

...SISERABLES VOLUME II--COSETTE BOOK FIRST--WATERLOO CHAPTER I--WHAT IS MEANT BY THE WAY FROM NIVELLES Last year (1861), on a beautiful May morning, a traveller, the person who is telling this story, was coming from Nivelles, and directing his course towards La Hulpe. He was on foot. He was pursuing a broad paved road, which under the name of the "Chemin de Nivelles" is now called the "Chemin de Waterloo". He was passing over two rows of trees, over the hills which succeed each other, raise the road and let it fall again, and produce something in the nature of enormous waves. He had passed Lillois and Bois-Seigneur-Isaac. In the west he perceived the slate-roofed tower of Braine-l'Alleud, which has the form of a r... minence; and at the angle of the cross-road, by the side of a sort of mouldy gibbet bearing the inscription Ancient Barrier No. 4, a public house, bearing on its front this sign: At the Four Winds (Aux Quatre Vents). Echabeau, Private Cafe. A quarter of a league further on, he arrived at the bottom of a little v... made through the embankment of the road. The clump of sparsely planted but very green trees, which fills the valley on one side of the road, is dispersed over the meadows on the other, and disappears gracefully and as in order in the direction of Braine-l'Alleud. On the right, close to the road, was an in... n, with a four-wheeled cart at the door, a large bundle of ho... as fluttering in the wind. At one corner of the inn, beside a p... stone, with a rectilineal impost, in the sombre style of Louis XV... ed. The two decrepit leaves which barred it were ornamented... circular excavation, resembling the hollow of a sphere, in the... re, higher up in the door, near a nail, is the hole of a big iron bullet... trees, he perceived a sort of little elevation, and on this elevation s... first knot under the blows of his axe. It was a chateau; it is no longer... e first thing which struck him in this paddock was a door of the sixtee... ure-hole, some pickaxes, some shovels, some carts, an old well, with... uld he but have seized it, would, perhaps, have given him the world likewi... Hougoumont viewed on the map, as a geometrical plan, comprising buildings... he northern door, belonging to the farm. Napoleon sent his brother Jerome a... force Hougoumont on the north, and the brigade of Soye could not do more th... attack are visible. The northern door, which was beaten in by the French, and w... has exist in all farms, with the two large leaves made of rustic planks: beyond the... here; the confusion of the fray was petrified there; it lives and it dies there; it was c... ch have since been pulled down then formed redans and angles. The English barrica... y. The chateau served for a dungeon, the chapel for a block-house. There men extern... and set fire to walls and men; the reply to the grape-shot was a conflagration. The English, besied... ars like the inside of a broken shell. The staircase has two stories; the English, besied... cessible steps are solid in their niches. All the rest resembles a jaw which has been den... ecovered its calm, is singular. The mass has not been said there since the carnage. Neverthe... square air-hole stopped up with a bundle of hay; on the ground, in one corner, an old window... of the chapel for a moment, and were then dislodged, set fire to it. The flames filled this building... o the assertion of the people of the neighborhood. The infant Jesus, decapitated, was less fortu... anation points,--a sign of wrath. The wall was freshly whitewashed in 1849. The nations insulted... e inquires, Why is there no bucket and pulley to this? It is because water is no longer drawn there... 1815, his family fled and concealed themselves in the woods. The forest surrounding the Abbey of V... ephs of the thickets. Guillaume van Kyskom remained at Hougoumont, "to guard the chateau," and co... thirsty; this Guillaume brought them water. It was from this well that he drew it. Many drank there l... glory. The typhus is a concomitant of triumph. This well was deep, and it was turned into a sepulchre. Th... isolated in the middle of the courtyard. Three walls, part stone, part brick, and simulating a small, square... s little tower had a platform, of which only the beams remain. The iron supports of the well on the right fo... at large blue slab which forms the table for all wells in Belgium. The slab has here been replaced by a cross... he rain-water collects there, and from time to time a bird of the neighboring forests comes thither to drink, an... he moment when the Hanoverian lieutenant, Wilda, grasped this handle in order to take refuge in the farm, a Fr... My sister, who was older, was terrified and wept. They carried us off to the woods. I went there in my mother's... t almost say, in three acts. The first part is a garden, the second is an orchard, the third is a wood. These three... of stone. One enters the garden first. It slopes downwards, is planted with gooseberry bushes, choked with a wild... rs are surmounted by globes which resemble cannon-balls of stone. Forty-three balusters can still be counted on t... the 1st, having made their way thither, and being unable to escape, hunted down and caught like bears in their den... lth no shelter save the currant-bushes, took a quarter of an hour to die. One mounts a few steps and passes from t... sh at irregular heights, are there still. In front of the sixth are placed two English tombs of granite. There are loopho... n obstacle and an ambuscade, with the English guards behind it, the thirty-eight loopholes firing at once a show... trees. All this grass has been soaked in blood. A battalion of Nassau, seven hundred strong, was overwhelmed t... re; the cart-horses browse there; cords of hair, on which linen is drying, traverse the spaces between the trees an... n leaped against it to die. Beneath a great tree in the neighborhood fell the German general, Duplat, descended fr... There is not one which has not had its bullet or its biscayan.[6] The skeletons of dead trees abound in this ord... ammed with corpses, the regiment of Nassau and the regiment of Brunswick destroyed, Duplat killed, Blackm... all this so that a peasant can say to-day to the traveller, Monsieur, give me three francs, and if you like, I wi... action narrated in the first part of this book took place. If it had not rained in the night between the 17th an... nd a cloud traversing the sky out of season sufficed to make a world crumble. The battle of Waterloo coul... felt the effects of this. The foundation of this wonderful captain was the man who, in the report to the Di... el, and made a breach in it. He overwhelmed the weak point with grape-shot; he joined and dissolved ba... tuted this task to the cannon-ball. A redoubtable method, and one which, united with genius, rendered... ire; Napoleon had two hundred and forty. Suppose the soil dry, and the artillery capable of moving, th... atle? Is the shipwreck due to the pilot? Was it the evident physical decline of Napoleon that complicat... y historians of note have thought, suffering from an eclipse? Did he go into a frenzy in order to disgui... ants of action, when genius grows short-sighted? Old age has no hold on the geniuses of the ideal; t... no longer divine the snare, no longer discern the crumbling brink of abysses? Had he lost his pow... could lead his tumultuous legions harnessed to it, to the precipice? Was he seized at the age of for... ne, to make a breach in the enemy, to cut them in two, to drive the British half back on Hal, and the... apoleon. Afterwards people would see. Of course, we do not here pretend to furnish a history of the... view by Napoleon, and from another point of view by a whole pleiad of historians.[7] As for us, we l... tion of facts which contain illusions, no doubt; we possess neither military practice nor strategic a... ons who wish to gain a clear idea of the battle of Waterloo have only to place, mentally, on the groun... here Reille is stationed with Jerome Bonaparte; the right tip is the Belle-Alliance, where Napoleon... e, A between the two limbs and the tie, is the plateau of Mont-Saint-Jean. The dispute over this plat... ignes. As for the plain itself, let the reader picture to himself a vast undulating sweep of ground; ear... he other. They clutch at everything; a bush is a point of support; an angle of the wall offers them a... of that colossus which is called an army, and prevent its retreat. He who quits the field is beaten; he... n of Waterloo. In the preceding year, Wellington, with the sagacity of foresight, had examined it; he... earance of Napoleon on horseback, glass in hand, upon the heights of Rossomme, at daybreak, on J... epaulets, the corner of red ribbon peeping from beneath his vest, his leather trousers, the white hors... d with acclamations by some, severely regarded by others. That figure stood for a long time wholly in... sses this peculiar and divine quality, that, pure light as it is, and precisely because it is wholly light... illiancy of the leader. Hence arises a truer measure in the definitive judgments of nations. Babylon vi... UM OF BATTLES Every one is acquainted with the first phase of this battle; a beginning which was tr... e plain as if in casks; at some points the gear of the artillery carriages was buried up to the axles, the... direction of Papelotte would have been impossible. The affair began late. Napoleon, as we have alr... was necessary that the sun should come out and dry the soil. But the sun did not make its appearan... he Emperor would have wished, by the left wing of the French resting on Hougoumont. At the same... t; the plan was to draw Wellington thither, and to make him swerve to the left. This plan would ha... ements, only four more companies of guards and one battalion from Brunswick. The attack of t... ne-l'Alleud, thence on Hal; nothing easier. With the exception of a few incidents this attack suc... ; their inexperience extricated them intrepidly from the dilemma; they performed particularly ex... ington. After the taking of La Haie-Sainte the battle wavered. There is in this day an obscure int... a dizzy mirage, paraphernalia of war almost unknown to-day, pendant colbacs, floating sabre-t... infantry of England, the English soldiers with great, white circular pads on the slopes of their sh... pictures, not strategic lines--what Salvator Rosa requires, not what is suited to the needs of Grib... the combinations of the generals, the shock of armed masses has an incalculable ebb. During th... Is soak up more or less quickly the water which is poured on them. It becomes necessary to pou... fronts of the armies waver, the regiments form capes and gulfs as they enter and withdraw; all the... re was something there; seek it. It has disappeared; the open spots change place, the sombre folds ad... deceptive; the hurricane alone is trustworthy. That is what confers on Folard the right to contradict Polybius. Let us... which, to borrow the expression of Napoleon himself, "belong rather to the biography of the regiments than to the... d it is not given to any one narrator, however conscientious he may be, to fix, absolutely, the form of that horrible ca... ernoon the battle came to a point. CHAPTER VI--FOUR O'CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON Towards four o'clock the con... nge, desperate and intrepid, shouted to the Hollando-Belgians, "Nassau! Brunswick! Never retreat!" Hill, having been weaken... of the line, the French had killed the English general, Picton, with a bullet through the head. The battle had, for Wellington, tw... ed it, only forty-two men survived; all the officers, except five, were either dead or captured. Three thousand combatants had b... by a little French drummer-boy, Baring had been dislodged, Alten put to the sword. Many flags had been lost, one from Alten's... at dragons had been hacked to pieces. 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