Michel de Bourges concluded, "The People must be given time to understand, to grow angry, to rise. As for us, Representative, we should be rash to precipitate the situation. If we were to march immediately straight upon the troops, we should only be shot to no purpose, and the glorious insurrection for Right would thus be beforehand deprived of its natural leaders—the Representatives of the People. We should decapitate the popular army. Temporary delay, on the contrary, would be beneficial. Too much zeal must be guarded against, self-restraint is necessary, to give way would be to lose the battle before having begun it. Thus, for example, we must not attend the meeting announced by the Right for noon, all those who went there would be arrested. We must remain free, we must remain in readiness, we must remain calm, and must act waiting the advent of the People. Four days of this agitation without fighting would weary the army." Michel, however, advised a beginning, but simply by placarding Article 68 of the Constitution. But where should a printer be found? Michel de Bourges spoke with an experience of revolutionary procedure

which was wanting in me. For many years past he had acquired a certain practical knowledge of the masses. His council was wise. It must be added that all the information which came to us seconded him, and appeared conclusive against me. Paris was dejected. The army of the coup d'état invaded her peaceably. Even the placards were not torn down. Nearly all the Representatives present, even the most daring, agreed with Michel's counsel, to wait and see what would happen. "At night," said they, "the agitation will begin," and they concluded, like Michel de Bourges, that the people must be given time to understand. There would be a risk of being alone in too hasty a beginning. We should not carry the people with us in the first moment. Let us leave the indignation to increase little by little in their hearts. If it were begun prematurely our manifestation would miscarry. These were the sentiments of all. For myself, while listening to them, I felt shaken. Perhaps they were right. It would be a mistake to give the signal for the combat in vain. What good is the lightning which is not followed by the thunderbolt? To raise a voice, to give vent to a cry, to find a

printer, there was the first question. But was there still a free Press? The brave old ex-chief of the 6th Legion, Colonel Forestier, came in. He took Michel de Bourges and myself aside. "Listen," said he to us. "I come to you. I have been dismissed. I no longer command my legion, but appoint me in the name of the Left, Colonel of the 6th. Sign me an order and I will go at once and call them to arms. In an hour the regiment will be on foot." "Colonel," answered I, "I will do more than sign an order, I will accompany you." And I turned towards Charamaule, who had a carriage in waiting. "Come with us," said I. Forestier was sure of two majors of the 6th. We decided to drive to them at once, while Michel and the other Representatives should await us at Bonvalet's, in the Boulevard du Temple, near the Café Turc. There they could consult together. We started. We traversed Paris, where people were already beginning to swarm in a threatening manner. The boulevards were thronged with an uneasy crowd. People walked to and fro, passers-by accosted each other without any previous acquaintance, a noteworthy sign of public anxiety; and groups talked in loud

voices at the corners of the streets. The shops were being shut. "Come, this looks better," cried Charamaule. He had been wandering about the town since the morning, and he had noticed with sadness the apathy of the masses. We found the two majors at home upon whom Colonel Forestier counted. They were two rich linendrapers, who received us with some embarrassment. The shopmen had gathered together at the windows, and watched us pass by. It was mere curiosity. In the meanwhile one of the two majors countermanded a journey which he was going to undertake on that day, and promised us his co-operation. "But," added he, "do not deceive yourselves, one can foresee that we shall be cut to pieces. Few men will march out." Colonel Forestier said to us, "Watrin, the present colonel of the 6th, does not care for fighting; perhaps he will resign me the command amicably. I will go and find him alone, so as to startle him the less, and will join you at Bonvalet's." Near the Porte St. Martin we left our carriage, and Charamaule and myself proceeded along the boulevard on foot, in order to observe the groups more closely, and more easily to judge the

aspect of the crowd. The recent levelling of the road had converted the boulevard of the Porte St. Martin into a deep cutting, commanded by two embankments. On the summits of these embankments were the footways, furnished with railings. The carriages drove along the cutting, the foot passengers walked along the footways. Just as we reached the boulevard, a long column of infantry filed into this ravine with drummers at their head. The thick waves of bayonets filled the square of St. Martin, and lost themselves in the depths of the Boulevard Bonne Nouvelle. An enormous and compact crowd covered the two pavements of the Boulevard St. Martin. Large numbers of workmen, in their blouses, were there, leaning upon the railings. At the moment when the head of the column entered the defile before the Theatre of the Porte St. Martin a tremendous shout of "Vive la République!" came forth from every mouth as though shouted by one man. The soldiers continued to advance in silence, but it might have been said that their pace slackened, and many of them regarded the crowd with an air of indecision. What did this cry of "Vive la

République!" mean? Was it a token of applause? Was it a shout of defiance? It seemed to me at that moment that the Republic raised its brow, and that the coup d'état hung its head. Meanwhile Charamaule said to me, "You are recognized." In fact, near the Château d'Eau the crowd surrounded me. Some young men cried out, "Vive Victor Hugo!" One of them asked me, "Citizen Victor Hugo, what ought we to do?" I answered, "Tear down the seditious placards of the coup d'état, and cry 'Vive la Constitution!'" "And suppose they fire on us?" said a young workman. "You will hasten to arms." "Bravo!" shouted the crowd. I added, "Louis Bonaparte is a rebel, he has steeped himself to-day in every crime. We, Representatives of the People, declare him an outlaw, but there is no need for our declaration, since he is an outlaw by the mere fact of his treason. Citizens, you have two hands; take in one your Right, and in the other your gun and fall upon Bonaparte." "Bravo! Bravo!" again shouted the people. A tradesman who was shutting up his shop said to me, "Don't speak so loud, if they heard you talking like that, they would shoot you." "Well,

then," I replied, "you would parade my body, and my death would be a boon if the justice of God could result from it." All shouted "Long live Victor Hugo!" "Shout 'Long live the Constitution,'" said I. A great cry of "Vive la Constitution! Vive la République;" came forth from every breast. Enthusiasm, indignation, anger flashed in the faces of all. I thought then, and I still think, that this, perhaps, was the supreme moment. I was tempted to carry off all that crowd, and to begin the battle. Charamaule restrained me. He whispered to me,— "You will bring about a useless fusillade. Every one is unarmed. The infantry is only two paces from us, and see, here comes the artillery." I looked round; in truth several pieces of cannon emerged at a quick trot from the Rue de Bondy, behind the Château d'Eau. The advice to abstain, given by Charamaule, made a deep impression on me. Coming from such a man, and one so dauntless, it was certainly not to be distrusted. Besides, I felt myself bound by the deliberation which had just taken place at the meeting in the Rue Blanche. I shrank before the responsibility which I should have incurred. To have taken

advantage of such a moment might have been victory, it might also have been a massacre. Was I right? Was I wrong? The crowd thickened around us, and it became difficult to go forward. We were anxious, however, to reach the rendezvous at Bonvalet's. Suddenly some one touched me on the arm. It was Léopold Duras, of the National. "Go no further," he whispered, "the Restaurant Bonvalet is surrounded. Michel de Bourges has attempted to harangue the People, but the soldiers came up. He barely succeeded in making his escape. Numerous Representatives who came to the meeting have been arrested. Retrace your steps. We are returning to the old rendezvous in the Rue Blanche. I have been looking for you to tell you this." A cab was passing; Charamaule hailed the driver. We jumped in, followed by the crowd, shouting, "Vive la République! Vive Victor Hugo!" It appears that just at that moment a squadron of sergents de ville arrived on the Boulevard to arrest me. The coachman drove off at full speed. A quarter of an hour afterwards we reached the Rue Blanche. CHAPTER VIII. "VIOLATION OF THE CHAMBER" At seven o'clock

in the morning the Pont de la Concorde was still free. The large grated gate of the Palace of the Assembly was closed; through the bars might be seen the flight of steps, that flight of steps whence the Republic had been proclaimed on the 4th May, 1848, covered with soldiers; and their piled arms might be distinguished upon the platform behind those high columns, which, during the time of the Constituent Assembly, after the 15th of May and the 23d June, masked small mountain mortars, loaded and pointed. A porter with a red collar, wearing the livery of the Assembly, stood by the little door of the grated gate. From time to time Representatives arrived. The porter said, "Gentlemen, are you Representatives?" and opened the door. Sometimes he asked their names. M. Dupin's quarters could be entered without hindrance. In the great gallery, in the dining-room, in the salon d'honneur of the Presidency, liveried attendants silently opened the doors as usual. Before daylight, immediately after the arrest of the Questors MM. Baze and Leflô, M. de Panat, the only Questor who remained free, having been spared or disdained as a Legitimist, awoke M. Dupin and

begged him to summon immediately the Representatives from their own homes. M. Dupin returned this unprecedented answer, "I do not see any urgency." Almost at the same time as M. Panat, the Representative Jerôme Bonaparte had hastened thither. He had summoned M. Dupin to place himself at the head of the Assembly. M. Dupin had answered, "I cannot, I am guarded." Jerôme Bonaparte burst out laughing. In fact, no one had deigned to place a sentinel at M. Dupin's door; they knew that it was guarded by his meanness. It was only later on, towards noon, that they took pity on him. They felt that the contempt was too great, and allotted him two sentinels. At half-past seven, fifteen or twenty Representatives, among whom were MM. Eugène Sue, Joret, de Rességuier, and de Talhouet, met together in M. Dupin's room. They also had vainly argued with M. Dupin. In the recess of a window a clever member of the Majority, M. Desmousseaux de Givré, who was a little deaf and exceedingly exasperated, almost quarrelled with a Representative of the Right like himself whom he wrongly supposed to be favorable to the coup d'état. M. Dupin,

apart from the group of Representatives, alone dressed in black, his hands behind his back, his head sunk on his breast, walked up and down before the fireplace, where a large fire was burning. In his own room, and in his very presence, they were talking loudly about himself, yet he seemed not to hear. Two members of the Left came in, Benoît (du Rhône), and Crestin. Crestin entered the room, went straight up to M. Dupin, and said to him, "President, you know what is going on? How is it that the Assembly has not yet been convened?" M. Dupin halted, and answered, with a shrug which was habitual with him,— "There is nothing to be done." And he resumed his walk. "It is enough," said M. de Rességuier. "It is too much," said Eugène Sue. All the Representatives left the room. In the meantime the Pont de la Concorde became covered with troops. Among them General Vast-Vimeux, lean, old, and little; his lank white hair plastered over his temples, in full uniform, with his laced hat on his head. He was laden with two huge epaulets, and displayed his scarf, not that of a Representative, but of a general, which scarf, being too long, trailed on the

ground. He crossed the bridge on foot, shouting to the soldiers inarticulate cries of enthusiasm for the Empire and the coup d'état. Such figures as these were seen in 1814. Only instead of wearing a large tri-colored, cockade, they wore a large white cockade. In the main the same phenomenon; old men crying, "Long live the Past!" Almost at the same moment M. de Larochejaquelein crossed the Place de la Concorde, surrounded by a hundred men in blouses, who followed him in silence, and with an air of curiosity. Numerous regiments of cavalry were drawn up in the grand avenue of the Champs Elysées. At eight o'clock a formidable force invested the Legislative Palace. All the approaches were guarded, all the doors were shut. Some Representatives nevertheless succeeded in penetrating into the interior of the Palace, not, as has been wrongly stated, by the passage of the President's house on the side of the Esplanade of the Invalides, but by the little door of the Rue de Bourgogne, called the Black Door. This door, by what omission or what connivance I do not know, remained open till noon on the 2d December. The Rue de Bourgogne was nevertheless full of

troops. Squads of soldiers scattered here and there in the Rue de l'Université allowed passers-by, who were few and far between, to use it as a thoroughfare. The Representatives who entered by the door in Rue de Bourgogne, penetrated as far as the Salle des Conférences, where they met their colleagues coming out from M. Dupin. A numerous group of men, representing every shade of opinion in the Assembly, was speedily assembled in this hall, amongst whom were MM. Eugène Sue, Richardet, Fayolle, Joret, Marc Dufraisse, Benoît (du Rhône), Canet, Gambon, d'Adelsward, Créqu, Répellin, Teillard-Latérisse, Rantion, General Leydet, Paulin Durrieu, Chanay, Brilliez, Collas (de la Gironde), Monet, Gaston, Favreau, and Albert de Rességuier. Each new-comer accosted M. de Panat. "Where are the vice-Presidents?" "In prison." "And the two other Questors?" "Also in prison. And I beg you to believe, gentlemen," added M. de Panat, "that I have had nothing to do with the insult which has been offered me, in not arresting me." Indignation was at its height; every political shade was blended in the same sentiment of contempt and anger, and M.

de Rességuier was no less energetic than Eugène Sue. For the first time the Assembly seemed only to have one heart and one voice. Each at length said what he thought of the man of the Elysée, and it was then seen that for a long time past Louis Bonaparte had imperceptibly created a profound unanimity in the Assembly—the unanimity of contempt. M. Collas (of the Gironde) gesticulated and told his story. He came from the Ministry of the Interior. He had seen M. de Morny, he had spoken to him; and he, M. Collas, was incensed beyond measure at M. Bonaparte's crime. Since then, that Crime has made him Councillor of State. M. de Panat went hither and thither among the groups, announcing to the Representatives that he had convened the Assembly for one o'clock. But it was impossible to wait until that hour. Time pressed. At the Palais Bourbon, as in the Rue Blanche, it was the universal feeling that each hour which passed by helped to accomplish the coup d'état. Every one felt as a reproach the weight of his silence or of his inaction; the circle of iron was closing in, the tide of soldiers rose unceasingly, and silently invaded the Palace; at

each instant a sentinel the more was found at a door, which a moment before had been free. Still, the group of Representatives assembled together in the Salle des Conférences was as yet respected. It was necessary to act, to speak, to deliberate, to struggle, and not to lose a minute. Gambon said, "Let us try Dupin once more; he is our official man, we have need of him." They went to look for him. They could not find him. He was no longer there, he had disappeared, he was away, hidden, crouching, cowering, concealed, he had vanished, he was buried. Where? No one knew. Cowardice has unknown holes. Suddenly a man entered the hall. A man who was a stranger to the Assembly, in uniform, wearing the epaulet of a superior officer and a sword by his side. He was a major of the 42d, who came to summon the Representatives to quit their own House. All, Royalists and Republicans alike, rushed upon him. Such was the expression of an indignant eye-witness. General Leydet addressed him in language such as leaves an impression on the cheek rather than on the ear. "I do my duty, I fulfil my instructions," stammered

the officer. "You are an idiot, if you think you are doing your duty," cried Leydet to him, "and you are a scoundrel if you know that you are committing a crime. Your name? What do you call yourself? Give me your name." The officer refused to give his name, and replied, "So, gentlemen, you will not withdraw?" "No." "I shall go and obtain force." "Do so." He left the room, and in actual fact went to obtain orders from the Ministry of the Interior. The Representatives waited in that kind of indescribable agitation which might be called the Strangling of Right by Violence. In a short time one of them who had gone out came back hastily, and warned them that two companies of the Gendarmerie Mobile were coming with their guns in their hands. Marc Dufraisse cried out, "Let the outrage be thorough. Let the coup d'état find us on our seats. Let us go to the Salle des Séances," he added. "Since things have come to such a pass, let us afford the genuine and living spectacle of an 18th Brumaire." They all repaired to the Hall of Assembly. The passage was free. The Salle Casimir-Périer was not yet occupied by the soldiers. They numbered about sixty. Several were

girded with their scarves of office. They entered the Hall meditatively. There, M. de Rességuier, undoubtedly with a good purpose, and in order to form a more compact group, urged that they should all install themselves on the Right side. "No," said Marc Dufraisse, "every one to his bench." They scattered themselves about the Hall, each in his usual place. M. Monet, who sat on one of the lower benches of the Left Centre, held in his hand a copy of the Constitution. Several minutes elapsed. No one spoke. It was the silence of expectation which precedes decisive deeds and final crises, and during which every one seems respectfully to listen to the last instructions of his conscience. Suddenly the soldiers of the Gendarmerie Mobile, headed by a captain with his sword drawn, appeared on the threshold. The Hall of Assembly was violated. The Representatives rose from their seats simultaneously, shouting "Vive la République!" The Representative Monet alone remained standing, and in a loud and indignant voice, which resounded through the empty hall like a trumpet, ordered the soldiers to halt. The soldiers halted, looking at the

Representatives with a bewildered air. The soldiers as yet only blocked up the lobby of the Left, and had not passed beyond the Tribune. Then the Representative Monet read the Articles 36, 37, and 68 of the Constitution. Articles 36 and 37 established the inviolability of the Representatives. Article 68 deposed the President in the event of treason. That moment was a solemn one. The soldiers listened in silence. The Articles having been read, Representative d'Adelsward, who sat on the first lower bench of the Left, and who was nearest to the soldiers, turned towards them and said,— "Soldiers, you see that the President of the Republic is a traitor, and would make traitors of you. You violate the sacred precinct of rational Representation. In the name of the Constitution, in the name of the Law, we order you to withdraw." While Adelsward was speaking, the major commanding the Gendarmerie Mobile had entered. "Gentlemen," said he, "I have orders to request you to retire, and, if you do not withdraw of your own accord, to expel you." "Orders to expel us!" exclaimed Adelsward; and all the Representatives added, "Whose orders; Let us see the orders.

Who signed the orders?" The major drew forth a paper and unfolded it. Scarcely had he unfolded it than he attempted to replace it in his pocket, but General Leydet threw himself upon him and seized his arm. Several Representatives leant forward, and read the order for the expulsion of the Assembly, signed "Fortoul, Minister of the Marine." Marc Dufraisse turned towards the Gendarmes Mobiles, and cried out to them,— "Soldiers, your very presence here is an act of treason. Leave the Hall!" The soldiers seemed undecided. Suddenly a second column emerged from the door on the right, and at a signal from the commander, the captain shouted,— "Forward! Turn them all out!" Then began an indescribable hand-to-hand fight between the gendarmes and the legislators. The soldiers, with their guns in their hands, invaded the benches of the Senate. Repellin, Chanay, Rantion, were forcibly torn from their seats. Two gendarmes rushed upon Marc Dufraisse, two upon Gambon. A long struggle took place on the first bench of the Right, the same place where MM. Odilon Barrot and Abbatucci were in the habit of sitting. Paulin Durrieu resisted violence by

force, it needed three men to drag him from his bench. Monet was thrown down upon the benches of the Commissaries. They seized Adelsward by the throat, and thrust him outside the Hall. Richardet, a feeble man, was thrown down and brutally treated. Some were pricked with the points of the bayonets; nearly all had their clothes torn. The commander shouted to the soldiers, "Rake them out." It was thus that sixty Representatives of the People were taken by the collar by the coup d'état, and driven from their seats. The manner in which the deed was executed completed the treason. The physical performance was worthy of the moral performance. The three last to come out were Fayolle, Teillard-Latérisse, and Paulin Durrieu. They were allowed to pass by the great door of the Palace, and they found themselves in the Place Bourgogne. The Place Bourgogne was occupied by the 42d Regiment of the Line, under the orders of Colonel Garderens. Between the Palace and the statue of the Republic, which occupied the centre of the square, a piece of artillery was pointed at the Assembly opposite the great door. By the side of the cannon some