

gunning by a court dark as Erebus, gloomy as a prison gate, ended in a building for the construction of which Father Methusalem had made use of the most heterogeneous elements. Wood and mortar had the principal share in it. The doors and windows had neither form, proportion, nor equilibrium. Several panes in the window were supplied by greasy paper; hinges creaked, window bolts had ceased to work, the ancient stove smoked, and yet there appeared in white letters on a black board, placed just above the entrance door, the sign, PENSION BOURGEOISE. These words set us thinking. What sort of kitchen could there be in the underground depths of this extraordinary structure? Who could be the customers of such a *table d'hôte*?

In the middle of a large room stood a deal table, stained with wine and gravy, cut and hacked by the knives of the boarders, and set at the time when we entered with chipped plates, wooden spoons and iron forks. There were no knives, as the guests usually brought their own. Pewter mugs stood before each plate. Benches served for seats. There was but one chair in the room; it marked the place reserved for Father Methusalem.

A dark, winding staircase with rickety steps led down into the depths of the cellar transformed into a kitchen. Upon a long range or furnace, in stew-pans as large as boilers, over a hot fire boiled a strange mixture, the *olla podrida* daily served up to the boarders; it was in fact the invariable dish. In the steaming mess were rabbits, bones of mutton, chunks of beef, the tails of red herrings, sheeps' tails, remnants of calves' heads, beets, onions and lobster claws. A great lump of grease and several cloves of garlic gave all these components a certain similarity of taste. Some fine chickens, ready for broiling, veal cutlets and beefsteaks laid out upon the