

of ignorance and pauperism, but do we find among rich and learned the desired perfection? Daily experience proves the contrary. Hugo himself had not to complain either on the score of knowledge or of wealth, and yet has he not had his share in the trials of adversity? Neither the home nor the heart of rich man or sage, is proof against earthly affliction and sorrow. It is among those who are rich and need them least, that fraud and injustice are practiced most, and as long as avarice, lust, ambition and cupidity exist, there will be crimes and misery among men. Society certainly owes to every man protection in his struggle for a living, and she in all cases fulfils that obligation, by guarding his rights and faculties in the free exercise of the only legitimate means given him by the laws of his Creator to earn that living, and, if he does not accept and use that means, but, through idleness and perversity, chooses rather to see his wife and children starve, the fault is not to be imputed to society.

As an example of those wronged by the social juggernaut, Hugo brings forward the hero of his work, one Jean Valjean, whom he represents as having been condemned by the civil authority to nineteen years on the galleys for stealing a loaf of bread. In the reign of hot-headed anarchy in France, such a misdirection of justice as this might have occurred, as, during those troublous times, hundreds more innocent have suffered more severely, but society in its normal state is seldom, if ever, guilty of such gross injustice to its members, and, if ever this does happen, it is not the fault of society, but of the individual judge who passes the sentence. This exceptional case, therefore, goes but a very short way in proving Hugo's theory, and the paltry and absurd evidence he puts forward to support his accusation against society, show that he has gone astray in seeking both the source of, and the remedy for, man's miseries. No, it is not from society that man's misfortunes come, but rather from the perverse inclinations of his own human nature, as exemplified in the very first of his race, who brought upon his progeny the curse of his maker, and the condemnation to perpetual toil and hardship as an atonement for his first sin, the blighting effect of which on man's will and understanding still causes him, by sins of intemperance

and injustice, to keep himself and his fellows in continual wretchedness and sorrow. And so it will be to the end. Misery always existed and it was permitted by God that it should exist, for did not He himself, under human form, drink more deeply of the cup of suffering and sorrow than ever mortal man before or since, and therefore, it is not to revolutionary dreams, or socialistic utopias that we must look to eradicate or to relieve it. Modern society has done, perhaps not all it can, but at least enough, to place every man on a sound standing in the world. In every country it has abolished slavery, and given to each man the free use of his faculties to provide for himself according to the divine command, the necessities of life. And what more can he expect or look for? What more need he desire? Why does he listen to the honeyed words of cunning socialists, who, not for his benefit, but in their own interest, preach to him that he should be on a level with his richer neighbour, and who by their illusory pictures of a life of joy, and by their lying promises of freedom from pain and trouble will only increase his wretchedness, and make the evil worse than before. Their words are empty as their schemes are vain and absurd, for to reduce humanity to a level is an utter impossibility, since men differ in mental and physical constitution, that is to say in the natural means by which is achieved success in life, and how then can all their unequal claims and diverse interests be maintained in a common social level. And even if this were accomplished, would man be freed from sorrow and pain? Would ills, infirmities and death no longer afflict him? Would man's will not still be liable to lead him into error, or, when society has reached a state of equilibrium, and therefore of perpetual stagnation, would he no longer interfere with the interests of his fellow because he knows he is his equal? No, as long as man remains free in will, and as long as Satan lives to tempt him, mere equality will not banish vice and crime, nor misery their necessary attribute. Sickness and death bearing in their train the pangs of suffering and sorrow shall ever continue to invade the home of man, and, on their advent, what comfort shall he derive from the sensation of social equality.

In man's very nature we find the root