

resolved the one great problem, that of a happy life. He laboured more and more at his crucibles, sought ever to snatch one more secret from the great heart of nature; and he endeavoured to explain to his wife what he did, and to excite her interest. She comprehended nothing, but she listened with as much attention as if she understood all.

Around this cottage was a garden, which seemed made expressly for them; the vegetables took pleasure in growing there, the vine bent under its heavy clusters, and a stream meandered through, and watered this little corner of the promised land.

The chemist had proved to his wife, (for she believed all he said) that they ought to eat only vegetables and fruit; they would thus extinguish the fire of the passions: they lived therefore on the produce of their garden, where a cow also found her herbage. Caliban, the servant of this happy household, made the vintage and the harvest, winnowed the wheat with a machine invented by his master; and this good servant knew no other existence than to rise at day break, cultivate the little garden, and soberly prepare the repast of the chemist; in the winter to spin, make his cloth, and go to bed. He had suppressed the use of thought, as too fatiguing an exercise; and the *ne plus ultra* of his employment, was to pay to the collector of the commune, the seventeen francs, which was the tax the chemist paid for his two acres, his wife, his crickets, his mice, his spiders, Caliban, the cow, the rats, and a poor little dog, who was the friend of all the house.

CHAPTER II.

THE cottage in which these four beings, who were formed so exactly for each other, lived, deserves an exact description, though too much reality should not be put into a fairy tale. It is necessary, however, for the true enjoyment of the recital, to believe its foundation is truth.

This cottage of goodness, was situated about twenty leagues from Paris, in one of those valleys where nature seems to have hid herself with all her treasures. The whole aspect of the landscape was varied and beautiful; the trees were the most graceful, the meadows the most laughing; the brooks the most limpid: here a drooping vine, there a rude cabin; still further, a picturesque mill, with its sonorous waterfall, blending with which, often was heard the voice of some young peasant girl, chanting a naive air, or the soft note of some shepherd's flute. Indeed, so lovely was this valley, so smiling, so quiet, so remote from the noise of the city, that it was the very place

to which disgraced ministers should have retired in the first moments of their fall.

As the chemist offered nothing to the cupidity of robbers, but books of science, charcoal, retorts, and little bottles, he could live without any danger in the little cottage, which was placed on the slope of a hill, at some distance from the village; and so secure and confident was the chemist, he always left his door unfastened, a little circumstance which completes admirably the picture of his simple manners.

The cottage was so situated, that its chimney was even with a level plat, on the top of the hill, from which spread out an immense forest, from whence the chemist obtained his charcoal, and other precious ingredients.

Whoever has travelled much, knows there are in France, and every where else, indeed, remote places, little villages, embosomed in quiet, far from all the public routes, where the people live in profound ignorance of the things of the world, where they learn nothing of political revolutions, except by the change of arms on the seal to the letters of advice sent to the collectors, or by the sign over the warehouse of the powder and tobacco merchant; in fine, villages, where those who do not pay taxes, and do not buy tobacco and powder, may live and die without knowing who is the mortal that governs them; without even hearing of Paroquoy Roux, of Regnaults, of pectoral paste, of Lord Byron, of hydrogen gas, of magnetism, of merobans, of duchesses, or water-carriers. A happy ignorance for themselves, but a great misfortune to sovereigns, directors of theatres, poets, undertakers, and above all, for duchesses. If this luminous description answers no other purpose, it will at least acquaint the reader, that the village, a quarter of a league from the cottage of the chemist, was one of these privileged places.

But this was not all: the habitation of the chemist was surrounded with a sanitary cordon of ignorance, which it was impossible to surmount, for it had been established by superstition and the headle of the parish. That its full force may be estimated, it is necessary to cast a glance back to the period of the arrival of the chemist in this country.

It was night—a fitful night, almost dark, for the moon was encompassed by dark clouds. It was Sunday, and the last Sunday in December, a dark era; the wind whistled howling through the trees, the inhabitants of each of the cottages were gathered close together, shuddering as the withered branches fell upon their thatched roofs, while one or another repeated some tale of horror, which had occurred on such a night. It was near midnight when the sound of a heavy vehicle,