School in a most scathing manner; he ridiculed those who were bound to the Aristotelian rules of the drama. But at length, he rose above the clouds of unfriendly criticism into the clear sky of popular favor, and then he turned his thoughts toward prose and gave to the literary world, "Notre Dame de Paris." In six months, a half year of untiring labor, the mighty work was written; by a French writer, this romance is called, "a marvel of interest, a masterpiece of style, and a wonder of archeological studies." Such unlimited praise is not bestowed upon it by all. "Les Misérables" is commonly considered his finest prose work. Its many pages seem a formidable mass, but it is replete with interest; in it, the reader is carried "out of the world into an atmosphere of romance."

As poet and novelist, Victor Hugo won distinction, but his aspirations led him beyond those seemingly narrow limits, into the broad and open field of political writing. He had been an admirer of Napoleon I, and so naturally supported the claims of his nephew, Louis Bonaparte, who aimed to be President of the Republic; but when the prince made known his intentions against the nation, the author zealously defended the rights of his people. The sad story of his oppressed countrymen still lives in "Histoire d'un Crime."

Powerful man though he was, he was obliged to flee from his native land, and seek refuge on the bold and rocky isle of Guernsey, where for twenty years he lived in solitude. Some of his best works date from the period of his banishment. On that lonely isle, where sea and sky alike mingled their varied voices in praise of nature's God, the poetic spirit of the man soared aloft, and gathered the inspiration which his poems breathe.

At that time, he wrote "Les Chatiments" which present a rare example of what indignation and patriotism can inspire: in some instances, he is said, to rival even Juvenal. His political writings brought