perils of a stormy sea, one who knows, moreover, how to compel respect for peace as well as war, industry, commerce, agriculture and the arts.

– I ought, said Rodolphe, to move back a little.

– Why? said Emma.

But, at this moment, the councillor's voice rose to an extraordinary pitch. He declaimed:

– The days are gone, gentlemen, when civil discord smeared our public places with blood, when the landowner, the merchant, the worker himself, as he lay down in the evening to peaceful slumbers, trembled lest he woke to the sudden clang of the seditious tocsin, when the most subversive slogans sapped audaciously the very foundations . . .

– Because someone, said Rodolphe, may see me from down below; then I'll be in for a fortnight of making excuses, and, with my bad reputation . . .

– Oh! You slander yourself, said Emma.

– No, no, it is execrable, I can assure you.

– However, gentlemen, the councillor continued, if, putting from my memory such sombre scenes, I turn my gaze again upon the present state of our fair land: what do I now see? Everywhere commerce and the arts are flourishing; everywhere new means of communication, like so many new arteries in the body politic, opening therein new relations; our great manufacturing centres are busy once more; religion, reinvigorated, smiles in every heart; our ports are crowded, confidence is restored, and France at last draws breath!

– Even so, added Rodolphe, perhaps, as the world sees things, they may have a point?

– How is that? she asked.

– What! he said. Do you not realize that there are souls in endless torment? They are craving for dreams and action, the purest passions, the wildest pleasures, and thus they cast us into all kinds of fantasies, and foolishness.

Then she looked at him just as you gaze upon a traveller come from a far-away land.

– We don't even have that consolation, we poor women!

– Sad consolation, for it brings no happiness.

– But does anything ever? she asked.

– Yes, one day you find it, he said.

– And this is what you have realized, said the councillor. You, the farmers and the workers of the soil; you, the peaceful pioneers in an enterprise entirely civilized! You, the men of progress and morality! You have realized, I say, that the tempests of politics are truly even more terrible than the chaos of the elements . . .

– One day you find it, repeated Rodolphe; one day, quite suddenly, just when hope seems lost. And the horizon opens up, it's like a voice crying: 'Behold!' You feel you must tell this person the secrets of your life, give them everything, sacrifice everything for them. Nothing is actually said, you just know. You have seen each other in your dreams. (And he was looking at her.) There it is at last, the treasure you have sought so long, there, right in front of you; shining, sparkling. Though you still have doubts, you dare not believe it; you stand there dazed, just as if you stepped from shadow into sunlight.

And, as he finished his speech, Rodolphe added pantomime to phrase. He passed his hand across his face, just like a man stricken with vertigo; he let it fall down on Emma's. She withdrew hers. But the councillor was still reading:

– And who would be surprised at that, gentlemen? Only one so blind, so immersed (I do not flinch from saying it), so immersed in prejudices of another age as still to misconceive the spirit of our agricultural communities. Where, indeed, do we find greater patriotism than in the country, greater devotion to the common cause, in a word, greater intelligence? And I do not mean, gentlemen, that superficial intelligence, the vain ornament of idle minds, but rather that profound and judicious intelligence, which applies itself above all else to the pursuit of useful ends, contributing thus to the good of each, to the amelioration of the common life and to the buttressing of the state, fruit of respect for the law and the habit of duty . . .

– Not again! said Rodolphe. Always duty, I'm sick of the very word. They're a bunch of old fogies in flannel vests, bigoted old women in bed-socks saying their prayers, droning endlessly in our ears: 'Duty! Duty!' Damnation! To feel what is great, to

cherish what is beautiful, that's what duty is! Not to accept every one of society's conventions, with all the ignominy they inflict upon us.

– All the same . . . all the same . . ., objected Madame Bovary.

– No! Why castigate the passions? Are they not the only beautiful thing there is on earth, the source of heroism, enthusiasm, poetry, music, art, of everything?

– But we must sometimes, said Emma, heed the opinions of other people and accept their morality.

– Oh, the thing is there are two moralities, he replied. The little conventional one that men have made up, one that's endlessly changing and that brays so fiercely, makes such a fuss down here in this world, like that mob of imbeciles you see there. But the other morality, the eternal one, is all about and above, like the fields around us and the blue sky that gives us light.

Monsieur Lieuvain had just wiped his mouth with his handkerchief. He continued:

– And what should I be doing here, gentlemen, demonstrating to you the usefulness of agriculture? Who is it that provides for our needs? Who is it that furnishes our sustenance? Is it not the farmer? The farmer, gentlemen, who, impregnating with unwearied hand the teeming furrows of our countryside, brings forth the corn, which, once crushed, is turned to powder by means of cunning engines, issues thence under the name of flour, and, from there, conveyed to the cities, is swiftly delivered to the baker, who confects from it a nourishment for rich and poor alike. Is it not likewise the farmer who fattens for our garments, his prolific flocks in the meadows? For how should we be clothed, how should we be nourished without the farmer? And is there, gentlemen, any real need to seek out examples so far afield? Who has not frequently pondered the various important things we collect from that modest animal, the ornament of our poultry-yards, who furnishes us with a soft pillow for our slumbers, succulent flesh for our tables, and eggs? But I should never finish if I were required to enumerate one after the other the diverse products that the well-tended earth, like a bounteous mother, lavishes upon her children. Here, the vine; there, the cider-apple trees; there, the rape-seed; further afield, cheese; and

flax; gentlemen, let us not forget flax! Which has in recent years made great headway and to which I would most particularly draw your attention.

There was no need for him to do that: for every mouth in the crowd was hanging open, as if to drink up his words. Tuvache, next to him, was listening goggle-eyed; Monsieur Derozerays, occasionally, closed his eye-lids gently; and further on, the pharmacist, with his son Napoléon between his knees, had a hand cupped to his ear so as not to lose a single syllable. The other members of the committee slowly wagged their chins into their waistcoats, in token of their appreciation. The firemen, in front of the platform, were leaning on their bayonets; and Binet, motionless, had his elbow stuck out, with the tip of his sabre in the air. Perhaps he could hear, but he certainly couldn't see a thing because of the visor on his helmet that came down over his nose. His lieutenant, the youngest son of Tuvache Esquire, had overdone his own even more; for there he was wearing an enormous helmet that wobbled on his head, leaving one end of his cotton scarf hanging down. He was smiling underneath it with the sweetness of a young child, and his pale little face, streaming with sweat-drops, wore an expression mingling beatitude, affliction and a need for sleep.

The square was packed right up as far as the houses. There were people leaning out of every window, others were standing in every door, and Justin, in front of the window of the pharmacy, seemed quite transfixed in contemplation of what he was watching. In spite of the silence, Monsieur Lieuvain's voice was lost on the air. It reached the ear in disconnected phrases, interrupted here and there by chairs scraping among the crowd; and you heard, suddenly, erupting from somewhere behind, the drawn-out bellowing of a cow, or else the bleating of lambs calling to each other at street corners. The cowherds and the shepherds had driven their flocks all this way, and they were clamouring every so often, as their tongues plucked at various bits of foliage dangling near their muzzles.

Rodolphe had moved in closer to Emma, and he was talking in a low voice, speaking rapidly:

– Don't you find this social conspiracy revolting? Is there one

single feeling they do not condemn? All the noblest instincts, all the purest sympathies are persecuted and maligned, and if ever two poor souls should meet, everything is organized so that they cannot be joined as one. Yet they will strive, they will beat their wings, they will call out each to each. Oh! Come what may, sooner or later, in six months, ten years, they will be together, will be lovers, because Fate ordains it, because they were born for each other.

He sat with his arms folded on his knees, and, now lifting his face towards Emma, he was gazing directly at her, fixedly. In his eyes she noticed little threads of gold, and she could even catch the scent of the pomade in his glossy hair. And then the swooning was upon her, she remembered the Viscount who had waltzed her at La Vaubyessard, whose beard, like this man's hair, gave off that scent of vanilla and lemon; and, mechanically, she half shut her eyes to breathe it deeper. But, as she did so, bracing herself upon her chair, she noticed in the distance, right on the far horizon, the old *Hirondelle*, the coach coming slowly down the Côte des Leux, trailing behind it a long plume of dust. It was in this yellow coach that Léon had, so many times, come back to her; and along that very road that he had gone away for ever. She thought she saw him over the way, at his window, then it was all a blur, clouds went past; it felt as if she was still turning in the waltz, under the bright chandeliers, on the Viscount's arm, as if Léon were not far away, was going to come . . . and yet all this time she could smell Rodolphe's hair beside her. The sweetness of this sensation went down deep into her past desires, and just like grains of sand in a puff of wind, they were swirling about in the subtle breath of the odours that were spilling down into her soul. She opened wide her nostrils several times, eagerly, to breathe in the freshness of the ivy around the tops of the columns. She took off her gloves, she wiped her hands; then, with her handkerchief, she fanned her face, while through the pulsing of her temples she could hear the murmuring of the crowd and the voice of the councillor psalming out his phrases.

He was saying:

– Endurance! Perseverance! Heed neither the voice of habit,

nor the over-hasty teachings of rash empiricism! Dedicate yourselves above all else to the improvement of the soil, to good manure, to the development of the various breeds, equine, bovine, ovine and porcine. May such show-days be for you like a peaceful arena where the victor, departing, will hold forth a hand to the vanquished and fraternize with him, in the hope of triumphs to come. And you, venerable attendants, humble domestics, whose arduous labours no government until this very day has ever taken into account, come forth to receive recompense for your silent virtues, and be assured, henceforth, that the state has you in its eye, that it encourages you, that it protects you, that it will respect your just demands and lighten, so far as in it lies, the aching burden of your sacrifice.

Monsieur Lieuvain now sat down; Monsieur Derozerays stood up: another speech began. His was, perhaps, nothing so flowery as the councillor's; but it was distinguished by more positive qualities of style, that is to say, a knowledge more precise and themes more exalted. Accordingly, praise of the government played a lesser role; religion and agriculture were rather more in evidence. They were shown the relation between them, and how they had always contributed to civilization. Rodolphe, with Madame Bovary, was talking dreams, premonitions, magnetism. Reaching back to the birth of human society, the orator depicted for us the barbaric era when men lived on acorns, deep in the woods. They had shed their animal skins, put on clothes, ploughed the earth, planted the vine. Was this for the good? Monsieur Derozerays asked himself this question. Beginning with magnetism, little by little, Rodolphe had got as far as affinities, and, while the chairman cited Cincinnatus at his plough, Diocletian planting his cabbages and the emperors of China bringing in the New Year by planting seeds, the young man was explaining to the young woman that these irresistible attractions had their origin in some previous existence.

– Look at us, for instance, he said, why did we meet? By what decree of Fate? It must be because, across the void, like two rivers irresistibly converging, our unique inclinations have been pushing us towards one another.

And now he took her hand; she didn't take it back again.

– Prize for general farming! shouted the chairman.

– Just now, for instance, when I came to see you . . .

– To Monsieur Bizet of Quincampoix.

– Did I know that I would be escorting you?

– Seventy francs!

– A hundred times I wanted to leave, and I followed you, I stayed.

– Manures!

– As I shall stay this evening, tomorrow and the day after, all my life.

– To Monsieur Caron, from Argueil, a gold medal!

– For never before have I found anyone so entirely charming.

– To Monsieur Bain, from Givry-Saint-Martin!

– I shall carry with me the memory of you.

– For a merino ram . . .

– You will forget me, though, I will have faded like a shadow.

– To Monsieur Belot, from Notre-Dame . . .

– Oh! No, surely, I will be somewhere in your thoughts, in your life?

– Swine category, prize shared by Monsieur Lehérissé and Monsieur Cullembourg; sixty francs!

Rodolphe gripped her hand, and he felt it warm and trembling like a captive turtle dove that strives to take wing again; but, whether she was trying to disentangle it or whether she was responding to his pressure, her fingers moved; he exclaimed:

– Oh, thank you! You are not repulsing me! You are so sweet. You realize that I am yours. Permit me to see you, to gaze upon you!

A breeze that came in through the windows ruffled the cloth on the table, and, in the square, down below, it lifted the big bonnets of the peasant women, like the wings of white butterflies flitting about.

– Use of oilseed-cake, the chairman continued.

He was going faster.

– Flemish manure – cultivation of flax – drainage – long leases – domestic service.

Rodolphe was silent now. They were looking at one another.

A supreme desire set their parched lips trembling; and soothingly, easily, their fingers entwined.

– Catherine-Nicaise-Élisabeth Leroux, from Sassetot-la-Guerrière, for fifty-four years' service on the same farm, a silver medal! – with a value of twenty-five francs!

– Where is she, Catherine Leroux? repeated the councillor.

She did not appear, and voices were heard whispering:

– Go on!

– No.

– Over on the left!

– Don't be shy!

– Oh, isn't she silly!

– Well, is she here or not? shouted Tuvache.

– Yes! . . . There she is!

– Let her come up here!

Then was seen stepping on to the platform a little old woman, moving timidly, and apparently cringing deep into her shabby clothes. On her feet she had great wooden clogs, and, around her hips, a large blue apron. Her thin face, swathed in a simple hood, was more creased and wrinkled than a withered russet apple, and from the sleeves of her red camisole there dangled a pair of long hands, with bony knuckles. The dust from the barn, the soda for washing and the grease from the wool had made them so crusted, cracked, calloused, that they looked grimy even though they had been rinsed in fresh water; and, from long service, they stayed half unclasped, almost as though to set forth of themselves the simple testimony of so much affliction endured. A hint of monastic rigidity intensified the look on her face. No touch of sadness or affection softened that pale gaze. Living close to the animals, she had assumed their wordless placid state of being. It was the first time she had found herself in the midst of such a large gathering; and, inwardly terrified by the flags, by the drums, by the gentlemen in frock-coats and by the councillor's Legion of Honour medal, she stood quite still, not knowing whether to step forwards or to run away, nor why the crowd were pushing her on and the judges smiling at her. There she stood, before these flourishing bourgeois, this half-century of servitude.