

the clerks of a lawyer's office situated upon the threshold of the den of sophistry, and by the housekeepers of the neighborhood, who mingled with the water carriers at the corner of the little street of St. Ann. At twelve o'clock, when all was quiet, the honorable members of public safety, whose barracks were not far off, and who, without any effort of imagination, could have been compared to the *paltoniers* of old times, were used to come to warm themselves in the sunshine. Every day at about the same time the courtyard resounded with the noise of heavy vans whose stables were at the northern corner of the *Corte de Conti*. At this place, in a recess behind the staircase and precisely under the hall of the first chamber of the Supreme Court had lived for fifteen or twenty years a man called Duverrier, a contractor of the prisoners' conveyance, an industry advantageous enough to allow him the gratification of the luxury of rare flowers, which was his strongest passion. The entrance to the dark cavern which he inhabited, greatly resembled a florist's stall, and the grass which was growing through the pavement prolonged the verdure a few feet further the narrow space which he used as a garden. At twilight, when the monotonous silence was only broken by the steps of the sentinel beneath the gas burning before the palace, this dimly lighted and almost deserted place was the rendezvous of the lovers from the surrounding streets. Each morning resembled the preceding, always the same events, and, we may say, almost the same conversations exchanged by the same people.

On account of the increasing activity many offices of public writers had been opened around the walls of the Holy Chapel, but at the time when our narrative begins only one of these offices had remained, and it was situated at the right hand of the covered passage leading to