

Chapter 1

Kindred Souls.

As there were thirty-three degrees of heat the Boulevard Bourdon was absolutely deserted.

Farther down, the Canal St. Martin, confined by two locks, showed in a straight line its water black as ink. In the middle of it was a boat, filled with timber, and on the bank were two rows of casks.

Beyond the canal, between the houses which separated the timber-yards, the great pure sky was cut up into plates of ultramarine; and under the reverberating light of the sun, the white façades, the slate roofs, and the granite wharves glowed dazzlingly. In the distance arose a confused noise in the warm atmosphere; and the idleness of Sunday, as well as the melancholy engendered by the summer heat, seemed to shed around a universal languor.

Two men made their appearance.

One came from the direction of the Bastille; the other from that of the Jardin des Plantes. The taller of the pair, arrayed in linen cloth, walked with his hat back, his waistcoat unbuttoned, and his cravat in his hand. The smaller, whose form was covered with a maroon frock-coat, wore a cap with a pointed peak.

As soon as they reached the middle of the boulevard, they sat down, at the same moment, on the same seat.

In order to wipe their foreheads they took off their headgear, each placing his beside himself; and the little man saw "Bouvard" written in his neighbour's hat, while the latter easily traced "Pécuchet" in the cap of the person who wore the frock-coat.

"Look here!" he said; "we have both had the same idea—to write our names in our head-coverings!"

"Yes, faith, for they might carry off mine from my desk."

"'Tis the same way with me. I am an employé."

Then they gazed at each other. Bouvard's agreeable visage quite charmed Pécuchet.

His blue eyes, always half-closed, smiled in his fresh-coloured face. His trousers, with big flaps, which creased at the end over beaver shoes, took the shape of his stomach, and made his shirt bulge out at the waist; and his fair hair, which of its own accord grew in tiny curls, gave him a somewhat childish look.

He kept whistling continually with the tips of his lips.

Bouvard was struck by the serious air of Pécuchet. One would have thought that he wore a wig, so flat and black were the locks which adorned his high skull. His face seemed entirely in profile, on account of his nose, which descended very low. His legs, confined in tight wrappings of lasting, were entirely out of proportion with the length of his bust. His voice was loud and hollow.

This exclamation escaped him:

"How pleasant it would be in the country!"

But, according to Bouvard, the suburbs were unendurable on account of the noise of the public-houses outside the city. Pécuchet was of the same opinion. Nevertheless, he was beginning to feel tired of the capital, and so was Bouvard.

And their eyes wandered over heaps of stones for building, over the hideous water in which a truss of straw was floating, over a factory chimney rising towards the horizon. Sewers sent forth their poisonous exhalations. They turned to the opposite side; and they had in front of them the walls of the Public Granary.

Decidedly (and Pécuchet was surprised at the fact), it was still warmer in the street than in his own house. Bouvard persuaded him to put down his overcoat. As for him, he laughed at what people might say about him.

Suddenly, a drunken man staggered along the footpath; and the pair began a political discussion on the subject of working-men. Their opinions were similar, though perhaps Bouvard was rather more liberal in his views.

A noise of wheels sounded on the pavement amid a whirlpool of dust. It turned out to be three hired carriages which were going towards Bercy, carrying a bride with her bouquet, citizens in white cravats, ladies with their petticoats huddled up so as almost to touch their armpits, two or three little girls, and a student.

The sight of this wedding-party led Bouvard and Pécuchet to talk about women, whom they declared to be frivolous, waspish, obstinate. In spite of this, they were often better than men; but at other times they

were worse. In short, it was better to live without them. For his part, Pécuchet was a bachelor.

"As for me, I'm a widower," said Bouvard, "and I have no children."

"Perhaps you are lucky there. But, in the long run, solitude is very sad."

Then, on the edge of the wharf, appeared a girl of the town with a soldier,—sallow, with black hair, and marked with smallpox. She leaned on the soldier's arm, dragging her feet along, and swaying on her hips.

When she was a short distance from them, Bouvard indulged in a coarse remark. Pécuchet became very red in the face, and, no doubt to avoid answering, gave him a look to indicate the fact that a priest was coming in their direction.

The ecclesiastic slowly descended the avenue, along which lean elm trees were placed as landmarks, and Bouvard, when he no longer saw the priest's three-cornered head-piece, expressed his relief; for he hated Jesuits. Pécuchet, without absolving them from blame, exhibited some respect for religion.

Meanwhile, the twilight was falling, and the window-blinds in front of them were raised. The passers-by became more numerous. Seven o'clock struck.

Their words rushed on in an inexhaustible stream; remarks succeeding to anecdotes, philosophic views to individual considerations. They disparaged the management of the bridges and causeways, the tobacco administration, the theatres, our marine, and the entire human race, like people who had undergone great mortifications. In listening to each other both found again some ideas which had long since slipped out of their minds; and though they had passed the age of simple emotions, they experienced a new pleasure, a kind of expansion, the tender charm associated with their first appearance on life's stage.

Twenty times they had risen and sat down again, and had proceeded along the boulevard from the upper to the lower lock, each time intending to take their departure, but not having the strength to do so, held back by a kind of fascination.

However, they came to parting at last, and they had clasped each other's hands, when Bouvard said all of a sudden:

"Faith! what do you say to our dining together?"

"I had the very same idea in my own head," returned Pécuchet, "but I hadn't the courage to propose it to you."

And he allowed himself to be led towards a little restaurant facing the Hôtel de Ville, where they would be comfortable.

Bouvard called for the *menu*. Pécuchet was afraid of spices, as they might inflame his blood. This led to a medical discussion. Then they glorified the utility of science: how many things could be learned, how many researches one could make, if one had only time! Alas! earning one's bread took up all one's time; and they raised their arms in astonishment, and were near embracing each other over the table on discovering that they were both copyists, Bouvard in a commercial establishment, and Pécuchet in the Admiralty, which did not, however, prevent him from devoting a few spare moments each evening to study. He had noted faults in M. Thiers's work, and he spoke with the utmost respect of a certain professor named Dumouchel.

Bouvard had the advantage of him in other ways. His hair watch-chain, and his manner of whipping-up the mustard-sauce, revealed the greybeard, full of experience; and he ate with the corners of his napkin under his armpits, giving utterance to things which made Pécuchet laugh. It was a peculiar laugh, one very low note, always the same, emitted at long intervals. Bouvard's laugh was explosive, sonorous, uncovering his teeth, shaking his shoulders, and making the customers at the door turn round to stare at him.

When they had dined they went to take coffee in another establishment. Pécuchet, on contemplating the gas-burners, groaned over the spreading torrent of luxury; then, with an imperious movement, he flung aside the newspapers. Bouvard was more indulgent on this point. He liked all authors indiscriminately, having been disposed in his youth to go on the stage.

He had a fancy for trying balancing feats with a billiard-cue and two ivory balls, such as Barberou, one of his friends, had performed. They invariably fell, and, rolling along the floor between people's legs, got lost in some distant corner. The waiter, who had to rise every time to search for them on all-fours under the benches, ended by making complaints. Pécuchet picked a quarrel with him; the coffee-house keeper came on the scene, but Pécuchet would listen to no excuses, and even cavilled over the amount consumed.

He then proposed to finish the evening quietly at his own abode, which was quite near, in the Rue St. Martin. As soon as they had entered he put on a kind of cotton nightgown, and did the honours of his apartment.

A deal desk, placed exactly in the centre of the room caused inconvenience by its sharp corners; and all around, on the boards, on the three chairs, on the old armchair, and in the corners, were scattered pell-mell a

number of volumes of the "Roret Encyclopædia," "The Magnetiser's Manual," a Fénelon, and other old books, with heaps of waste paper, two cocoa-nuts, various medals, a Turkish cap, and shells brought back from Havre by Dumouchel. A layer of dust velveted the walls, which otherwise had been painted yellow. The shoe-brush was lying at the side of the bed, the coverings of which hung down. On the ceiling could be seen a big black stain, produced by the smoke of the lamp.

Bouvard, on account of the smell no doubt, asked permission to open the window.

"The papers will fly away!" cried Pécuchet, who was more afraid of the currents of air.

However, he panted for breath in this little room, heated since morning by the slates of the roof.

Bouvard said to him: "If I were in your place, I would remove my flannel."

"What!" And Pécuchet cast down his head, frightened at the idea of no longer having his healthful flannel waistcoat.

"Let me take the business in hand," resumed Bouvard; "the air from outside will refresh you."

At last Pécuchet put on his boots again, muttering, "Upon my honour, you are bewitching me." And, notwithstanding the distance, he accompanied Bouvard as far as the latter's house at the corner of the Rue de Béthune, opposite the Pont de la Tournelle.

Bouvard's room, the floor of which was well waxed, and which had curtains of cotton cambric and mahogany furniture, had the advantage of a balcony overlooking the river. The two principal ornaments were a liqueur-frame in the middle of the chest of drawers, and, in a row beside the glass, daguerreotypes representing his friends. An oil painting occupied the alcove.

"My uncle!" said Bouvard. And the taper which he held in his hand shed its light on the portrait of a gentleman.

Red whiskers enlarged his visage, which was surmounted by a forelock curling at its ends. His huge cravat, with the triple collar of his shirt, and his velvet waistcoat and black coat, appeared to cramp him. You would have imagined there were diamonds on his shirt-frill. His eyes seemed fastened to his cheekbones, and he smiled with a cunning little air.

Pécuchet could not keep from saying, "One would rather take him for your father!"

"He is my godfather," replied Bouvard carelessly, adding that his baptismal name was François-Denys-Bartholémée.

Pécuchet's baptismal name was Juste-Romain-Cyrille, and their ages were identical—forty-seven years. This coincidence caused them satisfaction, but surprised them, each having thought the other much older. They next vented their admiration for Providence, whose combinations are sometimes marvellous.

"For, in fact, if we had not gone out a while ago to take a walk we might have died before knowing each other."

And having given each other their employers' addresses, they exchanged a cordial "good night."

"Don't go to see the women!" cried Bouvard on the stairs.

Pécuchet descended the steps without answering this coarse jest.

Next day, in the space in front of the establishment of MM. Descambos Brothers, manufacturers of Alsatian tissues, 92, Rue Hautefeuille, a voice called out:

"Bouvard! Monsieur Bouvard!"

The latter glanced through the window-panes and recognised Pécuchet, who articulated more loudly:

"I am not ill! I have remained away!"

"Why, though?"

"This!" said Pécuchet, pointing at his breast.

All the talk of the day before, together with the temperature of the apartment and the labours of digestion, had prevented him from sleeping, so much so that, unable to stand it any longer, he had flung off his flannel waistcoat. In the morning he recalled his action, which fortunately had no serious consequences, and he came to inform Bouvard about it, showing him in this way that he had placed him very high in his esteem.

He was a small shopkeeper's son, and had no recollection of his mother, who died while he was very young. At fifteen he had been taken away from a boarding-school to be sent into the employment of a process-server. The gendarmes invaded his employer's residence one day, and that worthy was sent off to the galleys—a stern history which still caused him a thrill of terror. Then he had attempted many callings—apothecary's apprentice, usher, book-keeper in a packet-boat on the Upper Seine. At length, a head of a department in the Admiralty, smitten by his handwriting, had employed him as a copying-clerk; but the consciousness of a defective education, with the intellectual needs engendered by it, irritated his temper, and so he lived altogether alone,

without relatives, without a mistress. His only distraction was to go out on Sunday to inspect public works.

The earliest recollections of Bouvard carried him back across the banks of the Loire into a farmyard. A man who was his uncle had brought him to Paris to teach him commerce. At his majority, he got a few thousand francs. Then he took a wife, and opened a confectioner's shop. Six months later his wife disappeared, carrying off the cash-box. Friends, good cheer, and above all, idleness, had speedily accomplished his ruin. But he was inspired by the notion of utilising his beautiful chirography, and for the past twelve years he had clung to the same post in the establishment of MM. Descambos Brothers, manufacturers of tissues, 92, Rue Hautefeuille. As for his uncle, who formerly had sent him the celebrated portrait as a memento, Bouvard did not even know his residence, and expected nothing more from him. Fifteen hundred francs a year and his salary as copying-clerk enabled him every evening to take a nap at a coffee-house. Thus their meeting had the importance of an adventure. They were at once drawn together by secret fibres. Besides, how can we explain sympathies? Why does a certain peculiarity, a certain imperfection, indifferent or hateful in one person, prove a fascination in another? That which we call the thunderbolt is true as regards all the passions.

Before the month was over they "thou'd" and "thee'd" each other.

Frequently they came to see each other at their respective offices. As soon as one made his appearance, the other shut up his writing-desk, and they went off together into the streets. Bouvard walked with long strides, whilst Pécuchet, taking innumerable steps, with his frock-coat flapping at his heels, seemed to slip along on rollers. In the same way, their peculiar tastes were in harmony. Bouvard smoked his pipe, loved cheese, regularly took his half-glass of brandy. Pécuchet snuffed, at dessert ate only preserves, and soaked a piece of sugar in his coffee. One was self-confident, flighty, generous; the other prudent, thoughtful, and thrifty.

In order to please him, Bouvard desired to introduce Pécuchet to Barberou. He was an ex-commercial traveller, and now a purse-maker—a good fellow, a patriot, a ladies' man, and one who affected the language of the faubourgs. Pécuchet did not care for him, and he brought Bouvard to the residence of Dumouchel. This author (for he had published a little work on mnemonics) gave lessons in literature at a young ladies' boarding-school, and had orthodox opinions and a grave deportment. He bored Bouvard.

Neither of the two friends concealed his opinion from the other. Each recognised the correctness of the other's view. They altered their habits, they quitting their humdrum lodgings, and ended by dining together every day.

They made observations on the plays at the theatre, on the government, the dearness of living, and the frauds of commerce. From time to time, the history of Collier or the trial of Fualdès turned up in their conversations; and then they sought for the causes of the Revolution.

They lounged along by the old curiosity shops. They visited the School of Arts and Crafts, St. Denis, the Gobelins, the Invalides, and all the public collections.

When they were asked for their passports, they made pretence of having lost them, passing themselves off as two strangers, two Englishmen.

In the galleries of the Museum, they viewed the stuffed quadrupeds with amazement, the butterflies with delight, and the metals with indifference; the fossils made them dream; the conchological specimens bored them. They examined the hot-houses through the glass, and groaned at the thought that all these leaves distilled poisons. What they admired about the cedar was that it had been brought over in a hat.

At the Louvre they tried to get enthusiastic about Raphael. At the great library they desired to know the exact number of volumes.

On one occasion they attended at a lecture on Arabic at the College of France, and the professor was astonished to see these two unknown persons attempting to take notes. Thanks to Barberou, they penetrated into the green-room of a little theatre. Dumouchel got them tickets for a sitting at the Academy. They inquired about discoveries, read the prospectuses, and this curiosity developed their intelligence. At the end of a horizon, growing every day more remote, they perceived things at the same time confused and marvellous.

When they admired an old piece of furniture they regretted that they had not lived at the period when it was used, though they were absolutely ignorant of what period it was. In accordance with certain names, they imagined countries only the more beautiful in proportion to their utter lack of definite information about them. The works of which the titles were to them unintelligible, appeared to their minds to contain some mysterious knowledge.

And the more ideas they had, the more they suffered. When a mail-coach crossed them in the street, they felt the need of going off with it. The Quay of Flowers made them sigh for the country.

One Sunday they started for a walking tour early in the morning, and, passing through Meudon, Bellevue, Suresnes, and Auteuil, they wandered about all day amongst the vineyards, tore up wild poppies by the sides of fields, slept on the grass, drank milk, ate under the acacias in the gardens of country inns, and got home very late—dusty, worn-out, and enchanted.

They often renewed these walks. They felt so sad next day that they ended by depriving themselves of them.

The monotony of the desk became odious to them. Always the eraser and the sandrac, the same inkstand, the same pens, and the same companions. Looking on the latter as stupid fellows, they talked to them less and less. This cost them some annoyances. They came after the regular hour every day, and received reprimands.

Formerly they had been almost happy, but their occupation humiliated them since they had begun to set a higher value on themselves, and their disgust increased while they were mutually glorifying and spoiling each other. Pécuchet contracted Bouvard's bluntness, and Bouvard assumed a little of Pécuchet's moroseness.

"I have a mind to become a mountebank in the streets!" said one to the other.

"As well to be a rag-picker!" exclaimed his friend.

What an abominable situation! And no way out of it. Not even the hope of it!

One afternoon (it was the 20th of January, 1839) Bouvard, while at his desk, received a letter left by the postman.

He lifted up both hands; then his head slowly fell back, and he sank on the floor in a swoon.

The clerks rushed forward; they took off his cravat; they sent for a physician. He re-opened his eyes; then, in answer to the questions they put to him:

"Ah! the fact is—the fact is—A little air will relieve me. No; let me alone. Kindly give me leave to go out."

And, in spite of his corpulence, he rushed, all breathless, to the Admiralty office, and asked for Pécuchet.

Pécuchet appeared.

"My uncle is dead! I am his heir!"

"It isn't possible!"

Bouvard showed him the following lines:

OFFICE OF MAÎTRE TARDIVEL, NOTARY.

Savigny-en-Septaine, 14th January, 1839.

Sir,—I beg of you to call at my office in order to take notice there of the will of your natural father, M. François-Denys-Bartholomé Bouvard, ex-merchant in the town of Nantes, who died in this parish on the 10th of the present month. This will contains a very important disposition in your favour.

Tardivel, *Notary.*

Pécuchet was obliged to sit down on a boundary-stone in the courtyard outside the office.

Then he returned the paper, saying slowly:

"Provided that this is not—some practical joke."

"You think it is a farce!" replied Bouvard, in a stifled voice like the rattling in the throat of a dying man.

But the postmark, the name of the notary's office in printed characters, the notary's own signature, all proved the genuineness of the news; and they regarded each other with a trembling at the corners of their mouths and tears in their staring eyes.

They wanted space to breathe freely. They went to the Arc de Triomphe, came back by the water's edge, and passed beyond Nôtre Dame. Bouvard was very flushed. He gave Pécuchet blows with his fist in the back, and for five minutes talked utter nonsense.

They chuckled in spite of themselves. This inheritance, surely, ought to mount up——?

"Ah! that would be too much of a good thing. Let's talk no more about it."

They did talk again about it. There was nothing to prevent them from immediately demanding explanations. Bouvard wrote to the notary with that view.

The notary sent a copy of the will, which ended thus:

"Consequently, I give to François-Denys-Bartholomé Bouvard, my recognised natural son, the portion of my property disposable by law."

The old fellow had got this son in his youthful days, but he had carefully kept it dark, making him pass for a nephew; and the "nephew" had always called him "my uncle," though he had his own idea on the matter. When he was about forty, M. Bouvard married; then he was left a widower. His two legitimate sons having gone against his wishes, remorse

took possession of him for the desertion of his other child during a long period of years. He would have even sent for the lad but for the influence of his female cook. She left him, thanks to the manœuvres of the family, and in his isolation, when death drew nigh, he wished to repair the wrongs he had done by bequeathing to the fruit of his early love all that he could of his fortune. It ran up to half a million francs, thus giving the copying-clerk two hundred and fifty thousand francs. The eldest of the brothers, M. Étienne, had announced that he would respect the will.

Bouvard fell into a kind of stupefied condition. He kept repeating in a low tone, smiling with the peaceful smile of drunkards: "An income of fifteen thousand livres!"—and Pécuchet, whose head, however, was stronger, was not able to get over it.

They were rudely shaken by a letter from Tardivel. The other son, M. Alexandre, declared his intention to have the entire matter decided by law, and even to question the legacy, if he could, requiring, first of all, to have everything sealed, and to have an inventory taken and a sequestrator appointed, etc. Bouvard got a bilious attack in consequence. Scarcely had he recovered when he started for Savigny, from which place he returned without having brought the matter nearer to a settlement, and he could only grumble about having gone to the expense of a journey for nothing. Then followed sleepless nights, alternations of rage and hope, of exaltation and despondency. Finally, after the lapse of six months, his lordship Alexandre was appeased, and Bouvard entered into possession of his inheritance.

His first exclamation was: "We will retire into the country!" And this phrase, which bound up his friend with his good fortune, Pécuchet had found quite natural. For the union of these two men was absolute and profound. But, as he did not wish to live at Bouvard's expense, he would not go before he got his retiring pension. Two years more; no matter! He remained inflexible, and the thing was decided.

In order to know where to settle down, they passed in review all the provinces. The north was fertile, but too cold; the south delightful, so far as the climate was concerned, but inconvenient because of the mosquitoes; and the middle portion of the country, in truth, had nothing about it to excite curiosity. Brittany would have suited them, were it not for the bigoted tendency of its inhabitants. As for the regions of the east, on account of the Germanic *patois* they could not dream of it. But there were other places. For instance, what about Forez, Bugey, and Rumois? The maps said nothing about them. Besides, whether their house happened to be in one place or in another, the important thing was to have one.

Already they saw themselves in their shirt-sleeves, at the edge of a plat-band, pruning rose trees, and digging, dressing, settling the ground, growing tulips in pots. They would awaken at the singing of the lark to follow the plough; they would go with baskets to gather apples, would look on at butter-making, the thrashing of corn, sheep-shearing, bee-culture, and would feel delight in the lowing of cows and in the scent of new-mown hay. No more writing! No more heads of departments! No more even quarters' rent to pay! For they had a dwelling-house of their own! And they would eat the hens of their own poultry-yard, the vegetables of their own garden, and would dine without taking off their wooden shoes! "We'll do whatever we like! We'll let our beards grow!"

They would purchase horticultural implements, then a heap of things "that might perhaps be useful," such as a tool-chest (there was always need of one in a house), next, scales, a land-surveyor's chain, a bathing-tub in case they got ill, a thermometer, and even a barometer, "on the Gay-Lussac system," for physical experiences, if they took a fancy that way. It would not be a bad thing either (for a person cannot always be working out of doors), to have some good literary works; and they looked out for them, very embarrassed sometimes to know if such a book was really "a library book."

Bouvard settled the question. "Oh! we shall not want a library. Besides, I have my own."

They prepared their plans beforehand. Bouvard would bring his furniture, Pécuchet his big black table; they would turn the curtains to account; and, with a few kitchen utensils, this would be quite sufficient. They swore to keep silent about all this, but their faces spoke volumes. So their colleagues thought them funny. Bouvard, who wrote spread over his desk, with his elbows out, in order the better to round his letters, gave vent to a kind of whistle while half-closing his heavy eyelids with a waggish air. Pécuchet, squatted on a big straw foot-stool, was always carefully forming the pot-hooks of his large handwriting, but all the while swelling his nostrils and pressing his lips together, as if he were afraid of letting his secret slip.

After eighteen months of inquiries, they had discovered nothing. They made journeys in all the outskirts of Paris, both from Amiens to Evreux, and from Fontainebleau to Havre. They wanted a country place which would be a thorough country place, without exactly insisting on a picturesque site; but a limited horizon saddened them.

They fled from the vicinity of habitations, and only redoubled their solitude.

Sometimes they made up their minds; then, fearing they would repent later, they changed their opinion, the place having appeared unhealthy, or exposed to the sea-breeze, or too close to a factory, or difficult of access.

Barberou came to their rescue. He knew what their dream was, and one fine day he called on them to let them know that he had been told about an estate at Chavignolles, between Caen and Falaise. This comprised a farm of thirty-eight hectares,¹ with a kind of château, and a garden in a very productive state.

They proceeded to Calvados, and were quite enraptured. For the farm, together with the house (one would not be sold without the other), only a hundred and forty-three thousand francs were asked. Bouvard did not want to give more than a hundred and twenty thousand.

Pécuchet combated his obstinacy, begged of him to give way, and finally declared that he would make up the surplus himself. This was his entire fortune, coming from his mother's patrimony and his own savings. Never had he breathed a word, reserving this capital for a great occasion.

The entire amount was paid up about the end of 1840, six months before his retirement.

Bouvard was no longer a copying-clerk. At first he had continued his functions through distrust of the future; but he had resigned once he was certain of his inheritance. However, he willingly went back to MM. Descambos; and the night before his departure he stood drinks to all the clerks.

Pécuchet, on the contrary, was morose towards his colleagues, and went off, on the last day, roughly clapping the door behind him.

He had to look after the packing, to do a heap of commissions, then to make purchases, and to take leave of Dumouchel.

The professor proposed to him an epistolary interchange between them, of which he would make use to keep Pécuchet well up in literature; and, after fresh felicitations, wished him good health.

Barberou exhibited more sensibility in taking leave of Bouvard. He expressly gave up a domino-party, promised to go to see him "over there," ordered two aniseed cordials, and embraced him.

Bouvard, when he got home, inhaled over the balcony a deep breath of air, saying to himself, "At last!" The lights along the quays quivered in the water, the rolling of omnibuses in the distance gradually ceased. He recalled happy days spent in this great city, supper-parties at restaurants, evenings at the theatre, gossips with his portress, all his habitual

1. Roughly speaking, about 93 acres.—Translator.

associations; and he experienced a sinking of the heart, a sadness which he dared not acknowledge even to himself.

Pécuchet was walking in his room up to two o'clock in the morning. He would come back there no more: so much the better! And yet, in order to leave behind something of himself, he printed his name on the plaster over the chimney-piece.

The larger portion of the baggage was gone since the night before. The garden implements, the bedsteads, the mattresses, the tables, the chairs, a cooking apparatus, and three casks of Burgundy would go by the Seine, as far as Havre, and would be despatched thence to Caen, where Bouvard, who would wait for them, would have them brought on to Chavignolles.

But his father's portrait, the armchairs the liqueur-case, the old books, the time-piece, all the precious objects were put into a furniture waggon, which would proceed through Nonancourt, Verneuil, and Falaise. Pécuchet was to accompany it.

He installed himself beside the conductor, upon a seat, and, wrapped up in his oldest frock-coat, with a comforter, mittens, and his office foot-warmer, on Sunday, the 20th of March, at daybreak, he set forth from the capital.

The movement and the novelty of the journey occupied his attention during the first few hours. Then the horses slackened their pace, which led to disputes between the conductor and the driver. They selected execrable inns, and, though they were accountable for everything, Pécuchet, through excess of prudence, slept in the same lodgings.

Next day they started again, at dawn, and the road, always the same, stretched out, uphill, to the verge of the horizon. Yards of stones came after each other; the ditches were full of water; the country showed itself in wide tracts of green, monotonous and cold; clouds scudded through the sky. From time to time there was a fall of rain. On the third day squalls arose. The awning of the waggon, badly fastened on, went clapping with the wind, like the sails of a ship. Pécuchet lowered his face under his cap, and every time he opened his snuff-box it was necessary for him, in order to protect his eyes, to turn round completely.

During the joltings he heard all his baggage swinging behind him, and shouted out a lot of directions. Seeing that they were useless, he changed his tactics. He assumed an air of good-fellowship, and made a display of civilities; in the troublesome ascents he assisted the men in pushing on the wheels: he even went so far as to pay for the coffee and brandy after the meals. From that time they went on more slowly; so much so that, in

the neighbourhood of Gauburge, the axletree broke, and the waggon remained tilted over. Pécuchet immediately went to inspect the inside of it: the sets of porcelain lay in bits. He raised his arms, while he gnashed his teeth, and cursed these two idiots; and the following day was lost owing to the waggon-driver getting tipsy: but he had not the energy to complain, the cup of bitterness being full.

Bouvard had quitted Paris only on the third day, as he had to dine once more with Barberou. He arrived in the coach-yard at the last moment; then he woke up before the cathedral of Rouen: he had mistaken the *diligence*.

In the evening, all the places for Caen were booked. Not knowing what to do, he went to the Theatre of Arts, and he smiled at his neighbours, telling them he had retired from business, and had lately purchased an estate in the neighbourhood. When he started on Friday for Caen, his packages were not there. He received them on Sunday, and despatched them in a cart, having given notice to the farmer who was working the land that he would follow in the course of a few hours.

At Falaise, on the ninth day of his journey, Pécuchet took a fresh horse, and even till sunset they kept steadily on. Beyond Bretteville, having left the high-road, he got off into a cross-road, fancying that every moment he could see the gable-ends of Chavignolles. However, the ruts hid them from view; they vanished, and then the party found themselves in the midst of ploughed fields. The night was falling. What was to become of them? At last Pécuchet left the waggon behind, and, splashing in the mire, advanced in front of it to reconnoitre. When he drew near farm-houses, the dogs barked. He called out as loudly as ever he could, asking what was the right road. There was no answer. He was afraid, and got back to the open ground. Suddenly two lanterns flashed. He perceived a cabriolet, and rushed forward to meet it. Bouvard was inside.

But where could the furniture waggon be? For an hour they called out to it through the darkness. At length it was found, and they arrived at Chavignolles.

A great fire of brushwood and pine-apples was blazing in the dining-room. Two covers were placed there. The furniture, which had come by the cart, was piled up near the vestibule. Nothing was wanting. They sat down to table.

Onion soup had been prepared for them, also a chicken, bacon, and hard-boiled eggs. The old woman who cooked came from time to time to inquire about their tastes. They replied, "Oh! very good, very good!" and the big loaf, hard to cut, the cream, the nuts, all delighted them. There

were holes in the flooring, and the damp was oozing through the walls. However, they cast around them a glance of satisfaction, while eating on the little table on which a candle was burning. Their faces were reddened by the strong air. They stretched out their stomachs; they leaned on the backs of their chairs, which made a cracking sound in consequence, and they kept repeating: "Here we are in the place, then! What happiness! It seems to me that it is a dream!"

Although it was midnight, Pécuchet conceived the idea of taking a turn round the garden. Bouvard made no objection. They took up the candle, and, screening it with an old newspaper, walked along the paths. They found pleasure in mentioning aloud the names of the vegetables.

"Look here—carrots! Ah!—cabbages!"

Next, they inspected the espaliers. Pécuchet tried to discover the buds. Sometimes a spider would scamper suddenly over the wall, and the two shadows of their bodies appeared magnified, repeating their gestures. The ends of the grass let the dew trickle out. The night was perfectly black, and everything remained motionless in a profound silence, an infinite sweetness. In the distance a cock was crowing.

Their two rooms had between them a little door, which was hidden by the papering of the wall. By knocking a chest of drawers up against it, nails were shaken out; and they found the place gaping open. This was a surprise.

When they had undressed and got into bed, they kept babbling for some time. Then they went asleep—Bouvard on his back, with his mouth open, his head bare; Pécuchet on his right side, his knees in his stomach, his head muffled in a cotton night-cap; and the pair snored under the moonlight which made its way in through the windows.

Chapter 2

Experiments in Agriculture.

How happy they felt when they awoke next morning! Bouvard smoked a pipe, and Pécuchet took a pinch of snuff, which they declared to be the best they had ever had in their whole lives. Then they went to the window to observe the landscape.

In front of them lay the fields, with a barn and the church-bell at the right and a screen of poplars at the left.

Two principal walks, forming a cross, divided the garden into four parts. The vegetables were contained in wide beds, where, at different spots, arose dwarf cypresses and trees cut in distaff fashion. On one side, an arbour just touched an artificial hillock; while, on the other, the espaliers were supported against a wall; and at the end, a railed opening gave a glimpse of the country outside. Beyond the wall there was an orchard, and, next to a hedge of elm trees, a thicket; and behind the railed opening there was a narrow road.

They were gazing on this spectacle together, when a man, with hair turning grey, and wearing a black overcoat, appeared walking along the pathway, striking with his cane all the bars of the railed fence. The old servant informed them that this was M. Vaucorbeil, a doctor of some reputation in the district. She mentioned that the other people of note were the Comte de Faverges, formerly a deputy, and an extensive owner of land and cattle; M. Foureau, who sold wood, plaster, all sorts of things; M. Marescot, the notary; the Abbé Jeufroy; and the widow Bordin, who lived on her private income. The old woman added that, as for herself, they called her Germaine, on account of the late Germain, her husband. She used to go out as a charwoman, but would be very glad to enter into the gentlemen's service. They accepted her offer, and then went out to take a look at their farm, which was situated over a thousand yards away.

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