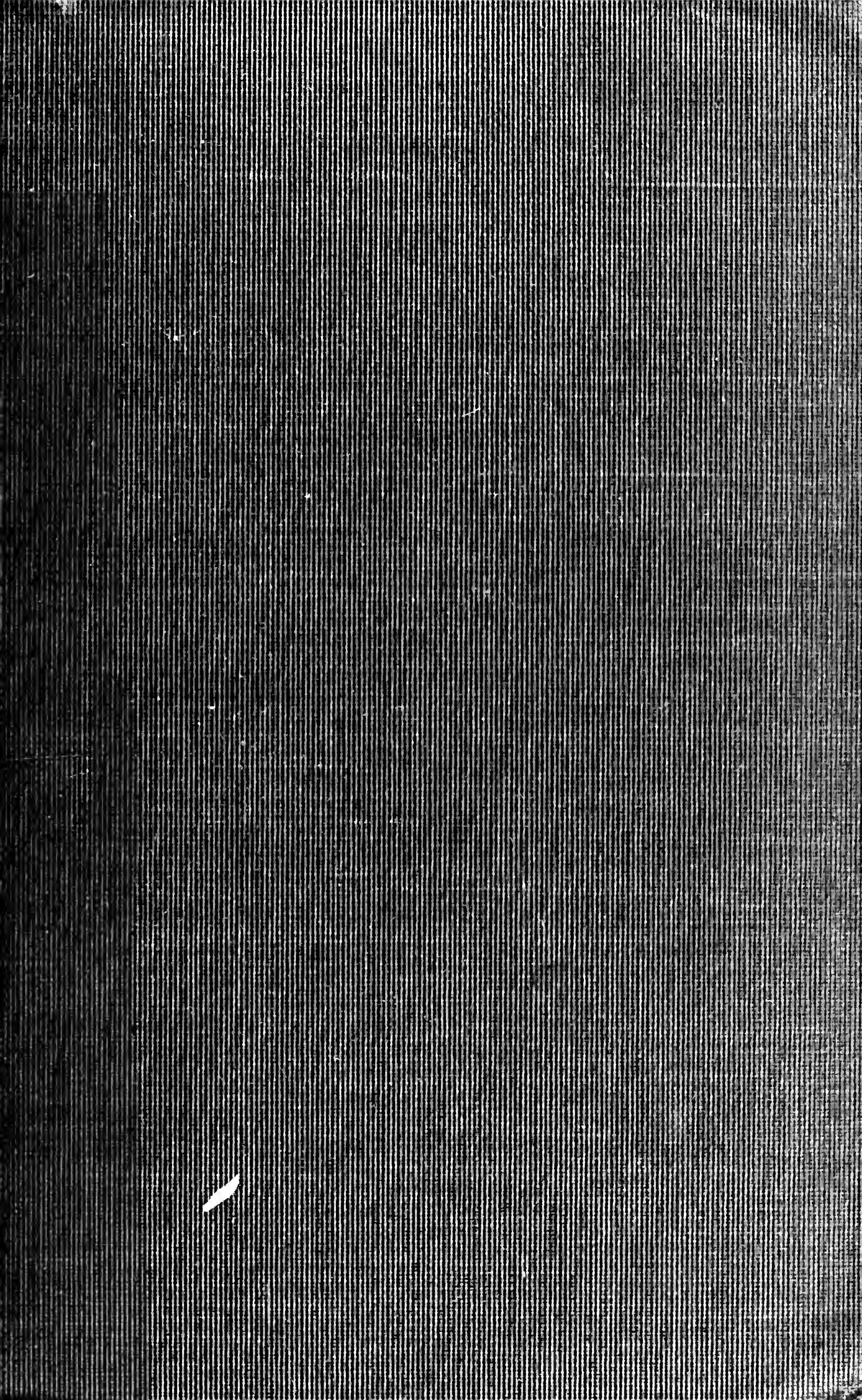

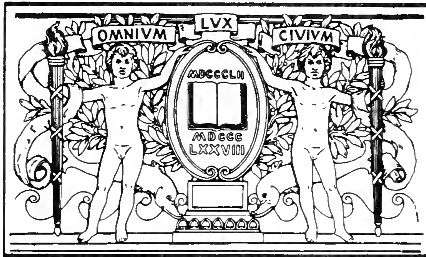

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MEMORIES OF A MAN OF LETTERS

THIRTY YEARS IN PARIS

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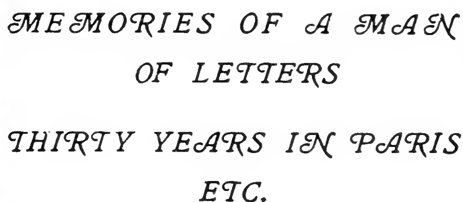

MEMORIES OF A MAN OF LETTERS

THIRTY YEARS IN PARIS

ETC.

BOSTON

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THIRTY YEARS IN PARIS

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INTRODUCTION.

In the introduction to *Thirty Years in Paris*, I attempted to present a hasty sketch of Alphonse Daudet's literary work, as represented by his published books, down to the appearance of *Jack* in 1876, that being the last of his books whose "history" is printed in that volume. He tells us that he was already at work on *The Nabob*, when a chance suggestion from Gustave Droz led him to lay it aside for the moment and set about writing a novel founded upon the story of his unhappy friend Raoul. "On that day," he says, in the history of *Jack*, "laying aside *The Nabob*, which was already in process of construction, I started off upon this fresh scent with a feverish haste, a trembling at the ends of the fingers, which seizes me at the beginning and end of all my books." And in the *Journal des Goncourt*, under date of Sunday, March 21, 1876, Edmond de Goncourt writes: "During our long walk I talked with Daudet of the novel he has in his head, in which he intends to introduce Morny incidentally."

Thoroughly exhausted by the labor of composing the longest and the "most quickly written"

of all his books, he went with his wife and son to recruit in the balmy sunshine of the Mediterranean, amid the violets of Bordighera. That his hours there were not passed solely in idle contemplation we have gratifying evidence in the twenty-fourth chapter of *The Nabob*, which he attacked anew after his return from the Riviera.

The Nabob was published by Charpentier in 1877 and marked a departure from the author's previous methods in the matter of publication, in that it had not previously appeared in serial form in any journal. Some episodes, however — the *Death of the Duc de M——*, for instance, and *A Nabob* — which were included in *Studies and Landscapes*, originally published with *Robert Helmont*, as noted in the introduction to *Thirty Years in Paris*, reappeared in the novel amplified and elaborated.

The 37th edition — that is to say the 37th impression of the original edition — dated 1878, contains for the first time the "Declaration by the Author," which will be found in the present edition. In the "history" of *Fromont and Risler*, printed in *Thirty Years in Paris*, Daudet refers to his original dedication to the *Nabob*, of which Madame Daudet modestly declined to allow the publication, and which "I retained only in a half-score of copies presented to friends, now very rare, which I commend to collectors." The dedication was printed by M. Henri Céard in an annual publication, the *Étrennes aux Dames*,

for 1884. It will be found in translation, as a note to the passage just mentioned, on page 201 of *Thirty Years in Paris;* but it may not lack interest in its original form and typographical arrangement.

"*Au collaborateur dévoué, discret*
et infatigable,
A ma bien-aimée Julia Daudet,
j'offre avec un
grand merci de tendresse reconnaissante
ce livre qui lui doit tant."

"*The Nabob,*" says Henry James,[1] "is not a sustained narrative, but a series of almost diabolically clever sketches." This sentence states, it seems to me, as concisely as it can be stated, the reason that, while some detached portions of the book are more generally admired than anything else that Daudet ever wrote, it is seldom placed, as a whole, at the head of the list by professed critics, although it is one of the four which in the opinion of Mr. Matthews "form the quadrilateral wherein Daudet's fame is secure." The criticisms called forth by this same "diabolical cleverness," as displayed in drawing the characters of the Nabob and the Duc de Mora, were evidently the moving cause of the "Declaration by the Author," which he was inclined, he says, to place at the beginning of the book when it was first published. If one compares what Ernest Daudet has

[1] *Partial Portraits,* page 234.

to say of his brother's connection and his own with François Bravay,[1] with what the author himself says in this "declaration," one must certainly acquit him of any unfair use of his model. As to the Duc de Mora, we are once more obliged to regret the reticence which Ernest Daudet imposed upon himself, because he did not "care to take the edge off that part of my brother's memoirs which he will devote to" the relations between M. de Morny and himself. Such memoirs as we have, alas! tell us much more of the relations of Villemessant or Henri Rochefort with the President of the Corps Législatif than of Daudet's own; indeed, the last page of this Declaration is almost the only reference we have to the subject. But what are the facts as we know them? He held a subordinate position, a sort of secretaryship in the *Bureau* of the Corps Législatif, from 1860 until soon after the death of the Duc de Morny, in 1865, when he carried out a project which he had long debated, the project of recovering his liberty. "As soon as it appeared that the independence of his ideas might be compromised, he left the Corps Législatif," says his brother. "Is it necessary to add that during the stay which he made in that office he never either wrote a line or performed an act which could be considered in the light of a sacrifice of that same independence to the demands of his situation?" When he left that office he ceased

[1] *My Brother and I*, pp. 424 et seqq.

to take any part in politics except as a patriotic citizen, and twelve years later he introduced, in a novel purporting to delineate Parisian society and manners in the closing years of the Second Empire, the one public character who was, next to the Emperor, perhaps even more truly than the Emperor, the perfect incarnation of that society and those manners. He drew him, not ill-naturedly, but as he had seen him in his more or less familiar intercourse with him: "I always saw him with that smile on his face, nor had I any need to look through keyholes; and I have drawn him so, as he loved to appear, in his Richelieu-Brummel attitude. History will attend to the statesman. I have exhibited him, introducing him at long range in my fictitious drama, as the worldly creature that he was and wished to be; being well assured that in his lifetime it would not have offended him to be so presented."

"It may well be that he was right," says a recent critic.[1] Now, inasmuch as there is no reason to think that he was not right, or that the picture was overdrawn, and as the whole gravamen of the accusation against Daudet was that he had abused the situation he occupied under M. de Morny, the answer to the criticism seems to leave nothing to be desired.[2]

[1] M. René Doumic, *Portraits d'Écrivains.*

[2] I quote once more and at greater length in this connection the entry of March 21, 1876, in the *Journal des Goncourt:* "During our long walk I talked with Daudet of the novel he has in his

There is an interval of more than two years, interrupted only by an unimportant one-act comic opera, *Le Char*, between *The Nabob* and *Kings in Exile*, which was Daudet's next offering to the public. It was published by Dentu, late in 1879, having previously appeared as a serial in *Le Temps*, August 15th to October 10th of that year. The long interval is partly explained by the fact that he was at work more or less on other matters and published a considerable number of detached pieces in newspapers and reviews, many of which have since been collected in these volumes of memoirs and in other volumes. But, as he himself tells us, during the composition of *Kings in Exile* his health, never robust, became seriously and permanently impaired, and thenceforth his pen worked more slowly and his genius became less prolific than ever.

The novel had a great and instantaneous suc-

head, in which he intends to introduce Morny incidentally. I dissuaded him from doing that. The Morny whom he had the good fortune to know and gauge should be, in my opinion, the subject of a special study, a study in which he can exhibit one of the characters which best represent the period. He exclaimed at the foolish, bourgeois sides of the man. I told him that he must be very careful not to attenuate them, that one of the peculiarities of this age is the pettiness of men and the restless movement of things; that if he attempts to make him an absolutely superior person, he will produce a Maxime de Trailles or a de Marsay — familiar characters in many *Scenes* of Balzac's *Human Comedy*; — in a word, he will construct an abstraction. He must represent the great diplomat of the secret manœuvres of the Interior with his flavor of pawnbroking, of the *littérateur* of the Bouffes. And Daudet thought my advice good."

cess; the only criticism to which the author specifically refers is that of Vallès, and that seems to have been purely literary and to have shown no trace of the venomous spirit which prompted the later criticisms of the play founded on the book, wherein Daudet was bitterly assailed, being charged, among other heinous sins, with political tergiversation. The insinuation referred to by him, that his book was begun as a bit of flattery to the rising hopes of the monarchists during the presidency of MacMahon, and that, after the fall of the Marshal he suddenly changed his tune and turned to the "triumphant republic," was somewhat ingenious on its face, as MacMahon resigned on January 30, 1879, when the book probably was begun, but not finished; but it becomes utterly absurd when we consider that the first feuilleton did not appear in *Le Temps* until five months after the "fall of the Marshal," when any such attempt to flatter the dynasty as was alleged against the early portions of the book would have been most untimely and ill-judged; so that Daudet's refutation of the charge is hardly needed, although it is no less conclusive than vigorous and telling.

Of the very few characters whom Daudet introduces in more than one of his novels, two first appear in *Kings in Exile:* Colette Sauvadon, the wife and widow of Prince Herbert de Rosen, whose great wealth furnishes the motive of much of the action of *The Immortal;* and Doctor Bouchereau, who plays a somewhat prominent

part momentarily in the last chapters of *Sappho.* The only other of Daudet's creations who figures in more than one book (always excepting Tartarin of Tarascon) is Astier Réhu, *the* Immortal, who is introduced in *Tartarin on the Alps* as a typical Cook's tourist.

The annoyance to which Daudet was subjected by the persistent attempts to furnish "keys" for his novels and to find a living original for each of his leading characters, seems to me to have been an inevitable consequence of the "personal note" which runs through all his work and goes far to explain its charm. Inventing but little, as he himself said, but narrating and describing what he had actually seen, taking part personally in the action of his stories, mingling therewith the reflections aroused by the events he describes,[1] often addressing his characters and his readers in the second person, he could hardly expect that the secret of his method would not be suspected, or that the critics would not vie with one another in supplying "keys" for characters and incidents alike.

The controversy waged most fiercely over *The Nabob, Kings in Exile* and *Numa Roumestan,* although it seems that there are more characters drawn from life in *Jack* than in any other of the novels. But the originals of Jack himself, of Doctor Rivals, d'Argenton, Belisaire and Mangin were not public characters, like the Duc de Morny, François Bravay, Sarah Bernhardt, Taglioni and

[1] M. René Doumic, *Portraits d'Écrivains.*

the English charlatan who really sold pills *à base arsénicale:* like Gambetta and Numa Baragnon; or like the various dethroned monarchs who honored Paris with their presence, and who were supposed to have sat for the portraits of Christian and Frédérique. With the publication of the "histories" of the different books the warfare came to an end so far as concerned the identity of the characters specifically mentioned by the author, but continued to be waged with renewed vigor around Daudet's treatment of Morny and Bravay, and the disputed identity of Félicia Ruys, as to whom we are still left to conjecture to determine whether she represents Sarah Bernhardt or Judith Gautier. — In an article published in the *Bookman* shortly after the death of Daudet, it is said that "in his *Memories of a Man of Letters* Daudet himself states, what everybody knew, moreover, that his Queen of Illyria was the ex-Queen of Naples, who had been living in Paris since the conquest of her kingdom by Garibaldi and Vittorio Emmanuele."[1] As a matter of fact, Daudet expressly denies what he is here said to assert. "As the King and Queen of Naples lived for a long time on Rue Herbillon, it was commonly alleged that I had intended to describe them; but I declare that *nothing of the sort is true*, and that I drew a purely imaginary royal couple in an authentic stage-setting."

One instance of a character drawn from life, not

[1] *History of Kings in Exile*, infra, page 81.

cited by Daudet himself, is most characteristic of his method. You remember Passajon of the easy conscience, the cashier of the Caisse Territoriale in the *Nabob.* In *My Brother and I,* Ernest Daudet describes an uncle from Lyon who came to live with the family at Nîmes. "I really believe that, without knowing it, he posed as one of the characters in *The Nabob.* In that novel there is a certain cashier in the Caisse Territoriale who has a terrible likeness to him."

It may have been this uncle to whom Daudet referred when he told Goncourt, soon after the first appearance of *The Nabob*, that he was already in trouble with some of his family.

Another interval of two years elapsed before *Kings in Exile* was followed by *Numa Roumestan* (Charpentier, 1881), in which Daudet went once more to his Midi for his hero and thereby involved himself in more trouble of the same sort that had followed the appearance of *Tartarin.* Even his friends, the Félibres, took fire, he tells us, and maltreated him in their poetry, but Mistral remembered that "the lioness bears no grudge to the whelp that scratches her a little in play."

Numa Roumestan is dedicated "to my dear wife," — "a dedication which has always brought me good fortune, and which should stand at the beginning of all my books." It has always been ranked among the most successful of its author's works and forms the third side of the "quadrilateral upon which Daudet's fame rests

secure," in the opinion of Mr. Matthews, two others being formed by *The Nabob* and *Kings in Exile* among the books we have thus far considered.

In this same year, 1881, *The Nabob*, a play in seven tableaux, the first to be published of the dramas founded on Daudet's novels, was issued by Charpentier. It was written in collaboration with Pierre Elzéar, and had been performed for the first time at the Vaudeville, January 30, 1880. It should be said that the play founded on *Fromont and Risler*, in which Daudet's collaborator was Adolphe Belot, had been acted at the Vaudeville as early as September 16, 1876, but it was not published until ten years later.

In 1882, *Jack*, a play in five acts, by Daudet and H. Lafontaine, was published by Dentu; it had previously been produced at the Odéon, January 11, 1881.

In the following year, 1883, the dramatization of *Kings in Exile* was published, and, probably in that year, represented at the Vaudeville. Although Daudet speaks of Delair as his collaborator, he seems to make it plain that he had no part in the actual construction of the play, and Delair's name alone appeared on the title-page; but, as he tells us, the assaults of the critics were all aimed at the author of the book, and it seems clear that they seized upon the failure of the play as a pretext for attacks which the enthusiastic reception of the novel by the public had deterred them from mak-

ing upon it. That the play was a failure there can be no doubt. It is a curious fact that this is the only one of the novel-plays to which Daudet refers in his histories; and he refers to this only to tell us how completely it failed; and that "criticism followed the public, which is its rôle to-day." In truth the non-success of these plays seems to have been as marked as the success of the books upon which they were founded, although *Fromont and Risler* possessed vitality enough to cross the Atlantic.

The Evangelist was published by Dentu in 1883, after another interval of two years since *Numa Roumestan*, having previously appeared in feuilletons in *Figaro*. It is one of the less well known of Daudet's books, so far as my experience goes; certainly less well known than it deserves to be. It is especially interesting as being the first of his longer works in which the author confines himself to the development of a single theme; thus establishing a very distinct line of demarcation between it and the "galleries of pictures brushed in with the sweep and certainty of a master hand, — portraits, landscapes with figures, marines, battle-pieces, bits of *genre*, views of Paris," — to which his public had become accustomed.

The *Evangelist* was followed, in 1884, by *Sappho*, the first edition of which was published by Charpentier in 1884. It had previously appeared in the *Écho du Paris*, beginning with the number of April 16 of that year. The dedication of *Sappho* —

"for my sons, when they shall have reached the age of twenty-one"—indicates clearly enough Daudet's own conviction that this somewhat painful story is a moral story in the true meaning of the word; indeed, there is no other of this author's books wherein a salutary and necessary moral is so emphatically enforced.—"The author of *Sappho*," says M. Doumic, "who hitherto had hardly seemed inclined to preach to his contemporaries, invites them, on this occasion, to take their share in the horrible lesson."—*Sappho* forms the fourth and last side of Mr. Matthews's quadrilateral.

In *Sappho*, as in *The Evangelist*, M. Daudet confined himself to the development of a single theme. "He undertook to prove that he was capable of composing, and of composing from within, of producing a work . . . which should exhibit veritable *unity*. He succeeded."[1] In the later of these two books he produced what is in many respects the strongest of all his works.

In 1886, the second series of Tartarin sketches, *Tartarin on the Alps, New Exploits of the Hero of Tarascon*, was published by Calmann Lévy, profusely illustrated with *aquarelles*, sixteen of which were full-page and in colors,—a handsome octavo much more sumptuous than the ordinary original edition of its author's books. *Tartarin on the Alps* has achieved a popularity which would be considered extraordinary measured by any other standard than that established by its famous predecessor.

[1] M. René Doumic, *Portraits d'Écrivains.*

The Belle Nivernaise, the Story of an Old Boat and its Crew, was issued in the same year (1886) by Marpon and Flammarion, the same octavo volume containing five shorter sketches, *How Jarjaille Went to Heaven, The Fig and the Sluggard, The First Coat, The Three Low Masses* and *The New Master.*

The First Coat is an episode of *Little What's-His-Name, The Three Low Masses* had previously appeared in the second edition of *Monday Tales*, to which collection it is restored in this edition, and *The New Master* was one of the two previously unpublished pieces in the collection entitled *Contes et Récits* (Polo, 1873), described in the introduction to *Thirty Years in Paris.*

The production of the play founded on *Fromont and Risler* at the Vaudeville in 1876 has already been referred to. In 1886, March 11, it was revived at the *Gymnase*, and in the same year was published by Calmann Lévy. The published text differs materially from that of the play as acted in 1876, which was never published.

The two volumes of memoirs, if we may so designate them, *Thirty Years in Paris* and the present volume, were both published in 1888, by Marpon and Flammarion.[1] In the same year, but between

[1] In 1891, the 18th and last volume of the Lemerre edition of the *Works of Alphonse Daudet* was issued, containing under the title of *Thirty Years in Paris* all the articles printed under that title in this edition, and, in addition thereto, the following articles contained in the first edition of *Memories of a Man of Letters* and now printed in this volume: *Émile Ollivier* and all the sketches

the two, came *The Immortal*, with the imprint of Alphonse Lemerre. It had first appeared in *L'Illustration*, May 5 to July 7, 1888. Of this first edition (unillustrated), a very large number of copies was printed. The brief preface by the author, closing with his famous declaration: "I am not a candidate, I have never been a candidate I shall never be a candidate for the Academy," first appeared in the 56th thousand. Beginning with the 67th thousand there are two corrections: *Three Charles the Fifths* instead of *three parchments* and *Under the Emperor's Signature* instead of *Under Charles the Fifth's Signature.*

In 1890 Lemerre issued an illustrated edition in which there are other variations from the original text, notably the almost universal substitution of *confrère* for *colleague.* "No other of the author's works," says M. Brivois, "has undergone so many corrections, nor has any other been so severely criticised."

Two years elapsed between the publication of the present volume and the appearance of the third and last instalment of the adventures of the "Illustrious Tartarin." Late in 1890 Dentu issued *Port-Tarascon*, in an octavo volume profusely illustrated and with a number of full-page plates. A noteworthy fact in connection with this story is that it had originally appeared in *Harper's Monthly Magazine* (June–December, 1890), in

of *Theatrical People;* it also contained the "history" of *Robert Helmont,* now published as a preface to that work.

the form of a translation by Mr. Henry James; it was then accompanied by all the illustrations found in the bound volume except those relating to the legend of the Antichrist.

It has become the fashion to speak somewhat disparagingly of this concluding volume of the Tartarin trilogy, but it may well be that this fashion, like some other fashions, has been more than a little overdone. I quote on this subject one of the most highly esteemed of French critics, who is favorably known in this country. Writing in 1895, M. Francois Coppée says: "Beyond question he (Alphonse Daudet) has long since assured his hold upon glory and upon posterity Had he written the three *Tartarins* alone — I say the three, for the judgment of the public was, in my opinion, unjust and too cold to *Port-Tarascon* — had he done nothing more than that threefold narrative, in which he revealed a new type of comic character, Alphonse Daudet would be, none the less, the Cervantes of our literature." [1]

In this year of *Port Tarascon* Daudet published his first essay in the dramatic line, without collaboration, since the utter failure of *Lise Tavernier* in 1872. *The Struggle for Life*, in which the fortunes of Paul Astier of the *Immortal* are followed from the period at which the novel closes to his shameful and fitting death, had been first performed at the Gymnase-Dramatique, October 30,

[1] *Mon Franc-Parler*, 3d series, p. 321.

1889. Before its publication by Lévy it had appeared in the number for November, 1889, of *Les Lettres et les Arts*, an illustrated review published by Boussod and Valadon. Although, as Mr. Matthews says, the "freshest and most vigorous" of Daudet's plays, it has not been altogether successful.

In the same year (1890) *Numa Roumestan*, a play in five acts and six tableaux, founded upon the novel of that name, was published by Lemerre. Daudet's name appeared alone on the title-page. The play seems to have been neither more nor less successful than the earlier ones of the same class.

In 1891 *Rose and Ninette*, was published by Flammarion, and in the same year the same house published the *Obstacle*, a play in four acts, which had previously been performed for the first time at the Gymnase, December 27, 1890.

An interval of two years was followed by nothing of more importance than a dramatization of *Sappho*, in which Adolphe Belot collaborated (Charpentier and Fasquelle, 1893), and an adaptation of *La Menteuse*, one of the sketches published in this volume under the title of *Artists' Wives*, in the shape of a play in three acts (Flammarion, 1893). In the latter the original is amplified and elaborated; the title-page bears the name of Léon Hennique as joint author with Daudet. *Sappho* had been acted for the first time at the Gymnase on December 18, 1885, and revived on the same stage

November 12, 1892, in which latter year *La Menteuse* was first acted, also at the Gymnase.

La Menteuse was the last dramatic work of Daudet to appear during his life-time; it may be said that in 1888 a dramatization of *Tartarin on the Alps*, by Bocage and de Courcy, was performed at the Gaîté; and that the last year of Daudet's life (1897) witnessed the production of a second version of *Sappho*, a "lyric drama," libretto by MM. Henri Cain and Bernède, music by Massenet.

In 1894 a collection of nine "studies of theatrical life," under the general title of *Between the Flies and the Footlights*, was published by Dentu in the *Petite Collection Guillaume*. These studies had previously appeared in periodicals, but I have been able to locate definitely only one of them, the *Dream of Madame d'Épinay*, which may be found in the issue for 1885 of the *Etrennes aux Dames*, an annual publication, of which five numbers were published, 1881 to 1885. This collection will be found in the volume containing *Sappho*.

It will thus be seen that in the four years since *Port Tarascon* Daudet had published nothing of the first importance, and almost nothing of any sort; and while the few volumes we have catalogued do not represent all of his work in those years, it is none the less true that his activity in all directions had sensibly diminished. It seems to be the fact that this falling off in the volume of production

was due entirely to his enfeebled health; and yet, although there was no improvement in that regard but constant retrogression during the last three years of his life, he produced more in those three years than in any equal period since the time of *The Evangelist* and *Sappho.*

In a note written after his essay had gone through the press, M. Brivois (his preface is dated December, 1894) records the fact that the *Little Parish Church* had been in process of publication in *L'Illustration* since October 20 of that year. He also states that "the *Revue de Paris*, in its supplement of November 15, announces that it will publish M. Alphonse Daudet's next novel, *Fifteen Years of Married Life.*" I can find no trace of this last mentioned work,[1] but *The Little Parish Church* was issued by Lemerre in 1895 and once more fixed public attention upon its author. "He returns to-day," says a recent writer, "to the vein of the *Evangelist* and *Sappho*, with *The Little Parish Church*, inferior in some points, equal for the most part to those two masterful works, and, as a whole, worthy to complete a *groupe d'élite.*"[2]

[1] *Journal des Goncourt*, Saturday, July 22, 1893.—"In our walk this morning, Daudet, talking of the book he has begun, *Fifteen Years of Married Life*, confided to me that a process of evolution is taking place in his mind similar to that which has taken place in mine: disgust with the everlasting adventure, with the everlasting complication of plot in novels." This date, it will be noticed, is a year and a half earlier than the announcement of the *Revue de Paris.*

[2] Gustave Larroumet, *Études de Littérature et d'Art*, 4th Series, 1896.

"I am not now writing a literary criticism," says M. Coppée in the article cited above, "nor indeed am I called upon to commend a novel (*The Little Parish Church*) which is in every hand. I simply desire to pay my tribute of admiration to our great and dear Daudet, still indefatigable and fruitful with all his suffering."

In 1896 a collection of sketches, which took its title from the first of them, *La Fédor*, was published by Flammarion, and in the same year *Arlatan's Treasure*, a somewhat longer, tragic little tale of the plains of Camargue, by Charpentier and Fasquelle. All of these are published in the preceding volume, *Thirty Years in Paris*, and are referred to in the introduction thereto. *Ultima*, the touching description of the close of M. Edmond de Goncourt's life, which will be found in this volume, was contributed by M. Daudet to the *Revue de Paris* of August 15, 1896.

With *The Support of the Family*, which was the longest and most elaborate novel he had given to the world since *Kings in Exile*, and which had surely been very long in the making,[1] Alphonse Daudet brought his life-work to a close. He died on the 16th of December, 1897, when the last proofs of the novel had barely been read and when he had just written the last word of a play founded upon *The Little Parish Church*, which he had undertaken in collaboration with Léon Hen-

[1] He seems to have been at work upon it in August, 1896. See *Ultima*, *infra*.

nique. The novel was published by Charpentier in 1898.

A word may be said here as to three collections of detached portions of Daudet's works, published at various times under the title of *Contes Choisis.* The first bore the imprint of Charpentier and the date 1877, and had for a sub-title *La Fantaisie et l'Histoire.* The second was published by Jouaust in 1883, and the third by Hetzel in 1884. All were illustrated, — the last, which was called a "special edition for the use of the young," — most profusely. No one of the three contained anything that had not been previously published in book form, and much of the contents consisted of extracts from the novels.

We learn from the *Journal des Goncourt* that Daudet had at more than one time entertained the idea of founding a review (to be called the *Revue de Champrosay*), "in which he would be ready to embark 100,000 francs, and in which he would gather our friends about him and pay for copy at a rate no editor has ever offered heretofore. He sees in *interviews* — interviews of a different sort from those reported in the newspapers — a wholly novel method of intellectual propagation, a method which he is very anxious to employ, not limiting it solely to the questioning of literary men. — It is a good idea," is Goncourt's comment, "and with his storehouse full of ideas Daudet would make an excellent editor of a review." [1]

[1] *Journal*, January 4, 1891.

The idea came to nothing.

Of the several articles collected in this volume under the title of *Memories of a Man of Letters*, there is little to be said. They had been published in the *Monde Illustré* under this same title, but a majority of them had appeared previously to that publication, and none, I believe, later than 1881. Five — *The Francs-Tireurs, The Garden on Rue des Rosiers, The Summer Palace, An Escape*,[1] and *The Shipwreck* — in all of which the date of composition is indicated, were originally included among the *Lettres à un Absent* (1871); the others had appeared in the *Temps, Globe*, and *Voltaire* at various times in 1878, 1879, 1880, and 1881.

Émile Ollivier has passed so completely from the public eye in twenty-five years, that it is hard to realize that he is still living. He stands third on the list of members of the Académie Française, to which he was elected to succeed M. de Lamartine in 1870, only a few months before his cowardly retirement from the government, when war with Prussia was flagrant. M. Legouvé, elected in 1855, and now in his ninety-second year, and the Duc de Broglie, elected in 1862, are his only seniors in length of membership in the ranks of the Immortals. He was for a time director of the Academy in succession to M. Thiers.

Gambetta was one of Daudet's earliest friends in the capital, as he has told us in the first chapter of

[1] In the *Lettres à un Absent* the title of this sketch was *Les Évadés de Paris.*

Thirty Years in Paris, when describing his experiences in the old Hôtel du Sénat. This appreciative and admiring sketch of his career and character was written for the *Novoë Vremya* of St. Petersburg about four years before Gambetta's untimely death. To my mind the passage describing Gambetta's performance at the Bazaine trial, with its frank acknowledgment that the coolness which made it impossible for the writer to congratulate the orator was chargeable entirely to his, the writer's, own lack of justice, depicts a trait of Daudet's character which goes far to explain why he was, as was said of him in his lifetime, "beloved of all men." [1]

The profound affection which united Daudet and Edmond de Goncourt, who was the older of the two by nearly twenty years, but died little more than a year before his friend, was one of the most important facts in the last twenty-five years of the younger man's life. It seemed as if he had, in some sort, taken the place in the old man's heart of that younger brother, Jules, whose death, its cause and its effects, are so feelingly described in the article entitled *A Reading at Edmond de Goncourt's*. In January, 1898, the *Revue Encyclopédique* published a collection of articles by different hands concerning Alphonse Daudet, then recently deceased, and his work, the first of which, *Alphonse Daudet Intime*, was written by Messieurs Paul and Victor Margueritte, brothers and

[1] M. René Doumic.

collaborators of enviable and constantly growing reputation. In that description of Daudet as his friends knew him, the figure of Goncourt constantly appears, evidently a most essential element of the younger man's private life. There is a charming picture of the house at Auteuil, so frequently described, from which Goncourt was buried on the day that *Ultima* was written, and of the *Grenier*, where the "Marshal of letters," used to receive his friends on Sunday afternoons. "The house at Auteuil, in those days full of marvellous things, is nought but an empty tomb. The hangings are torn down, the rare furniture, the priceless curiosities removed. All the beautiful things have been scattered here and there, at public sale, under the hammer of the auctioneer, and only the cold bare stone remains. To see again the two noble figures, touching in their friendship, of Edmond de Goncourt and Alphonse Daudet, we must make once more, in imagination, the pilgrimage along Boulevard Montmorency, growling at the noise of the passing trains, to the little house of silence and of toil . . . We reach the second floor, open a black door and enter a double room, hung with red, with a carpet with blue figures; Oriental rugs thrown over the low arm-chairs and the divans; books, etchings on the walls: this is the *Grenier*.

"There we smoke and talk. A tall, white-haired old man rises from the divan at the rear of the room, and receives his visitors with stately grace. Edmond de Goncourt, with his dilated

pupils, his snow-white hair and beard, has one of the noblest faces one can imagine; an aristocratic and military air; 'A marshal of letters,' we have called him. . . . The conversation of the *Grenier* is placid, consisting of reflections, reminiscences. . . . At times we lower our voices, there is absolute silence; friends all, we look at each other as in a house where a dead body is lying. How often we have felt that strange charm, as we sat mute before the gaze of the master, staring fixedly into space! But the door opens. Leaning on his cane, clinging to the arm of Edmond de Goncourt, who goes forward to meet him, Alphonse Daudet enters, crosses the room painfully and sinks upon the divan at the rear. Almost invariable is Goncourt's affectionate query, accompanied by a patting of the arm with his hand: 'Well, little one, how goes it?' And Daudet replies: 'Poorly, my Goncourt,' or 'Pretty well, my Goncourt.' But never 'Well,' for the inexorable malady which torments him no longer gives him any respite from his sufferings. But the pen cannot render the pretty tone of affection of the phrase *little one* in the mouth of the one, and *my Goncourt* in the mouth of the other. *Little one!* You think of the younger brother, the absent, the dead. *My Goncourt!* Daudet says it so gracefully; he, the survivor, is his, twice dear, twice precious. And Edmond inquires of his friend's affairs, of those things which are his life and his life's heart — his family, and his work. Daudet replies in a weary voice, a

sort of sing-song, in which there is the sorrow of a creature of delicate organization who suffers, whose heart is always full, his nerves tense and his soul constantly shaken like a bird upon a too slender branch. Daudet replies, and gradually becomes animated.

"What a strange feeling steals over the auditors! The gray light in the room brightens, the wood crackles more merrily on the hearth, it grows warmer, the *Grenier* seems more inhabited, more alive. A gleam of amusement, of interest, flashes in Goncourt's great eyes. Voices are raised, laughter breaks out. But who is the kindly magician? It is Alphonse Daudet, the invalid, the poor tortured creature, who, with his sempiternal youth, his highly-colored fancy, spreads joy and light abroad, shines like the sun of Provence, in whose beams his face seems to be bathed. The *Grenier* is no longer the reception room where the fire is lighted only on Sundays, the little house is no longer the darkened abode of silent mourning. Broken is the charm of lethargy, that strange sensation of waiting for some one who has gone away. The dead brother has returned, he is sitting yonder, we touch him and speak to him. In Alphonse Daudet he is reincarnate, and Edmond de Goncourt, the taciturn giant, alive once more to the joy of living, says to him with deep emotion, — with the same loving inflection: 'Do you remember, little one?' And the reminiscences take shape in anecdotes. On the subject of the past Daudet is inexhaustible."

Then we are taken to Champrosay, by the route described by Daudet himself in *Ultima;* from the little station of Ris-Orangis, leaving on the right "a toy steeple, that of the *Little Parish Church*, for worthy M. Mérivet's church really exists," by the site of the first house he occupied at Champrosay, the house of Eugène Delacroix, the painter,[1] to the simple and unpretentious home of his later years. "There sits the master, with a happy smile on his face, his cane between his legs and his little felt hat over his ear. Beside him, the fairy of the household, she who is to him the dear friend of every day, sweet, smiling Madame Daudet. And there also, in his high-crowned straw hat, the loyal guest, the elder brother, Edmond de Goncourt, who extends his trembling white hand."

And in the *Journal* too, that formidable *Journal des Goncourt*, in eleven volumes, which raised such a storm about the ears of its author, and by which even Daudet was annoyed, we find on almost every page passages which, however much we may question the propriety of publishing them, bear abundant testimony to the older man's sincere affection and admiration for the author of *Little-What's-His-Name*.

Whatever may be said of Daudet's treatment of the theatrical profession in his novels, it would be difficult to infer any unfavorable bias on his part from the sketches of leading actors and actresses contained in this volume, or from the "theatrical

[1] See the Preface to *Robert Helmont*.

studies" entitled *Between the Flies and the Footlights.* The last paragraph of the last of those studies — *Fanny Kemble* — seems convincing as to his attitude toward the stage-folk of his own country. Of the actors of whom sketches are given in this volume, Dupuis had taken a leading part in the performance of the *Nabob,* and Lafontaine, who was associated with Daudet in the dramatization of *Jack,* played Vaillant in *The Struggle for Life* at the Gymnase, October, 1889.

Madame Arnould-Plessy was still living, in retirement, a year or two ago.

The "rosary of marital infelicities," strung together under the title of *Artists' Wives,* was published in 1874, when Daudet had been seven years married. I have been unable to discover whether any of these had previously been published; but M. Ernest Daudet states, by implication at least, that they were all written after his marriage. He tells us that Alphonse had been deterred from marrying by the fear of some such catastrophe as that described in the first of these sketches. "An expression of this fear *made after his marriage,* will be found in *Artists' Wives,* more particularly in the story which opens that volume, *Madame Heurtebise.*" To my mind the interest of these very vivid and lifelike sketches is greatly heightened by the thought that they were written after their author was happily married to her who, in

his brother's words, "has been the very peace of his hearth, the regulator of his work and the discreet counsellor of his inspiration."[1] In another place he refers to this collection as "one of the less known books, which I recommend to connoisseurs;"[2] and in support of this recommendation and of my own profound impression of the great power of these sketches, I venture to refer to the comments of Mr. Matthews in his General Introduction to this edition of Daudet's works in English.[3]

Of the description of Edmond de Goncourt's last hours, *Ultima*, I have already said enough, in connection with the article on Goncourt. It seems exquisitely fitting that the lonely old man, who never ceased to mourn for his brother except when his heart was cheered and warmed by the sympathetic presence of his friend, should have died beneath that friend's roof, where he was a loved and honored guest.

"Of those brief moments on Sunday mornings we retain the most penetrating, the most delightful memory. They are mingled in our minds with the Dominical Sunday afternoons in the *Grenier* at Auteuil. The Sundays to come will seem desolate to us because of the disappearance of the two masters, whom we admired with our whole soul

[1] *My Brother and I*, page 448.
[2] Page 462.
[3] *The Nabob*, pp. xix–xxi.

and loved with our whole heart: Edmond de Goncourt, Alphonse Daudet." [1]

There are many passages in the *Journal des Goncourt* which indicate that neither Alphonse Daudet himself nor his brother Ernest has given us an adequate account of his early years in Paris, and which explain at the same time the feeling of Daudet toward the famous *Journal*, as described in *Ultima*. It seems that whatever he — or any one else for that matter — might say to Goncourt in a moment of expansiveness or confidence, was inexorably jotted down, to be given to the world some day.

"Daudet has been living in the Lamoignon mansion [2] in the Marais these seven years," says the diarist under date of March 21, 1876. "He tells me that the house has been kind to him, that it has soothed and tranquillized him. In his youth he was fond of excitement, of haunting low places; it was a youth that retained for a long while, as he expresses it, the posthumous waves, the whale's-backs of the sea after a storm. But in that tranquil, placid, soporific house, he has been transformed and, by dint of hard work, has become an entirely different man." — Again, in October 1885: "Daudet talked of the excesses of his youth; a conversation broken by excruciating pains which, from time to time, cut him short and

[1] MM. Paul and Victor Margueritte, ***Alphonse Daudet Intime.***

[2] Where he wrote *Fromont* and *Jack.*

caused him to conclude his confidences with these words: 'That he has well merited what has come to him, but that in very truth there was within him an irresistible instinct which impelled him to abuse his physical powers.'"

The vagaries of his boyhood in Lyon, described by himself and his brother, and the privations of his servitude as a school-usher at Alais, to which he always looked back as the most miserable part of his life, must have impaired his constitution at the very outset, so that it was but ill prepared to stand the additional strain of his irregular habits and of his lack of the wherewithal to nourish himself properly. In March, 1886, he and Goncourt dined with Zola.—Daudet talked of his horrible poverty, and of the days when he literally had nothing to eat, and yet enjoyed that destitution, because he felt no load on his shoulders, because he was at liberty to go where he pleased, to do what he chose; *because he was no longer an usher.*

The days of absolute poverty had come to an end when he entered the office of the President of the Corps Législatif in 1860, but his habits still left much to be desired in the way of regularity. As early as 1861, his health, "which had been shaken," says M. Ernest Daudet, "by the violent attacks upon the nerves that life in Paris brings," was so seriously affected that he was sent to Algiers by his physician; in the following year again he had to leave Paris, going then to Corsica; and although we are told that it was prudence

alone, not necessity, which counselled him to start southward again in 1863 — when he did not go beyond Provence — it is clear that neither then nor ever afterward was he a thoroughly sound man. But it is equally clear, and not from his writings alone, that his ill-health had not, in these early years, at all impaired his vitality and animation. A single incident will serve not only to illustrate his temperament but to indicate the nature of his duties under the Duc de Morny and of his relations with him. Once more I have recourse to the *Journal des Goncourt.*

"Sunday, March 16, 1873. — Daudet talked of Morny, to whom he was once a sort of secretary. While sparing him, while disguising, with words of gratitude, that gentleman's lack of real worth, he described him to us as having a certain tact in dealing with mankind and the faculty of distinguishing between an incapable and an intelligent man at first sight.

"Daudet was very amusing and reached the acme of comicality when he described the *littérateur*, the composer of operettas. He told us of one morning when Morny had ordered him to write a ballad, some absurd thing with a jingle after the style of *bonne négresse aimer bon nègre; bon négresse aimer bon gigot.* — When the thing was done and produced by Daudet, in the enthusiasm of the first rendering the presence of Persigny and Boittelle in the reception room was entirely forgotten.

"And lo! Daudet, L'Épine, the musician, ay, and Morny himself, with his skull-cap and in the ample robe-de-chambre in which he aped the Cardinal-minister, one and all leaping over stools, shouting *zim-boum, zim-balaboum*, while the Interior Department and the Prefecture cooled their heels outside."

In 1866, we are told, he was too ill to go to Ville d'Avray with his family, and remained in Paris until he was driven away by an epidemic of cholera; it was during the summer of that year after he had joined his brother at Ville d'Avray, that he met Mademoiselle Julie Allard, to whom he was married early in the following year.

"How did that come about?" he asks. "By what witchcraft was the inveterate Bohemian I then was, caught and laid under a spell?"[1]

"His marriage, he often said, transformed his existence."[2] So indeed it did, to the extent that it put an end forever to his Bohemian days and introduced an entirely new set of interests into his life, hitherto "open to all the winds of heaven, with only brief flights, impulses instead of wishes, never following aught save its caprice and the blind frenzy of a youth which threatened never to end."[3] But the transformation was not to be complete until his marriage had been supplemented by another event, the event which

[1] *Thirty Years in Paris*, page 47.
[2] MM. Margueritte in Rev. Encyc., *ubi supra*.
[3] *Thirty Years in Paris*, page 44.

aroused every vestige of patriotic feeling in the breast of every Frenchman, whatever his politics, and united the nation as it had not been united for many a year. "It" (his marriage) MM. Margueritte continue, "had been, *with the war*, the touch of a magic wand which had caused fresh springs to gush forth within him, had enlarged his horizon. He retained from his domestic life a sort of reflection of kindliness, and from the tragic excitement of the war a boundless store of intense life and burning compassion."

"Daudet said," records Edmond de Goncourt,[1] "that during all those years (including the first years after his marriage, when his wife was learning what the Mont-de-Piété was), he did nothing, was conscious of nothing save the need of living, of living actively, violently, noisily, the need of singing, of making music, of strolling through the woods with a bit of wine in his head. He confessed that in those days he had no literary ambition; but that it was a matter of instinct with him and amused him to jot down everything, to record even his dreams. It was the war, he declared, that transformed him, that finally aroused in the depths of his being the thought that he might die without having done anything, leaving nothing lasting behind him. Thereupon he set to work, and with work literary ambition was born in him."

While this assertion, if correctly reported, is

[1] *Journal*, January 25, 1885.

probably somewhat exaggerated, the effect of the war upon Daudet's work can be detected readily enough by comparing the tone of *Tartarin* and the *Letters from my Mill* with the *Lettres à un Absent*, with those of the *Monday Tales* which relate to the war and its results, and with *Robert Helmont.*

As we know, Daudet failed in none of the duties which he deemed to be those of a patriotic Frenchman in the time of the nation's peril. It is certain that his experiences as a volunteer in the National Guard during the siege of Paris,[1] following close upon the accident described in the Preface to *Robert Helmont*, and the consequent confinement and anxiety, had a most serious effect upon his already broken health. Even so, the work that he had hitherto done was as nothing compared with that which he began to do when, as he told Goncourt, the lacking incentive was supplied and literary ambition was born within him. *Fromont*, *Jack*, *The Nabob*, *Kings in Exile*, and *Numa Roumestan* followed one another in rapid succession, each representing, as he tells us in their respective "histories," an enormous amount of labor of the most exacting kind. After *Jack* was finished he was so exhausted that he was driven to the Riviera for rest, and while *Kings in Exile* was on the stocks his work was interrupted by the attack which proved to be the beginning of the end, though the end was to be long in coming.

[1] See *My Brother and I*, page 453.

To be sure, he rallied, the danger passed away, and he, like Turgénieff, analyzed his sensations for use in describing the death of Élysée Méraut. But he felt thenceforth that "something was broken within him." An entry in Goncourt's *Journal* seems to fix the date of this attack approximately: "Daudet said that he had recently raised a great clot of blood," he writes in 1879. "Some say it comes from the bronchial tubes, others from the lungs."

There is scarcely an entry of subsequent date wherein Daudet is mentioned, in which reference is not made to his health. "Upon my word, that Daudet has the energy of all the devils! He worked all the morning at *Sappho* (the play), notwithstanding the most cruel pains, and he passed all the evening walking about, unable to sit down, from one end of the gallery to the other, leaning on his son's arm, with an occasional giving way of one leg, as if a bullet had broken it." [1]

"'You are better, it seems to me,' I said this morning to Daudet. 'My dear fellow,' he replied, 'you know that in the old days when they crucified a man they used to take out the nails for a moment to make him suffer longer. Well, just at present I am enjoying a moment when the nails are out.'" [2]

It is difficult to find a mention of Daudet by his contemporaries in which there is not some reference to his ill-health. Anatole France speaks of him as

[1] October 6, 1885. [2] June 29, 1887.

"tortured by fifteen years of suffering." Pierre Loti says of him that he displayed "the patience of an heroic martyr," and a recent writer, the last of the eminent Frenchmen who have recently visited this country, primarily to deliver a course of lectures at Harvard University, M. Édouard Rod, observes that "one of the tales which he left unfinished was to be entitled *My Suffering*, and to contain the daily record of the disease which had tortured him for so many years—of that disease endured with admirable, smiling heroism for which we loved him the more dearly."

It is possible to follow with reasonable certainty, although without exact dates, the sequence of Daudet's various residences in Paris, from the garret in the Hôtel du Sénat, to which his brother escorted him on his arrival, to the house on Rue de l'Université in which he died more than forty years later. He tells us in the history of *Little What's-His-Name* that Daniel Eyssette's chamber under the eaves over against the steeple of Saint-Germain-des-Prés is one of the realities of the book, and it was presumably his second home in the capital. During the years immediately succeeding his resignation of his office under government, that is to say from 1865 until his marriage, he lived in the country the greater part of the year; and he seems to have passed nearly the whole of the year 1867, after his marriage, away from Paris, at L'Estérel, Pormieu, and

at the chateau of Vigneux.[1] In the early seventies, when he wrote *Fromont* and *Jack*, he was living in the Marais, in the Palais Lamoignon, and in 1876, as we have seen, he told Goncourt that he had then been living there seven years, so that this was probably his first settled residence in Paris. *Kings in Exile* was written in 1878-79, on Place des Vosges, in an old Louis XIII. mansion described in the history of that book; and *Numa Roumestan* on Avenue de l'Observatoire, where he was living in the spring and summer of 1880. In 1890 he was living on Rue de Bellechasse, and he died on Rue de l'Université. But nowhere else was he so happy as at Champrosay, where he first lived in summer as early at least as 1870, in the house formerly occupied by Eugène Delacroix, the artist, and where he afterward built the modest but charming retreat where Goncourt died in his arms, and where his friends love to think of him.

Having no purpose to discuss the question of "schools" or systems, I have thought that those readers who, like myself, have become deeply interested in the man through his works and a slight knowledge of his career, might care to be informed as to the estimation in which he and his writings are held by his own countrymen, and how he is differentiated by them from other novelists with whom his name is often

[1] See *History of Little What's-His-Name*, in *Thirty Years in Paris*, pages 47-48.

associated, but who, while they may compel admiration of their intellects, repel such affection as Daudet aroused in his readers, as evidenced by this incident among many, told by M. Édouard Rod: "On the day following his death, when all the fashion and celebrity of Paris filed by his bier, a poor man stole timidly to his side and laid a poor little bunch of violets among the sumptuous flowers."

"In the days of his earliest triumphs," says M. Rod, "Alphonse Daudet had for companions in arms three men who were his seniors and who have all disappeared, Flaubert, Edmond de Goncourt and Turgénieff, and one contemporary, M. Émile Zola. . . . They generally met at Flaubert's, whom they admired and who had great influence over them. 'Flaubert thundered,' says M. Zola, who has given us a very vivid picture of these meetings, 'Turgénieff told stories of exquisite savor and originality, Goncourt passed judgment with his characteristic shrewdness and conciseness, Daudet acted his anecdotes with the charm which makes him one of the most adorable companions whom I know.[1] As for myself I could hardly be said to shine, for I am of very moderate ability as a talker.' . . . The author of *Madame Bovary* had reflected much upon the 'genus' novel, in which

[1] "June 27, 1881. Dined at Charpentier's. — Alphonse Daudet is such a captivating talker, such a capital actor of the comedies he describes, that just as I got up to ask if it was eleven o'clock, I heard a clock strike one!" — *Journal des Goncourt.*

all of his guests were rising to fame; and he strove to convert them to his theory. One of the points of this theory — the most essential in his eyes — was, if we may venture to say so, the *impersonality* of the novelist. Flaubert contended that the author should create his characters, then disappear behind them, in order to emphasize the reality of their existence. Goncourt and Turgénieff never submitted unreservedly; M. Zola accepted the theory in all its rigor. As for Daudet, it ran counter to his temperament, and he could never determine to make any sacrifice to it.

"No æsthetic arguments, no thought of a 'school' could ever convert this incorrigible to the 'impersonal method.' Did he discuss it on Sundays with his friends? did he attack it? did he condemn it? I cannot say; but even if he had tried to put it in practice he would not have succeeded and would have impeded his talent to no purpose. From the very beginning and to the very end he threw himself frantically into his books. . . . The best 'receipt' — the only one — to give to writers, as to artists, is simply to find out their proper path and to follow it. Guided by his unerring instinct, Daudet found his without difficulty. . . . It was he who made that charming and profound observation of which artists alone can appreciate the full meaning: 'A man is not the master of his work.' Nor is he the master of his talent. He goes where it leads him. The true 'method' is to allow oneself to be led. Daudet

would have deprived us of the best part of himself, if he had sacrificed his *ego* to the exigencies of the 'impersonal method.' . . .

"Thus the author is constantly blended with his characters. Amid the multitude of his creations his own face stands forth in the foreground, amiable, mobile, charming, *human* above all, in the broadest meaning of that noble word. They who have had the good fortune to know him will always see him as they read his books; he will appear before them as they turn each page, ready to throw himself into his own narrative, to comment on it, to explain it, glowing with the feelings he has described, indignant, delighted, mocking, deeply moved, scornful, indulgent; he will appear to them as they have seen him, as they have loved him, kind to all, heroic against disease, with mind and heart always on the alert, amid the loving and cherished ones who comforted him in his suffering and created a sort of radiant atmosphere about him. They who have never seen him will divine his personality without difficulty, and, as they pass from volume to volume, will come to know him through and through, and he will remain, or will become their friend. For . . . he wrote with love in his heart, and they who read him will love him." [1]

"This realist," says M. Jules Lemaître, "is cordial. He loves; he has compassion; he does not disdain. He has kept himself free from that brutal

[1] *Nouvelles Études*, etc. *passim.*

and contemptuous pessimism which is so fashionable, and which is called, no one knows why, 'naturalism.' . . . For kindly folk, you see (and for others too), Daudet possesses one gift which dominates everything: 'charm'; and to that simple yet mysterious word we must come at last when we speak of him."

"I knew Alphonse Daudet before his hours of glory and suffering," says Anatole France. "And I do not believe that any human creature has ever loved nature and art with a more ardent and more generous love; has ever enjoyed the world with more intensity and more affection. And the marvellous feature of it all is that such an observer, so exact, so unerring, a mind working so constantly upon the quick, should not be cruel, should show no sign of bitterness, should never become gloomy and depressed. It was because he loved men and naturally was indulgent to them."

After Daudet's death M. François Coppée wrote: "In the literature of this century Alphonse Daudet will stand in the first rank as a marvellous master of emotion, of grace and of irony. . . . Almost all of his books are masterpieces, and several of the characters created by his genius of observation, so profound and so acute, have attained the eminence of types. He has had the very great pleasure, the supreme reward of hearing people say, in his lifetime, 'a Delobelle' or 'a Tartarin,' as Molière heard people say 'a Célimène' or 'a Tartuffe.'

"France had no book which could be compared to *Don Quixote.* Alphonse Daudet has filled the gap with the three volumes of the life of Tartarin of Tarascon."

"His style," says the same eminent critic, "is inimitable, and no writer has succeeded as he has done in expressing vividly in words the sensation — the whole sensation — he feels in the very depths of his heart, at the very end of his nerves."

"Especially in his later works," says M. Lemaître, "his style is that of an extrordinarily 'sensitive' writer. It has the instant quiver of life that is expressed as soon as it is noted. Not a phrase of oratorical rhythm or of didactic finish. Never did any one make such persistent use of all 'grammatical figures,' abridgment, anacoluthon, ellipsis, ablative absolute. — Not a trick of style; constant invention of words. The impression toward the end was almost too strong, painful as it were. It was like the overflow of sensations which oppresses one in stormy weather. Turning over the leaves of those books, one would say that his fingers struck fire."

There is something irresistibly attractive to me in the mental picture which I draw of Alphonse Daudet, not only from what is said of him by those who were his nearest and dearest, but from the gentle tone which they who have written of his work seem to have adopted instinctively, and long before they can be suspected of doing violence to

their real opinions in deference to the maxim: *de mortuis nil nisi bonum.*

Years ago M. Jules Lemaître wrote: "The soul of that dear Little What 's-His-Name, who had an unhappy childhood, and who dreams such sweet and fascinating dreams, continues to float lightly over M. Alphonse Daudet's genuine novels;" and *The Immortal* had been published when M. René Doumic referred to him as "this novelist, beloved of all men."

In 1895, M. François Coppée spoke of Daudet as "the writer whom I admire, and the friend whom I have dearly loved for many years." And again: "The Daudet whom I now invoke is my neighbor in the country for several summers past, the dear invalid of whom I think tenderly and sadly when I return from Champrosay to Mandres through the forest of Sénart, in the Shakespearian moonlight. Alas! how the poor fellow trembled just now, from walking a few steps in the garden! How heavily he leaned on my arm and on a cane! But I pause there, I am wrong. I was on the point of insulting his heroic courage, his proud resignation, the resignation of a giant of intellect."

This universally gentle, affectionate tone is the more impressive when compared with the tone in which these same men speak of certain other authors who are more constantly in the public eye than Daudet himself ever was. Have we far to seek for the reason? It seems to me that it is most justly set forth in these words, with which I bring

this rambling note to a close: "His works," says M. Georges Pellissier, "are the product of his heart no less than of his genius. There are writers whom we admire, and others whom we love; there are very few who succeed in winning love and admiration at once. Of these last is Alphonse Daudet. All the admirers whom he owes to his genius his heart has made his friends."

GEORGE B. IVES.

A. DAUDET.

MEMORIES OF A MAN OF LETTERS

ÉMILE OLLIVIER.

AMONG the Parisian salons which my first coat haunted, I retain a very pleasant memory of the salon Ortolan at the School of Law. Père Ortolan, a Southerner with a refined face and a jurist of renown, was also a poet in his leisure hours. He had published *Les Enfantines*, and although he vowed that he never wrote for any but the very young, he did not disdain any approbation that adults might bestow upon his verses. His evenings, sedulously attended by the natives of the studious quarters, presented an agreeable and original mixture of pretty women, professors and advocates, learned men and poets. It was as a poet that I was invited.

Among the celebrities, young and old, whom I saw there in the golden mist of the first bewildered sensations of youth, Émile Ollivier appeared one evening. He was with his first wife and the great musician Liszt, his father-in-law. Of her I remember a mass of fair hair above a velvet dress; of Liszt, the Liszt of that time,

even less. I had eyes and curiosity for Ollivier alone. He was then about thirty-three years old — it was in 1858 — and being very popular among the youth of the republican party, who were proud to have a leader of his years, he was treading the paths of glory. People whispered to one another the legend of his family; the old father long proscribed, the brother killed in a duel, himself proconsul at twenty years and governing Marseille by his eloquence. All this gave him, to the minds of those who saw him at a distance, a certain likeness to a Roman or Greek tribune, and even to the tragic young men of the great Revolution, the Saint-Justs, the Desmoulins, the Dantons. For my part, as I was but slightly interested in politics, seeing him thus, of poetic aspect despite his spectacles, eloquent, Lamartinian, always ready to talk and to work himself into a passion, I could not forbear comparing him to a tree of his province — not that whose name he bears, which is the symbol of wisdom — but one of those melodious pines which crown the white hills and are reflected in the blue waves of the Provençal coast, sterile it is true, but retaining a sort of echo of the antique lyre, and quivering always, their slender needles ever rustling at the lightest touch of the tempest, in the faintest breath that comes from Italy.

Émile Ollivier was at that time *One of the Five*[1] — one of the five deputies who dared, standing

[1] Two others of the Five were Jules Favre and Ernest Picard.

alone, to defy the Empire, and he sat among them, on the topmost benches of the Assembly, isolated in his opposition, as on an impregnable Aventine. Across the Chamber, Morny, lying back in his presidential chair, with a bored and sleepy expression, watched him with the cold eye of an unerring judge of men; he had decided that he was less Roman than Greek, swept onward by Athenian frivolity rather than ballasted by Latin prudence and cold reasoning. He knew the vulnerable spot; he knew that beneath that tribune's toga lay concealed the innate and defenceless vanity of virtuosi and poets, and he hoped by attacking him in that spot to bring him to terms sooner or later.

Years afterward, when I came in contact with Émile Ollivier for the second time and under the circumstances which I am about to narrate, he had been won over to the Empire. Morny, before his death, had displayed a sort of coquettish determination to overcome by sly advances and haughty cajoleries the resistance of that harmonious vanity, offered for form's sake and for the gallery. Men had shouted through the streets: "Émile Ollivier's great treason!" and therefore Émile Ollivier believed himself a second Comte de Mirabeau. Mirabeau had tried to make the Revolution and the Monarchy march in step; Ollivier, impelled by the best intentions, tried after twenty years to unite Liberty to the Empire, and his efforts recalled Phrosine attempting to marry the Adriatic to the Great Turk. Mean-

while the Great Turk, as he had long been a widower, had made a match for himself with a very young girl, a Provençale like himself, who admired him. He was said to be radiant, triumphant; the same honeymoon silvered with its softest rays his amours and his politics. A happy man!

But a pistol-shot rang out in the direction of Auteuil. Pierre Bonaparte[1] had shot Victor Noir; and that Corsican bullet through a young man's heart dealt a deadly blow at the fiction of the liberal Empire. Paris suddenly rose, the cafés talked in loud tones, a mob gesticulated wildly on the sidewalks. From moment to moment fresh news arrived, reports of all sorts were circulated; people told of Prince Pierre's strange abode, that Auteuil mansion tightly closed amid the bustle and uproar of Paris, like the tower of a Genoese or Florentine nobleman, smelling of powder and old iron, and echoing the livelong day with pistol-shots and the clash of crossed swords. Others told what manner of man Victor Noir was, his exceeding gentleness of disposition, his youth, his approaching marriage. And lo! the women took a hand: they pitied the mother, the fiancée; the touching element of a love-romance inflamed political passions. The *Marseillaise*, between heavy leads, published its call to arms; people said that Rochefort would distribute four thousand revolvers at his office that

[1] Pierre was the son of Lucien, second brother of Napoléon I. He was born at Rome in 1815, and died at Versailles in 1881.

evening. Two hundred thousand men, women and children, the bourgeois quarters, all the faubourgs prepared for the great manifestation of the following day; the rumor of barricades was in the air, and in the melancholy of the fading daylight one could hear those vague sounds, precursors of revolution, which seem like the dull cracking of the timbers of a throne.

At that juncture I met a friend on the boulevard. "This looks bad," I said to him. — "Very bad indeed, and the most disgusting part of it is that *on high* they have no suspicion of the gravity of the affair." Passing his arm through mine, he added: "Émile Ollivier knows you; come to Place Vendôme with me."

Since Émile Ollivier had become Minister of Justice, that department of the government had lost all appearance of administrative ostentation and arrogance. Being entirely sincere in his dreams of a democratic and liberal Empire, a genuine American minister, Ollivier declined to occupy those vast apartments, those lofty salons, decorated with the imperial bees and with a profusion of crests and gilding which, in his view, were too suggestive of autocracy. He continued to occupy the same modest lodgings on Rue Saint-Guillaume which he had occupied as a simple advocate and deputy, and arrived at Place Vendôme every morning with a huge satchel stuffed with papers under his arm, with his frock-coat and spectacles, like a lawyer on his way to the Palais de Justice, like a worthy government clerk

walking to his office. This conduct caused him to be more or less despised by the attendants and ushers. Door wide open, staircase deserted! Doorkeepers and ushers allowed us to pass, not deigning even to ask us where we were going or whom we sought, simply testifying, by an air of contemptuous resignation and a certain correct insolence of bearing, how contrary to the dignified, vanished traditions of the administrative ideal they considered these novel and undignified methods.

In a large, high office, lighted by enormous door-windows, one of those offices of cold and depressing aspect where everything is green, but of the bureaucratic green of green boxes and chairs covered with green leather, which is to the lovely verdure of the woods and fields what a stamped paper is to a sonnet written on vellum, what cider is to champagne, — the minister was alone, standing with his back to the fireplace, at his post, in an oratorical attitude. Night was falling. Attendants brought in two tall lamps already lighted.

My friend had said truly that nothing was suspected *on high;* the rumors of the street reached those lofty heights only as a vague murmur. Émile Ollivier, with the natural infatuation, intensified by a certain short-sighted way of looking at things, which is characteristic of the man in power, assured us that everything was going as well as possible, that he was thoroughly informed as to the state of affairs; he even showed us the

note written by Pierre Bonaparte to M. Conti, which had been officially communicated to him; a savage, feudal sort of note, in the traditional Italian style of the sixteenth century, beginning thus: "Two young men insulted me —" and ending with these words: "I think that I killed one of them."

Thereupon I took the floor and told what I believed to be the truth, not as a politician but as a man, describing the effervescent condition of the popular mind, the exasperation of the street, the unavoidable alternative of an appeal to arms or a courageous act of justice. I added that it seemed to me, as to everybody else, absolutely certain that Fonvielle and Noir were incapable of a purpose to kill or to strike the prince at his house; that I knew them both, Noir especially; and I told how my heart had warmed toward that tall, inoffensive youth, still hardly more than a child, who was amazed by his success in Paris, proud of his precocious renown, striving by dint of hard work to acquire what he lacked in the matter of elementary education; and whose greatest joy was to have a friend teach him some brief Latin quotation, together with suggestions as to the method of introducing it adroitly, apropos of anything, in conversation, with the idea of displaying his erudition that evening, and thereby dumfounding J. J. Weiss, then connected with the *Journal de Paris*, who was teaching him orthography.

Émile Ollivier listened to me with close atten-

tion, with a pensive, determined air; and when I had finished, after a brief silence he uttered in a haughty voice this sentence, which I quote in his very words:

"Very well! if Prince Pierre is an assassin, we will send him to the galleys!"

A Bonaparte, to the galleys! Those were the empty words of a keeper of the Seals of the liberal Empire, of a minister still mired in his illusions as an orator, of a minister who bore the title of minister without the ministerial spirit, of a minister, in a word, who lived on Rue Saint-Guillaume!

The next day, it is true, Pierre Bonaparte was a prisoner, but a prisoner as princes usually are prisoners, on the first floor of the Tour d'Argent, with an outlook on Place du Châtelet and the Seine; and the good people of Paris, as they crossed the bridge, pointed to his burlesque dungeon and the white curtains at his windows, which were hardly barred. A few weeks later Prince Pierre was solemnly acquitted by the High Court at Bourges. Émile Ollivier said no more about the galleys; but he left Rue Saint-Guillaume to take up his quarters on Place Vendôme. Thereafter, doorkeepers and ushers in the vast corridors and the broad stairways smiled ceremoniously when he passed; he had become an unexceptionable minister, and the liberal Empire had lived!

To sum up, Émile Ollivier may be described as a statesman of moderate parts, prone to act

upon impulse and unreflecting, but an honest man, an idealistic poet gone astray in public affairs. Morny first of all, and others after Morny, made a tool of him. A republican, he tried to strengthen the dynasty by roughcasting it with liberty; later, he wished for peace, declared war, and not with a light heart, as he said by an unfortunate inspiration, but with a mind irremediably light and frivolous, he dragged us with him into the abyss whence we found our way out, but in which he remained!

The other evening — people always meet sooner or later in Paris — we dined opposite each other at a friend's table; the same as in the old days, the same dreamy glance, questioning and hesitating behind his spectacles, the same characteristic talker's face, in which one's attention is engrossed by the fold of the lips, by the shape of the mouth, instinct with audacity but devoid of will. Proud and erect withal, but all white; white as to his thick hair, white as to his short whiskers, white as a camp abandoned after a disastrous campaign, and covered with snow. And with all the rest, the jarring, nervous voice of those who have more upon their heart than they care to display.

And I remembered the young tribune, black as a crow, of whom I once caught a glimpse in Père Ortolan's salon.[1]

[1] Émile Ollivier was born at Marseille in 1825. He was admitted to the bar at the age of twenty-one, and two years later, after the Revolution of 1848, was made *commissaire* of the Re-

public in the departments of Bouches-du-Rhône and Var. His administration was not successful and he was soon removed from that post to that of prefect of Haute-Marne, — an exchange which was so evidently a degradation that he was with difficulty dissuaded by his friends from resigning. Louis Napoléon eventually dismissed him and he returned to private life and the practice of his professio

In 1857 he was chosen one of the deputies for Paris. It was in 1863 that the *Five* referred to above made themselves famous, but Ollivier's apostasy was not long delayed, as he broke with the opposition in 1864, only a year before Morny's death. He seems to have invited the advances that were made to him.

In December, 1869, he became Prime Minister, being invited by the Emperor to "name persons who will, associated with yourself, form a homogeneous cabinet, faithfully representing the legislative majority." The new cabinet took office January 2, 1870, and Ollivier became Minister of Justice, his colleagues being selected from the leaders of the Left Centre and Right Centre. Great hopes were founded upon this coalition as the beginning of a constitutional régime, but they were of brief duration. The more liberal members of the cabinet resigned about May 1, but the policy of Napoléon and Ollivier was approved by a majority of the popular vote on May 8. After this policy had plunged the nation into the war with Prussia (formally declared July 19), Ollivier, on August 9, resigned his office, and by that step irretrievably lost all his influence and all his hold upon the public confidence. He has almost passed out of sight since that period, appearing only on rare occasions and generally in connection with his membership in the French Academy.

GAMBETTA.

One day, years and years ago, at my table d'hôte on Rue du Sénat, which I have already shown you — a tiny room at the rear of a narrow courtyard with a cold, cleanly swept pavement, where rose-laurels and spindle-trees withered in their classic green boxes — before a sumptuous banquet at two francs a plate, Gambetta and Rochefort met. I had brought Rochefort. It sometimes happened that I invited a brother of the craft to dinner thus, on the morrow of an article in *Figaro*, when fortune smiled upon me; it enlivened and gave variety to a somewhat provincial circle. Unfortunately Rochefort and Gambetta were not made to agree, and I believe that they did not speak to each other that evening. I can see them now, each at one end of the table, separated by the whole length of the cloth, and both the same in appearance as they always remained: Rochefort reserved, self-contained, with a dry, silent laugh; the other laughing uproariously, shouting, gesticulating, overflowing and steaming like a vat of Cahors wine. And how many things, how many momentous events were foreshadowed, unsuspected by any of us, in

the holding aloof of those two guests, amid the stoneware jugs and the napkin-rings of a meagre students' dinner!

The Gambetta of those days was throwing off his humors and deafening the cafés in the Latin Quarter with his thunderous eloquence. But mark this: the cafés in the quarter at that period were not simply taprooms where men gathered to drink and smoke. Amid the muzzled Paris of that time, deprived of public life and of newspapers, these meetings of studious young men of generous impulses, veritable schools of opposition, or rather of legitimate resistance, continued to be the only places where a free voice could still be raised. Each of them had its orator *par excellence*, a table which, at certain moments, became almost a tribune, and each orator in the quarter his admirers and partisans.

"At the Voltaire there's Larmina, a strong man — *bigre!* what a powerful speaker that Larmina at the Voltaire is!"

"I don't say he is n't, but at the Procope there's Pesquidoux, who is more powerful than he."

And they would go in troops, by way of pilgrimage, to the Voltaire to hear Larmina, then to the Procope to hear Pesquidoux, with the ingenuous, fervent faith of the youth of twenty of those days. In very truth these discussions over a glass of bock, amid the pipe smoke, were educating a generation and keeping constantly awake that France which was thought to be chloroformed for good and all. More than one

doctrinaire,[1] who, being comfortably settled to-day or hoping to be, affects the contempt of offended good taste for such customs and unreflectingly considers the new generation of students as on a level with those of the old days, has lived for a long while and still lives — I know some of them — on snatches of eloquence or lofty argument which richly-endowed spendthrifts left lying on the tables at the time of which I write. Of course some of our young tribunes delayed too long, grew old around the tables, talked constantly and never did anything. Every army corps has its stragglers whom the head of the column leaves behind at last; but Gambetta was not one of them. If he skirmished at the café by gaslight, it was always after a day filled with genuine hard labor. As the factory blows off its steam into the gutter at night, he went thither to expend in words his overflow of energy and ideas. That did not interfere with his being a serious student, with his winning triumphs at the conference Molé, being entered on the advocates' roll, earning diplomas and certificates. One evening at Madame Ancelot's — great heaven! how long ago that was! — in that salon on Rue Guillaume, full of bright old men and birds in cages, I remember that I heard the very good-natured mistress of the house say to some one: "My son-in-law Lachaud has a new secretary, a very eloquent young man, it seems, with a deuce of a name — wait a moment — his

[1] Written in 1878, for the *Novoë-Vremya* of St. Petersburg.

name is — his name is Monsieur Gambetta." Assuredly the excellent old lady was very far from foreseeing how high that young secretary would rise, who was said to be eloquent, and who had such a deuce of a name. And yet, aside from the inevitable toning down, of which experience of life undertakes to demonstrate the necessity to men of much less subtle comprehension than his, aside from a certain political insight into the motives and hidden purposes of men, readily acquired in the exercise of power and management of affairs, the young law-student of the time of which I write was, so far as his general character and appearance were concerned, substantially the same man that we afterward knew. Not stout as yet, but squarely built, round-shouldered, familiar in gesture, already fond of leaning on a friend's arm as he walked and chatted; he was a voluble talker, on all subjects, with the harsh, penetrating Southern voice, which cuts out sentences as with the coiner's stamp, and strikes words like medals; but he listened, too, asked questions, read, assimilated everything, and prepared that enormous stock of facts and ideas which is so indispensable to him who assumes to guide an epoch and a country so complicated as ours. Gambetta is one of the few politicians who possess objects of art, and who suspect that letters fill some place in the life of a nation. This preoccupation appears constantly in his conversation and even crops out in his speeches, but entirely without arrogance or ped-

antry, rather as coming from one who has seen artists near at hand, and to whom literary and artistic matters are of daily and familiar interest. In the days of the Hôtel du Sénat, the young advocate, whose friend I was, would sometimes hurry through a lecture to go to the Museums and admire the great masters, or, at the opening of the Salon, to defend the great painter François Millet, then unappreciated, against the drowsy and those who came late. His initiator and guide in the seven circles of the hell of painting was a Southerner like himself, somewhat older than he, a hairy, unsociable creature, with terrible eyes, which one could see gleaming beneath enormous drooping lashes, like a brigand's fire in the depths of a cavern masked by underbrush. It was Théophile Silvestre, a superb and tireless talker, with a mountaineer's voice ringing like the iron of Ariège, a writer of refined taste, an incomparable art critic, doting upon painters and estimating their value with the comprehensive subtlety of a lover and a poet. He loved the unknown Gambetta, foreseeing the great rôle he was to play; he continued to love him at a later period, notwithstanding a bitter political disagreement, and died one day at his table, of joy one might say, and in the ecstasy of a tardy reconciliation.[1]

These saunterings through the Salon, through the Louvre, on Théophile Silvestre's arm, had

[1] Théophile Silvestre, littérateur and journalist, born at Fossat (Ariège) in 1823, died in 1876.

given Gambetta a sort of reputation for indolence with certain embryotic statesmen who had been girthed and cravatted from childhood. They are the same men, now taller and older, who, being still full of themselves and still hermetically corked, speak of him in private as a frivolous man and as a politician without serious purpose, because, forsooth, he enjoys the company of a bright fellow who happens to be an actor. This would prove, at the utmost, that then as to-day Gambetta was a judge of men and knew the great secret of making it possible to make use of them, which is to win their affection. One characteristic stroke to finish the picture of the Gambetta of that day: that voice like a speaking trumpet, that terrible talker, that mighty *gasconizer*, was not a Gascon. Is it the influence of race? In more than one respect that impetuous son of Cahors was a near neighbor of the Italian frontier and Italian prudence; the strain of Genoese blood made of him almost a discreet Provençal. Talking often, talking all the time, he never allowed himself to be carried away by the eddying current of his words; he was very enthusiastic, but he knew beforehand the exact point at which his enthusiasm should halt, and, to express my whole meaning in a few words, he is almost the only great talker, so far as my knowledge goes, who is not at the same time an utterly unreliable maker of promises.

One morning, as always happened sooner or later, that noisy brood of youngsters who had

their nests in Hôtel du Sénat, took their flight, having become conscious of the growth of their wings. One flew northward, another toward the south. Gambetta and I lost sight of each other. I did not forget him however; as I dug and delved on my own account, living entirely apart from the world of politics, I sometimes wondered: "What has become of my friend from Cahors?" and I should have been astonished to learn that he was not in a fair way to become *somebody*. A few years later, happening to be at the Senate — not the hotel, but the palace of the Senate — on one of the reception evenings, I had taken refuge, far from the music and the noise, on a corner of the bench in a billiard-room, formerly a part of the vast suite, high enough for six ordinary floors, of Queen Marie de Medicis. It was the critical period, the period of attempts on the part of the Empire to endear itself to the people, when it was making loving advances to the various parties, talking of mutual concessions, and under color of reforms and soft words trying to entice, at the same time with the least radical of the Republicans, the last survivors of the old liberal bourgeoisie. Odillon Barrot, I remember, the famous Odillon Barrot, was playing billiards.[1] A whole gallery of old or prema-

[1] Odillon Barrot, a very famous advocate and politician, figured in almost all the great causes in France for nearly half a century, and was equally prominent in politics, taking a leading part in the Revolutions of July, 1830, and of 1848. He was celebrated as a wit and maker of *bons mots*. In 1869 he declined an offer of a position in the ministry. He was President of the

turely solemn men surrounded him, less heedful, most assuredly, of his strokes than of his person. They were waiting for a phrase, a *bon mot* to fall from those once eloquent lips, that they might pick it up and put it away under glass, piously, devoutly, as the angel did with Eloa's tear. But Odillon Barrot persisted in saying nothing, he chalked his cue, he made his stroke, nobly and with a grace of movement in which a whole past of bourgeois solemnity and high-cravatted parliamentarianism seemed to live again. Hardly a word was spoken in his neighborhood; those conscript fathers of an earlier age, those Epimenides who had been asleep since Louis-Philippe and 1848, conversed only in very low tones, as if they were not sure that they were really awake. I succeeded in catching these words on the wing: "Great scandal — Baudin trial — scandal — Baudin." As I seldom read the newspapers, and did not leave home until very late in the day, I knew absolutely nothing about that famous trial.[1] Sud-

Council of State in 1872. Died August 6, 1873. Barrot appeared at his best in defence of the Protestants who refused to decorate their house fronts for the procession of Corpus Christi. In the first case he ever tried he made a very famous retort to Lamennais, a Catholic, who said: "So you claim that the law is atheist?" "Yes," replied Barrot, "yes, it is, and it should be, if you mean by that that the law, which exists only to constrain, has no concern with the religious beliefs of mankind, which are outside of all constraint; it should be, in the sense that it protects all religions and identifies itself with none."

[1] Jean B. A. V. Baudin, born in 1811, a doctor and politician. He was a Republican of 1848, of the most rabid description; and when Louis Napoléon perpetrated the *coup d'état* (December 2, 1851) which made him Emperor and brought disaster upon

denly I heard Gambetta's name: — "Who in God's name is this Monsieur Gambetta?" said one of the old men, with deliberate or natural impertinence. All the memories of my life in the quarter came rushing into my mind. I was sitting quietly in my corner, with the perfect independence of an honest man of letters who earned his own living and was too free from all obligations and all political ambition to be overawed by such an areopagus, however venerable it might be. I rose: "This Monsieur Gambetta?

France, Baudin, then a deputy, resolved, with the concurrence of a few of his colleagues, to sustain the cause of the Republic and liberty, or die for it. They attempted to resist and threw up barricades in the streets of Paris; but they were practically defenceless and were shot down by the troops sent against them after having tried in vain to win the troops over to their side. — Seventeen years later, in 1868, a book was published called "Paris in December, 1851," in which the *coup d'état* was discussed at length and great prominence given to Baudin. The book created great excitement and crowds of people visited Baudin's grave. A public subscription for a monument was started, and lists of the subscribers were published. In November certain journalists and others were summoned before one of the lower criminal courts, charged with plotting to disturb the public peace or to incite the people to hatred and contempt of the imperial government. Gambetta and Jules Favre were among counsel retained for the defence. Gambetta considered the question at issue to be this: "Is there a moment when, on the pretext that the public safety demands such a step, the law may be overthrown and those persons treated as criminals who defend it at the peril of their lives?" As he elaborated his argument he grew more and more excited and refused to be silenced; his speech was an extremely brilliant and intensely bitter attack on the Empire. There seems to be no doubt that the widespread excitement and discussion caused by the Baudin subscription did much to weaken the government of Louis Napoléon.

Why, he is unquestionably a very remarkable man. I knew him when he was very young, and every one of us predicted a most magnificent future for him." — If you could have seen the general stupefaction at that outbreak, the games interrupted, the billiard cues poised in the air, all those irritated worthies, and the very balls gazing at me under the lamp with their round eyes! Where did this fellow come from, this stranger, who presumed to stand up for another, and in M. Odillon Barrot's presence too! — An intelligent man — we meet them everywhere — M. Oscar de Vallée, saved me. He was an advocate, procureur-général, I don't know what — one of the elect at all events, and the very fact that he had left his cap in the dressing-room conferred upon him the right to speak in any presence; he spoke: — "Monsieur is right, perfectly right, Maître Gambetta is no upstart; all of us at the Palais have the greatest admiration for him because of his eloquence;" and, noticing probably that the word eloquence did not arouse the enthusiasm of the company, he added, insistently: "because of his eloquence and his *jugeotte*."[1]

Then came the supreme assault upon the Empire, whole months charged with powder, stuffed with threats, all Paris shuddering beneath an indefinable warning breath, like the forest before the storm; ah! we of the generation which complained of having seen nothing were to see storms indeed. Gambetta, as the result of his argument

[1] *Jugeotte* is pure *argot:* "intellect."

in the Baudin trial, was in a fair way to become a great man; the fathers of the republican party, the combatants of 1851, the exiles, the *old beards*, had a fatherly affection for the young tribune, the faubourgs expected everything from the "one-eyed lawyer," the young men swore by him alone. I met him sometimes: "he was going to be chosen deputy, — he had just returned to Paris after a great speech at Lyon or Marseille!" — Always excited, always scenting powder, always in the agitated frame of mind of the day following a battle, talking aloud, squeezing one's hand hard and throwing his hair back with a gesture instinct with decision and energy. A delightful companion withal, more than ever familiar in his manner, and always glad to stop in the street to laugh and chat. "Breakfast at Meudon?" he said in answer to one of his friends who invited him. "Gladly! but by-and-by, when we have made an end of the Empire."

And now the great overturn is upon us, the war, the Fourth of September,[1] Gambetta a member of

[1] On September 1, 1870, the battle of Sedan was fought, resulting in the disastrous defeat of MacMahon, who had been sent to the relief of Bazaine, then shut up in Metz. The Emperor surrendered his sword to the King of Prussia. The news reached Paris three days later, on September 4, and caused intense excitement. Gambetta rose in the Corps Législatif, declared the Emperor deposed, and France a republic. A provisional government of National Defence was formed at the Hôtel de Ville, General Trochu being elected President, Jules Favre Vice-President and Jules Ferry Secretary; Gambetta, Rochefort and Jules Simon were among the other members. They immediately determined to abolish the Senate and the Corps Législatif. At

the National Defence, a colleague of Rochefort therein. They met again face to face around the green cloth where proclamations and decrees were signed, as they had met twelve years before around the glazed cloth of my table d'hôte. The sudden accession to power of my two former comrades in the Latin Quarter did not surprise me. The air was full at that moment of much more astounding prodigies. The great crash of the Empire as it fell still filled our ears, prevented our hearing the boots of the Prussian army which was coming nearer and nearer. I remember one of my first walks through the streets. I was returning from the country — a peaceful nook in the forest of Sénart — still breathing the fresh air of the foliage and the river. I felt like one dazed; it was no longer Paris, but an immense fair, something like an enormous barracks, making holiday. Everybody wore a military cap, and the petty industries, suddenly set free by the disappearance of the police, filled the whole city with multicolored booths and cries, as in the days immediately preceding New Year's Day. The streets swarmed with people, night was falling, fragments of the *Marseillaise* were in the air. Suddenly, right in my ear, a bantering, drawling faubourg voice cried: "Buy the Bonaparte woman, her orgies, her lovers — two sous!" and the owner of the voice held out a sheet of paper, a canard still damp from the press. What

one o'clock in the afternoon of that day the Empress left the Tuileries and fled to England.

a dream! In the heart of Paris, within two steps of that palace of the Tuileries where the echoes of the last fêtes were still floating; on those same boulevards which I had seen, only a few months before, swept with clubs, sidewalk and roadway, by squads of police! The antithesis produced a profound impression upon me, and I had for five minutes a very clear and sharply-defined consciousness of that ghastly and grandiose thing which is called a revolution.

I saw Gambetta once, during this first period of the siege, at the Department of the Interior — where he had taken up his quarters as if in his own home, unconcernedly, like a man to whom something had happened which he had long anticipated — receiving tranquilly, *à la papa*, with his slightly satirical good-humor, those chiefs of bureaux who only yesterday had referred to him contemptuously as "little Gambetta!" and now bent their backs and murmured, with an air of deep concern: "If Monsieur le Ministre will deign to permit me!"

I saw Gambetta afterward only at long intervals, and as it were through some rent suddenly made in the dark, cold and sinister cloud which hovered over the Paris of the siege. One of these meetings left an ineradicable impression on my mind. It was at Montmartre, on Place Saint-Pierre, at the foot of that escarpment of mortar and ochre which the construction of the church of the Sacré-Cœur has covered since with loose rubbish, but where at that time, not-

withstanding the trampling of numerous idling Dominicans and the sliding of urchins, a few patches of sickly turf, broken and ragged, were still green. Below us, in the haze, the city with its myriad roofs and its mighty hum, which subsided from time to time to let us hear the dull roar of the cannon of the forts in the distance. There was a small tent on the square, and in the centre of a circle enclosed by a rope, a huge yellow balloon pulling on its cable and swaying back and forth. Gambetta, it was said, was about to leave Paris, to electrify the provinces, to arouse them to the point of rushing to the deliverance of the capital, to inflame men's minds, to restore courage, in a word — and perhaps he would have succeeded but for Bazaine's treachery — to repeat the miracles of 1792! At first I saw nobody but Nadar, friend Nadar, with his aeronaut's cap, which had played a part in all the events of the siege; then, standing in the centre of a group, I spied Spuller[1] and Gambetta, both muffled in furs.

[1] Spuller, between 1860 and 1870, was interested in a journal called *L'Europe*, published at Frankfort, and on the eve of the war between Prussia and Austria, in 1866, he constantly dwelt upon the menace to France and to Europe inherent in the insatiable ambition of the Prussian monarchy. He subsequently came to Paris, and was the author of the famous document circulated during the elections of 1869, with the signatures of fifteen hundred electors, wherein Émile Ollivier was declared unworthy of confidence. On September 4, 1870, he followed Gambetta to power, without any official title, and became his collaborator, something more than his secretary, his *alter ego* and inseparable companion in the struggle. He had a share in all his Chief's great work and seconded him with great ability and

Spuller was very calm, brave without affectation, but unable to remove his eyes from that enormous machine in which he was to take his place in the capacity of *chef de cabinet*, and murmuring in a dreamy voice: "Really, it 's a most extraordinary thing!" Gambetta, as always, talking and raising his shoulders, almost delighted with the adventure. He came up to me and shook hands: a grasp which said many things. Then Spuller and he entered the basket. "Let go all!" Nadar's voice rang out. A few shouts of farewell, a "Vive la République!" the balloon shot up into the air, and it was all over.

Gambetta's balloon arrived safe and sound, but how many others fell into the sea at night, pierced by Prussian bullets, to say nothing of the incredible adventure of that one which, after driving twenty hours before a gale, landed in Norway within a few steps of the fiords and the frozen ocean! Surely, whatever any one may say, there was heroism in those expeditions, and I cannot recall without emotion that last grasp of the hand and that wicker-basket, which, smaller and more fragile than Cæsar's historic vessel, bore all the hope of Paris away into the wintry sky.

I did not see Gambetta again until a year later, at the trial of Bazaine, in that summer dining-room at Marie Antoinette's Trianon, of which

indefatigable devotion. It was on October 8, 1870, that they escaped from Paris in the balloon, and subsequently joined Crémieux and others at Tours.

the graceful intercolumniations are prolonged between the verdure of the two gardens, and which, enlarged and magnified by hangings and partitions, and transformed into a court-martial, still retained as it were, with its panels covered with doves and cupids, a memory, a perfume of past splendors. The Duc d'Aumale presided; Bazaine was in the prisoner's dock, haughty, stubborn, reckless, overbearing, his breast striped with red by the *grand cordon* of the Legion of Honor. And surely there was something grand in that spectacle of a soldier who, a traitor to his country, was about to be tried, under a republican form of government, by a descendant of the former kings.[1] The witnesses succeeded one another, uniforms and blouses, marshals and privates, government clerks, ex-ministers, peasants, old women, forest guards and customs officers, whose

[1] Bazaine surrendered Metz, with 160,000 men and 1800 guns, on October 27, 1870. Gambetta was among the first to recognize the culpability of this surrender of the last French army without striking a blow, and he lost no time in attacking the marshal in a very famous speech. "Metz has fallen! A general upon whom France relied, even after Mexico, has robbed his imperilled country of more than a hundred thousand of her defenders. General Bazaine has betrayed us; he has acted as the agent of the man of Sedan, the accomplice of the invader; and, contemptuously heedless of the honor of the army which was in his keeping, he has surrendered, without even attempting a final effort, one hundred thousand combatants, twenty thousand wounded, his muskets, his cannon, his flags and the strongest citadel in Europe, Metz, until his coming unsullied by the hand of the foreigner. Such a crime is beyond all the penalties of the law!"

Bazaine was arraigned, October 10, 1873, before a court-martial presided over by the Duc d'Aumale.

feet, accustomed to the elastic turf of the woods or the rough stones of the highroads, slipped on the polished floors and tripped over the rugs, and who would have aroused a laugh by their awkward, frightened reverences, had not the artless embarrassment of so many humble heroes tended rather to bring tears to the eyes. A faithful image of that sublime drama of resistance for the country's sake, which is the duty of all men, great and small alike. Gambetta was called. At that moment the fierce passions born of the inevitable reaction were in full cry upon his heels, and there was some talk of prosecuting him as well. He entered the room, wearing a short overcoat, and, as he passed, the Duc d'Aumale[1] bowed slightly to him; ah! I can still see that bow, — neither too stiff nor too low, not so much a bow as a signal of fellowship between men, who, although differing widely in opinions, are always sure of meeting and understanding each other upon certain questions of honor and patriotism. The Duc d'Aumale did not seem to be offended, and I, in my corner, was overjoyed at my former comrade's correct and dignified man-

[1] Henri Eugène Philippe Louis d'Orléans, fourth son of King Louis Philippe, was born in 1822. He entered the army in 1839, was rapidly promoted and became a lieutenant-general in 1843 after defeating Abd-el-Kader. In 1847 he was appointed Governor-General of Algeria, but resigned in March, 1848, at the abdication of his father, and lived in exile in England many years. He was elected to the National Assembly in 1871, and soon after that date the law excluding the Orléans princes from France was annulled. He became a member of the Académie Française in 1871; he lived, highly respected and honored, until 1898.

ner; but I could not congratulate him, for this reason. When the siege of Paris was first raised and I was still shaking with the siege fever, I had written an article on Gambetta and the national defence in the provinces, — a sincere but very unjust article which, as soon as I was more fully informed, I took great pleasure in expunging from my books. Every Parisian was more or less mad just then, myself like the rest. We had been lied to and tricked so many times. We had read on the walls of mayors' offices so many placards radiant with hope, so many encouraging proclamations, followed the next day by such lamentable collapses; we had been made to make so many absurd marches, musket on shoulder and knapsack on back; we had so often been forced to lie on our stomachs in the ensanguined mud, motionless, useless, foolish, while the shells rained down on our backs! And the spies, and the despatches! "Let us occupy the heights of Montretout, the enemy is falling back!" or: "In day before yesterday's engagement we took two helmets and the barrel of a musket." — And this, while four hundred thousand National Guards were stamping their feet in Paris, asking only to be allowed to go out and fight! Then, when the gates were open, it was a different story; and while people were saying in the provinces: "Paris did n't fight!" they were whispering in Paris: "You were abandoned in a most dastardly way by the provinces." — So that, frantic, covered with shame, powerless to distinguish any-

thing clearly in that fog of hatred and falsehood, suspecting treason, cowardice and imbecility everywhere, we had ended by putting everything, Paris and the provinces, into the same bag. Afterward, when the air cleared, the misunderstanding vanished. The provinces learned of the fruitless heroism displayed by Paris during those five months; and I, a Parisian of the siege, realized for my humble part how worthy of admiration were Gambetta's acts in the provinces and that great National Defence movement in which we had seen at first only Tarasconian bluster and brag.

I met Gambetta once more two years ago. We had had no explanation; he came to me with outstretched hand; it was at Ville-d'Avray, at the country house of Alphonse Lemerre the publisher, where Corot lived so long. A charming house, built for a painter or a poet; a typical eighteenth century structure, with its well-preserved wainscotings, panels over the doors, and a small porch leading down to the garden. We breakfasted in the garden, in the open air, among the flowers and the birds, under the great Virgilian trees which the old master loved to paint, their foliage was of such a soft and lovely green in the cool neighborhood of the ponds. We sat there through the afternoon, recalling the past and exchanging confidences as to our position in Paris — Gambetta, the doctor, and myself, the last three survivors of our table d'hôte. Then came the turn of art and literature. Gambetta, I was

overjoyed to find, read everything, saw everything, was still an expert connoisseur and keen in his literary judgments. Those were five delightful hours that we passed in that green and flowery retreat, between Paris and Versailles, and yet so far removed from all political uproar. Gambetta, it seems, realized its charm; a week after that breakfast under the trees, he purchased a country house at Ville d'Avray.[1]

[1] Léon Gambetta was born at Cahors, April 3, 1838; he was of Jewish extraction. He was admitted to the Paris bar in 1859; devoted himself to politics as well as to his profession, and was already a man of note when he was elected to the Chamber of Deputies in 1869. He acted with the so-called *Irréconciliables* there.

After the proclamation of the republic and formation of the provisional government (September 4, 1870), he became (September 5) Minister of the Interior. As we have seen, he escaped from Paris by balloon in October, having been appointed one of a committee to organize a national defence outside of the capital. He joined his colleagues at Tours and assumed a virtual dictatorship, negotiating a loan with English capitalists, and organizing two armies of the Loire and an army of the North. He was unable, however, to prevent the capitulation of Paris (January 28, 1871), and on February 6 he resigned his office on account of a disagreement with the central government. In the same year he was re-elected to the Chamber of Deputies. He was president of that body from 1879 to 1881, and Prime Minister from November 1881 to January 1, 1882.

He died at Sèvres, December 31, 1882.

HISTORY OF MY BOOKS. — NUMA ROUMESTAN.

When I began this history of my books, wherein some persons may have detected the self-conceit of an author, but which seemed to me the true method, original and distinctive, of writing the memoirs of a man of letters on the margin of his books, I took great pleasure in it, I confess. To-day, my pleasure has sensibly diminished. In the first place the idea has lost its savor, having been adopted by several of my confrères and not the least illustrious of them; and then the constantly increasing vogue of reporting, great and small, the uproar and dust which it raises about the play or the book, in the shape of anecdotal details which a writer who is neither unapproachable in his grandeur nor of a surly temper willingly allows to be extorted from him. So that my auto-historic task has become more difficult; my fine shoes, which I kept in reserve, to be worn only on great occasions, have been trodden down at the heel.

It is very certain, for instance, that what the newspapers said a few months ago apropos of the comedy founded on *Numa Roumestan*, and played at the Odéon, their research and their praises

have left almost nothing of interest for me to say about my book, and have exposed me to the danger of tedious repetition. At all events it has helped me to shatter once and for all the legend, propagated by people who did not themselves believe it, that Gambetta was concealed under Roumestan. As if it were possible! as if, had I attempted to make a Gambetta, anybody could have mistaken the picture, even under the mask of Numa!

The fact is that for years and years, in a little green note-book which I have before me now, full of closely written notes and inexplicable erasures, under the general title of THE SOUTH, I have noted the distinguishing characteristics of my native province, its climate, morals, temperament, accent, the gestures, fits of frenzy and passionate outbursts of our sunlight, and that artless need of lying which is due to an excess of imagination, to an expansive, chattering, good-natured madness, so utterly unlike the cold-blooded, wicked, deliberate lying which we find in the North. I have gathered these notes everywhere, — first of all from myself, whom I always use as a unit of measure, and among my own people and in the memories of my infancy, retained by an extraordinary memory, wherein every sensation is jotted down and stereotyped as soon as it is felt.

Everything is noted in the little green book, from the local ballads, the proverbs and homely sayings in which the instincts of a people stand

confessed, to the cries of the hawkers of fresh water, of the candy and fruit peddlers of our travelling fairs; to the groans extorted by our diseases, which the imagination magnifies and increases by repercussion, — they are almost all nervous diseases, of a rheumatic nature, caused by the constant wind and scorching heat, which consume the marrow of your bones, reduce everything to a state of fusion, like sugar-cane; the crimes of the South, too, are noted in that book, explosions of passion, of drunken violence, drunken without drinking, which confuse and terrify the consciences of the judges who come from a different climate and are completely astray amid these exaggerations, this extravagant testimony which they do not know how to gauge. From that book I drew *Tartarin de Tarascon*, *Numa Roumestan*, and, more recently, *Tartarin on the Alps*. Other books dealing with the South are vaguely outlined there, fanciful sketches, novels, physiological studies: Mirabeau, Marquis de Sade, Raousset-Boulbon, and the *Malade Imaginaire*, whom Molière surely imported from the South. Yes, and even serious history too, if I may believe this ambitious line in a corner of the little book: "*Napoléon, a Southerner — the whole race embodied in him.*"

Mon Dieu, yes. In anticipation of the day when the Novel of Manners should weary me by the confined and conventional limits of its frame, when I should feel the need of enlarging my field and of soaring higher, I had dreamed of that — of

striking the dominant note in Napoléon's supernatural existence, of interpreting that extraordinary man by this simple phrase, The South, of which Taine, with all his learning, never thought. The South, pompous, classical, theatrical, fond of parade and gorgeous costumes, — with a spot or two in the creases — platforms, plumes, banners and trumpets flaring in the wind. The family-loving, tradition-ridden South, inheriting from the Orient loyalty to the clan or the tribe, with the fondness for sweet dishes and that incurable contempt for woman which does not prevent its being passionate and lustful to the point of madness. The cajoling, cunning South, with its reckless eloquence, luminous but colorless — for color is a Northern quality — with its short but terrible outbreaks of wrath, accompanied by much pawing of the ground and grimacing, always more or less simulated, even when they are sincere — now tragic, now comic — typical Mediterranean hurricanes, ten feet of foam on top of calm water. The superstitious, idol-worshipping South, readily forgetful of the gods in the excitement of its salamander-like life, but remembering the prayers of its childhood as soon as disease or misfortune threatens. (Napoléon on his knees praying, at sunset, on the deck of the *Northumberland*, and hearing mass twice a week in the dining-room at St. Helena.) — Lastly, and above all, the most prominent characteristic of the race, imagination, which was never so vast, so frenzied in any man as in him. (Egypt, Russia, the dream of con-

quering the Indies.) Such was the Napoléon whom I would have liked to describe in the principal acts of his public life and the trivial details of his private life, coupling with him for a foil, for a Bompard, imitating and exaggerating his gestures and his display, another Southerner, Murat, of Cahors, the poor and intrepid Murat, who was captured and driven to the wall, having attempted to effect a little return from Elba on his own account.

But let us leave the historical work which I have never written, which I may never have the time to write, for this novel, *Numa Roumestan*, already several years old, in which so many of my countrymen have pretended to recognize themselves, although every character in the story is made up of scraps and fragments. A single one, and, as one would naturally suspect, the most ridiculous and improbable of them all, was taken from life, copied strictly from nature — the chimerical and delirious Bompard, a silent, self-contained Southerner, who proceeds only by explosions and whose conceits surpass all measure, because the visions of that slave of his imagination lack the prolixity in speech or writing which is our safety-valve. This Bompard type is frequently met with among us, but I never made a careful study of any specimen save this one of mine, a good-natured, mild-mannered fellow whom I meet sometimes on the boulevard, and who was not in the slightest degree offended by the publication of Numa, because, with so

great a multitude of novels fermenting in his brain, he has no leisure to read those that other people write.

In the case of the *tambourinaire*, Valmajour, some details are taken from life, for instance, the little tale: "*It came to me at night*," etc. — which I plucked, word by word, from his artless lips. I have described elsewhere[1] the burlesque and pitiable epic of this Draguignanais, whom my dear and great Mistral despatched to me one day with these lines: "I send you Buisson, *tambourinaire;* pilot him," and the endless series of failures which Buisson and I made, in the wake of his rustic flute, in Parisian salons, theatres and concert halls. But the real truth, which I could not tell in his lifetime for fear of injuring him, I may divulge to-day, when death has burst his drum, *pécaïré!* and stuffed with black earth the three holes in his flute. It is this: Buisson was a sham *tambourinaire*, a petty bourgeois from the South, who played a clarinet or cornet in some town band and had learned how to handle the *galoubet* and the *massette* of the old Provençal peasant merry-makings, simply as a diversion. When he arrived in Paris, the poor devil did not know a single Provençal tune, not a serenade or a *farandole*. His repertory consisted of the overture to the *Bronze Horse*, the *Carnival of Venice* and the *Panteïns de Violette*, all brilliantly executed, but decidedly lacking in local accent for a *tambourinaire* vouched for by Mistral. I taught

[1] *Thirty Years in Paris*, Chapter VI., "My Drummer."

him some of Saboly's Christmas ballads — *Saint José m'a dit* and *Ture-lure-lure le coq chante* — also *Les Pêcheurs de Cassis, Les Filles d'Avignon,* and the *Marche des Rois* which Bizet, a few years later, arranged for the orchestra with such marvellous skill, for our *Arlésienne.* Buisson, who was a clever musician enough, noted down the tunes as I hummed them for him, and practised them day and night in his lodgings on Rue Bergère, causing a great excitement among his neighbors, whom the shrill, buzzing music drove to exasperation. When he was thoroughly trained, I launched him on the town, where his odd French, his Ethiopian complexion, his thick black eyebrows, as dense and bushy as his moustaches, together with his exotic repertory, deceived even the Southerners in Paris, who believed him to be a real *tambourinaire;* but that deception did nothing, alas, to insure his success.

This type, as it was presented to me by nature, seemed somewhat complicated, especially as a secondary figure; therefore I simplified it for my book. As for the other characters in the novel, from Roumestan to little Audiberte, I say again that they are taken from several models, — as Montaigne says: "A bundle of sticks of different kinds." So too with Aps in Provence, Numa's native town, which I built with bits of Arles, Nîmes, Saint-Rémy, and Cavaillon, taking from one its arenas, from another its old Italian lanes, as narrow and stony as the dry beds of mountain torrents, its Monday market under the massive

plane-trees of its encircling wall; and from anywhere you please those glaring Provençal roads, bordered with tall reeds, covered with hot, snow-white, crackling dust, over which I travelled when I was twenty years old, owned an old mill, and still wore my long woollen cape on my back. The house in which I suppose Numa to have been born is that in which I lived as a child of eight, on Rue Séguier, opposite the Academy, at Nîmes; the Brothers' school, held in awe by the illustrious Boute-à-Cuire and his ferule pickled in vinegar, is the school of my childhood, one of my very earliest memories. "Early birds," say the Provençaux.

Such are the secret mechanism and the real properties, very simple as you see, of *Numa Roumestan*, which seems to me the least incomplete of my books, the one in which I have most fully expressed my meaning, in which I have displayed the greatest power of invention, in the aristocratic sense of the word. I wrote it in the spring and summer of 1880, on Avenue de l'Observatoire, above the noble chestnuts in the Luxembourg gardens, giant nosegays of pink and white clusters, with the cries of children, the bells of cocoa-dealers, and blasts of military music ascending through the foliage. Its composition left me without fatigue, like everything that comes from an inexhaustible spring. It appeared first in *L'Illustration*, with drawings by Émile Bayard, who lived near me, across the avenue.

Several times a week, in the morning, I went and installed myself in his studio, describing my characters to him as I wrote about them, interpreting and commenting upon the South for the benefit of that fanatical Parisian, who had never got beyond the Gascon who was taken out to execution and Levassor's *chansonnettes* on La Canebière.[1] Did I not play my dear South to you, Bayard, and act it and sing it, and the roar of the crowd at the bull-fights, at the contests between men and demi-men, and the chants of the penitents in the processions on Corpus Christi? And was it really you or one of your pupils whom I took to drink Carthagena wine and eat *barquettes* on Rue Turbigo, at the sign of "Les Produits du Midi?"

Published by Charpentier, with a dear dedication, which has always brought me good fortune and should appear at the beginning of all my books, the novel achieved some success. Zola honored it with a cordial and flattering analysis,

[1] Pierre Levassor, French comic actor, was born at Fontainebleau in 1808; died in 1870. At the age of 12 he was apprenticed to a tradesman in Paris. In 1830 he was travelling salesman for a firm of dealers in silks, and while at Marseille sang at a dinner the patriotic song of *Les Trois Couleurs* with so much fire and expression that some one who heard him insisted on his singing at the Grand-Théâtre. After this, while continuing in business, he tried to obtain employment at different theatres and finally aroused the interest of Déjazet, who brought about his début at the Palais Royal. He was especially successful as a caricaturist and a singer of *chansonnettes*.

La Canebière is a famous street of Marseille leading to the quays from the heart of the city.

reproving me simply for Hortense Le Quesnoy's love for the *tambourinaire,* which he thought unnatural; others after him made the same criticism. And yet, if my book were to be rewritten, I would not omit that mirage-like effect upon that quivering, ardent little heart, it too a victim of the Imagination.

But why consumptive? Why that sentimental and romantic death, that commonplace contrivance to arouse the reader's emotion? Why, because one has no control over his work, because, during its gestation, when the idea is tempting us and haunting us, a thousand things become involved in it, dragged to the surface and gathered *en route,* at the pleasure of the hazards of life, as sea-weed becomes entangled in the meshes of a net. While I was carrying Numa in my brain, I was sent to take the waters at Allevard; and there, in the public rooms, I saw youthful faces, drawn, wrinkled, as if carved with a knife; I heard poor, expressionless, husky voices, hoarse coughs, followed by the same furtive movement with the handkerchief or the glove, looking for the red spot at the corner of the lips. Of those pallid, impersonal ghosts, one took shape in my book, as if in spite of me, with the melancholy curriculum of the watering place and its lovely pastoral surroundings, and it has all remained there.

Numa Baragnon, my compatriot, an ex-minister, or almost that, misled by the similarity of Christian names, was the first to recognize himself in

Roumestan. He protested. The horses had never been taken from his carriage! But a fable, forwarded from Germany, a bungling article by a Dresden editor, soon replaced Baragnon's name with Gambetta's. I cannot understand such utter nonsense; I simply state that Gambetta did not believe it, that he was the first to be amused by it.

As we were dining one evening side by side, at our publisher's table, he asked me if Roumestan's "When I don't talk, I don't think," was a manufactured sentence or one that I had heard somewhere.

"Pure invention, my dear Gambetta."

"Well," he said, "at the council of ministers this morning, one of my colleagues, a Southerner from Montpellier, informed us *that he never thought except while he was speaking.* Evidently the idea is indigenous in your country."

And I heard his loud, cheery laugh for the last time.

All Southerners did not exhibit so much intelligence; I was indebted to Numa Roumestan for many anonymous ferocious letters, almost all postmarked somewhere in the sunny provinces. Even the Félibres became excited. Poems read at their meetings called me renegade and malefactor. "If we should try to serenade him, the instruments would fall from our hands," said old Borelly in a Provençal sonnet. And to think that I relied upon my compatriots to bear witness that I had neither caricatured nor lied! But

no; question them even now, when their wrath has subsided, and the most enthusiastic, the most extreme Southerner of them all will assume a serious expression, as he replies:—

"Oh! it is all very much exaggerated!"

THE FRANCS-TIREURS.

Written during the Siege of Paris.

WE were taking tea the other evening at the *tabellion's*[1] at Nanterre. I take pleasure in using the old word *tabellion*, because it fits in so well with the Pompadour atmosphere of the pretty village where the *rosières*[2] flourish, and of the old-fashioned salon where we sat about a fire of blazing roots, in a huge fireplace decorated with fleurs-de-lis. The master of the house was absent, but his shrewd and kindly face hung in a corner, presiding over the festival and smiling placidly, from an oval frame, upon the strange guests who filled his salon.

A curious company, in sooth, for a notary's evening party. Gold-laced military coats, beards of a week's growth, *képis*, hooded cloaks and high boots; and everywhere, on the piano, on the table, sabres and revolvers tossed carelessly among lace-trimmed cushions, boxes from Spa and embroidered baskets. It was all in strange contrast to that patriarchal abode, where one could still detect a faint odor of Nanterre pasties served

[1] *Tabellion* is the old word for *notaire*, notary.

[2] *Rosière* was the name given to the young girl who was awarded the prize for virtue in a village.

by a lovely notaress to *rosières* in fresh organdie dresses. Alas! there are no longer any *rosières* at Nanterre. They have been replaced by a battalion of *francs-tireurs* from Paris, and the staff of that battalion were our hosts at the tea-party that evening.

The chimney-corner had never seemed so pleasant to me. Outside, the wind blew over the snow and brought to our ears, with the quavering tones of the village clock, the *qui vive* of the sentries, and at intervals the muffled report of a *chassepot.* In the salon there was little conversation. It is hard service, that of the outposts, and you are tired when night comes. And then, that savor of homely comfort which rises from the tea-kettle in clouds of white steam had taken hold of us all and hypnotized us as it were in the notary's capacious arm-chairs.

Suddenly, hurried steps, a slamming of doors, and with gleaming eye, gasping for breath, a telegraph clerk bursts into the room:

"To arms! to arms! The post at Reuil is attacked!"

It was an outpost stationed by the *francs-tireurs*, ten minutes from Nanterre, in the Reuil railway station — for all practical purposes, in Pomerania. In a twinkling the staff was on its feet, girded and armed, and rushing into the street to assemble the companies. No need of trumpets for that. The first company is quartered at the curé's; two hasty kicks on the curé's door.

"To arms! — turn out!"

And with that they hurried away to the town clerk's, where the men of the second had their quarters.

Oh! that dark little village with its pointed steeple covered with snow, those little gardens laid out in quincunxes, where the gates, as you opened them, rang like shop-doors, those strange houses, those wooden stairways up which I ran, feeling my way behind the adjutant's long sword, the hot breath of the chambers in which we gave the alarm, the muskets ringing in the darkness, the men heavy with sleep stumbling to their posts, while four or five stupid peasants, standing at the corner of a street with lanterns, said to one another: "They 're attacking — they 're attacking," — all this produced the effect of a dream on me at the moment, but the impression that my mind retained was clearly defined and ineradicable.

There was the square in front of the mayor's office, all in darkness save the brightly lighted windows of the telegraph office; an outer room where messengers were waiting, lantern in hand; in a corner, the Irish surgeon of the battalion phlegmatically preparing his instrument case; and — a charming picture amid all that hurly-burly — a little cantinière, dressed in blue as at the orphanage, lay sleeping in front of the fire, a *chassepot* between her legs; and lastly, in the rear room, the telegraph office, the camp beds, the great table flooded with light, the two clerks

bending over their machines, and behind them the commandant, looking over their shoulders, following with an anxious eye the long strips of paper which run off the reel and give the latest news from the point of attack from moment to moment. It seems that matters are getting decidedly warm there. Despatches on despatches. The telegraph jingles its electric bells frantically and keeps up its constant clicking like a sewing-machine, as if it would shatter everything.

"Hurry up," says Reuil.

"We are coming," Nanterre replies.

And the companies start off at a gallop.

I agree that war is unquestionably the most depressing and most absurd thing on earth. For instance, I know nothing so lugubrious as a night in January passed in the trenches, shivering like an old wolf; nothing so ridiculous as a great lump of lead falling on your head from a distance of eight kilometres; but to go forth to battle on a fine frosty evening with a warm heart and full stomach, to rush headlong into the darkness, into uncertainty, in the company of gallant fellows whose elbows you can feel all the while, is a delicious pleasure, and as it were a harmless drunkenness, — but a special sort of drunkenness, which makes the drunken sober and causes weak eyes to see distinctly.

For my part, I could see perfectly well that night. And yet there was only a tiny bit of moon, and the snow-covered earth furnished the sky with light — a cold, raw stage-light, extending

to the farthest limit of the fields, against which the slightest details of the landscape, a fragment of wall, a post, a row of willows, stood out clean-cut and black, as if stripped of their shadow. Along the narrow path beside the high-road the *francs-tireurs* sped at the double-quick. We could hear naught but the vibration of the telegraph wires running by the roadside, the panting breath of the men, the whistle to the sentinels, and from time to time a shell from Mont-Valérien passing over our heads like a bird of night, with a terrible flapping of wings. As we advanced, the flashes of firearms gleamed like stars in the darkness, on the level of the ground. Then, on the left, far away in the fields, the flames of a great conflagration soared silently aloft.

"In front of the mill, as skirmishers!" ordered our commanding officer.

"We're going to get a thrashing!" said my neighbor at the left with a faubourg accent.

With one bound the officer was before us.

"Who was it who spoke? You?"

"Yes, captain, I —"

"Good — off with you — back to Nanterre."

"But, captain —"

"No, no — off you go at once. I have no use for you. Ah! so you're afraid of a thrashing! away with you!"

And the poor devil was obliged to leave the ranks; but within five minutes he had stealthily resumed his place, and thenceforth asked for nothing better than a thrashing.

But no. It was written that no one should be thrashed that night. When we reached the barricade the affair had just come to an end. The Prussians, who hoped to surprise our little outpost, finding it on the alert and out of reach of a *coup de main*, had prudently withdrawn, and we were just in time to see them disappear in the distance, as silent and black as cockroaches. However, as a fresh attack was feared, we were ordered to remain at the Reuil station, and we finished the night on guard, musket in hand, some on the roadway and others in the waiting-room.

Poor Reuil station, which I had known so cheerful and bright, the aristocratic station of the boatmen of Bougival, where the pretty Parisians aired their muslin ruffles and their jaunty feathered caps — how could one recognize it in that dismal cave, that blinded, mattressed tomb, redolent of powder and petroleum and damp straw, where we talked in low tones, huddled close together and with no other light than the fire in our pipes and the slender thread of light from the officers' corner? — From hour to hour, by way of diversion, we were sent out in squads to do scout duty along the Seine, or patrol the town of Reuil, whose empty streets and almost deserted houses were illuminated by the cold gleams of a conflagration lighted by the Prussians at Bois-Préau. The night passed thus without incident; and in the morning we were sent back.

When I returned to Nanterre it was still dark.

On the square in front of the *Mairie*, the window of the telegraph office still shone like a lighthouse, and in the quarters of the battalion staff Monsieur le Tabellion was still smiling placidly in the corner opposite his fireplace, where a few hot embers still glowed.

THE GARDEN ON RUE DES ROSIERS.

Written March 22, 1871.

TALK of trusting to the names of streets and their prim, insipid aspect! When, after climbing over barricades and cannon, I came out at last behind the mills of Montmartre and saw that little Rue des Rosiers, with its roadway of loose stones, its gardens, its low houses, I fancied that I had been transported into the provinces, into one of those tranquil faubourgs where the town spreads out and becomes more and more sparsely settled until it comes to an end at last on the edge of the open country. Nothing in front of me save a dovecote and two worthy hooded sisters walking timidly along against the wall. In the background the Solferino tower, a top-heavy, commonplace bastille, a favorite rendezvous for the suburbs on Sunday, which the siege has made almost picturesque by making a ruin of it.

As one proceeds the street widens, shows a few more signs of life. There are rows of tents, cannon, stacks of muskets; and on the left a broad gateway in front of which are some National Guardsmen smoking their pipes. The house sets back and cannot be seen from the street. After some parleying the sentry allows us to enter. It

is a house of two floors, with courtyard in front and garden behind, and nothing tragic in its outward aspect. It belongs to M. Scribe's heirs.

The ground-floor rooms, light and airy and hung with flowered wall-papers, open on the hall which runs from the little paved courtyard to the garden. It was there that the Central Committee held its meetings. It was there that the two generals were taken on the afternoon of the eighteenth, and that they lived through the agony of their last hour, while the mob howled in the garden and the deserters glued their hideous faces to the windows, scenting blood like wolves; and it was there that the two corpses were brought and exposed for two days.

I descend, with a weight upon my heart, the three steps which lead to the garden; a typical faubourg garden, where each tenant has his little square of gooseberries and clematis, separated from one another by green trellises with gates which ring a bell. The wrath of a mob has passed that way. The trellises are torn down, the borders destroyed. Nothing is left standing except a quincunx of lindens, a score of newly trimmed trees, rearing aloft their rigid, gray branches, like a vulture's claws. An iron fence runs at the rear in guise of wall, affording a distant glimpse of the valley, vast and melancholy, where columns of smoke rise from tall factory chimneys.

Objects, like persons, cool down in time. Here am I on the very scene of the drama and yet I

find difficulty in grasping the reality of it. The weather is soft, the sky very bright. These Montmartre troopers who surround me seem like good fellows. They are singing and playing games. The officers are walking back and forth, laughing together. Only a high wall, riddled with bullets and all ground to powder at the top, rises like a witness and describes the crime to me. It was against this wall that they were shot.

It seems that at the last moment General Lecomte, who had been unwavering in his resolution up to that time, felt that his courage was oozing away. He tried to struggle, to fly, ran a few steps in the garden, and then, being instantly recaptured, roughly handled and dragged back to his place, fell upon his knees and talked about his children.

"I have five," he sobbed.

The father's heart had burst the soldier's tunic. There were fathers in that frantic mob also; a few moved voices answered his appeal; but the implacable deserters would listen to nothing:

"If we don't shoot him to-day, he 'll order us shot to-morrow."

They forced him against the wall. The next moment a sergeant of the line approached him: —

"General," he said, "if you will promise us — "

But, suddenly changing his mind, he stepped back and discharged his *chassepot* at his breast. The others had only to finish him.

Clément Thomas, on the other hand, did not flinch for one second. Standing against the same

wall with Lecomte, within two steps of his body, he showed a bold front to death to the very end and talked in a most noble strain. When the muskets were aimed at him, he instinctively put his left arm before his face, and the old republican died in the attitude of Cæsar. On the spot where they fell, against that wall, as cold and bare as the walls of a shooting-gallery, a few peach-trees still wave their branches, and among the highest of them an early snow-white blossom is opening, unharmed by the bullets, unblackened by the powder.

On leaving Rue des Rosiers, by the silent roads which follow a zigzag course up the hillside covered with gardens and with terraces, I reach the old cemetery of Montmartre, which was opened several days since for the burial of the two generals. It is a bare, treeless village cemetery, containing nothing but graves. Like those grasping peasants, who, while ploughing their fields, encroach a little every day upon the cross-road, death has invaded everything, even the paths. The graves are piled upon one another. Everything is full to overflowing. One does not know where to put his feet.

I know of nothing so sad as these old cemeteries. You feel that there are so many people there, and yet you see nobody. Those who are there seem to be dead twice over.

"What are you looking for?" I am asked by a sort of gardener-gravedigger, in the cap of a National Guard, who is patching a piece of turf.

My reply surprises him. He hesitates a moment, looks about him, then says, lowering his voice:

"Yonder, beside the *capote.*"

What he calls a *capote* is a sort of pavilion of painted iron sheltering some faded bits of glassware and some old filigree flowers. Beside it is a large flat gravestone, bearing marks of having recently been moved. No inclosure, no inscription. Nothing but two bunches of violets, wrapped in white paper, with a stone placed on their stems so that the high winds that blow on the hill may not blow them away. There they lie side by side. Those two soldiers have been billeted in that temporary tomb, pending the time when they can be restored to their families.[1]

[1] The Commune of Paris, an organized band of socialists, outlaws, and proletaires revolted against the new republican government on March 18, 1871, just as the last of the German army of occupation were evacuating Paris. They were supported by a large part of the National Guards, who had been allowed to retain their arms.

On the night of the 17th and 18th, General Lecomte was ordered by the government to take possession of the cannon which the National Guard had collected on the hill of Montmartre. When he reached the hill, he waited for the horses which were to draw the guns away, but they did not come. It was reported that the Assembly intended to disarm Paris in order to proclaim the monarchy; an angry and constantly increasing mob surrounded Lecomte and his soldiers, who threw up their muskets and joined the National Guard. Thereupon Lecomte was seized and taken to the house on Rue des Rosiers, where the Central Committee was sitting; and there a handful of men, exasperated to frenzy, dragged him to the end of the garden and shot him down.

General Clément Thomas had been made commander-in-chief of the 1st army corps — 266 battalions of the National Guard —

on November 4, 1870. In February, 1871, he retired to private life; but, on the outbreak of the insurrection, March 18, 1871, hearing that a former comrade-in-arms had been arrested by the insurgents, he went out in citizen's dress, intending to go to Montmartre. He was recognized by a member of the National Guard, seized as a traitor and hurried before the Central Committee, where he was instantly condemned without even the pretence of a trial; whereupon a party of National Guardsmen dragged him into the garden, placed him against a wall beside General Lecomte, and shot him almost at the muzzles of their guns.

The Communists soon became absolute masters of Paris, and maintained their hold upon the city about two months. On May 22 the army of the government, under MacMahon, entered Paris by several gates, but the insurgents threw up barricades and held out for five days, during which time they committed many acts of atrocious vandalism and cruelty, destroying much property and many lives. The insurrection was definitely suppressed on May 27.

AN ESCAPE.

Written during the Commune.

On one of the last days of March, five or six of us were at table in front of the Café Riche, watching the battalions of the Commune march past. There had been no fighting as yet, but there had been murder on Rue des Rosiers, on Place Vendôme and at the prefecture of police. The farce was turning to tragedy, and the boulevards no longer laughed.

Crowding about the red flag, with knapsacks slung saltire-wise, the Communards marched with firm step, filling the roadway from curb to curb; and as one gazed upon that whole people under arms, so far from the working quarters, those cartridge-boxes strapped about woollen blouses, those toilworn hands clutching the butts of their muskets, one could but think of the empty workshops, the abandoned factories. That march past in itself resembled a threat. We all understood it, and the same melancholy, ill-defined presentiments oppressed our hearts.

At that moment a great, lazy, bloated dandy, well known from Tortoni's to the Madeleine, approached our table. He was one of the most melancholy specimens of the fop of the Empire,

albeit a secondhand fop, who had never done anything else than pick up on the boulevard all the original conceits of the upper circle of dandydom, wearing low collars like Lutteroth, women's *peignoirs* like Mouchy, bracelets like Narishkine, and keeping Grammont-Caderousse's card on his mantel for five years; and with all the rest, as spotted as an old mullet and affecting the languid speech of the Directory: "*Pa'ole d'honneu' — Bonjou' ma'ame;*" all the mud of Tattersall's on his boots, and just enough learning to sign his name on the mirrors of the Café Anglais, which did not prevent him from giving out that he was very strong in theology, and from carrying from cabaret to cabaret that contemptuous, bored, disillusioned air, which was the height of fashion in those days.

During the siege my fine fellow had succeeded in being taken on to some staff or other — an opportunity to obtain a shelter for his saddle-horses, — and from time to time his loose-jointed shadow could be seen stalking about the neighborhood of Place Vendôme with all the fine gentlemen with gilt breastplates: afterward I lost sight of him. To meet him suddenly there in the midst of the *émeute*, still the same as ever in that Paris turned topsy-turvy, produced upon me the depressing and at the same time comical effect of an old *shapka* of the first Empire making his fifth of May pilgrimage on our modern boulevards.[1] So we had not yet done with that race of swells!

[1] Napoleon I. died May 5, 1821.

There were still some of them left! Indeed, I believe that, if I had been allowed to choose, I would have preferred those wild devils of Communards who marched up to the fortifications with a crust of bread in their canvas wallets. They at least had something in their heads, a vague, insane ideal which hovered about them and assumed a gory hue in the folds of that red rag for which they were destined to die. But he, that empty bell, that brain of dough —

On this day our man was more languid, more indolent, more nauseating with *chic* than ever. He had a little watering place hat with blue ribbons, stiff moustaches, hair trimmed *à la Russe*, a too short jacket that left everything in the air, and, to complete his outfit, was leading at the end of a silk cord a little Havana terrier, no larger than a rat, lost in his long hair, and with the same bored, tired air as his master. Thus equipped, he planted himself languidly in front of our table, watched the Communards march past, indulged in some idiotic remark or other, and then, with an inimitable swagger and nonchalance, informed us that those people were really beginning to annoy him, and that he was going at once "to offer his sword to the admiral!" It was said; the murder was out. Neither Lasouche nor Priston ever invented anything more comical. Thereupon he executed a half-turn and walked languidly away with his ill-favored little dog.

I do not know whether he did in fact offer his sword to the admiral; but, in any event, M.

Saisset used it to no good purpose, for a week later the flag of the Commune was flying over all the municipal offices, the drawbridges were raised, the battle was raging on all sides, and from hour to hour we saw the sidewalks grow wider and the streets become deserted. Every-one escaped as best he could, in market-gardeners' wagons, in the luggage vans from the embassies. There were some who disguised themselves as sailors, as firemen, as navvies. The most roman-tic scaled the fortifications at night with rope-ladders. The boldest assembled in bands of thirty or more to carry a gate by assault; others, more practical, quietly purchased their safety with a hundred-sou piece. Many joined funeral processions and followed them into the suburbs, wandering across the fields with umbrellas and silk hats, black from head to foot, like bailiffs in the provinces. Once outside the walls all these Parisians looked at one another and laughed, breathed freely, capered about and made faces at Paris; but homesickness for the asphalt speedily seized upon them, and this emigration, which began like playing truant, soon became as irk-some and depressing as exile.

With my mind engrossed by the thought of escape, I was walking along Rue de Rivoli one morning in a pelting rain, when I was brought to a halt by a familiar face. At that hour there was nobody in the street save the street-sweepers, who swept the mud into little glistening piles along the sidewalks, and no vehicles save the

lines of carts which were filled one after another by mud-begrimed individuals. Horror of horrors! under the soiled blouse of one of those men I recognized my dandy, and well disguised he was! — a shapeless hat, a handkerchief twisted around his neck, the ample trousers which the workingmen of Paris call — pardon the word — a *salopette;* all worn and ragged and smeared with a layer of mud, which the poor devil did not deem thick enough, for I surprised him stamping in the puddles and splashing himself to the hair. Indeed it was that strange performance which had called my attention to him.

"Good-morning, viscount," I said in an undertone as I passed.

The viscount turned pale under his filth, and looked about him in alarm; then, seeing that everybody was busily at work, he recovered a little self-assurance and told me that he had not chosen to put his sword — his sword again! — at the service of the Commune, and that his butler's brother, who had a contract for cleaning the streets at Montreuil, had fortunately provided him with that means of leaving Paris. He had no time to say more. The carts were full, the procession was moving. My man had just time to run to his team, fall into line, crack the whip, and *dia! hue!* he was off. The adventure interested me. In order to see the end of it, I followed the carts at a distance as far as the Vincennes gate.

Each man walked beside his horses, whip in

hand, guiding the team with a leather thong. To make the viscount's task easier, they had placed him last of all; and it was a pitiful sight to see the poor devil trying hard to do as the others did, imitating their voices, their gait, that bent, crouching, sleepy gait of men lulled into drowsiness by the rumble of the wheels as they keep step with heavily laden beasts. Sometimes they halted to allow battalions coming down from the fortifications to pass. At such times he would seem to be very much engrossed by his duties, would swear and crack his whip and play the carter as well as possible; then at intervals the dandy would crop out once more. The grimy creature ogled the women. In front of a cartridge-factory on Rue de Charonne, he stopped a moment to stare at some working-girls who were going in. The strange aspect of the great faubourg, the swarm of people in the streets seemed to surprise him too. That was evident from the terrified glances which he cast to right and left, as if he had just arrived in some strange land.

And yet, viscount, you have driven through those long streets leading to Vincennes many a time on fine Sundays in the spring and autumn, returning from the races, with the green card in your hat, the leather bag slung over your shoulder, snapping your whip-lash in the air. But then you were perched so high on your phaeton, there was such a wilderness of flowers, ribbons, curls and gauze veils about you, all those wheels that grazed one another enveloped you in a cloud

of such luminous, aristocratic dust, that you did not see the dark windows thrown open as you drew nigh, the interiors of working men's homes where they and their families were sitting down to supper just at that hour; and when you had passed, when that long trail of luxury, of light silk dresses, of gleaming axles, of gaudy head-gear disappeared in the direction of Paris, carrying with it its golden atmosphere, you did not see how much darker the faubourg became, how much more bitter the bread, how much heavier the implement of toil, nor what a store of wrath and hatred you left behind you there.

A volley of oaths and of strokes of a whip cut short my soliloquy. We were nearing the Vincennes gate. The drawbridge was lowered, and in the half-light, amid the torrents of rain, the multitude of carts crowded together and National Guards inspecting permits, I spied my poor viscount struggling with his three great horses, trying to make them turn. The poor devil had lost his place in the line. He swore, he pulled on his strap, great drops of sweat rolled down his cheeks. His manner was no longer lackadaisical, I promise you. The Communards were already beginning to notice him. A circle had formed about him and people were laughing at him; the situation was becoming critical. Luckily the head carter came to his assistance, snatched the strap out of his hands, pushed him roughly aside, and then, with a mighty crack of the whip, started the team across the bridge at a gallop, with the

viscount splashing through the mud behind. Having passed through the gate, he resumed his place, and the procession was lost to my sight in the barren tract outside the fortifications.

It was truly a pitiable exit. I watched it from the top of a bank; those fields strewn with old plaster in which the wheels sank deep, that sparse and slimy grass, those men bent double by the downpour, that line of carts moving heavily along like hearses. One would have said that it was a shameful funeral, the whole Paris of the Lower Empire drowning in its filth.[1]

[1] The *Bas-Empire* means, strictly speaking, the Roman Empire in its later period of decadence; the term is here applied to the Second Empire in France, under Louis Napoléon.

SUMMER PALACES

Written during the Commune.

AFTER the capture of Pekin and the pillage of the Summer Palace by the French troops, when General Cousin-Montauban came to Paris to be baptized Comte de Palikao, he distributed in Parisian society, by way of baptismal sweetmeats, the marvellous treasures of jade and red lacquer with which his trunks were laden, and throughout one whole season there was a grand exhibition of Chinese curiosities at the Tuileries and in some favored salons.

People went to them as to a sale of some cocotte's belongings, or to one of Abbé Bauer's conferences. I can still see, in the half-light of the partly deserted rooms where these treasures were displayed, little Frou-Frous with huge chignons fluttering about and elbowing one another among the shades of blue silk with silver flowers, the gauze lanterns decorated with enamel tufts and bells, the folding-screens of transparent horn, the hand-screens of cloth, with sentences painted on them, and all that medley of priceless trifles, so well adapted to the needs of sedentary women with tiny feet. People sat on porcelain chairs, they handled lacquer caskets and work-tables

with designs inlaid in gold; they tried on, in sport, white silk shawls and necklaces of Tartary pearls; and there were little shrieks of surprise, stifled laughter, a bamboo screen overturned with the train of a dress, and upon every lip the magic words Summer Palace, which ran about like the current caused by a fan, opening to the imagination vague visions of enchanted avenues of white ivory and many-hued jasper.

This year, society in Berlin, Munich and Stuttgart has had exhibitions of the same sort. For several months past the buxom matrons beyond the Rhine have been giving vent to admiring *Mein Gotts!* before services of Sèvres porcelain, Louis XVI. clocks, salons in white and gold, Chantilly laces, chests of orangewood and myrtle and silver, which countless Palikaos of King William's army have collected in the outskirts of Paris during the pillage of our summer palaces.

For they were not content to pillage a single one. Saint-Cloud, Meudon — those gardens of the Celestial Empire — were not enough for them. Our conquerors entered everywhere; they ransacked, plundered everything, from the great historic châteaux, which still retain a faint suggestion of France in their fresh green lawns and their century-old trees, to the humblest of our little white cottages; and now, all along the Seine, from bank to bank, our summer palaces, open to all the winds that blow, roofless and windowless, display their bare walls and their dismantled terraces.

The devastation is especially lamentable in the neighborhood of Montgeron, Draveil and Villeneuve-Saint-Georges. His Royal Highness the Prince of Saxony worked that region with his horde, and it seems that His Highness did things well. In the German army he is known by no other name than "the robber." Indeed, the Prince of Saxony strikes me as being a potentate without illusions, a gentleman of a practical turn of mind, who fully realizes that some day or other the ogre of Berlin will make but one mouthful of all the little Hop-o'-my-Thumbs of Southern Germany, and has taken his precautions accordingly. Now, whatever may happen, monseigneur is beyond the reach of want. When the day comes that he is paid off and dismissed, he can choose between opening a French publishing house at Leipzig fair, making clocks at Nuremberg or pianos at Munich, and becoming a pawnbroker at Frankfort-on-the-Main. Our summer palaces have supplied him with funds, and that is why he conducted his pillaging operations with such energy.

But I am less able to understand why His Highness was so bent upon depopulating our pheasant-preserves and rabbit-warrens that he left not a feather or a tuft of hair in our woods.

Poor forest of Sénart, so peaceful, so well kept, so proud of its little ponds stocked with red fishes, and its green-coated keepers! How comfortable they were in their home, all those hares and pheasants of the Crown! What a pleasant monk-

ish life they led! What perfect security! Sometimes, in the silence of a summer afternoon, you would hear the ferns rustling, and a whole battalion of young pheasants would pass, fluttering among your legs, while over yonder, at the end of a shaded alley, two or three hares strolled tranquilly to and fro, like abbés in a seminary garden. To think of shooting such innocent creatures!

Why, even the very poachers shrank from doing it, and on the opening day of the hunting season, when M. Rouher or the Marquis de la Valette arrived with their guests, the head keeper — I had almost said the stage manager — pointed out beforehand a few superannuated hen pheasants and a few crested old hares, who went to the *rond-point* of the Great Oak to wait for the gentlemen, and fell beneath their volleys with a good grace, crying "Vive l'Empereur!" That is all the game that was killed during the year.

Imagine the dazed bewilderment of the poor beasts when two or three hundred beaters in dirty caps came rushing over their carpets of pink heather one morning, destroying nests, overturning fences, shouting to one another from clearing to clearing in a barbarous tongue, and when, in the depths of those mysterious thickets where Madame de Pompadour used to watch for Louis XV. to pass, they saw the gleam of the sabretasches and pointed helmets of the Saxon staff! In vain did the hares try to fly, in vain did the frightened rabbits raise their trembling little

paws, crying "Long live His Royal Highness the Prince of Saxony!" The hardhearted Saxon would not listen to them, and the massacre went on for several days in succession. Now, it is all over; Great Sénart and Little Sénart are deserted. Nothing is left save jays and squirrels, which the faithful vassals of King William dared not touch, because the jays are black and white, the colors of Prussia, and because the squirrels' fur is of that light chestnut so dear to Herr von Bismarck.

I learned these details from Père La Loué, a perfect type of the forest-keeper of Seine-et-Oise, with his drawling accent, his sly air, his little eyes blinking in an earth-colored face. The good man is so jealous of his keeper's duties, he invokes so often, and in every connection, the five cabalistic letters that glitter on his copper badge, that the country people have nicknamed him Père La Loi[1] — La Loué in the patois of Seine-et-Oise. When we came into Paris in the month of September, to shut ourselves up for the siege, old La Loué buried his furniture and his clothes, sent his family away, and remained alone to await the Prussians.

"I know my forest," he said, waving his carbine, "let them come and find me!"

Thereupon we parted. I was not free from anxiety concerning him. Often, during that hard winter, I imagined that poor man all alone in the forest, reduced to living on roots, with no protection against the cold beyond his cotton blouse,

[1] Father Law.

with his badge of office upon it. It made my flesh creep simply to think of it.

Yesterday morning he appeared at my house, fresh, jaunty, stouter than of old, with a brand-new overcoat, and the famous badge still gleaming like a barber's basin on his breast. What had he been doing all these weeks? I dared not ask him, but he did not look as if he had suffered terribly. Excellent Père La Loué! He knew his forest so well! Perhaps he acted as guide to the Prince of Saxony.

It may be that that is an unjust idea of mine; but I know my peasants, and I know of what they are capable. The intrepid painter Eugène Leroux, who was wounded in one of our first sorties and was nursed for some time in a vine-dresser's family in Beauce, told us an anecdote the other day which faithfully depicts the whole race. The people with whom he was staying could not understand why he had fought when he was not obliged to.

"Are you an old soldier?" they asked him again and again.

"Not at all. I make pictures, I have never done anything else."

"Very well! then, when they made you sign a paper agreeing to go to war — "

"But no one made me sign anything."

"What! why, in that case, when you went out to fight, you must" — and here they winked at one another — "you must have had a little too much to drink!"

There you have the French peasant! In the outskirts of Paris he is still worse. The few brave fellows there were in the suburbs came behind the fortifications to eat dog's food with us; but the rest of them I distrust. They remained behind to show the Prussians the way to our wine-cellars and to glean after the pillagers of our poor summer palaces.

My own palace was such a modest affair, so completely buried in the acacias, that it may perhaps have escaped destruction; but I shall not go to see until the Prussians have gone, and have been gone a long while.[1] I prefer to give the countryside time to be purified. When I think that all our lovely little nooks, those islets of reeds and slender willows, where we used to go in the evening, and lie on the water's edge to listen to the tree-frogs; the moss-carpeted paths where the thought, as one walked, flitted along the hedges and clung to every branch; the great grassy clearings where one could sleep so comfortably at the foot of the great oaks, with the bees flying hither and thither over one's head, making as it were a dome of music — when I think that all these have been theirs, that they have sat everywhere; then that lovely countryside seems to me a melancholy, faded spot. That contamination horrifies me even more than the pillage. I fear lest I may find that I no longer love my nest.

Ah! if only the Parisians, at the time of the

[1] See Preface to *Robert Helmont.*

siege, could have taken that lovely suburban countryside within the city gates! if only we could have rolled up the greenswards, the grass-grown roads empurpled by the setting sun, have taken away the ponds that gleam like hand-mirrors under the trees, have wound our little brooks around a spool like silver threads, and locked them all up in the wardrobe! what a delight it would be for us now to replace the greensward and the underbrush, and to recreate an Île de France which the Prussians never saw!

THE SHIPWRECK.

Champrosay, May 25, 1871.

> And this is the charming garden
> Sweet with the myrtle and the rose.

ALAS! this year the garden is still full of roses, but the house is full of Prussians. I have carried my table to the foot of the garden, and that is where I am writing, in the graceful shadow and amid the perfume of a tall genesta bush, filled with the humming of bees, which does not obstruct my view of the Pomeranian stockings hanging out to dry on my poor gray blinds.

To be sure I had sworn not to come here until long after *they* had gone; but it was absolutely necessary to evade the horrible Cluseret conscription, and I had no other place of refuge. And so it is that I, in common with many other Parisians, have been spared none of the miseries of this sad time: the agony of the siege, civil war, emigration, and, to cap the climax, foreign occupation. It is of no use to be philosophical, to pretend to take one's stand above and outside of the affairs of life, one cannot avoid being strangely impressed when — after travelling six hours over these lovely French roads, all white with the dust caused by Prussian battalions — one arrives

at his own door and finds there, under the hanging clusters of ebony trees and acacias, a German sign in Gothic characters:

"5th COMPANY,
BOEHM,
SERGEANT-MAJOR,
AND THREE MEN."

This M. Boehm is a tall, taciturn, eccentric fellow, who keeps the shutters of his bedroom closed all the time, and sleeps and eats without a light. And with it all a too free-and-easy manner, a cigar always between his teeth, and so exacting! His Lordship must have a room for himself, one for his secretary, one for his servant. We are forbidden to enter by this door, to go out by that one. He actually tried to prevent our going into the garden! At last the mayor appeared, the *Hauptmann* took a hand, and here we are at home. It is not very cheerful at home this year. Do what you will, the proximity of these fellows embarrasses you, wounds you. The straw that they chop all about you, on your premises, is mixed with what you eat, withers the trees, blurs the page of your book, gets into your eyes, makes you long to weep. Even the child, although he does not understand what the trouble is, has the same strange feeling of oppression. He plays quietly in a corner of the garden, restrains his laughter, sings in an undertone, and in the morning, instead of his usual uproarious awakenings, overflowing with life, he lies very

quiet, with his eyes wide open behind his bed-curtains, and asks very softly from time to time:

"Can I wake up now?"

If only we had nothing but the sorrows of the occupation to ruin our springtime! but the hardest, the most cruel thing of all is the roaring of cannon and musketry which reaches us whenever the wind blows from Paris, making the whole horizon tremble, rending pitilessly the pink morning haze, disturbing with storms these lovely, clear May nights, these nights of nightingales and crickets.

Last night it was peculiarly terrible. The reports came in rapid succession, fierce, desperate, accompanied by an incessant flashing. I had opened my window toward the Seine, and I listened with a heavy heart to those muffled sounds, borne to my ears over the deserted river and the silent countryside. At times it seemed to me as if there were a great ship in distress on the horizon, firing her alarm guns frantically, and I remembered that, ten years ago, on just such a night, I stood on the terrace of a hotel at Bastia, listening to a melancholy cannonade brought to us by the sea, like a despairing shriek of agony and wrath. It continued all night; and in the morning they found on the beach, amid a confused mass of shattered masts and torn sails, some shoes with light bows, a wooden sword such as Harlequin wears, and quantities of rags spangled with gold and bedecked with ribbons, all drenched with salt water and smeared with blood and filth. It was, as I learned afterward,

all that remained from the wreck of the *Louise*, a large packet bound from Leghorn to Bastia with a troupe of Italian pantomimists on board.

To him who knows what the battle with the sea at night really is, the fruitless, groping struggle against an irresistible force; to him who pictures truly to himself the last moments of a ship, the ascending water, the lingering death, without grandeur, death soaked and bedraggled; to him who is familiar with the paroxysms of frenzy, the insane hopes followed by brutish prostration, the drunken agony, the delirium, the hands blindly beating the air, the clenched fingers clinging to the intangible, that Harlequin's sabre, amid all that blood-stained debris, had a comical yet terrifying significance. One could imagine the storm striking the ship like a thunder-clap during a performance on board, the improvised theatre invaded by the sea, the orchestra flooded, music-stands, violins, double-basses floating about pell-mell; Columbine tossing her bare arms over her head, running from one end of the stage to the other, dead with fear, and still pink under her paint; Pierrot, whose cheeks terror could not blanch, clinging to a post, watching the water rise, and with the ghastly vertigo already visible in his great eyes, enlarged with paint for the farce; Isabella, entangled in her stage skirts, with her head-dress of flowers, weeping bitterly, yet laughable by reason of her very charms, rolling about the deck like a package, clutching at all the benches and stammering childish prayers;

Scaramouche, with a keg of water between his legs, laughing a dazed laugh and singing at the top of his voice; while Harlequin, stricken with madness, continues to play his part with perfect gravity, cuts his capers, and brandishes his sword, and old Cassandra, swept away by the sea, goes down, down between two waves, with her dress of nut-brown velvet, and her toothless mouth wide open.

As I say, that shipwreck of strolling players, that funereal masquerade, that performance *in extremis*, all those convulsive gestures, those grimaces passed before me last night with every roar of the cannon. I felt that the Commune, on the point of foundering, was firing its alarm guns. Moment by moment I could see the sea rising, the breach widening, while the men at the Hôtel de Ville, clinging to their stools, still issued decrees upon decrees amid the uproar of the wind and waves; then, one last shock and the great ship going down with its red flags, its gold scarfs, its delegates in judges' gowns, and generals' uniforms, its battalions of gaitered and beplumed amazons, its circus troops, buried in Spanish képis or Garibaldian caps, its Polish lancers, its fantastic Turcos, drunken, raving, singing and dancing madly. All these went overboard in a confused mass, and naught remained of all that tumult, madness, crime, braggadocio, yes, and heroism, save a red scarf, a képi with eight stripes and a jacket with gold-lace frogs, found one morning on the shore, all besmeared with slime and blood.

HISTORY OF MY BOOKS. — KINGS IN EXILE.

Of all my books this is unquestionably the one which I found most difficulty in standing on its feet, the one which I carried longest in my head in the stage of title and vague outline, as it appeared to me one October evening on Place du Carrousel, in the tragic rent in the Parisian sky caused by the fall of the Tuileries.

Dethroned princes exiling themselves in Paris after their downfall, taking up their quarters on Rue de Rivoli, and when they woke in the morning and raised the shades at their windows, discovering those ruins — such was the first vision of *Kings in Exile.* Not so much a romance as an historical study, for romance is the history of men and history the romance of kings. Not an historical study as the term is generally understood among us, a dry, dusty, meddling compilation, one of those bulky tomes dear to the Institute, which it crowns every year without opening them, and upon which might be written *for external use*, as on the blue glass bottle of the pharmacy; but a book of modern history, intensely alive, exciting, founded upon a terribly earnest and arduous overhauling of documents which had

to be torn from the very entrails of life, instead of being disinterred from the dusty recesses of archives.

To my eyes the difficulty of the work consisted principally in this search for models, for accurate information, in the tedium of all the interviewing made necessary by the novelty of a subject so far removed from me and my surroundings, from my habits of life and mind. As a young man I had often brushed against the ghastly black wig of the Duke of Brunswick[1] traversing the corridors of night restaurants in the hot breath of gas, patchouli and spiced meats; at Bignon's, on the couch at the rear, Citron-le-Taciturne had appeared to me one evening, eating a slice of *foie gras* opposite a girl from the street; and again, at the conclusion of a Sunday session at the Conservatoire, the tall, haughty figure of the blind King of Hanover, feeling his way between the

[1] Charles Frederick Augustus William, born in 1804, son of Duke Frederick William, who was killed at Quatre-Bras, on the eve of Waterloo, and nephew of Caroline of Brunswick, the unhappy consort of George IV. of England. In 1807 the peace of Tilsit deprived his father of his dukedom and the boy was taken to Sweden by his mother; at her death he wandered about from city to city, receiving little education and leading a wild life.

At his father's death he assumed the title of duke, but was not allowed to exercise any control of the government until 1823. He travelled until 1827, when he returned to Brunswick and made himself so odious by his arbitrary rule that the States appealed to the German diet. The duke refused to submit his dispute with his subjects to arbitration, and was obliged to flee in 1830 on the arrival of a body of federal troops. After visiting Paris and Brussels he sought to regain his power, thereby arousing a revolution which led to his being deposed and succeeded by his

pillars of the peristyle, on the arm of the pathetic Princess Frederika, who told him when he must bow.[1] My notions were all very vague, I had no definite knowledge as to the private life of these refugee princes, as to the way in which they bore their disgrace, as to the effect that exile and the air of Paris had produced upon them, and as to the amount of gold lace that still remained on their court robes, and of court ceremonial in their hired lodgings.

It required much time and innumerable jour-

brother William, the last duke. Duke Charles spent the rest of his life in exile, in Paris and London, trying to recover his dukedom. He died in 1873.

[1] George V. of Hanover was the second son of Ernest Augustus, Duke of Cumberland, fifth son of George III., and consequently first cousin to Queen Victoria, who was three days older than he. His father became King of Hanover on the death of his brother William IV. of England, and George V. succeeded to the title on his father's death in 1851. He was born May 27, 1819. The first Duke of Cumberland, who was cordially hated in England, showed himself in Hanover a harsh and narrow-minded despot. The son inherited his father's extravagant ideas of the royal prerogative. He finally succeeded, in 1857, in surrounding himself with ministers after his own heart, but his attempts to impose 17th century Catholicism aroused discontent. In 1866 Hanover voted with Austria in regard to the question of mobilizing the federal army; and as a result was ordered by Prussia to preserve an unarmed neutrality in the war which ensued between Prussia and Austria. The refusal of Hanover to comply with this order furnished Prussia with the long-desired pretext to seize the ancient kingdom; it was annexed to Prussia and the monarchy was abolished. The king, who was quite blind but an excellent musician, lived until 1878.

His daughter Frederika was born in 1848 and remained unmarried until after her father's death, when she married (in 1880) Freiherr von Pawel-Rammingen.

neys to obtain this information; I had to press into the service all my acquaintances in old Paris, from top to bottom of the social ladder, from the upholsterer who furnished the royal mansion on Rue de Presbourg to the great nobleman and diplomatist who was invited to attend as a witness at Queen Isabella's abdication;[1] I had to catch social gossip on the wing, to look through police minutes and tradesmen's bills; then, when I had gone to the bottom of all those royal existences, had discovered instances of proud destitution, of heroic devotion, side by side with manias, infirmities, tarnished honor and seared consciences, I laid aside my investigation, I retained only typical details borrowed here and there, bits of scenery, of manners, and the general atmosphere in which the action of my drama was to take place.

However, by virtue of a weakness which I have already avowed, that craving for reality which besets me and compels me always to leave a certificate of genuineness at the foot of my most carefully disguised inventions, after originally installing my royal household on Rue de la Pompe in the small mansion of the Duke of Madrid, whom Christian of Illyria resembles in more ways

[1] Isabella, Queen of Spain from 1833 to 1868, when she was driven out of the country. In 1870, in Paris, she signed a formal abdication in favor of her son Alfonso XII., who succeeded in 1875, the brief reign of King Amadeus and the short-lived Republic having intervened. She is the grandmother of the present king Alfonso XIII. and the mother-in-law of the Queen-Regent, Maria-Christina. Isabella is still living in Paris.

than one, I transplanted it to Rue Herbillon, within a few steps of the great faubourg and its itinerant fairs, where I proposed to have Méraut show Frederika the common people at close quarters and teach her to fear them no more. As the King and Queen of Naples [1] lived for a long time on Rue Herbillon, it was commonly said that they were the royal personages whom I intended to depict; but I solemnly declare that it is untrue, and that I have simply displayed a purely imaginary royal couple on a real stage.

Méraut, however, is taken from life, he is a real personage, to his waist at all events, and the way in which I was led to put him into my book deserves to be told. Being firmly determined not to write a mere pamphlet but to make one of my characters plead the cause of legitimacy and divine right, I tried to kindle my own enthusiasm in their behalf, to resuscitate the convictions of my youth, by reading Bonald, Joseph de Maistre, Blanc Saint-Bonnet, those whom d'Aurevilly calls the "prophets of the past." One day, in an old copy of the *Restauration Française*, [2] which

[1] Presumably Francis II., who succeeded his father Ferdinand (Bomba) as King of the Two Sicilies in 1859. In 1860 his territory was overrun by Garibaldi's troops and he took refuge in Gaeta, whence he was finally forced to retire in February 1861. His protest against the assumption of the title of King of Italy by Victor Emmanuel was dated at Rome in April, 1861. After devoting his energies for some time to fomenting brigandage and insurrection in his former realm, he at last bowed to the inevitable and retired to Paris.

[2] Written by Blanc Saint-Bonnet.

I purchased on the quays, I discovered at the foot of a presentation letter from the author, bound between two pages, this postscript, which I copy word for word: "If you happen to need a well-informed, eloquent young man, apply, *using my name*, to M. Thérion, 18 Rue de Tournon, Hôtel du Luxembourg."

And suddenly I saw once more that tall youth with the flashing black eyes, whom I used to meet soon after my arrival in Paris, always with books under his arm, coming out of a book-stall or burying his nose in old books in front of the shops in the Odéon; a long, dishevelled devil, with a peculiar trick, constantly repeated like the spasms of the St. Vitus dance, of adjusting his spectacles on a flat, open, sensual nose, instinct with love of life. Eloquent beyond question, and learned, and bohemian! All the fruit stalls in the quarter have heard him declare his monarchical opinions, and, with an abundance of gesture and an earnest, persuasive voice, hold the attention of an auditory drowned in tobacco smoke. Ah! if I had had him before me, living, what an impulse he would have given to my book! He would have breathed into it his fire, his sturdy loyalism; and what a mine of information concerning his experience at the Austrian court, whither he went as tutor to some of the young princes, and whence he returned disillusioned, his dream shattered! But this Constant Thérion had disappeared some years before, starved to death, and unluckily I had met him rather than

known him; my eyes had not begun to see clearly in those days, I was too young, more intent upon living than observing. Thereupon, in order to make up for the details concerning him which I lacked, it occurred to me to make him a countryman of my own, from Nîmes, from that hard-working *bourgade* from which all my father's workmen came; to place in his bedroom that red seal, *Fides, Spes,* which I had seen in the house of my own parents, in the room where we used to sing *Vive Henri V.!*[1] the refrain that came on with the dessert at all our family merry-makings; to surround him with those royalist traditions amid which I had grown up and to which I had clung until I reached the age of the open mind and the enfranchised thought. By thus bringing in my own South, my childish memories, I brought the book nearer to me. Méraut — Thérion if you prefer — being conceived, how could he be introduced into the royal household? As the tutor of a prince; hence Zara. And just at that moment, a catastrophe that happened in a friend's family, a child struck in the eye by a bullet from a parlor rifle, suggested the idea of the poor king-maker destroying his own work.

The visions of sleep bear the impress of the realities of life. At a time when I used to dream a great deal, I had adopted the habit of jotting

[1] The son of the Duc de Berri and grandson of Charles X., commonly known as the Comte de Chambord, was always "King Henri V." to the adherents of the elder branch of the Bourbons after the abdication of Charles X. in 1830. He was born in 1820 and died in 1883.

down my dreams in the morning, accompanying them with explanatory notes: "Did this thing or that the night before — said such and such a thing — met So-and-so." And I might place notes of this sort on the margin of *Kings in Exile.* After the chapter on the gingerbread fair, where Méraut carries the little king, who is so frightened, on his shoulders, I might write: "Yesterday, walked through Rue Herbillon. — Also through the woods at Saint-Mandé with one of my children. — Easter Sunday. — Holiday uproar. — We finally got into the thick of the restless, surging crowd. — The boy was frightened. — I took him on my back to leave the scene of the fair." — In another place, at the end of the chapter on the heroic ball at the Rosen palace, I might note the fact that, one day, at the Exposition of 1878, as I sat listening to the tzigani music and sipping Tokay, the clash of the cymbals reminded me of a Polish ball at the Countess Chodsko's, a farewell ball, given in honor of those young men of whom many were destined never to return. And then, when one is carrying a book in one's head, thinking only of it, what lucky chances, extraordinary coincidences, miraculous meetings, are certain to occur! I have mentioned Blanc Saint-Bonnet's little postscript. Another day there was the prosecution begun by the Duke of Madrid against Boët, his aide-de-camp, the pawned jewels, the Golden Fleece sold; then a sale on execution at Tattersall's, the Duke of Brunswick's state carriages

purchased by the Hippodrome; and again, at the Drouot establishment, the sale of two jewelled crowns belonging to Queen Isabella. And it was on the day I went to the "Hôtel" to attend this sale, that a *high-liver*, a superb idiot, putting his head between the shoulders of two Auvergnats, shouted to me in the crush: "Where do we *faire fête* to-night?" A foolish phrase, which I launched on its course, and which had the fortune of all foolish phrases. Another time I saw the funeral procession of the old King of Hanover pass the *Librairie Nouvelle*, the Prince of Wales at its head. A fine episode to describe, that funeral of an exiled king. Unfortunately I was embarrassed by the parallel episodes in my former books, Mora, Desirée, and the little king Madon-Ghezo. But all this tended to assure me that I was writing a book instinct with the spirit of my epoch, now drawing to its close.

I wrote *Kings in Exile* on Place des Vosges, at the end of a vast courtyard where tufts of green grass grew between the uneven pavements, in a small summer-house filled with the reflection of virgin vines, a neglected bit of the Hôtel de Richelieu. Within, old Louis XIII. wainscotings, gilding almost worn away, ceiling five metres from the floor; without, a cast-iron balcony eaten with rust at its base. That was just the framework I needed for that melancholy tale. In that enormous study I found anew every morning the creatures of my imagination, like human beings instinct with life, grouped about my table.

It was a pitiless, tyrannical task. I went out only in the morning, soon after dawn in winter, to take my boy to the Lycée Charlemagne through the muddy alleys of that corner of the Marais, and through Passage Eginhard, the *ghetto* where old Leemans' secondhand shop fermented, and where I used to meet on their way into the city little working-girls, well-groomed, hook-nosed Sephoras in germ, walking swiftly and laughing merrily. And from time to time an excursion in the city, in pursuit of information, or in search of a house — Tom Lewis's den or the Franciscan convent on Rue des Fourneaux.

Suddenly, in the very heart of the book, at the height of the effervescence of those painful hours which are the best hours of life, there was a sudden interruption, a snapping of the overworked machine. It began with brief naps, bird-like drowsiness, a trembling of the hand, a feeling of languor interrupting the written page, ominous and unconquerable. I had no choice but to halt in the middle of the day's march, to allow the fatigue to pass away. I relied upon the care of good Dr. Potain, upon the perfect repose of the country, to restore elasticity and strength to my relaxed nerves. In truth, after a month of Champrosay, of blissful revelling in the fresh odors of the forest of Sénart, I had an extraordinary sense of well-being, of exaltation. The springtime was advancing; my reawakened sap bubbled and fermented in my veins as in all nature's, and clothed once more with blossoms

the emotions of my twentieth year. Never shall I forget the forest path where, beneath the dense foliage of walnuts and green oaks, I wrote the balcony scene of my book. Then suddenly, without warning, I was startled by a violent hemorrhage, unattended by pain, which left my mouth full of the acrid taste of blood. I was really frightened; I thought that the end had come, that I must go and leave my work unfinished; and, in what I believed to be a final farewell, I had just strength enough to say to my wife, to the dear companion of my every hour, happy or miserable; "Finish my book!"

Perfect quiet, a few days in bed — what cruel days they were with that constant rumbling of the book in my head! — and the danger had passed. Everything can be put to some use. Turgénieff, a short time before his death, being compelled to undergo a painful operation, noted in his mind all the shades of suffering. He intended, he said, to describe it to us at one of the dinners of which he and I, Goncourt and Zola used to partake together in those days. In like manner I analyzed my sufferings, and turned to account the sensations of those moments of anguish in describing the death of Élysée Méraut.

Gently, little by little, I resumed my work. I carried it to the waters of Allevard, whither I was sent for treatment. There, in one of the public rooms, I met an old physician, a man of great originality and great learning, Doctor Roberty from Marseille, who suggested to me the

idea of the Bouchereau type and of the episode with which the book ends. For, sustained as I was by the brave creature who guided my still hesitating pen, I reached the end of the book at last. But I felt that something had broken within me; after that I could no longer treat my body like an old rag, deprive it of air and movement, prolong my vigils till morning in order to bring on the fever which inspires noble literary conceptions.

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The novel appeared in the *Temps* newspaper, and was afterward published by Dentu. Press and public welcomed it kindly, even the Legitimist journals. Armand de Pontmartin said in the *Gazette de France:*

"I do not know whether Alphonse Daudet wrote his book as the result of a republican inspiration. But I am sure of this — and it sums up my impression after reading the book — that there is something noble, affecting, pathetic and encouraging in *Kings in Exile;* and the thing that atones for its brutalities, that rescues this novel from the trivial ugliness of realism, is the royalist sentiment. It is the energetic resistance of a few proud and lofty souls to that cataclysm in which the Bal Mabille, the green-room, the great Club, the great *Seize*, are gradually swallowing up dethroned royalties."

Amid the laudatory articles there was a savage attack by Vallès, who took Tom Lewis's establishment for an invention *à la* Ponson du Terrail. That proved to me what I already knew, that the

author of "The Street" knows nothing of Paris except the street, the street of the faubourgs, the capering crowds and the sidewalk; he has never entered the houses. Among other reproaches, he accused me of having been a traitor to Thérion, of having distorted his figure. I have already said that Méraut was not Thérion absolutely. As a counterpoise I quote a few lines from a letter which I received, with a portrait, immediately after the publication of my book:

"You must have been very fond of dear Élysée to give him the place of honor in *Kings in Exile.* No one who knew him will ever forget him. Thanks to you, Elysée Méraut will live as long as *Kings in Exile.* Your book will be henceforth to me and mine the book of a friend, a family book."

This letter is from Thérion's brother.

Then the excitement subsided. Paris went on to read other things; for my part I was satisfied to have written a book which my father, an ardent royalist, might have read without pain, and to have proved that words still came at my command and that I was not altogether played out, as my enemies had shown that they hoped.

Several dramatic authors, however, were desirous of writing a play based upon my work; I was hesitating about giving my consent, when an Italian wrote the play for a Roman theatre, without consulting me. That exploit turned the scale. But to whom should I intrust the play? Godinet was tempted, but the political flavor frightened

him. Coquelin, to whom I mentioned the matter, said that he had some one; if I would put the matter in his hands, he would tell me my collaborator's name later. I am very fond of Coquelin, I have perfect confidence in him and I consented. He read the play to me, act by act, as it was constructed; I found it a strong production, written in flowing prose, clever and well dialogued. Two words put in Élysée Méraut's mouth in the middle of the first act — he was made to say that Hezeta had "printed him" — put me on the track of the author. — "It is some one from Lemerre's." — It is well known that the publishing-house on Passage Choiseul places the printer's name at the end of the beautiful poems it publishes. And that is how I discovered my collaborator, Paul Delair, a writer of great talent, sometimes a little confused, but with flashes of true grandeur; a poet.

The play was satisfactory to me, except that the last act seemed to me a little harsh. The scene was laid in the garret on Rue Monsieur-le-Prince, at the death-bed of Élysée Méraut. At the end King Christian partly opened the door: "Is Mademoiselle Clémence in?" — In my little salon on Avenue de l'Observatoire, when Coquelin read us Delair's work, all who were present received the same impression that I did. Gambetta had come that evening, also Edmond de Goncourt, Zola, Banville, Doctor Charcot, Ernest Daudet, Édouard Drumont and Henry Céard. It was the unanimous opinion that the last act must

be changed, that it was too dangerous. Delair listened to us and modified, toned down the last act; labor thrown away! we were doomed before we were acted. I was convinced of it at the dress rehearsal. The play had been well-mounted, beyond question; the best talent of the Vaudeville interpreted it, the management had spared no pains; and yet I have never seen an audience so attentive and so hostile as that of the first night. At the next and all following performances they hissed; — see the *Gaulois* of that time. Every evening the clubs sent delegates to make a disturbance. Whole scenes, very beautiful, very touching scenes, were acted amid a terrible uproar in which it was impossible to hear a single word. Passages like that in which a Bourbon is described as running after an omnibus were marked beforehand. Ah! if they had known from whom I had that detail! And Dieudonné's superb *entrée*, drunkenness in a black coat during the heroic chorus from Pugno's march! It came to be the fashion to go there and create a disturbance, as at the Salle Taitbout. And then, behind that artificial wrath of dandydom, there was a general feeling of indifference on the part of the audience. The Parisian public, much less monarchical in its feelings than I, remained profoundly insensible to the sufferings of royal personages; they were too entirely outside its usual line of thought, as far removed from its pity as the sufferers by fire at Chicago and by the floods on the Mississippi.

Aside from a few *feuilletons* from the pen of independent critics like Geoffroy and Durranc, criticism followed the public; that is its rôle to-day; and the play had the advantage of universal denunciation. Although Paul Delair's name alone appeared on the advertisement, I was singled out as the target for calumnies and abuse of all sorts for several weeks. I treated those insults as they deserved to be treated. By virtue of the multiplicity of newspapers and the din of reporters, the voice of Paris has become a deafening mountain echo, which increases tenfold the hum of conversations, repeats everything without end, and stifles, by increasing its volume, the just tone of blame and praise. I did, however, note down one of these calumnies which I propose to discuss. It was alleged that my book was intended as a bit of flattery for the government, and that, after beginning it in a tone favorable to royalty, during the "Sixteenth May," I had turned about after the fall of the marshal and fawned upon the triumphant republic. They who said that, who believed that a work once constructed can be thus turned to right or left by caprice, by self-interest — they never composed a book, or they would at least have reflected, have asked themselves for what purpose I could have done that of which they accused me. I stand in need of nothing, of nobody, I live in my own house, I desire neither office, nor preferment, nor distinction. Then, why?

As for the charge that my book was a pamphlet

in the interest of a party, that is no truer than the other. Both book and play tell less than the truth. I have given royalty a not ignoble part; whose is the fault that that part is no nobler? Monarchy posed for me; as always, I wrote after nature. Moreover, I am not the first to call attention to the deterioration of royal minds in exile. In the admirable *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*, which I had upon my table all the time I was at work, Chateaubriand describes much more brutally than I the imbecility, the blindness of the court of Charles X. in England.

"From her sofa Madame looked through her window at what was going on out-of-doors; she mentioned the equestrians, male and female, by name. Two small horses appeared, with two jockeys dressed in the Scotch fashion. Madame paused in her work, looked a long while and said: 'It is Madame ——' (I forget the name), 'going to the mountain with her children.'— Marie-Thérèse, in the character of an inquisitive woman, familiar with the habits of the neighborhood, the princess of thrones and scaffolds descended from her exalted station to the level of other women, interested me strangely. I watched her with a sort of philosophical emotion."

And, a few pages farther on:—

"I went to pay my court to the Dauphin; our conversation was very brief:

"'How does Monseigneur find himself at Butscherad?'

"'Growing old.'

"'Like everybody else, Monseigneur.'

"'How is your wife?'

"'She has the toothache, Monseigneur.'

"'Inflammation?'

"'No, Monseigneur, old age.'

"'Do you dine with the king? We shall meet again.'

"And we parted."

And what an indictment is contained in M. Fourneron's book, *History of the Émigrés during the French Revolution!* The bearing of the Comte d'Artois[1] and the Comte de Provence[2] in exile, while their brother was a prisoner in the Temple and when he was sent to the scaffold—the rivalry between mistresses, Madame de Polastron and Madame de Balbi!

My Gravosa expedition seemed to some persons incredible, monstrous, pure invention. But read the story of Quiberon, the adventures of those ill-starred Vendean soldiers who had been promised a prince of the blood to march at their head, waiting, longing for the landing of the Comte d'Artois, who remained in the offing, afraid to land, and who wrote to d'Harcourt: "We could see none but republican troops on shore." They who pointed them out to him, Baron de Roll and his friends, invented every day new pretexts for postponing the landing. In vain did the heroic Rivière, Comtes d'Autichamp, de Vauban and de la Beraudière insist. "I don't propose to fight Chouan-fashion," the king replied. — And then there is the story of Frotté and his mission dropping like a bombshell amid the whist

[1] Afterwards Charles X. [2] Afterwards Louis XVIII.

parties at Holyrood. He came to submit his plan for a landing. He was received in presence of Couzié, the Bishop of Arras, Baron de Roll, Comtes de Vaudreuil and de Puységur, and the banker du Theil.

"I beg your pardon," said Roll with his German accent, "I am captain of the guards and therefore responsible to the king for Monsieur's safety. Is there sufficient assurance of success for Monsieur to venture? — No, most assuredly not!" — "So you yourself, Monsieur de Frotté," interposed the prince, "agree that the plan is impracticable?"

Frotté takes his leave, he returns alone to his Norman gentlemen, armed with one of those letters filled with pompous phrases, of which the Comte d'Artois was very lavish. "I rely upon Comte Louis de Frotté to express to you all the sentiments which fill my heart to overflowing. Providence, doubt it not, will smile upon your noble-hearted constancy. Until that so earnestly desired moment arrives when I shall be able to express my feelings in spoken words, believe me, Messieurs — "

That book was written by a royalist who could not find words in which to express his hatred of the Convention. Is there so harsh a page as this in *Kings in Exile?*

A READING AT EDMOND DE GONCOURT'S.[1]

EDMOND DE GONCOURT has invited a few intimate friends to meet at Auteuil this morning, proposing to read them his new novel before breakfast. In the study, with its pleasant smell of old books, and lighted, as it were, from floor to ceiling by the burnished gold of the bindings, I perceive, as I open the door, Émile Zola's sturdy frame, Ivan Turgénieff, colossal as a Northern god, and the slight black moustache and unruly hair of the excellent publisher Charpentier. Flaubert is missing; he broke his leg the other day, and at this moment lies helpless in an invalid's chair, making Normandie ring with terrible Carthaginian oaths.

Edmond de Goncourt, our host, seems to me about fifty years old. He is a Parisian, but of Lorraine parentage; he has the kindly dignity of a Lorrainer, combined with true Parisian delicacy. Gray hair, once very light, a genial high-bred air, a tall erect figure with the hunting-dog nose of a sporting country gentleman; and on his pale, strong face a smile that is always tinged with sadness, a glance which sometimes emits a flash as keen and sharp as an engraver's point.

[1] Written in 1877 for the *Novoë-Vremya* of St. Petersburg.

What a world of will power in that glance, and what melancholy in that smile! And while we are laughing and talking, while de Goncourt is opening his table drawers and arranging his papers, interrupting himself to show us a curious pamphlet, a curio from some distant land, while we are taking our seats and making ready to listen, I am conscious of a thrill of deep emotion as my eyes rest upon the broad, long writing-table, the fraternal table, made for two, at which Death took his seat one day, as a third, carrying away the younger of the brothers and brutally cutting short that unique collaboration.[1]

The survivor retains an extraordinary affection for his deceased brother. Despite his innate reserve, which is intensified by a proud and persistent taciturnity, he betrays in speaking of him an exquisite, almost feminine delicacy of feeling. One is conscious of a boundless grief beneath it, of something more than affection. "He was our mother's favorite!" he says sometimes; without regret, without bitterness, as if it seemed to him just and natural that such a brother should always be the favorite.

In truth such a perfect community of existence has never been seen. In the eddying whirl of modern life brothers part before they reach the age of twenty. One travels, the other marries; one is an artist, the other a soldier; and when, from time to time, chance brings them together beneath the family lamp, after years of absence,

[1] Jules de Goncourt died June 20, 1870.

it requires a sort of effort for them not to treat each other as strangers. Even when they live side by side, what chasms may be opened between those two minds and those two hearts by diversity of ambitions and aspirations! Pierre Corneille may live in the same house with Thomas, but the former writes the *Cid* and *Cinna*, while the latter laboriously versifies the *Comte d'Essex* and *Ariane*, and their literary fraternity hardly extends beyond passing a few paltry rhymes back and forth from floor to floor, through a small peep-hole in the ceiling.

With the two de Goncourts it was by no means a matter of borrowed rhymes or phrases. Before death parted them they had always thought together, and you will not find a fragment of prose twenty lines in length which does not bear their double mark and is not signed by their two names inseparably united. A small fortune — twelve to fifteen thousand francs a year for both — assured them leisure and independence. Nevertheless they had marked out a life for themselves within narrow limits, a life of literary delights and hard work. From time to time a long journey *à la* Gérard de Nerval through Paris and its books, always by the narrow by-paths, for those refined tourists had a sincere horror of everything that resembles the beaten highway, with its long monotonous ribbon of dusty road, its sign-posts, its telegraph wires, and its double row of loose stones raked into piles. They went thus, arm-in-arm, ransacking books and life, noting details

of manners, the unknown nook, the rare pamphlet, and plucking each new flower with the same joyful interest, whether it grew amid the ruins of history or between the greasy pavements of the Paris of the faubourgs. Then, when they had returned to the little house at Auteuil, like herborists or naturalists, fatigued and joyous together, they would pour out the double harvest on the great table, observations, novel images, redolent of nature and green fields, metaphors as full of life as flowers, brilliant as exotic butterflies, and there was neither rest nor truce until everything was arranged and classified.

Of the two collections they made a single one; each wrote his page on his side of the table; then they compared the two pages, to complete them each by the other and to blend them. And it sometimes happened, by a unique phenomenon of assimilation in work and parallelism of thought, that the charming and touching surprise awaited them of finding that, save for some detail forgotten by one and noted by the other, the two pages, written separately but *lived* together, strikingly resembled each other.

Why is it that, side by side with many too-easily-won triumphs, such a love of art, such assiduous work, with so many priceless gifts as observers and writers, brought to the brothers de Goncourt only a tardy recompense, awarded after much haggling as it were? Judging from the appearance of things only, that would seem incomprehensible. But no! those two Lorrainers,

so refined and fashionable, so in love with aristocracy, were downright revolutionists in art; and the French public, always virtuous in some direction, does not care for revolutions except in politics. By their passionate pursuit of the contemporary document, by their interest in autographs and engravings, the brothers de Goncourt have inaugurated a new method in history, properly so-called, and in art. If they had taken up some speciality — in France we always pardon specialities sooner or later — if they had confined themselves to history for instance, it may be that, notwithstanding their originality, they would have been accepted, and perhaps we should have seen those mad fellows seated beneath the dusty dome of the Institute, beside the Champagnys and the Noailles. But no! applying as they did to the novel the same care in obtaining exact information, the same scrupulous regard for reality, are they not, since leaders of schools are the fashion, the leaders of a school comprising a whole generation of young novelists?

Historians who write novels! That would be all very well if they were historical novels; but such novels as no one ever saw before, novels which are neither Balzac remoulded nor George Sand diluted, novels consisting wholly of tableaux — there you have the collectors of engravings! — with a plot barely suggested and great gaps between the chapters, genuine breakneck ditches for the imagination of the honest bourgeois reader. Add to this an entirely novel

style, abounding in the unexpected; a style from which all stereotyped forms are banished, and which, by a calculated originality of construction and of image, forbids the mind to entertain a commonplace thought; and disconcerting flashes of audacity, the constant separation of words that are accustomed to go together like working oxen, the necessity of choosing, the horror of saying everything, and do you wonder that the de Goncourts did not immediately arouse the admiration of the multitude?

The esteem of men of letters, the admiration which is equivalent to consecration, ennobling friendships — these were the fruits which MM. de Goncourt reaped at once. The great Michelet expressed a wish to know the young men; and the homage with which he honored them as historians, Sainte-Beuve rendered them as novelists. Sympathy with their work gradually widened. For a whole year the painters' set swore by *Manette Salomon*, that admirable collection of pen pictures. *Germinie Lacerteux* caused more excitement, almost a scandal. And refined Paris was dumfounded by that horrifying disclosure of the abysses of vice in the populous quarters. People marvelled at the ball at the "Boule-Noire," with its irritating orchestra and its compound odor of hair-oil, gas, pipe smoke, and wine served in salad-bowls.

They were charmed with those Parisian landscapes, so often imitated since, but then in the very flower of novelty, the outer boulevards, the

Buttes Montmartre, the promenade around the fortifications, and the dusty tracts of the outlying districts, where the soil is all ground earthenware and oyster shells. The picture of this special side of Parisian life, so near us and yet so far away, boldly conceived and vigorously painted, gave to every one who could read a vivid impression of originality.

But still the great public held aloof.

Theatrical writers pilfered more or less from the de Goncourts' books, which is a good sign for a novelist. But these ingenious adaptations brought profit and glory only to the adapter. Outside of an extremely restricted circle the name of the de Goncourts remained almost unknown after so many powerful and charming books.

They needed an opportunity; it came at last. Chance seemed inclined to smile. A manager with literary tastes, M. Édouard Thierry, accepted their *Henriette Maréchal.* Three long acts at the Comédie-Française! It was a genuine bargain. At last they were about to lay hands upon that distraught, indifferent public, more elusive than Galatea; and when they actually had it in their grasp, it would have no choice but to listen and pass judgment, willy-nilly. You cannot make people read a book, though it be a masterpiece, but a play is always heard.

But no, once more the public did not hear. The fates were unkind; an accident, a foolish accident, was all that was needed. It was currently reported that the play had been forced on

the management by a princess of the imperial family; the youth of the Latin Quarter took fire, a cabal was organized, and political feeling, which was everywhere held in check and found a vent as best it could, vented itself this time on the backs of two inoffensive artists. *Henriette Maréchal* was played five times and no one was able to hear one single word of it.[1]

I can still recall the uproar in the hall, and particularly the scene in the artists' green-room on the first night. Not an *habitué!* Not an actor! Everybody had fled before the breath of disaster. And in that waxed and gleaming desert, beneath the lofty, solemn ceiling and the eyes of the great portraits, two young men standing alone by the fireplace and asking each other: "What is the meaning of all this ill-feeling? What have they against us?"—dignified and proud, but with hearts oppressed none the less by the brutality of the insult. The elder, pale as death, was encouraging the younger, a fair-haired youth with a flushed and nervous face, whom I saw but that one time.

And yet their drama was a strong, bold, original piece of work. Some years later the same people who had hissed it applauded frantically *Héloïse Paranquet* and the *Supplice d'une Femme,* plays swift in action, going straight to the catastrophe like an express train; plays of which *Henriette Maréchal* may well be considered the forerunner. And was not that first act at the

[1] *Henriette Maréchal* was produced in December, 1865.

Bal de l'Opéra, that crowd, those masks chaffing and shouting, pursuing and reviling each other, that persistent adherence to reality and life, as ironical and as true to nature as a caricature by Gavarni — was it not, in fact, *naturalism* on the stage, fifteen years before the word naturalism was invented?

Henriette Maréchal has foundered — very good, we must go to work once more. And behold the two brothers seated anew before the great table in their hermitage at Auteuil. First of all, they put their hands to a study of art, the monograph on the life and work of Gavarni whom they had known and loved, as full of life as a novel, as accurate and full of facts as a museum catalogue. And next to that, the most complete, incontestably the finest, but also the most disdainful and the most arrogantly personal of their books: *Madame Gervisais.*

No plot, the simple story of a woman's soul, the journeyings, through a series of admirable descriptions, of an intellect vanquished by the nerves, which started on its travels in full control of itself and ended by going to Rome and there succumbing, under the enervating influence of the climate, to the shadow of ruined monuments, to the indefinable mystic and benumbing exhalation from the walls of churches, amid the odor of incense of Catholic ceremonial. It was superb, its failure was complete. Not an article upon it, and hardly three hundred copies sold.

That was the last stroke. The younger brother,

an excitable, almost feminine nature, — subject, moreover, for some time past, to attacks of a nervous malady, and sustained solely by the fever of hard work and hope — could not endure the shock. As a very thin glass placed on the resonant cover of a piano shivers and breaks at a too brutal discord, so something broke in him. He languished some time and died. The artist is not a recluse. Try as one may to take his place above and outside of the multitude, it is for the multitude that one always writes, when all is said.

And then you love those books of yours, the fruit of your entrails, made of your blood and your flesh; how can you divest yourself of your interest in them? Whatever strikes them strikes you, and the artist equipped with the most impregnable armor bleeds at a distance — as if by means of some mysterious sorcery — from the wounds inflicted on his works. We play for the select few, but number is what we crave; we scorn success, and failure kills us.

Can you imagine the despair of the survivor, of that brother left alone, dead himself, as it were, stricken in half of his being? At any other moment it is probable that he would not have resisted. But the war was then in progress. The siege came in due time, and then the commune.

The roar of the cannon in that suburban district, bombarded on all sides, the hissing of the shells, the universal crumbling and ruin, the for-

eign war, the civil war, the massacre amid the conflagration, that Niagara-like roar which hovered over Paris for six months, preventing one from hearing, benumbing even the thought, made his grief less sensible to him. And when it was all over, when the black fog was dissipated and people began to think again, his sadness enveloped him anew, bereft of his mate, with a great void at his heart, amazed to find that he was still alive, yet accustomed to living.

Edmond de Goncourt had not the courage to leave the little fraternal house, so full of memories of him he mourned. He remained there, solitary and sad, and unconnected with life save by the quasi-instinctive labor of caring for his collections and his garden; he had sworn never to write again; the books, the table made him shudder.

One fine day — he had no idea how it came about — he found himself seated, pen in hand, in his accustomed place. At first it was hard, and more than once, turning as in the old days to ask his brother for a word, a note, he rose and left the room, dismayed to find the chair empty. But an entirely novel and unexpected experience, success, brought him back to his work, seated him in the old place once more. Since *Madame Gervisais* time had gone on and the public as well.

A movement had taken place in literature in the direction of accurate observation, expressed in curious and concise language. Readers gradu-

ally became accustomed to these novelties which had terrified them so at first, and the real initiators of this renascent movement, the Goncourts, became fashionable. All their books were reprinted. "If only my brother were here!" said Edmond, with a sort of sorrowful joy. Then it was that he ventured to write the novel, *La Fille Élisa*, which he and his brother had contemplated.

It was not precisely writing alone, it was a sort of spinning out of their joint work, a posthumous collaboration. The book was successful and had a large sale. A triumph full of sad pleasure in a renewal of pain, and more than ever the inevitable: "Ah! if only he were here!"

But the ice was broken, the unconsoled brother awoke, a man of letters once more; and as Art is always connected by an invisible thread with life, the first book which he wrote alone was the story of that twofold existence, of that collaboration tragically interrupted, of his despair as of one dead in life, and of his sorrowful resurrection. The book is called *Les Frères Zemganno.*

We listened, deeply moved, enchanted, with a choking sensation in our throats, looking out through the windows at the convolvuli and the rare shrubs with gleaming, polished leaves in the little garden, still green notwithstanding the season. The thaw was beginning, causing star-shaped cracks in the ice on the pond, and patches of moisture on the rock-work, while a late winter's sun spread a smile over the snow. That smile, that sunshine ascended and invaded the house.

"Really? Do you like it? Are you satisfied?" said Edmond de Goncourt, wonderfully cheered by our enthusiasm; and the miniature of the dead brother, in its little oval frame in front of the mirror, seemed also to be lighted up by a gleam of long-delayed glory.

ACTORS AND ACTRESSES.—DÉJAZET.[1]

WHEN I saw Déjazet on the stage, a long, long while ago, she was nearer seventy than sixty; and despite all her art, all her charm, the silks and satins, scant as they were, fell in folds about her emaciated figure, the powder on her hair seemed in very truth the snow of age, and the ribbons of her costumes fluttered sadly with all her movements, which, by affecting to be frisky and agile, emphasized the more strongly the stiff-jointedness of advancing years and sluggish blood. One evening, however, the actress seemed to me altogether charming. It was not on the stage, but at Villemessant's, at Seine-Port. We were taking our coffee in the salon, with the windows open upon a magnificent park and a lovely summer's night. Suddenly a little figure appeared on the threshold, in a moonbeam, and a shrill voice asked: "May I come in?" It was Mademoiselle

[1] Pauline Virginie Déjazet, born in Paris in 1797 and died there in 1875. Her first appearance on the stage took place at the age of five and her last in October, 1875, shortly before her death. She is said to have won some of her most brilliant triumphs in male parts. As late as 1859 and 1860 she created important rôles in new plays and her acting was instrumental in bringing Sardou into prominence as a dramatic writer. A critic said of her: "Déjazet is champagne in petticoats, she is indecency exalted to an art, she is the Gauloise of quality."

Déjazet. She had come to make a neighborly call, her country-house being close by, and to pass the evening with us. Receiving an enthusiastic welcome, she sat down with a reserved, almost timid manner. We asked her to sing something. Faure the singer took his place at the piano to accompany her; but the instrument embarrassed her. Even the sweetest notes, mingled with her voice, would have prevented our hearing her. So she sang without accompaniment; standing in the centre of the salon, while the rare candles flickered in the summer breeze, dressed in a simple white muslin gown which made her seem as young as a young girl or as old as a grandmother, she began in a trembling voice, of small volume but very distinct, which sounded like a mysterious violin in the silence of the park and the darkness: "*Enfants, c'est moi qui suis Lisette.*"

I always see her so, when I think of her.

LESUEUR.[1]

LESUEUR in the beginning lacked many things which he required in order to earn the name of a great actor. His voice was low and indistinct, of an unpleasant quality which became rough and rasping when it aimed at resonance. Lack of memory tormented him also and led him constantly to the prompter's box. And finally, being of slender frame and thin, almost undersized, he lacked that dignified bearing which, in pathetic passages, dominates and occupies the whole stage. Not only did Lesueur triumph over all these defects, but he justified Regnier's theory that an actor should be obliged to contend with some physical disadvantages. The fine shades of meaning which his voice failed to express were expressed in his eloquent eyes, in the details of his acting; and, if portions of his part escaped him, there never were any serious mistakes in his performance, because he was always alive to the situa-

[2] François-Louis Lesueur's successful début in the *Gamin de Paris* and the *Aumônier du Régiment* led to a permanent engagement at Montparnasse. This was in 1822 and was the beginning of a long and successful career, during twenty years of which — 1848 to 1868 — he acted at the Gymnase. His stage name was Francisque de Saint-Marcel. He died in 1876 and created some of his best rôles as late as 1869.

tion and possessed what so many actors lack, the art of listening. But how did he succeed in overcoming his deficiency of stature? Certain it is that in certain plays, *Don Quixote* for instance, he appeared to be very tall and filled the stage with the amplitude of his gestures. If I may venture to make the comparison, there was something of Frédérick in him; the same versatility in assuming all the costumes of the human comedy, the short jacket of a studio fag, the sham purple of the king in a fairy extravaganza, the black coat of society — all of which he wore with perfect ease and equal distinction. The two men also had in common an exuberant fancy which gave to their creations an element of intensity, stamped their parts with an ineffaceable imprint and made it difficult for others to assume them after them. Ask Got, who is himself a perfect artist, whether he found it difficult to make his own the character of Père Poirier, created forty years ago by the actor at the Gymnase. When Lesueur acted in a play, the author could feel confident that, even in case of disaster, his whole effort would not be wasted, but that one part would certainly survive the shipwreck, the part assigned to Lesueur. Who would remember Édouard Plouvier's *Fous* to-day, were it not for his superb acting as the absinthe-drinker? How fine he was, sitting before his glass, with moist, trembling lip, holding high the carafe which shook in his hand, and pouring drop by drop the green poison, the effects of which we followed on his stupefied, cadaverous

mask! First there would be a puff of animation, a convulsion of life in that skeleton, congealed and dried up by alcohol; a little blood would rise to his cheeks, his eyes would flash; but in a moment his glance would become glassy and dull once more, the muscles of the lips would relax and the corners droop. He was a marvellous mimic, he was familiar with every detail of construction and with all the concealed wires of the poor human marionette, and handled them with such dexterity and precision! When he wept, everything about him sobbed, his hands, his shoulders. Do you remember how, in the *Chapeau d'un Horloger*, he folded and unfolded his legs, which flew about and multiplied as if he had ten, twenty, thirty pairs of legs: a gyroscopic vision? And what a poem his glance was, when he woke, in the *Partie de Piquet!* Ah! Lesueur! Lesueur!

FÉLIX.

A STRANGE figure, that Félix! As I wrote his name he appeared before me, a typical coxcomb and dolt, with the wide-open eyes, the low, square, obstinate forehead, always wrinkled with an effort to understand; the best of men, but as vain and foolish as a turkey-cock! One must have worked with him on the stage to realize what the man was. In the first place, immediately after the reading of a play in the green-room, Félix would go to the manager to return the part which had just been assigned to him, and which did not suit him. All the other parts in the work, except that, seemed to him excellent! He would have found it very hard to say why, I promise you. No, it was a mania, a craving to make one go on one's knees to him, to lure authors to his fourth floor apartment on Rue Geoffroy-Marie, to that comfortable, scrupulously neat little provincial interior, which one might have taken for a canon's or arch-priest's quarters, except for the innumerable portraits, medallions and photographs, reminding the artist of each of his creations. One must needs take a seat, accept a glass of "something sweet," and try to overcome that exasperating coquetry by dint of eloquence,

compliments and blandishments. At this first call Félix did not bind himself, he made no promises. He would see, he would reflect. Sometimes, when he was very anxious to have the part, he would say in a careless, indifferent tone: "Leave the play with me. I will read it again." And God only knows how much of it he understood, poor man! He would keep the manuscript a week, two weeks, and never refer to it; at the theatre one would hear whispers: "He will act — he won't act." And then, when you were tired of waiting, of having everything blocked by the caprice of a single man, and were making up your mind to tell the great actor to go to the devil, he would come to the rehearsal, affable and smiling, knowing his lines perfectly, and striking fire from the boards simply by putting his foot on them. But you had not seen the last of his caprices even then, and until the very day of the performance you must be prepared for terrible trials. On that day, to be sure, the incomparable energy of that strange artist, who became transformed in the glare of the footlights, his unconscious effects, always unerring, always understood, his irresistible power over the public, paid you handsomely for all your misery.

MADAME ARNOULD-PLESSY.[1]

DID you ever see her in *Henriette Maréchal?* Do you remember her in front of her mirror, gazing long and despairingly at that silent and pitiless confidant, and saying, in a heart-rending tone: "Ah! I show my age to-day?" Those who have heard that will never be able to forget it. It was so intense, so human! The actress made those five words, uttered slowly, falling from her lips at intervals like the notes of a funeral knell, express so many things: regret for vanished youth, the heartbroken agony of the woman who feels that her reign is ended, and that, if she does not abdicate of her own free will, old age will come forthwith and enforce her abdication by leaving the marks of its claws on her face. A horrible moment for the strongest, the most virtuous woman! It is like a sudden exile, a change of climate and the shock of an icy atmosphere sud-

[1] Madame Arnould Plessy was born in 1819. In 1834 she appeared in La Harpe's *Mélanie*, and in the same year made her début at the Français. She was an incomparable actress of light comedy of the Marivaux type, but was judged by the critics to be hardly "up" to Molière, although she acted in some of his plays. Of her it was said: "No actress since Mlle. Mars, whose traditions she inherited, has played the rôles of *amoureuse* and *grande coquette* with such consummate art." She retired from the stage in 1876.

denly succeeding the warm and balmy air, full of flattering murmurs and passionate adulation, which surrounds the beauty of woman in the bloom of life. For the actress the wrench is even more cruel. In her case coquetry is intensified and inflamed by a thirst for fame. So that most actresses are never willing to quit, they lack the courage to stand in front of their mirrors and say to themselves: "I show my age to-day." They are truly to be pitied. In vain do they struggle, cling desperately to the faded remnants of the fallen wreath; they see the public holding aloof, admiration replaced by indulgence, then by pity, and, what is more heart-rending than all, by indifference.

Thanks to her intellect, thanks to her pride, the great and brave-hearted Arnould-Plessy did not await that distressing hour. Having some years of life still before her, she has preferred to disappear at the height of her renown, as the sun, at the close of our beautiful October days, plunges abruptly below the horizon, rather than prolong its luminous death-agony in a vague, gradual twilight. Her reputation will be the gainer; but we have lost the delightful evenings she might still have given us. With her, Marivaux has gone, and the charm of his marvellous art, of that ever-changing, kaleidoscopic dialogue which has all the capricious amplitude of a fan unfolded in the light. All those lovely heroines who are called after Shakespeare's princesses, and who have something of their ethereal refine-

ment, have retired into their books; we may summon them but they do not come. Vanished also are those pretty pranks of wit and language, those dialogues, a little affected, perhaps a little too highly-wrought, but so thoroughly French, of which de Musset has written so many; charming bits of badinage, with elbows surrounded with falling lace resting on the edge of work-tables, and all the smiling caprices of amorous idleness. That is all dead and gone now; there will be no more chatting, no more over-refined sentimentalism on the stage. It is a vanished tradition, since Arnould-Duplessy has retired. Moreover, not only was that excellent actress a studious, painstaking artist, a faithful interpreter of the traditions of French art, but she possessed an original, inquiring talent, whether she essayed great tragic creations, like Agrippine, which she acted with so much individuality, much more according to Suetonius than according to Racine, or created a rôle in modern life, a realistic rôle like Nany in Meilhac's drama, an ignorant peasant and passionate mother. I remember one scene especially where, in her struggles to express the multitude of confused sentiments which were jostling one another in her ambitious and jealous heart, Nany, uncouth, stammering, trying in vain to find words, exploded in a frantic fit of rage with herself, and exclaimed in a strangled voice, fiercely beating her breast: "Ah! peasant! peasant!" The actress said it in such a way that the whole audience shuddered. Observe that such

shrieks as that, outbursts of such exceeding naturalness, are not due to tradition, not to schooling, but to study, to observing and *feeling* life. And is it not a glorious triumph, a proof of marvellous creative power, that an unsuccessful drama like *Nany*, which was played hardly half a score of times, should remain forever present to the eyes and minds of those who saw it, because Madame Arnould-Plessy acted the principal part?

ADOLPHE DUPUIS.[1]

ADOLPHE DUPUIS is the son of Rose Dupuis, *sociétaire* of the Comédie-Française, who retired from the stage in 1835 and died only a few years ago. Despite a very real talent, and triumphs dearly won beside Mademoiselle Mars, the excellent woman looked with stern disfavor upon her former profession; and when, upon graduating from the Collège Chaptal, where he had taken only moderate rank, sitting on the same bench with Alexandre Dumas, *fils,* Dupuis spoke of becoming an actor, his mother remonstrated with all the force of her affection. But we know what a loving woman's "never" is worth, and she loved her tall son passionately. At the Conservatoire he succeeded little better than at Chaptal; not that he lacked intelligence by any means, on the contrary he had too much; but it was of the sort that the school does not recognize, that sharp, individual intelligence which argues in the ranks and insists upon knowing the reason for the order "head to the right," when it should be put to the left. The scholar discussed his teacher,

[1] Born in 1824, made his first appearance in 1845, and died in 1891.

Samson's, ideas in the midst of the lesson, rebelled against the fashion of preparing for the competition and dissecting the subject with the professor, instead of leaving a little initiative to the pupil; he demanded that the examination should consist in rendering some passage at sight, not something that had been learned, repeated again and again for ten months, and insisted that in the general plan of study more attention should be given to nature, to the detriment of tradition. Imagine whether old Samson was likely to jump at such subversive theories as these; but in spite of everything he had a sympathetic feeling for his former comrade's son, this cool-blooded young rebel, with the good-humored smile, and he recommended him for admission to the Comédie-Française, where he became the fifth or sixth young lover in the plays of the regular repertory. Dupuis did not remain there long. One day Fechter, who had the same assignment that he had and acted no more frequently, said to him under his breath in a corner of the green-room: "Suppose we quit? We are starving here." "Let's do it," said Dupuis, and away went our *jeunes premiers*, to London, to Berlin, singing *Je suis Lindor*, in every corner of Europe, poorly paid, imperfectly understood, applauded the wrong way, but acting, having employment, which beginners prefer to everything. Two years later, about 1850, we find our actor at the Gymnase, in the hands of Montigny, who was the first to realize what might be made of that handsome youth,

a little slow in action and a little soft, and who suppled him by persistent hard work in many and widely varying parts; dressed him as an old man, as a workman, as a *raisonneur*,[1] as a noble father, exercised all his powers of observation, finesse, sensibility and good-humor, and that admirably natural intonation in which he is unrivalled. After ten years there, and immediately after the great success of the *Demi-Monde*, which was in large measure due to him, Dupuis yielded to the temptation of an engagement in Russia; he remained there a long time, too long, and when he came back to us, after an absence of seventeen years, he had some difficulty in winning public favor anew. That is the fate of all those who come back from the Michel Theatre. We must believe that the diapason is not the same at St. Petersburg as with us; they must speak lower there, act more quietly, understand things that are only half said, and underline nothing, as in a salon, among people who know one another well and are not very hard to please. In that style of acting, good and bad qualities are blurred as it were, make less impression. We recognize our artists, to be sure, but the footlights seem to burn dimly; we see them indistinctly as through a gauze veil. On the evening the *Nabob* was produced, for instance, old Parisians recognized their Dupuis, with all the talent of the old days,

[1] In the old French comedies the *raisonneur* was the serious character, whose lines were argumentative and highly moral in tone.

with something more indeed, a largeness of interpretation, a Marseillais impetuosity of which that placid old fellow seemed to them incapable. On the day after that performance, it was for Jansoulet to say whether he would enter the Comédie-Française by the staircase of honor, with all the doors thrown open, and not again by the secret door of his early days; but Samson's former pupil has retained his taste for freedom, the independent instinct of his youth, and as the management of the establishment on Rue Richelieu felt that they ought not to comply with his demands, the Vaudeville has had the good fortune to retain its actor.

LAFONTAINE.[1]

Henri Thomas, called Lafontaine, was born at Bordeaux in the early days of the romantic Hegira. Bordeaux occupies a place by itself in the South of France. Anchored on the shores of the Atlantic, its bowsprit pointed toward the Indies, it is the Creole South, the South of the Isles, excitable beyond measure, combining with the fiery imagination, the vivacity of speech and feeling of the people across the Loire, an immoderate craving for excitement, for travel, for rapid flight. This Bordeaux plays an important part in our actor's life and genius. "We will make a priest of him!" said his mother, a typical mother of that country, Catholic to the point of frenzy; but the young Bordelais is no sooner installed at the seminary than he climbs the wall, exchanges his frock for a blouse, and begins Little Red Riding Hood's journey across country, following a zigzag capricious course, until the wolf, a wolf with the chapeau and yellow baldric of a gendarme, stops him and demands his papers. Passed from station to station, he reaches home at last, and is told that he must return to the seminary. "Never!"

[1] Born in 1826; his first appearance was at the Batignolles theatre, but his reputation really began in 1852 at the Gymnase.

"Then you may ship for the islands, good-for-nought!" There we have a typical outbreak of parental wrath in the South: "He won't be a curé. *Zou!* Then we'll make him a cabin-boy."

Three months of beans and salted meat, in the wind and wet of the sea, cured the young runaway of his taste for travelling, but did not give him a taste for the tonsure. On his return from Île Bourbon he tried twenty trades, was successively cabinet-maker, locksmith, secondhand dealer in innumerable things, slept on the floor, ate the bread of poverty, following his nose at the bidding of his youth and of the wild Bordelais instinct, with no definite aim, but with his eyes always open and with an artist's memory. Now he is at Paris, agent for a publisher, walking the streets, climbing stairs, dealing in literature and science, with his mind lined with titles and prospectuses, and dilating upon books which he has no time to read, but which leave a little phosphorus on his finger-tips none the less; persistent, insinuating, eloquent, irresistible, such a book-agent as the house of Lachâtre had never seen. And then one evening he drops into the Théâtre Porte-Saint-Martin, sees Frédérick, and feels that commotion at the heart which none but lovers and artists know. He drops books and reviews and goes to call on Sevestre, old Père Sevestre, the manager of the suburban theatres. "What can you do? Have you ever acted?" "Never, sir; but give me a part and you'll see." In that superb Bordelais presumption, accompanied by

bright eyes, freedom of movement and a loud metallic voice, Sevestre at once detected a temperament adapted to the stage. That temperament is common in the South, with its verbose, gesticulatory nature, which displays everything on the outside, puts everything into words, thinks aloud, the words always going beyond the thought. The man of Tarascon and the man of the Porte-Saint-Martin resemble each other.

On that little stage on Rue de la Gaïté, where Mounet-Sully afterward made his début, Lafontaine served his apprenticeship; he acted at Sceaux, at Grenelle, travelled in the omnibus attached to the suburban theatres, play-book in hand, declaiming Bouchardy along the roads. He succeeded. The report of his success crossed the bridges and reached the boulevard, and, not long after, Henri Lafontaine made his appearance at the Porte-Saint-Martin, to act in *Kean* with Frédérick,[1] who at once became attached to him

[1] The name Frédérick in connection with the French stage always means Frédérick Lemaître (1800–1876), generally considered the greatest artist of the age after Talma. His range of parts was very great, from the lion in *Pyramus and Thisbe* to Kean and Ruy Blas. His first great success was in *Robert Macaire*, which he transformed completely from a serious to a comic work. It was played a hundred and fifty times in succession in the twenties. Kean is said to have been his happiest part. In the *Vieux Caporal* his acting was so wonderful that he made his audience weep without uttering a word.

A copy of *Ruy Blas* which had belonged to the great actor was sold in 1891. It bore the following inscription on the fly-leaf: "To Frédérick, so well named The Master (Lemaître). — VICTOR HUGO."

and taught him how to work. "Come, my boy," the master would say as they left the theatre. And he would take his pupil with him to his quarters on Boulevard du Temple, exhausted by five hours on the boards, his eyes heavy with sleep, his cheeks discolored with gas and paint. But sleep was not on the programme, far from it! Supper would be served and all the candles in the salon lighted. They would eat and drink hastily; then the master would suggest a subject, a dramatic situation to be rendered, and, stretching himself out in his easy-chair, with a decanter of wine by his side, he would say: "Now, go ahead!"

The excellent Lafontaine has often told me the story of one of these improvised scenes. "Now," said Frédérick, lolling on his couch, "you are a petty government clerk, married three years ago. This is your wife's birthday, and you worship her. In her absence you have prepared a bouquet for her, a surprise, a nice little supper like this. And suddenly, as you are laying the table, you discover a letter which proves to you that you are shamefully outraged. Try to make me weep with that. Off you go."

Lafontaine goes about his task in all earnestness, sets his table conscientiously, not slighting anything — for Frédérick would stand no trifling in the matter of accessories — places his bouquet in the middle of the table with little bursts of laughter, melting glances; then, quivering with impatience and joy, opens the drawer in which

the surprise is secreted, finds a letter, reads it mechanically and utters a terrible cry, in which he tries to express all the despair of his blasted happiness!

"Between ourselves, I was very well satisfied with my cry," honest Lafontaine would say to me, his face brightening at the memory of his misadventure "I thought it was judicious, pathetic, sincere, I almost made myself weep when I uttered it. But no! no! Instead of the compliments I expected, I received a lusty kick at the root of the spine. I was not greatly disturbed by that, because I was used to my master's manners; but his criticism was what particularly impressed me. 'What! you animal, you love your wife better than anything else in the world, you believe in her blindly, blind—ly, and yet at the first reading of that paper you see, you comprehend, you believe all that it tells you! Is such a thing possible? Look you, go and sit down yonder and watch me distil my poison.'"

Thereupon he begins the scene himself, opens the drawer. "Ah! a letter!" He turns it over and over, runs his eye over it cursorily, without grasping its meaning, tosses it back in the drawer, and continues to lay his table. "Upon my word, that 's a strange thing, that letter!" He goes back to it once more, reads it more carefully, then shrugs his shoulders and throws it on the table. "Nonsense, it is n't true, it 's impossible. She 'll explain it all to me when she comes in." But how his

hands tremble as he finishes laying the table! And still his eyes are fixed on the letter. At last he feels that he cannot stand it, that he must read it again. This time he comprehends it, a sob comes to his throat, he stifles it; he falls upon a chair, gasping. It was a marvellous spectacle, it seems, to see the great actor's features become more and more distorted after each reading. One could feel the effects of the poison as his eyes absorbed it. And then, when he was once in the clutches of his own emotion, Frédérick paused no more but continued the scene. A convulsive tremor of his whole body, a sanguinary glance toward the door. His wife had come in. He let her walk to his side, without moving, then suddenly stood erect before her, a terrifying object, her letter in his hand: "Read!" But before she replied, divining from the terror on that woman's face that it was true, that the letter did not lie, he turned about twice or thrice like a beast drunk with rage, sought words but found none, and, still in love, even in his fury, feeling that he must let loose upon some object other than his wife the frantic longing to do murder with which his hands were itching, he seized the table and sent it whirling to the other end of the salon, with the lamp and dishes and everything upon it.

That kick anointed Lafontaine a great actor, was like a confirmation from below of his faith in his talent. But if he had had no other instruction than Frédérick's lessons, the Bordelais artist

would never have been able to regulate, to dam up his impulsive vagabond instincts. His South carried him forward, but it embarrassed him as well. He had its characteristic faculty of brilliant improvisation, but he also had its tendency to extravagance, its lack of moderation, all its sharp contrasts of light and shade. Well endowed as he was, his life might have been a failure, he might have turned out simply a sublime maniac, whom his twofold temperament as an actor and a Southerner had driven mad. Luckily Lafontaine entered the company at the Gymnase and had there, for ten years, an incomparable teacher. They who have seen old Montigny in his armchair at the front of the stage, surly and frowning, insisting upon ten, twenty repetitions of the same passage; crushing the most ill-tempered, the most rebellious, never satisfied, storming and stamping — they may boast that they have known a genuine theatrical manager. With him the artist's talent was disciplined. Upon his exuberant energy Montigny placed like a yoke the military high-collar of the *Fils de Famille*, the same *Fils de Famille* which Lafontaine reproduced some years ago at the Odéon; he buttoned up his Southern gesticulation in the broadcloth coat of the husband in *Diane de Lys*. The Bordelais reared and foamed at the mouth; but he came forth subdued, suppled, accomplished, and to-day when he speaks of his old master his eyes are always moist.

NOTES UPON PARIS. — THE NOUNOUS.[1]

THERE is nothing so pretty, on these first joyous days of sunshine, when the buds are beginning to peep forth, as the assemblage of babies and nurses at the Luxembourg or the Tuileries, between one and two o'clock in the afternoon.

In those sheltered nooks where they all gather by appointment, the nurses walk about in groups with flying ribbons, or sit in line on chairs, sheltering their charges beneath great parasols with pink or blue lining, which soften the glare; and while the chubby-cheeked little darling, sleeping in his transparent veil and the frothy lace of his little cap, inhales with his whole tiny being the invigorating breath of spring, Nounou, radiant and blooming, with a smile as of a woman just recovered from childbirth constantly on her lips, glances triumphantly about, tosses her head, laughs and chatters with her companions.

There are fifty or more of them, all in provincial costume, — a refined, transformed provincial costume, which gives to the solemnity of the royal garden a sort of staid, opéra-comique poesy. Superb head-dresses of many varieties; the brilliant silk handkerchiefs of Gascons and mulat-

[1] The name by which children call their nurses.

tresses, conventional Breton caps, the huge, light black butterfly of the women of Alsace, the aristocratic *hennin* of the maidens of Arles, the tall caps from the Caux country, pierced with holes like cathedral spires, and the long gold-headed pins of the women of Béarn planted in uncouth chignons.

The air is soft, the flower-beds breathe fragrance, an odor of resin and honey exhales from the chestnut buds. Yonder by the pond the military band attacks a waltz. Nounou becomes restless, Bébé cries, while the little soldier on sentry-go turns as red as his cockade before that long line of his countrywomen, who seem to him greatly improved.

These are the nurses made up for promenades and for show, costumed and transfigured by the pride of parents and by six months' residence in Paris. But to see the true *nounou*, to know her thoroughly, one must surprise her on her first arrival in the capital, at one of those strange establishments called intelligence-offices, where wet-nurses are dealt in for the benefit of Parisian babies famished for milk of some sort. Near the Jardin des Plantes, at the end of one of those quiet streets which have retained a provincial character in the very heart of Paris, with boarding-houses, tables d'hôte, little houses with little gardens, occupied by old scientists, small annuitants and hens; on the front of an old house with a huge porch there is a sign which bears this simple word in pink letters: NURSES.

Women in rags saunter about before the door, in listless groups, with children in their arms. You enter: a desk, a wicket with an iron grating, the copper-colored back of a ledger, people waiting on benches — the inevitable office, always the same, equally prim and cold at the Market and at the Morgue, whether the business in hand is shipping fruit or registering corpses. Here the traffic is in living flesh.

Being recognized as a well-to-do person, you are not required to wait on the bench but are ushered into the salon.

A flowered paper on the walls, floor painted red and waxed as in a convent parlor, and on either side of the fireplace, above two glass cylinders covered with artificial roses, gold-framed portraits in oil of Monsieur le Directeur and Madame la Directrice.

Monsieur is commonplace; the head of an ex-business manager or of a successful pedicure; Madame, who is inclined to obesity, smiles with her three chins in the smug contentment of an easily-managed business, with that indefinable suggestion of cruelty which the handling of a human flock imparts to the face and the glance. Sometimes she is an ambitious midwife; more frequently an ex-nurse blest with a genius for business.

One day, a long time ago, there came to an establishment of this sort, perhaps this very one, a poor country girl, to sell a year of her youth with her milk. She prowled about in front of

the door like the others, half-starved, her child in her arms; like the others she wore out her sack-cloth skirt on the stone bench.

To-day, times have changed; she is wealthy and famous. Her village, which saw her set forth on her travels in rags, speaks of her only with respect. She is a person of authority there, almost a providence.

The harvest has failed, the landlord is urgent. At night, in the chimney-corner, the man says as he holds out his broad palm to the blaze: "Look 'ee, Phrasie, your milk's good, money comes hard; how would you like to go nursing at Paris? It don't kill a body; and the mistress of the office, who comes from here and knows us well, would get you a good place right off."

She goes, then another. Gradually the habit becomes fixed, the love of lucre continuing that which poverty began. Now, whenever a child is born, its destiny is settled beforehand. It will remain in the province to suck the goat; and the mother's milk, sold at a good price, will help to buy a field, to round out a bit of pasture land.

Every celebrity in the nursing line, every manageress of an intelligence office devotes her special attention to the province from which she came. One has Auvergne, another Savoie, this one the Breton moors or the wooded hills of Morvan. It is to be observed that the market for *nounous* at Paris follows the fluctuations of country life. Nurses are rare when the crops are large, plentiful in times of famine; but whether it be a good

or bad year, they are almost impossible to find during the harvest and grape-picking, at the time when every one is at work in the fields.

To-day the intelligence office seems well supplied. To say nothing of the nurses we saw at the gate, dragging their wooden shoes along the sidewalk, here are twenty or thirty under the window, in a little garden transformed into a courtyard, dismal to look upon with its borders of trampled box, its extinct flower-beds, and children's clothes drying on a line stretched between a sickly fig-tree and a dead lilac. On all sides is a row of one-story huts, whose sordid bareness brings to one's mind the cabins of negro slaves or the convict's cell. In them the nurses live with their children, awaiting employment.

They lie on beds of cord, in an atmosphere musty with rustic lack of cleanliness, amid the constant uproar of the little brats lying in heaps, all of whom wake as soon as one cries, and begin to shriek in concert, with their mouths extended toward the meagre breasts. So that they prefer the fresh air of the little garden, where they wander from one corner to another all day long, with the jaded look of madwomen, sitting down to sew a little or to add one more piece to a skirt already patched a hundred times — a rag of a special color, earthy and gray, or else affecting those faded yellow tones or expiring blues which Parisian fashion borrows, as a refinement of elegance, from country poverty.

But Madame enters, with the conventional man-

ner and costume of the position, at once coquettish and serious; an avalanche of ribbons of the color of burning punch over a waist of jansenistical black — stern of glance and soft of speech.

"You wish a nurse? Seventy francs a month? Very good. We have an assortment at that price."

She gives an order; the door opens, the nurses appear in squads of eight or ten, tramp into the room and stand in line, humble of mien, their children in their arms, with a great noise of hob-nailed wooden shoes, and crowding one another awkwardly like cattle. These are not satisfactory? Quick, ten more! And always the same downcast eyes, the same pitiful timidity, the same gaunt, sunburned cheeks, of the color of bark and dirt. Madame presents them one by one and shows them off.

"As healthy as your eye — a real milch-cow — look at the little one!" The little one is really a fine fellow, he always is. Two or three are kept in stock in the establishment to appear in the place of those who are too weak and sickly.

"How old is your milk, nurse?"

"Three months, M'sieu'."

Their milk is always three months old. Just look: the dress is thrown open and a long white stream gushes forth, rich with the vigorous life of the country. But be not deceived; that is the reserve breast, which the child never sucks. The other side is the one you should see, the one which remains in hiding, shamefaced and flabby.

Moreover, with a few days of absolute repose, a little milk always collects.

And Madame unpacks those poor frightened creatures, and exposes them to your gaze, with the authority of possession and the impudence of habit.

At last the selection is made, the nurse is engaged; we must settle with the office. The manageress goes behind her grating and makes up the account. First, a certain percentage for the house, then the nurse's arrears for board and lodging. What more? her travelling expenses. Is that all? No, there is the *meneuse*, who is to take the nurse's child back to the province.

A melancholy journey that! The *meneuse* waits until there are five or six nurslings to go, and carries them strapped into great baskets, with their heads protruding like hens. Not a few of them die in this dragging about through frigid waiting-rooms, on the hard seats of third-class railway carriages, with milk from a nursing-bottle and a little sugared water on the end of a rag for nourishment. And then there are injunctions for the aunt, the grandmother. The child, brutally torn from the breast, writhes and shrieks; the mother kisses him for the last time, weeping. You are well aware that those tears are only half sincere, and that money will soon dry them, that terrible money which has so firm a grasp on the peasant entrails. But the scene is a heartrending one none the less, and reminds one unpleasantly of the breaking up of families among slaves.

The nurse has taken up her luggage, a few rags tied in a handkerchief.

"What! is that all you have?"

"Oh! my good M'sieu', we be so poor down our way. I don't own nothing but just what I got on my skin."

And that is almost literally true. First of all she must be fitted out, reclothed. That was premeditated. The first tradition among nurses, as among filibusters on their pillaging expeditions, is to travel empty-handed, without embarrassing baggage; the second is to procure a huge trunk, the trunk to hold the *harvest.* For no matter how much you may pet her, how much pains you may bestow upon this savage admitted to your household under these circumstances, who is at first so strangely out of tune with the refinements of a Parisian interior, with her hoarse voice, her incomprehensible patois, her strong odor of the stable and the fields; no matter how much you may wash her tanned skin and try to teach her a little French, a little neatness, and to dress becomingly; the Burgundian or Morvandian brute will reappear constantly, on every occasion, in the daintiest and most thoroughly polished *nounou* of them all. Beneath your roof, by your fireside, she remains the peasant, the enemy, transported from her dreary home, from her hopeless destitution to the lap of luxury and splendor.

Everything about her arouses her greed, she would like to carry it all away to her hole, to her lair, where the cattle are and the man. In real-

ity she has come for that and for that alone; the *harvest* is her fixed idea. The harvest, a surprising word in this connection, acquires unexpected elasticity — the elasticity of a boa-constrictor's maw — in the nurse's vocabulary. It means gifts and wages, what is paid them and what is given them, what they pick up and what they steal, the bric-à-brac and the savings which they look forward to exhibiting, on their return, to their envious neighbors. To swell and fatten this blessed harvest, your purse and your kind heart are systematically laid under contribution. And you have not the nurse alone to deal with; the man, the grandmother, the aunt, are her confederates, and in an obscure hamlet of which you do not even know the name, a whole family, a whole tribe is concocting against you schemes worthy of a tribe of Red Indians. Every week a letter arrives, written in a cunning, heavy hand, and sealed with dough bearing the impress of a thimble.

At first you are touched by these comical, ingenuous epistles, with their complicated orthography, their flowery style, sentences twisted and retwisted like the cap in the hand of a peasant who is trying not to appear awkward, and the minute superscriptions such as Durandeau imagined in his military sketches:

"To Madame, Madame Phrasie Darnet, nurse at M. ——, 18 Rue de Vosges, 3d Arrondissement, Paris, Seine, France, Europe, etc."

Patience. These flowers of rustic innocence will not move you to compassion for long. They

are all aimed at your purse, they all breathe the same perfume of rural extortion and idyllic rascality. — "This is to tell you, my dear and worthy wife, — but you need not mention it to our respected masters and benefactors, because they would perhaps insist on giving you more money, and it is never well to abuse — " Thereupon follows a circumstantial account of a terrible storm which has wrought havoc throughout the province. Crops destroyed, grain beaten down, grass-land ruined. It rains in the house as hard as in the open fields, because the hailstones have made holes in the roof; and the pig, such a fine beast, that they were going to kill for Easter, is dying of the fright he had when he heard the thunder.

At another time the cow is dead, the oldest of the little ones has broken his arm, the poultry have epilepsy. A terrible succession of catastrophes, like the plagues of Egypt, fall upon that one poor roof, upon that bit of land. It is a vulgar, stupid lie, sewn with thread so white that it dazzles your eyes. No matter, you must pretend to be deceived by these fables, and pay again and always, or else beware of Nounou! She will not complain, she will not ask for anything — oh! no, certainly not! — but she will sulk and pretend to weep in corners, where she is very sure of being seen. And when Nounou weeps, Bébé cries, because great grief *turns the blood*, and turned blood makes the milk sour. A money-order by post at once, and let Nounou laugh!

These great weekly *coups* do not prevent the

nurse from working daily at her little individual harvest. There are shirts for the little one, the poor disinherited wretch, all alone at home sucking the goat; a petticoat for herself, a coat for her man, and permission to pick up whatever is left lying around, the unnoticed trifles which go to the scavengers. Permission is not always asked, by the way, Nounou having brought with her from her village some peculiar ideas concerning the property of the good Parisians. The same woman who would not, in her own country, pick up a neighbor's apple through a hole in the hedge, will tranquilly pillage your whole house, without the slightest qualm of conscience. For the zouave to despoil the Arab or the colonist is not stealing, it is *looting*, *carrying on his trade.* A vast difference! So, according to Nounou's ideas, to rob the bourgeois is to *reap her harvest.*

In my house, a few years ago — for it is my own experience which qualifies me to deliver this lecture on nurses — some silver table-ware disappeared. Several servants were open to suspicion; it was necessary to order a search, to open trunks. I already had my own convictions concerning the harvest, and I began with Nounou's trunk. Never did the thieving magpie's hiding-place in a church-tower, never did the hollow tree in which a crow with the collector's mania has deposited the fruit of his marauding, offer such a motley collection of brilliant and useless objects; carafe stoppers and door-knobs, buckles, bits of glass, bobbins without thread, nails, pieces

of silk, clippings, chocolate wrappers, colored plates from fashion magazines, and, quite at the bottom, under the *harvest*, the missing silver, itself a part of the harvest.

Up to the very last moment Nounou refused to confess; she protested her innocence, declaring that she had taken the knives and forks with no thought of wrong-doing, to use as *shoe-horns*. However, she would not postpone her departure until the next day. She was afraid that we should change our minds and send for the gendarmes. It was dark and raining. We watched her as she disappeared under the arch of the staircase, silent, sullen, turned savage once more and for good, refusing all assistance, and dragging her trunk, heavy with the precious harvest, with both hands.

Fancy your child in the custody of such brute beasts! You will see that constant surveillance, not relaxed for a single moment, is no more than is necessary. If you leave the nurse to her own devices, she will never take Bébé out of doors to drink in the sunlight, to breathe the fresh air in the green squares. Paris, in reality, is a dreary place to her; and she would prefer to stay by the fire, without a light, with the child on her knees and her nose in the embers as in the country, sleeping her heavy peasant's sleep for four hours at a stretch. It is the devil's own task to prevent her from taking the nursling to sleep with her in her own bed. — "What then, a cradle? These bourgeois do have whims, they are exact-

ing, on my word! Would n't it be better to have him here, close by, and give him the breast, without waking up and getting cold, when he cries?" To be sure, they sometimes suffocate the baby when they turn over; but accidents of that sort are rare.

And then the traditions of the country declare that a nursing child can eat anything, that he can safely be stuffed with sour pears and green plums. Inflammation sets in, you hurry off to the doctor, and the child dies. At other times he has convulsions or meningitis, as the result of a fall, an unavowed blow. Ah! how much better our Parisian women would do to follow Jean Jacques's advice and nurse their children themselves! To be sure it is not easy always, nor for all women, in the enervating air of large cities, which leaves so many mothers without milk.

But what are we to think of the bourgeois mothers in the provinces, who, from no necessity but purely because they are habitually careless and indolent, put their children out to nurse for two or three years in the families of peasants whom they have never seen? Most of them die. Those who survive return home in the guise of frightful little monsters whom their parents do not recognize, with the rustic manners of little men, with harsh, loud voices and speaking barbarous patois.

I remember that, one day when I was in the provinces, in the South, some friends suggested an excursion to Pont du Gard. The plan was to

have an *al fresco* breakfast on the bank of the river, in the shadow of the ruins. As it happened, "the little one" was out at nurse in that direction, and we were to look in on him as we passed. A large party was made up, the neighbors were invited, an omnibus was hired and we started, raising a cloud of blinding, burning dust in the wind and sunlight. After about an hour we saw from afar, on the top of a hill, a brown speck in the middle of the snow-white road. The spot increased in size as we approached. It was the nurse, who had been notified of our coming and was on the lookout for us. The omnibus stopped and she passed the little one in at the door, shrieking at the top of his lungs.

"What a fine fellow he is! How much he looks like you! The little one 's getting on nicely, is he, nurse?" The whole omnibus kisses him, deeply moved, then the little squalling bundle is passed out again through the door, and we start off at a gallop, leaving the child and the nurse standing in the glaring sunlight, in the parched, crackling dust of that Southern road.

That is the way sturdy youths are made, you will say.

I should say as much; those who survive it have been tried as by fire.

NOTES UPON PARIS.—THE RIDICULOUS SALONS.

Of all the manias of the time there is none more amusing, more singular, more fertile in absurd surprises, than this passion for receptions, teas and small dancing-parties, which rages from October to April in every social circle of the Parisian bourgeoisie. Even in the most modest households, in the most retired corners of Batignolles or Levallois-Perret, one must receive, have a salon, a day at home. I know some unfortunate creatures who go every Monday to drink tea on Rue Terrier-aux-Lapins.

It is all very well for those who have any sort of interest in these little functions. For instance, doctors who are just starting in practice and wish to make themselves known in the quarter, parents without means who are looking out for an opportunity to marry their daughters, professors of elocution and music-mistresses, who receive their pupils' families once a week. These parties always savor a little of the class-room, of the prize competition. There are bare walls, stiff-backed chairs, waxed, uncarpeted floors, an air of artificial good-humor, and rapt silence when the professor announces: "Monsieur Edmond

will now recite a scene from *Le Misanthrope*," or "Mademoiselle Élisa will play a *Polonaise* by Weber."

But, in addition to these, how many poor devils there are who receive for no reason, with no selfish aim, simply for the pleasure of receiving, of putting themselves to all manner of inconvenience once a week, and of assembling in their salons some fifty or more people who will sneer at them when they go away. There are salons that are too small, all length, where the guests, as they sit talking together, have the constrained attitude of passengers in an omnibus; apartments transformed, turned topsy-turvy, with passage-ways, portières and screens in unexpected places, and the mistress of the house exclaiming in dismay: "Not that way!" Sometimes a tell-tale door opens enough to afford a glimpse of Monsieur, in the lower regions, returning home worn-out, drenched with rain, wiping his hat with his handkerchief, or hurriedly devouring a bit of cold meat at a table laden with dishes. There is dancing in the halls, in the bedrooms, from which the furniture has been removed, and, as you can see nothing but candelabra, bronze brackets, hangings and a piano, you ask yourself with a thrill of horror: "Where will they sleep to-night?"

I have known a very curious house of this sort, where the chambers, arranged in a long line, each two or three steps higher than the last, resembled floor landings, so that the guests at

the rear seemed to be standing on a platform, and from that vantage-ground humiliated the latest arrivals, buried up to the chin in the shoals of the first room. You can imagine how convenient it was for dancing! But no matter! Once a month a large evening-party was given there. Divans were brought from a little restaurant opposite, and with the divans a waiter in pumps and a white cravat, the only one of the guests who wore a gold watch and chain. You should have seen the mistress of the house, in a frenzy of excitement, with dishevelled hair, red as a lobster from the exertion of so many preparations, run after that man, pursue him from room to room, calling: "Monsieur le garçon! Monsieur le garçon!"

And the company at these functions! Always the same company, whom one meets everywhere, who know one another, seek one another's society, attract one another. A whole world of old ladies and young girls in ambitious but faded costumes; the velvet is made of cotton, the percaline pretends to be silk, and you feel that all those shabby fringes, those torn flowers, those discolored ribbons have been hastily assorted and thrown together with the audacious comment: "Bah! at night they won't show." They cover themselves with rice-powder, false jewels, false laces: "Bah! at night they won't show." The curtains have lost their color, the furniture is falling to pieces, the carpets are threadbare. "Bah! at night," etc. And that is how people

give parties and reap the glory of seeing four cabs, attracted by the glare of the candles, stop in front of their door at three o'clock in the morning; but the cabmen derive little profit therefrom, for, as a general rule, all the guests go their way on foot, making at impossible hours the long trip of the absent omnibus, the young girls leaning on their father's arms, their satin shoes encased in clogs.

Oh! how many of these laughable salons I have seen! At what strange evening parties I aired my first coat, in the days when, an ingenuous provincial, knowing life only through the pages of Balzac, I deemed it to be my duty to go into society! One must, like myself, have journeyed for two successive winters into every corner of bourgeois Paris, to realize how far this mania for receptions of some sort can go. It is all a little vague in my memory; I do remember, however, the tiny apartment of a certain government clerk, a queer little salon where, in order to make more room, the piano had to be moved in front of the kitchen door. We placed our liqueur glasses on music racks, and when some one sang a touching ditty, the maid would come and rest her elbows on the piano to listen.

As this unfortunate menial was a prisoner in her kitchen, Monsieur himself undertook the exterior service. I can see him now, shivering in his black coat, coming up from the cellar with huge lumps of coal wrapped in a newspaper. The newspaper bursts, the coal rolls on the floor, and

meanwhile some one at the piano continues to sing:

"I love to hear the oar, at evening, plashing in the waves."

And that other house, that fantastic fifth floor apartment, where the floor served as vestibule, the stair-rail as cloak-room, where the odds and ends of furniture were all crowded into a single room, the only one which could be lighted and warmed, an advantage which did not prevent its being dark and cold as ice, in spite of everything, because of the desolation and wretchedness that one felt lurking about in the desert of empty rooms. Poor creatures! about eleven o'clock, they would ask you very ingenuously: "Are you warm? Will you take a little refreshment?" And they would throw the windows wide open to admit the air from outside, by way of refreshment. After all, that was better than the poisonous colored syrups and the dry, crumbly little cakes preserved so carefully from week to week. Did I not know one hostess who used to place little packages of wet tea on her window-sill to dry every Tuesday morning, and thus made the same tea do duty two or three Mondays in succession? Oh! when the bourgeois allow their imaginations full play, no one knows where they will stop. Nowhere, not even in the heart of Bohemia, have I fallen in with such odd types as among them.

I remember one lady in white, whom we called the lady *aux gringuenotes*, because she was always

complaining of *gringuenotes* in her stomach! No one ever discovered what she meant.

And that other, a corpulent matron, married to a law-tutor, who always brought some of her husband's pupils to dance with her — all foreigners, a Moldavian enveloped in furs, a Persian with ample skirts.

And the monsieur who had on his cards *tourist of the world*, to indicate that he had made the tour of the world!

And, in the salon of a parvenu family, that old peasant woman, three-fourths deaf and idiotic, bundled clumsily in her silk gown, to whom her daughter would go and say in a simpering tone: "Mamma, Monsieur So-and-So is going to recite something." — The poor old creature, not understanding, would move about in her chair, with a foolish, frightened smile: "Oh! yes — yes." It was at that same house that they made a speciality of great men's relations. They would inform you with a great affectation of mystery: "Ambroise Thomas's brother will be with us this evening," or "a cousin of Gounod's," or "Gambetta's aunt." Never Gambetta nor Gounod, however. Then there was — but I must stop, for the list is inexhaustible.

IN THE PROVINCES. — A MEMBER OF THE JOCKEY CLUB.

After dinner these worthy Cevenols had insisted on showing me their club. It was of the unvarying type of clubs in small towns, four rooms in a line on the first floor of a venerable mansion fronting on the mall, long mirrors past their prime, uncarpeted floors, and here and there on the mantelpieces — where Paris dailies of the day before yesterday lay scattered about — a number of bronze lamps, the only ones in town which were not blown out on the stroke of nine.

When I arrived there were very few members in the rooms. A few old fellows were snoring away with their faces buried in their newspapers, or silently playing whist, and in the green light cast by the lamp-shades those bald craniums leaning toward one another and the piles of counters in their little silk basket had the same polished yellow tinge of old ivory. Outside on the mall, we could hear the bugles blowing the retreat and the footsteps of the promenaders returning home, dispersing among the sloping streets and the long flights of steps of that mountain town built at various levels. After a few last blows of door-knockers in the profound silence,

the young men, set free from family repasts and promenades, trooped noisily up the stairs to the club. I saw a score or more of sturdy mountaineers, freshly gloved, with low-cut waistcoats, rolling collars and attempts at hair-curling *à la Russe*, which made them all resemble great dolls painted in brilliant colors. It was the most comical sight you can imagine. It seemed to me as if I were attending a performance of a very Parisian play by Meilhac or Dumas *fils*, acted by amateurs from Tarascon or some more distant locality. All the weary, bored, disgusted airs, the soft lisping speech which is the height of fashion among Parisian swells, I found two hundred leagues from Paris, exaggerated by the awkwardness of the actors. You should have seen those great boys accost one another with a languid air: "How goes it, old fellow?" — stretch themselves out on divans in attitudes denoting utter prostration, yawn and stretch their arms before the mirrors, and say with the provincial accent: "It 's perfectly rank. It 's a frightful bore." It is a touching fact that they called their *cercle* the *club*, which like good Southerners they pronounced *clab*. I could hear nothing but that word on all sides. The waiter at the *clab*, the rules of the *clab*.

I was asking myself how all these Parisian follies could have travelled so far and taken root in the keen and health-giving air of the mountains, when I spied the pale face and curly head of the little Duc de M——, member of the

Jockey Club, of the Rowing Club, of the Delamarre Stables, and of divers other learned societies. This young nobleman, whose extravagant performances have made him famous on the boulevards, had just squandered in a few months the last million but one of his father's inheritance, and his dismayed adviser had sent him to rusticate in that out-of-the-way corner of the Cevennes. I understood then the languishing airs of all those youths, their heart-shaped waistcoats, their affected pronunciation; I had their model before my eyes.

The member of the Jockey Club was surrounded and fawned upon the moment he entered the room. They repeated his remarks, imitated his gestures and his attitudes, with the result that that pale image of dandydom, wasted and sickly, but with an air of distinction in spite of all, seemed to be reflected on all sides in vulgar rustic mirrors which exaggerated his features. On that evening, in my honor I doubt not, Monsieur le Duc discoursed much upon literature and the stage. With what contempt, and what ignorance! You should have heard him call Emile Augier "that M'sieu'!" and Dumas *fils* "little Dumas." On every subject he emitted very ill-defined ideas floating in unfinished sentences, wherein the *What's-his-names, Thingumbobs, What-d'ye-call-hims* replaced the words that refused to come at his bidding and the little dashes which dramatic authors who do not know how to write sadly abuse. In fine, this young nobleman

had never taken the trouble to think; but he had rubbed elbows with a great many people and had thereby acquired expressions and opinions which he kept at his tongue's end, and which made part of himself as truly as the curls that shaded his refined forehead. The subjects with which he was perfectly familiar were heraldic science, liveries, women and race-horses, and on those subjects the young provincials whose education he had undertaken had become almost as learned as himself.

The evening wore away thus amid the idle chatter of that melancholy stud-groom. About ten o'clock, the old men having departed and the whist tables being deserted, the young men sat down in their turn to a little game of baccarat. That had become the regular thing since the duke's arrival. I had taken a seat in the shadow, on a corner of the divan, and from there I had a very good view of all the players in the narrow circle of light cast by the lamps. The member of the Jockey Club was enthroned at the centre of the table, superbly indifferent, holding his cards with perfect grace and apparently caring little whether he won or lost. Ruined gamester as he was from the Parisian standpoint, he was still the richest of the party. But what courage it required for them, poor little devils, to maintain an impassive bearing! As the game became more exciting, I followed the expressions of the different faces with much interest. I saw lips tremble, eyes fill with tears, and fingers clutch

frantically at the cards. To dissemble their emotion the losers embroidered their ill luck with such expressions as: "I 'm getting excited, I 'm making an ass of myself;" but in that terrible Southern accent, significant and implacable, those Parisian exclamations lost the air of aristocratic indifference which they had on the little duke's lips.

Among the gamblers there was one who interested me particularly. He was a tall, overgrown fellow, very young, with the homely, honest face of a bearded child, ingenuous, countrified, primi tive, despite the Demidoff curls—a face in which all his feelings could be read as in an open book. That boy lost all the time. Twice or thrice I had seen him leave the table and rush hastily from the room; in a few minutes he would return to his place, flushed and perspiring, and I said to myself: "Ah! you have been telling your mother or your sisters some cock-and-bull story in order to get more money." It was a fact that the poor devil always returned with full pockets and began to play with renewed excitement. But luck was pitilessly against him that night. He lost and lost. I felt that he was intensely wrought up, quivering with excitement, that he no longer had the strength to meet ill fortune with a bold face. At each card that fell his nails buried themselves in the woollen cloth; it was heart-rending.

Gradually, however, hypnotized by that provincial atmosphere of ennui and idleness, very tired too from my journey, I saw the card-table only as

a very vague, very faint luminous space, and I finally fell asleep to the murmur of voices and rustling cards. I was suddenly awakened by the sound of angry words, resounding through empty rooms. Everybody had gone. The only persons remaining in the room were the member of the Jockey Club and my tall friend, both seated at the table and playing. It was a serious game, écarté at ten louis; and a mere glance at the despairing expression on that honest bull-dog face told me that the mountaineer was still losing.

"My revenge!" he exclaimed angrily from time to time. The other, always perfectly calm, held his own against him; and at every new *coup* it seemed to me that an almost imperceptible smile, cruel and disdainful, curled his aristocratic lip. I heard them call *la belle!* then a violent blow on the table; it was all over, the poor wretch had lost everything.

He sat for a moment as if dazed, gazing at his cards without speaking, with his heart-shaped vest all awry, his shirt rumpled and wet as if he had been fighting. Then, as he saw the duke gathering up the gold pieces scattered over the cloth, he sprang to his feet with a terrible cry: "My money, for God's sake, give me back my money!" And thereupon, like the child he still was, he began to sob: "Give it back to me — give it back!" Ah! I promise you he lisped no more. His natural voice had come back to him, as heart-rending as the voice of a strong man to

whom tears come in floods and are a source of genuine suffering. His adversary, still cold and sneering, looked at him without moving an eyebrow. Thereupon the miserable fellow threw himself on his knees and said under his breath, in a trembling voice: "The money is n't mine. I stole it. My father left it with me to pay a note—" Shame choked him, he could not finish.

At the first suggestion that the money was stolen, the duke had risen. A slight flush rose to his cheeks. His face assumed an expression of pride which was very becoming. He emptied his pockets on the table, and, laying aside for the moment his coxcomb's mask, he said in a natural and kindly voice: "Take it back, idiot. Did you think we were playing in earnest?"

I would have liked to embrace that young gentleman!

IN THE PROVINCES. — THE GUÉRANDE RACES.

First of all, let us tarry a moment in this charming and unique little town of Guérande, so picturesque with its old ramparts flanked by great towers and its moats filled with green water. Between the old stones the wild veronica grows in huge clusters, ivies and glycines cling to the projections and wind in and out, and terraced gardens display clumps of rose-bushes and drooping clematis along the edge of the battlements. As soon as you drive under the low arched postern, where the bells on the post-horses raise a merry, jingling echo, you enter a new country, an epoch five hundred years old. There are arched doorways, ogival doorways, venerable houses of irregular shape, of which the upper floors overhang the lower, with lines in the stone and defaced, weatherbeaten ornaments. On certain silent lanes are old manor-houses with high small-paned windows. The seignorial gates are closed, but between their disjointed planks one can see the stoop overgrown with verdure, clumps of hortensias by the door and the courtyard carpeted with weeds, where some crumbling well-curb or the ruins of some chapel form still another heap of stones covered with flowers and greenery.

For this is the true description of Guérande: a coquettish, flower-bedecked ruin.

Sometimes, above a worn and venerable knocker, the sign of a posting station or the escutcheons of a bailiff or notary are displayed bourgeois-fashion; but in most instances these ancient abodes have retained their aristocratic stamp, and by searching carefully one may find some of the great names of Bretagne buried in the silence of that little corner of France, which is in itself a whole past. In very truth a dreamy silence abides there. It prowls about that fourteenth century church, in whose shadow the fruit-women shield their flat baskets from the sun and knit without speaking. It hovers over those deserted walks, those moats filled with stagnant water, those peaceful streets through which a countrywoman passes from time to time, leading her cow, bare-footed, with a cord about her waist and a cap like Jeanne d'Arc's.

But on the day of the races the town presents a very different aspect. There is a constant going and coming of vehicles bringing bathers, male and female, from Croizic and Pouliguen. Wagons laden with peasants, lumbering, old-fashioned chariots which look as if they had just come out of a fairy tale, hired carrioles with old dowagers from the vicinity sitting in state therein, between maid servants in caps and pages in wooden shoes. They all arrive in the morning, in time for high mass. The bells ring out through the narrow streets, mingled with the clashing of barbers' scissors; and for two hours the church

is filled and the town deserted. At noon, at the first stroke of the *Angelus*, the doors are thrown open and the crowd pours forth into the little square, amid the psalm-singing of the beggars grouped under the porch, whose voices burst forth at the same moment. It is an extraordinary medley of all sorts of church music: Litanies, *Credos, Pater Nosters;* a display of sores and infirmities, of the leprosy of the Middle Ages. The very crowd contributes to this illusion of archaism: the women wear white caps ending in a point, with a circle of embroidery, over hair arranged in flat bands, — the fishwomen and salt-gatherers have floating strings or long fluted ribbons, — skirts with wide pleats and round wimples about the neck. The men have two very distinct costumes; the farmers wear a short jacket, high collar, and colored handkerchief arranged as a shirt front, which resembles the comb of the village rooster. The *paludiers*, or salt-gatherers, are dressed in the old Guérande costume, the long white blouse descending to the knee, the breeches, also white, secured with garters above the knee, and the black three-cornered hat, adorned with colored braid and steel buckles. This hat is worn in different ways. Married men wear it *en bataille*, like gendarmes; widowers and boys turn the points in a different way.

All these people scatter about through the old streets and assemble an hour later at the race-course, about a kilometre from the town, in a vast level tract bounded by the horizon.

From the raised stands the spectacle is a marvellous one. The sea in the background, a deep green flecked with white foam; nearer at hand the steeples of Croizic and the Bourg of Batz, and the fleecy salt marshes glistening in the sun at intervals in the broad sweep of marsh. The crowd comes from all directions across the fields. White caps appear above the hedges; the young men approach in groups, arm-in-arm, singing in their hoarse voices. Gait, songs, everything about them is ingenuous, primitive, almost uncivilized. The women who pass before us, with neckerchiefs of watered silk crossed over their wimples, heedless of the gentlemen in city hats who are staring at them, are reserved in manner and free from the slightest touch of coquetry or affectation. They have come to see, yes, indeed! but not to exhibit themselves. Pending the beginning of the races, all these people crowd behind the stands around great booths where wine and cider are sold, and cakes and sausages fried in the open air. At last the Guérande band arrives, surrounded by more noisy singing throngs, and interrupts the drinking for a moment. Every one hurries to find a place for the show; and in that rush of people scattering around the race-course, on the edge of ditches and of dismantled furrows, we remark the long white blouses of the salt-gatherers, which magnify their stature and make them look like Dominicans or Premonstrants. Indeed, that whole quarter of Bretagne gives one the impression of a huge convent. Even

toil is silent there. On our way to Guérande, we passed through villages which were as silent as the tomb, despite the activity of harvest time, and everywhere the threshers wielded their flails in unison, but without the slightest encouragement by speech or song. To-day, however, the cakes and cider and sausages have loosened the tongues of the young men, and all along the track there is a merry uproar.

The Guérande races are of two sorts: first there is the *citadine* race, one of those provincial steeple-chases of which we have seen hundreds. People with green cards in their hats, a few carriages standing about the inclosure, a general effect of gay parasols and long dresses, all in imitation of Paris; that sort of thing has little interest for us; but the races for mules and native horses are extremely entertaining. It is a terrible task to arrange in line those little Breton mules, obstinate by birth as well as by nature. The music, the shouting, the bright colors on the stands terrify them. One or other of them is always bolting in the wrong direction, and it takes time to bring him back. The youths who ride them wear scarlet Catalan caps, jackets of the same color, very full short breeches, and their legs and feet are bare; they have no saddles, — simply bridles at which the mules pull and jerk with extraordinary viciousness. At last they are off. We watch them galloping madly across the plain. The red caps are terribly jolted, and, with their legs straight and rigid, struggle to keep their

mounts within the space marked by the ropes. At the turn more than one rider rolls on the grass along the course; but the race is not interrupted for that. The salt-gatherer who owns the beast rushes to the spot, leaves his unfortunate jockey to rise as best he can and straddles the mule himself in his long blouse, which he has not time to remove. The people on the stands smile disdainfully; but the good Bretons yonder, perched in the trees, standing along the ditches, stamp with joy and applaud with frantic yells. Every one naturally is interested in the animals from his commune. The men from the Bourg of Batz, from Saillé, from Pouliguen, from Escoublac, from Piriac, watch for their fellows to pass, encourage the riders and even rush from the ranks to urge on the mules with blows of their hats and handkerchiefs. Even some white caps, with ribbons fluttering in the sea-breeze, suddenly appear to see Jean-Marie Mahé pass, or Jean-Marie Madec, or some other Jean-Marie. After the mules come the native horses and mares, a little less wilful, a little less wild, but full of ardor none the less and contending valiantly for the prize.

Their echoing trot ploughs up the soil of the track; and while they are racing, we see beyond it all, out at sea, where a high wind is blowing, a fishing-boat sailing laboriously toward Croizic. This proximity of the sea imparts an extraordinary grandeur to the spectacle; and the horses, the carriages rolling back toward the town, the

groups scattered about the plain, stand out against a shifting greenish background, a horizon instinct with animation and immensity.

When we return to Guérande the daylight is beginning to fade. The illuminations are in course of preparation — colored lanterns in the tall trees on the promenades, fireworks on Place de l'Église, a platform at the foot of the ramparts for the bagpipers. But suddenly a miserable little shower, as fine and stinging as hail, interrupts the festivities. Everybody flies for shelter to the inns, in front of which the wagons and carriages stand, dripping, with shafts in the air. For an hour the town is perfectly silent; then the parties of young men begin to march through the streets, singing. The great caps and little green shawls venture outside, two by two. They had intended to dance a reel, and dance they will in spite of the rain. *Dame!* they will indeed! Soon all the young people are drawn up in lines in the lower rooms of the cabarets. Some dance to the music of the bagpipes, others to "mouth-music," as they say here. The floors tremble, the lamps are thick with dust, and the same slow and melancholy refrain is droned forth in all directions. Meanwhile the chariots and carrioles rumble away through the five gates of the town. The old manor-houses are closed and the flowering shrubs which cover the ramparts seem in the darkness to increase in size, to join and become one confused mass, like the enchanted bushes which surrounded the castle of the Sleeping Beauty.

IN THE PROVINCES.—A VISIT TO THE ISLAND OF HOUAT.

A BEAUTIFUL summer's day, clear and cool, had just dawned in the bay of Quiberon, as we stepped aboard the pilot-boat which was to take us to the island of Houat. The breeze, which is always stirring at some point of that line of ocean, was blowing straight toward our destination, skimming along the surface of the waves which curled and wrinkled at its touch.

In the distance one could follow the coast-line by a strip of beach or a white house suddenly bathed in sunlight, brilliant spots between the deep blue of the waves and the monotonous blue of the sky, broken only by the light, fleecy, ragged clouds which the sailors hereabout call "horses' tails," and which indicate a fresh breeze for the afternoon.

The journey seemed short to us.

Nothing can be more uniform in appearance than the sea in fine weather; waves succeeding one another in perfect rhythm, plashing against the boat in murmuring foam, rising and falling, kept in motion by a strange restlessness, in which the storm lies hidden; and yet nothing is more varied in reality. Everything assumes tremendous importance on that surface, endowed with motion

and with life. There are ships in the offing, the mail-packet from Belle-Isle passing in the distance, her smoke trailing behind like a plume, fishing-smacks with white or tan-colored sails, schools of porpoises rolling through the waves, their sharp noses appearing above the surface, and islets from which whirling masses of gulls fly noisily away, or a flock of cormorants with their broad wings of birds of prey, made to soar and to flee.

On our way we pass the lighthouse of La Teignouse, perched on a rock; and although we are moving very fast, we have a very clear view of the reef and of the two human beings who dwell upon it. As we pass, one of the keepers, his blouse puffed out by the wind, is going down the little iron ladder which descends perpendicularly to the islet, forming an exterior staircase. His companion, seated in a hollow of the rock, is fishing dejectedly; and the sight of those two figures, so infinitely small in the vast expanse surrounding them, the white masonry of the lighthouse, its lantern, pallid and dull at that hour of the day, the weight of the great steam-bell, which rings on foggy nights — all these details of which we catch a passing glimpse suffice to give us a striking impression of that exile in the open sea and of the life led by the light-keepers, confined for weeks at a time in that hollow, resonant sheet-iron turret, where the voices of the sea and wind are repeated with such savage emphasis that men are obliged to shout in one another's ear to make themselves heard.

As soon as we have doubled the lighthouse, the island of Houat rises slowly on the horizon, and over the crests of the waves its rocky surface appears, whereon the sun casts a mirage of vegetation, of the tints of ripening crops and the velvety sheen of fields of grass.

As we approach, the aspect changes, the real nature of the place becomes apparent — barren, scorched by sun and sea, bristling with beetling cliffs; on the right a dismantled, abandoned fort; on the left a gray windmill, which shows you how hard the wind is blowing on shore, and a few very low houses grouped around their church spire; it is all very dismal, desolate, silent. One would think that it was an uninhabited spot, were it not for the flocks scattered over the hill-side and through the rocky valleys of the island, wandering about, lying down or browsing on the scanty, wild vegetation.

At intervals, amid the desolate cliffs, are little inlets describing graceful curves bordered with light sand. In one of these inlets we disembark, not without difficulty, for at low tide there is not water enough for the skiff, and we are obliged to land on wet slippery rocks, to which the seaweed clings with its long green hair, which the water disentangles and dilates, but which is heaped up for the moment in heavy sticky masses where we lose our footing at every step. At last, after many efforts, we reach the top of the high cliffs which command the whole sweep of the horizon.

In this clear weather, which brings the shore

of the mainland nearer, the view is beautiful. There is the church of Croizic and of the Bourg of Batz, ten or twelve leagues away, and the whole irregular coast line of the Morbihan, Saint-Gildas-de-Rhuiz, the Vannes and Auray rivers, Locmariaquer, Plouharmel, Carnac, the Bourg of Quiberon and its little hamlets scattered all along the peninsula. In the opposite direction the dark line of Belle-Isle stretches away toward the Mer Sauvage, and the houses of Le Palais gleam white in a patch of sunlight. But while the view of the outside world is magnified as it were, the view of Houat is altogether lost where we stand. Spire, fort, mill, all have disappeared in the inequalities of a surface as rough and billowy as the sea which surrounds it. We direct our steps toward the village by a winding path built between the deceptive low Breton walls, made of flat stones and abounding in détours and branches.

On the way we notice the flora of the island, of marvellous beauty and variety for that storm-beaten rock; the *Houat lily*, double and as fragrant as our own, large mallows, climbing rose-bushes, and the sea-pink, whose faint, sweet odor harmonizes naturally with the shrill song of the gray skylarks with which the island is overrun. Fields of freshly-cut grain and potatoes lie on either side of us; but in all the fallow land the furze, the melancholy furze, sturdy and well armed, runs everywhere, climbs and clings, with yellow flowers scattered among its thorns. As we approach, the cattle turn their heads; the

cows, accustomed to the flat cap and the Morbihan hat, follow us a long while with their great motionless eyes. Everywhere we see cattle, scattered here and there, unfettered and unwatched.

At last the village appears, in a hollow sheltered from the tempest and the sea mists, with its low, poor houses crowded together, as if to show a united front to the wind, and separated, not by lanes, for their straight lines would give the tempest an opening, but by *carrefours*, little open spaces of irregular shape, which, at this season, serve as threshing-floors for threshing the grain.

Half wild horses, of a breed somewhat resembling the Camargue breed, harnessed by twos or threes, go round and round in a narrow circle in these irregular squares, trampling the grain and causing the chaff to fly about in the sunlight. A woman guides them, a handful of straw in her hand; other women, armed with pitchforks, spread the grain on the ground. There is nothing striking in the costume: shabby clothes, discolored and of no special pattern, neckerchiefs yellow with age shading earth-colored, sunburned faces; but the scene itself is picturesquely primitive. There is a medley of neighs, of rustling straw and of loud voices uttering the harsh guttural syllables of the Breton dialect.

Such as it is, this poor Morbihan village makes you think of some African *douar;* there is the same stifling air, vitiated by the manure piled in the doorways, the same familiarity between men and beasts, the same isolation of a small group

of human beings in the midst of a vast expanse of solitude; furthermore the doors are low, the windows narrow, and there are none in the walls which look toward the sea. One has a consciousness of destitution struggling against the hostile elements.

The women overwork themselves in the fields and look after the cattle. The men fish at the peril of their lives. At this moment they are all at sea, save one old man, shivering with fever, whom we see seated beside his ropemaker's wheel, the miller, who is a stranger on the island and is paid by the month, and Monsieur le Curé, the most exalted personage on the island of Houat, and its greatest curiosity. Here the priest exercises supreme authority in all matters and is as absolute as a captain on board his ship. With his priestly authority he combines the authority of his administrative functions. He is deputy-mayor of the village and syndic of the seamen's guild; he also has the superintendence of all military works, forts large and small, erected on the island, which have no garrison in time of peace. If a dispute arises between two fishermen on the subject of a basket of lobsters, or the division of a catch, behold Monsieur le Curé transformed into a justice of the peace. If there is a little too much noise at the inn on Sunday evening, he hastily throws a scarf across his cassock, and performs at need the functions of village constable.

Not long ago, indeed, he descended to even more degrading duties. He had the monopoly of the sale of liquor and a nun doled it out for

him through a wicket. He also had the key of the common oven where every family baked its bread. These were precautions of exile, regulations governing the distribution of the sea-stores sent to this island, which is as truly at the mercy of the waves as any vessel.

Within three or four years the old customs have been modified to some extent; but the principle on which they are based is still in full vigor, and the present curé of the island, an intelligent and energetic man, seems to us to possess the strength of character and will to enforce respect for his multifold authority. He occupies a modest vicarage near the church, where two poplars, a superb fig-tree, a flower garden and a few wandering hens transport us to the heart of the continent.

Beside the parsonage is the school for boys and girls, under the management of nuns, who also have charge of the distribution of medicines to all these poor people, nurse them and advise them.

The sisters' house is also the terminus of the submarine telegraph which connects Houat with Belle-Isle and the continent. One of the sisters receives and sends messages; as we passed, I saw through the window her starched hood bending over the electric needle. We receive some other interesting information concerning the island of Houat and its population, in the little white-washed dining-room with all its rafters in plain sight, into which we are ushered by Monsieur le Curé, who invites us to sit down and rest. There

are no paupers in Houat. A communal fund supplies every one with the necessities of life. Fish are plentiful along the coast, the fishermen carry them to market at Croizic or Auray and always sell them at a good price; but the lack of a safe anchorage along that rock-bound coast prevents the people of Houat from being perfectly happy. It happens not infrequently in bad weather that the boats are obliged to seek shelter where they may from the greatest perils. Sometimes accidents happen even in the harbor, which is insufficiently protected by a short jetty of primitive construction. So that the sole ambition of the curé of Houat is to obtain an anchorage for the seven smacks which compose the navy of the island. We left him in that hope.

On leaving the village we passed the church, where the windows are tinged with changing shades of blue by the reflection of the sea; we paused a moment in the wild, silent little cemetery, where the few scattered black crosses seem like masts in the harbor against the horizon which surrounds us; and as we expressed our surprise at the small number of tombs and inscriptions contained in a cemetery of such great age, we were informed that until last year — another effect of the maritime customs of the island of Houat — they had always dug graves at random and committed the dead to the dust, unnamed, just as, on long voyages, they are committed to the passing wave.

NOTES ON LIFE

PREFACE

ALPHONSE DAUDET never in the course of his life published isolated thoughts; as they came to him, from a passing inspiration, a chance remark, he jotted them down, sometimes in a special note-book, oftenest in one where he was roughly sketching the chapters of a novel — on the margin, across the text, or on the cover. And this chance note, dashed across the work in hand, was often the embryonic idea of the next book, whose landmarks one might thus find, months apart, and follow to the complete elucidation.

Whenever he used one of these thoughts, he struck it out with a red or blue pencil; it was exhausted, done with, and the pencil-stroke is decisive, suggests satisfaction; it is the swing of the scythe over the ripe grain. The others remained untouched and without apparent connection. It is these that I have brought together.

It required courage — this gleaning. I had to go back to 1868, the year following our marriage, where the first annotations of the young writer are found among household memoranda, appointments with edi-

tors and managers, dates of payments, and all the serious preoccupations of a laborious and difficult entrance into the literary life. As the style and writing change, one may follow, between the lines where the thought broadens and deepens, the daily, intimate life, interwoven with the life of the author soon celebrated, in a weft that lacks not a guiding thread nor an instant's story.

It was a painful task for me, this searching through all his scattered work, each one of whose stages I could mark by the title of a book or the birth of one of our children; and if, through the magic of his words always full of color, terse and alive, I sometimes seemed to be talking with him, and passed two or three hours under the illusion of that close comradeship in which we lived, it was only to fall back again the more dejectedly, into the emptiness of his absence or the grievous assemblage of my regrets.

Most painful was it, when the fine writing, clear-cut as engraving, began to waver from a slight tremble of the hand, soon accentuated, where disease betrayed itself in bodily fatigue; and this became always more apparent as the thought gradually freed itself and, little by little, made of the man of talent of earlier years the high personality in literature that Alphonse Daudet became.

And yet, I was unwilling to leave to any one this task, which he had long ago confided to me, in a mysterious envelope to be opened after his death; and I took up one by one those manuscript books, small but so full, which are in brief the *Lettres de mon*

Moulin, *Jack*, *l'Immortel*, *Sapho*,[1] etc., finding each time, that once about his work, the list of characters written out, with their respective ages — for my husband made scenarios for his romances, with the exactitude required in a play — once in the midst, then, of one of his long stories, almost all the notes relate to the subject, and I must needs lay them aside, to avoid repetition from works widely known and read: but sometimes, doubtless in those pauses when the pen held in air turns the thought for a moment from the work under the hand, a remark slips in, two lines are interpolated, in a script luminous, distinct, and concentrated like the thought, and the author gives this a place aside, fearing confusion. The thoughts relating to war were almost all grouped in the eight months of the Siege and Commune, a time which so impressed Alphonse Daudet, when he shared at once in both the active and reflective life of his country, and his writing was the rebound of events: hence the justice and sincerity of this short journal.

The dreams are almost all of his youth, as is usual: with children the dream is as important as the day. As life becomes filled with work and distractions, dreams grow fewer and dimmer, and some — those where one takes wings to avert a fall or cross a river, delusive realizations of the ideal, the impossible — those no longer come at all. . . . My husband loved

[1] Four of these manuscripts had been given in token of friendship to Henry Céard, Léon Hennique, Gustav Geffroy, and J. F. Raffaëlli, who were kindly willing to intrust them to me in my researches.

these dreams, was careful to preserve them — he who was so alive to reality, yet always remained, in his great work of prose, the poet of his twentieth year.

. . . .

In a day, in an instant, life, talent, projects, all in the abyss — all but the supreme hope of a possible meeting beyond, and remembrance here. This last, at least, is ours, as ample as it is grievous, enveloping what was once the loveliness of a being, the charm of his person and his personality, that charm which brought him near to all, made him accessible to all, a man among men.

JULIA A. DAUDET.

NOTES ON LIFE

> All our dignity, then, consists in thought. It is by means of this that we must rise, not by time or space, which we could never fill. PASCAL.

Homo duplex, homo duplex! The first time I perceived that I was two, at the death of my brother Henry, when Papa cried so dramatically: "He is dead, he is dead!"—my first *I* wept, and the second thought: "How true that cry! how fine it would be on the stage!" I was fourteen.

I have often meditated on this dread duality. Oh! the terrible second *I*, always still while the other is up, acts, lives, strives, suffers!—this second *I*, that can not be intoxicated, nor made to shed tears, nor put to sleep! And how it sees! and how it mocks!

To a woman. Your eyes are like sweet violets.

WHAT profound disgust must those epithets feel which have lived for centuries with the same nouns! Bad writers can not be made to comprehend this. They think divorce is not permitted to words. There are people who write without blushing: *venerable trees, melodious accents. Venerable* is not an ugly word;

put it with another substantive—"your venerable burden," "most venerable worth," etc.,—you see the union is good. In short, the epithet should be the mistress of the substantive, never its lawful wife. Between words there must be passing liaisons, but no eternal marriages. It is this which distinguishes the original writer from others.

I READILY compare what is called Philosophy, to the cabinet of a ministry. Each new chief arranges the cabinet after his fashion, changes the place of papers and labels, makes what is called a work of classification, nothing more.

He who goes has taken nothing; he who arrives brings nothing. They talk of amelioration and reforms. Do not believe them. Different classification, that is all. Each new great philosopher who sets us astir, only classifies our ideas, tickets our knowledge, in a way different from his predecessor's. Rangement, arrangement, and even derangement! Some of them, like Proudhon, tear all the papers, smash the green boxes, throw the furniture out of the window;—then they are left standing in the middle of the cabinet, without so much as anything to sit on.

WE have in our lives singular moments of absence, or of vision perhaps, during which all objects, ideas, things, persons, present themselves to us as isolated, detached from time, from space, from ordinary circumstances. At such moments certain words appear to us in monstrous shapes. Two or three times the

word *death* has so appeared to me — as a big, black hole, a thousand fathoms deep, to whose bottom my eyes might have penetrated. At such times the men encountered in the street seem indescribably comic — madmen seen through a fog. We ourselves lose the sense of our personality. We get outside of ourselves, and watch the action of that which was ourselves. Once the idea of my name's being Alphonse Daudet, made me laugh heartily.

PEDAGOGUES charged with the instruction of children, always forget that to *apprehend* is not to *comprehend*. How many professors *know* Latin? Many have learned it, few know it. I shall never forget the famous: *Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit*. . . . It was always cited to us as an example of onomatopœia, and my teacher had persuaded me that one might mistake it for the gallop of a horse.

One day, wishing to frighten my little sister, who had a great fear of horses, I came up behind her and cried, "*Quadrupedante putrem*," and so forth. Well, the little thing was n't frightened.

THE senses have doors of communication between them, the arts also.

A CHILD of a few days, and a man in his last agony, have the same breath, feeble, gasping, rapid.

HEARD a very funny thing: a comedian describing the benediction of the sea, which he had seen in Brittany. "It made you feel like everything in your

back, and then all over you, and then you felt so, you know, and so, and then you went into a corner to cry." All this to signify that he was moved.

A DAINTY morsel to exploit! An edict under the reign of Nero, more brutal than the edicts of these times: "Order to open his own veins." See Suetonius and others.

SOME ONE asks me if I don't think the ethics of La Fontaine pernicious! 'T is as if you asked if a purée of lily or a jasmine fricassée is good for the stomach. La Fontaine, like the jasmine, is made for inhaling; it smells good, it 's not to be eaten.

HOW many men with libraries over which one might write "For external use," as on druggists' labels.

SAW one time in the Vosges, a beech wood overtopping a forest of pines; a rosy wood to marvel at, half its leaves pale green, the rest red, a charming effect.

"That wood," said the forester, "is doomed, eaten up by weevils; every touch of red is a leaf lost."

For all the world like young consumptives, their faces illumined by dainty rose tints for days before they die.

OF a writer, doing his journalistic work day by day, regularly, untalked of: Silent sewing-machine.

READ this fine thought in Seneca: "The ambitious man" compared to "those dogs to whom one throws

bits of meat, and who gulp them as they fly, jaws wide, throat tense, always thinking of the next piece, not relishing, not even tasting the morsel as it comes; insatiable."

ANOTHER thought from Seneca: "Glory always walks with genius (*virtus*), whose shadow she is."

Only, like the shadow of bodies, she is sometimes ahead, sometimes behind, according to the place of the sun.

THE Oath of the Tennis Court! How well that paints the French nation, accomplishing its greatest revolution in a hall for sports! I would David had represented them all with rackets in their outstretched hands.

OF M—, admirable brains without a regulator

D'A—, a dull mind manifesting in lyrics.

THE French language to be compared to an old salon: the pieces of furniture are the words. On some of them the covers have been left, and they have faded of themselves, without being of service: the others, on the contrary, have taken all the sun's rays, all the Blüchers of the language have wiped their feet on them (Vallès and others); in short, to receive in that salon is right embarrassing.

WE have the same age since we have the same grief.

WHEN one wishes nightingales to sing well, he puts out their eyes. When God wishes to make great poets, he chooses two or three and sends them great sorrows.

RUSTICS' faces, color of the soil.

TRUST not wines too old; they 're in their dotage.

THE sole brave kings that France has had are — I would swear it — the donothings. *Nihil fecit*, say the biographers. If I were a king, I would as much might be said of me.

OF my friend X—. He excels in mediocrity.

LOOK well to the affront, but consider not the man.

ANALOGY: The Valois race ending in three brothers, the Bourbon race also.

DE V—, an ardent soul in a gummed envelope.

OF D—: There is a singular medley of fancy and reality in this writer. When he makes a book from observation, a study of bourgeois manners, it always has a side fanciful, poetic. If, on the contrary, he writes a book of pure imagination, the stars themselves will speak in it like people of to-day. Always between heaven and earth, an African locust.

A MAN coming out of a fight, eyes blackened, swollen. . . . One always looks first at the eye. It is

the thing most living, most eloquent, most insolent in a face. It lives with a life of its own, radiates light. It attracts even very young children, who always want to stick their fingers into eyes.

READING the *Lettres d'un Voyageur*, it seems to me plain that the best were written upon quitting Musset; exquisite, winged fancy; the butterfly passed that way! Later, when the lady made poetry by herself, she wrote the *Diable aux Champs*. Heavy!

WHEN one is loved, he should have nothing else to do.

SAW one summer's day, a touching thing: a butterfly astray in the waste of sunshine on the Place de la Concorde. The atmosphere fiery, the asphalt melting, the little creature went on in this Sahara, fluttering close to the ground, searching for freshness over some stray drops fallen from a watering-cart.

A WOMAN'S definitions:
Little girls: three chins and the air of a dunce.
The works of George Sand: a great soup.
The Mondays of St. Beuve: they smell musty.

VERDICT of Napoleon on the limbs of his soldiers: rags.

A GERMAN shrew: she's a mad forget-me-not.

TURGENIEFF, in his landscapes, gives you the impression of a Russia hot, parched, all humming with heavy laden bees: I believe in all his works the snow does n't fall twice.

NOON, 't is the critical hour of the day; thirty, 't is the critical age of woman; before noon you cannot affirm that the day will be fine; before thirty you cannot tell that the woman will be honest.

HE used to say: I invent very easily, very fast; I compose less rapidly, write with desperate slowness. I have too many ideas; a great reservoir always too full, with only a pipe fine as a hair for outlet. I conceive grand, render graceful: an eagle enters my brain, then, *frrt!* three humming birds come out of it.

DE F—, a Provençal who has frozen his hands.

THE dryest hearts are most inflammable.

THERE are days when everything that happens to me seems to have happened before; when all that I do, I picture myself doing in the past, in another life, in a dream, with the same accompaniment of circumstances. Certain intonations of certain words, give me the idea of things already heard; certain colors or associations of color, of things already seen. How difficult to say this as I feel it!

WE have in life but two or three primal sensations, mother sensations, all the rest are only copies — reprints of the first impression. Thus, the first pine I saw, or rather, with which I lived, was at Fontvieille: all pines now recall to me Fontvieille, all autumn hazes recall Bures, in the Chevreuse Valley. (To be developed.)

FOR works of art and literature there ought to be mortuary chambers, like those of Germany. Works believed to be dead should be exposed there for a time — and so none would get buried alive.

ON our side, we love things, but they do not reciprocate. That is n't fair.

I HAVE a highly developed sense of the ridiculous. The ridiculous hurts me; I laugh, but I suffer; besides, it strikes me in myself as in others.

THE man who beats his wife, then, quite spent with his wrath, cries in a tearful voice: "Monstrous woman! what a state she put me in!" Like the little brew of herbs the old grandfather wanted prepared every time he had made a scene. The need of being petted, soothed.

CONSOLING another is lending to be repaid.

NOTHING so oppressive as accounts of travel, nothing so charming as impressions: the defined, the elusive.

OH! these people who say everything — the catchpenny writers!

THE verb is the bone of the sentence. Michelet makes them boneless, the Goncourts sometimes also.

A NATURE expansive without regard to direction, does not give itself, it throws itself away.

SOME souls are hares, some are cabbages.

THE men of the Midi do not say: "I love him!" but: "He loves me! Ah, how he loves me!"

AFTER the sea, the forest of Fontainebleau has moved me most. Impression of grandeur almost identical.

I saw it one autumn day; Bas-Bréau was all golden under black clouds low enough for the hand to touch. The forest was illumining herself with her own light, the deeps of her paths all on fire.

I understand now the northern lights. In them the sun scarcely counts. Color dances of itself, each ray for itself. 'T is not at all our splendid broadcast and effervescence of the Midi. All this still very vague in my head, but beginning to grow clear. In the Midi the light is on objects, in the North it is within.

MY attention was called one day to Balzac the provincial, disclosing the great Parisian world, describing with the imagination of a dazzled country squire, a world he had never seen. Possibly this world is real to-day, in which case life has copied the romance. Such things are not so rare as is supposed.

In the present case, this is probably what happened: Russia, where the novels of Balzac had their first great success, imitated the manners of Parisian high life in his books; then these manners, applied there, and believed to be authentic, came back to us (as in the comedies of Musset), and we have now welcomed and adopted them. This is life in circulation.

OF a philosopher stereotyped and pompous: Prudhomme at Cape Sunium.

GOOD subject for a comedy, I 've used the title elsewhere: *The Neighbor's House.* People who pass their time criticising their neighbors, while they do exactly the same things themselves.

HAVE read the history of '48, by Louis Blanc. A worthy book, but what strikes me most is the small stature of the author. He is always on a table, on a chair, on people's shoulders, passed from hand to hand. And what admiration for men of size! One would say a Brobdingnag revolution recounted by a Gulliver, one of the party chiefs.

LET the work be literary, but let not the workman's hand be seen.

THERE is an age tiresome, stupid, ugly, the moulting age, from eleven to thirteen years: the child loose-jointed, awkward, his voice false and shrill: the ungrateful age! Let us say one has this age in literature.

IN the music of Chopin, all the turns, rapid, shapely, ornate, are like brandenburgs: charming music with black brandenburgs.

TO add to observations on comedians: a certain one's arrival at his home, which had been ruined in the war. The emotion was sincere, but played as in a stage scene. Arms folded, head high, eyes cast about, then a half turn, a tear pressed out by the finger tip, and the first position again, full face, the gaze high, and firm now, a tapping with the left foot, a little quaver checked on the lips: "Be still, my

heart!" All this arranged, mounted, with a precision, a conventionality; — and yet the emotion was real, but how little appealing!

SOMETHING odd: Every time I come in contact with sentiments badly expressed, exaggerated or false, I find myself redden, and my eyes shift as if I were telling a falsehood.

IN the study I mean to make of the men of the Midi, I shall encounter many similitudes with the study of comedians: the man of Nîmes and the man of the Porte-Saint-Martin.

AHEAD of the advance guard, among the marauders and sharpshooters, in that complete abandon of one's self and of others, that grand letting-go of everything, — scented a nameless odor of bloody debauch and cadavers.

PERPETUAL contact with death, the sight of blood and of corpses, when it does not refine the soul, brutalizes it.

Remark of a zouave after Reichshoffen: "There was beef for you!"

DANGER is an intoxication that sobers.

HOW stupid are all pictures of battles! The soldiers should be only accessory, so much does the landscape fill the scene. A battle — 'tis a wood, a ravine, a street, a cabbage-field, with smoke.

AMUSING speech of Gambetta to the irregulars who offered themselves for a mission: "You are very young!" A feint to give himself the air of age.

A SINGULARLY romantic case happened in our quarter. A Bavarian family had lived in France many years: the son, a naturalized Frenchman, enrolled in the *garde mobile;* the father, forced to quit France, as a Bavarian, enrolled in the *landwehr* and returning to Paris in the army of the enemy.

OBSERVATION on comedians: one of them enrolled in the volunteers, less from true bravery than from love of shoulder-straps — for he 's an officer — and the joy of saluting and being saluted military fashion: wandering about among the cafés, with his whistle, which, for that matter, he never uses in action, but only to terrify the bourgeois by showing them how they do down there in the trenches.

A PRETTY poltroon; the poor fool on the Fontenay route, who from fear of shells dared not speak to any one nor stop, lest it should make a group! The Prussians fired on groups!

THEY tell me of an officer of the National Guard, who has been decorated for a wound he was supposed to have got in the affair at Montretout. Well, the rascal wounded himself, in the face and eyes of the whole battalion, staving in a barrel of bacon.

SOMETHING very touching was the return of the painter L—. Wounded at Malmaison, then made prisoner, he came back after two months, without

warning. His wife had wept, despaired. One evening she hears some one calling her from the stairway — a feeble, far-away cry. Is she dreaming? She goes out, her child in her arms, leans over, and sees L—, with his crutches, on the stairs, unable from weakness and emotion to go farther, sitting there crying for joy. What a fine scene! For awhile they looked at each other, weeping; then there were kisses to suffocation, or rather to the suffocation of the toddler, who, understanding none of it, was beginning vaguely to recognize this big man come back with the long sticks under his arms.

PUT in my study of the men of the Midi, the exaggeration of the glance, which kindles at all propos; of the speech, which accentuates everything, gives a value to every word, every letter. When those people say "*mon estomac*," it is "*mon estomack*." The effect is no longer that of anything human, but of a monster of war, something like the *Merrimac*.

CONDEMNED to death! A gentleman enters a café. "I 've just come from the war," he said, and he joined in the conversation; they were talking of the court-martial's decision regarding the men of October 31st. "Ah, you have news?" asks the gentleman; "what is it?" "There are three condemned to death, Blanqui, Flourens, and another." "His name?" They give it. "Bah!" says the man, "why that 's I!" He remains undecided a moment, then, rapping on the table: "Waiter, a bock!" But he could not finish it. He clasped close the hands of the others, looking to right and left, then disappeared down the passage.

THE general — they called him "general," — that old retired clerk. One of the first to be shot when the troops entered Paris.

SEQUEL to the Siege of Paris: those Parisians transported to the provinces, far away from their little incomes or pensions, dying of hunger, with dignity, enduring suffering yet more terrible, in the midst of a population so well nourished.

MAKE something out of the saying of a sub-prefect under the Empire, after Forbach and Reichshoffen: "I have a volunteer; to what corps shall I send him?"

DRUMMER going about the village: "To be sold next Sunday, in the town hall of Draveil, a lot of Prussian sentry-boxes."

NICE type! man in the wagon with me when I escaped from Paris, after the Commune. In proportion as the distance from the fortifications increased, he became insolent, defiant, fierce toward the Communards, threatening to bayonet them all. Very curious, too, this wagon, silent a good quarter hour, then the "ouf!" of relief, after Choisy-le-Roi.

SCENE of the Insurrection; entry of the Versaillais into Paris. A confederate, stretched on a cot in a military hospital, gets up, mounts to the roof, shoots down the first messenger passing in the street. Hospital surrounded; women across the way looking out through the blinds. Something white brought down by the soldiers; it is the confederate in his pajamas,

face pale, handsome, curly-headed fellow, shot at the corner of the rue Blanche. The coquettes gaze at the handsome corpse.

STORY told by the guardian of Père-Lachaise: The husband disappears during the Commune, the wife thinks she recognizes his body at the morgue, buys a lot, lays it out, puts up a grille. Then the husband, the real one, returns: he had been playing truant, knocking about for fifteen days. Imagine his rage at the expense incurred, and, above all, at not being able to oust the other from his ground. Prohibited from touching him!

INTERESTING to study, the face of Monselet, during the siege of Paris: sensualist, gormand, and very heroic, quite ready to give his skin for his country, but without suffering, and above all without ridicule. Well, Monselet is stout. To learn the manœuvres was hard! He took private lessons, "present arms!" — and his arms too short! He could not bring himself to join the company till he knew well the mechanics of the thing, and he was the admiration of all men for his fine figure under arms, and his formidable attacks with the fork.

FLOURENS at the Montgeron station, a Horace in his hand, exchanging courtesies with the station-master. He had just been passing a few days with his mother. The train carries him off in its whirlwind, far from the little grass plot of the station, his eyes filled with the misty meadows, so calm in the rising sun.

I never saw him again except down there in that great room with the dead, the sabre-stroke of the captain of gendarmery across his brow.

CONFUSION and fear on the field of battle. Silhouette which haunts me of an officer of artillery on a night of combat at Nanterre.

IT is a terrible thing, when you have known the person, to have some one say to you: "Such a one has been shot!" You see the contortion of his face, the puppet-like gesture of the stricken man as he falls; you hear his voice.

NO hackneyed appeals to pity, but in the name even of our selfishness, of our future tranquillity, let us not be implacable. In that way the whole thing is eternalized. . . . If you could wipe out even to the third generation of those people — but no, you can not. The Marats, the Maroteaus of order are still more terrible; — they talk of killing, of shooting down in the name of morality, etc. . . . Let us strive for it that such things shall not begin again.

EVEN in the most terrible battles, death is an eventuality, an accident.

THOSE who have died in these tumultuous days of the Commune, have died as one leaves a salon — English fashion.

IT has been the war of the negroes, San Domingo with its cruelties, the orgies of the Cape, Dessalines, Toussaint L'Ouverture, apes for generals, masked balls of orang-outangs, revels of satyrs. In face of all

this, I am like an honest planter barricaded in his plantation, who sees his sugar-cane burning. Inclination to run bayonets into them, and yet — poor negroes! poor devils!

They have a negro's ingenuousness and ignorance: they will be more unhappy freed, perishing of hunger unless the white man does his part. The white must enter in, recognize the struggle, point out to the black that he is no longer a slave, and that he should no longer give himself up to the guidance of the half-breeds.

These latter are the more ferocious. The negro, with his thick lips, kills, burns, but he has sometimes bowels of compassion: in the terrible war of the negroes, at the Cape, at San Domingo, blacks were seen saving their masters, but never a half-breed. The half-breed has white blood in his veins, and seems to draw from it a new ferocity.

In this terrible war, which has no few analogies with revolts of slaves, — the same methods, the same follies, — it was the half-breeds, the A —'s, the V —'s, half working men, half bourgeois, who committed the most atrocities.

BEFORE le Bourget, a trench of the advance-guard; Pujol of the *Gymnase*, sergeant of volunteers. And all at once, a ridiculously hirsute fellow near me, who says: "I am Gorski. Do you remember a children's ball at Lyons? — at the Mouillards?" Never seen since, never thought of; and the other night, in the fever of a restless sleep, that palish profile before me: "I am Gorski."

INTOXICATION of being in the ranks, the simple unity of action; thus have I felt beat the heart of the people of Paris, absolutely strange to me before.

THE country: what it thinks. So much trouble to go to the very bottom, to stir up the lowest strata. When the wind is fallen, the tempest long calmed, everything still trembles underneath.

THE shell in the trenches of fort Gravelle. The base-born fear, moment never to be forgotten. New danger, new fear.

ERECT, prone. These two so different fashions of viewing a battle. Tolstoy has shown it superbly, but I wish also to express it in life compared to a battle, the difference of vision, valor or timidity.

MAKE a portrait of Bazaine, taking Algeria as a point of departure. Moral undress, contact with the Orient, primitive manners, burnoose, bridle loose on the steed's neck. Spain also played an important part in his life.

AN admirable lie! Do something with the very dramatic situation of an honest man on whom life imposes the obligation of telling a falsehood, and who in failing to tell it, would bring dishonor upon himself.

TALE for Christmas: Story of a poor little girl who has for shoes the old ones of a big person. She leaves them by the chimney-place, Santa Claus mistakes, thinks they are a woman's, puts nothing in them.

"WHY are your songs so short," said one to the bird; "have n't you much breath?"

"It is chiefly that I have many songs, and wish to tell them all."

HOW everything holds together! By what a mysterious thread are our souls bound to things! You read in some nook of the forest, and the thing is done for the rest of your life. Every time you think of the forest, you see the book; each time you re-read the book, you see the forest. For myself, who live much out of doors, there are titles of books, names of authors, that come to me enveloped in perfumes, in sounds, in silences, in forest byways. I no longer know what novel of Turgenieff's it is that lives in my remembrance under the form of an islet of rosy heather, already a little seared by the autumn. In short, the beautiful hours of life, the fugitive moments when one says to himself, with tears in his eyes, "Oh! how good life is!" — those moments so impress us, that the least accompanying circumstance, the landscape, the time, are all captured in the remembrance of our happiness; like a net we might draw in, full of water grass, crushed lilies, broken reeds, and the little fish flashing silver in the midst.

IT is vain for Champfleury to write romances, he will always remain an author of pantomime; his characters have nothing but gestures.

I HAVE seen fishes which, in dying, change color five or six times consecutively; an agony as rich in blended hues as a twilight of the Orient.

He used to say: I have spent my life smothering my father within me, every moment feeling him waken again, with his manias, his tempers. And, much preoccupied with the fear of this resemblance, he had noticed that when he gave way to these hereditary impulses, his face masked itself under a series of the paternal expressions.

The tribe of crickets, always on the door-sill, and always singing: the Meridionals.

Why do I sense in this frivolous and amorous music of Rossini, a savor of voluptuousness and death? It is at the depths, away at the depths of my being, that these too sensuous melodies leave their impression so vibrant, so fugitive.

Following my wife's observations on light, and my notes on the forest of Fontainebleau.

Study of light on the flowers of my little garden: the roses, whose faces pale or blaze according to the state of the sky.

When the day is gray, or twilight is coming on, the broom bursts into flame, illumining the whole garden; you may read by its light; the white clusters of the flowering mustard glitter; the garden makes a fire of all its colors, lives in a radiance of its own.

Playing Weber, with open windows, at seven of a June night, J — said that Weber's music ennobles the landscape, gives solemnity to familiar things in nature. Something else from her: How well they go together, water and flowers: how the flowers love the water!

LOCAL vanity: certain great men, certain parvenus come to power, are sure to be less sensible of a great triumph than of a small satisfaction to their vanity, in some given place, at some obscure street corner of their native town.

TAKE care lest in being artistic you are no longer original.

MAKE something of this: A department clerk writes a letter to a friend, to kill time, seals it, stamps it, intrusts it to a lancer, who gallops away with his big envelope, defends it with heroic valor against the insurgents, and falls defending it.

THE Aureole. A god who loses his aureole.

THREE tinkers going along the highway, their pans gleaming in the sun. They cry in turn: "Tins to mend!" the first in a deep bass, the next a bit higher, the third, a child, in a shrill little treble. Heat oppressive, route dusty and silent, not a house, only trees and bushes. It was touching!

THERE are women who laugh without gayety.

SYMPATHETIC ink, visible only by the warmth of a hearth. My wife said she would write her books with that; they should be legible only by flame, comprehensible only to luminous natures.

A BEAUTIFUL comparison to be drawn from those stars which are perhaps dead, gone out thousands of

years ago, yet whose light endures, and will endure through centuries. Symbol of the dead genius and the immortality of his work. Homer seems to be singing still.

TELEMACHUS. A young man sent by his mother to an old friend, that the latter might be his Mentor. But the elder is less reasonable than the younger, and in this case it is Telemachus who directs everything, draws Mentor out of a slough of difficulties, he all the time thinking himself vastly experienced.

WHAT *alma parens*, the earth! we stab, flay, crush, rend, upheave her; there are the plow's long sabre-strokes, the cruel claws of the harrow, bores, picks, petards, mines; a continual tearing and quartering. And the more we torture, the more generous she is; and from all these open wounds she floods us with life, warmth, riches.

AN alluring page to write: the battle of Rosbach, as described by a soldier of the French Guard, or by the hairdresser of Maréchal de Soubise. Camp of women, actresses, courtesans, parasols, parrots, dogs.

TO put in *Artists' Wives:* Y—the great lyre-bearer, the Apollo wreathed in bay, charged with umbrellas, overshoes, and furs, waiting for his wife at the theatre exit.

NERVES: no convictions, no opinions, no ideas; nerves. It is with them that he judges. There are days when his nerves have good sense.

SOMETIMES a cloud passed over the sun, and one saw its great shadow scud along the plain, like a close-packed flock of sheep.

A SUMMER'S night. A gentle breath of air. The stars like tears trembling on the face of the sky. All at once a sigh of profound melancholy crossed the night; somewhat like the breaking of a lute's string. It passed, lapped in the lethargic odors of citron flowers; it was the last breath, the last sigh of the Latin race.

WHAT a strange thing is the atmosphere of crowds: how it seizes you, rouses you, stirs your indignation. Impossible to remain cold, impossible to resist, except by violence.

CERTAIN poets when they try to write prose, resemble those Arabs who on horseback are tall, handsome, supple, elegant: once on foot they scarce seem men, — soft, flabby bundles!

FOLLY is a cranial fissure through which vice sometimes enters.

THERE are some of Mendelssohn's *Songs without Words* which vibrate like voices on the water.

IT was inevitable that I should return to this fine subject of hereditary suicide: Two brothers. The father took his own life, the grandfather his: the same desperate melancholy seizes the sons at about the same age. They love each other devotedly:

this love saves them. The mother has told each the fears she has for the other. As he listens to the maternal confidences, each says to himself: "Poor woman! she does not suspect that I, too, feel this temptation." But each sets himself to watch the other, divert him, shield him from death, and does it so well that without realizing it, the one striving to preserve the other, both arrive at healing themselves. This I see in a primitive country, in a romantic old family domain.

I ONCE saw, in a little village called Saint Clair, a suggestive thing: the church, the manse, the school, the cemetery, all together. And I thought of an existence whose whole course might have been passed there, in the same spot, from baptism to burial.

SO long the days, so short the years!

THERE are people who see nothing, who may go anywhere unscathed. The charming *mot* of C—, just returned from Australia, who, questioned upon the aspect of the country, its customs, and so forth, always came back to the question: "Guess how much potatoes are!"

TO use somewhere, the intonation of B. d'A—, paying in his little furnished room a bill of twenty-five francs, and demanding in emphatic tones: "To whose order?" "Nivière's," replied the little old collector. "Very well!" You would have thought yourself in a great counting house, at Calcutta.

It is a very touching thing to see on the ships' decks, the Arabs, poorly clad, setting out for Alexandria: they have left everything behind, make their devotions without ostentation, suffer in silence, take the rain, the wind, the buffet of the sea. . . . Then they debark, go away in bands, and pray for fifty days, to purify themselves. Every good Mussulman ought once in his life to make the effort of this journey. Some go as great lords, but most in the garb of the poor, take no money, and strew the highways with their dead bodies. But on the return, what tales to recount, eyes yet dazzled with the vermilion lamps in the midst of the splendor of the mosques. Many keep the ravishment of it all their lives.

I have known some who attempt, too, the journey to Mecca, always a fine and glorious thing to do, even when one falls by the way: and those who did not make this effort in Art, who never embarked on the long and chanceful voyage, they were not true artists.

Something to be made out of this proverb of ours: "Gau de carriero, doulou d'oustau." (Joy of the street, grief of the home.) And how surely a proverb of the Midi!

Poor country! France plays a singular rôle in Europe. On dark nights men go out with torches, and 't is he that bears the light who sees the least. France plays in Europe this perilous rôle: she marches ahead of the other nations, lights them, but,

dazzled by her own fire, wallows in the mud, wades through the puddles.

SOMETHING amusing I've noticed: In little lives, narrow, toilsome, where a single continuous drama is acted, the drama of bread, there is always a name often repeated, that of the moneyed man, the gentleman of standing, on whom all depends, who could, if he would, change everything: this name comes, goes, circulates in the house, sounding differently in each mouth. The wife and even the children repeat it familiarly, without so much as adding the word *monsieur:* they have never seen him, it does n't matter. "Have you asked Dupont?" "Oh, if Dupont would advance us the money!" "I am off for Dupont's," the husband says as he goes out, and "Oh, I dreamed about Dupont last night!" says the wife when she wakes. The littlest tot of all, just beginning to talk, pronounces the name: "Du — pont."

ONE ridicules perfectly only those absurdities that are a trifle his own.

ABUSE of the word contempt, in parliamentary discussions, since the famous saying of Guizot. Ah! how many funny things in the ways of the Chamber! What a fine romance, in English style, could be made out of "Scenes from Parliamentary Life."

TELL of the pity I feel for the small shopkeepers who never sell their wares.

HE said that he did not lack will, but that he put it off sometimes, like a heavy and galling armor, good only for days of battle.

HEROIC phantasy narrating this:

The King of Bohemia, blind, comes to put his sword at the service of France: attacked by the English, he has his horse fastened between those of his two sons, and engages cut and thrust. "Lead me into the thick of the fight," he says to his sons. "Are we there?" "Yes, my lord." He strikes, then speaks to his children: no reply; dead, both of them.

AS they age, great artists, the conquerors of nations and of hearts, very beautiful women, all who triumph, are touched with an ennui, a melancholy of decline, that I shall describe some day.

THOSE he pities suffer less than he, and he wears himself out with others' griefs.

FIXED idea. Take a man, upright, ingenuous, untrained, who has suffered an injustice, and is determined to avenge himself. He obstinately works his own ruin, loses the sense of the family and of humanity, becomes an incendiary, a murderer, in revolt against the whole social structure.

IN the last days of his life, the aged Livingstone, seized with a sort of ambulatory delirium, wandered at hazard, camped here and there, then set out again, without aim or compass. It was the somnambulism

of travel. In the domain of thought, the old age of our great Hugo makes me think of that.

THAT publicity which annoys and outrages, and whose loss is death.

I NOTE, in passing, the avowal, so heartrending, so ridiculous, of Madame Roland to her old husband, of her quite ideal passion for Buzot. Grief of the old man, the cruel misconception, the savor taken out of life for ever. And the conclusion of Sainte-Beuve: "Would n't it have been better to deceive her husband and say nothing to him about it?" But I detect something else here, the unconscious vengeance of the woman who makes a rude sacrifice to remain honest, and wishes the old husband, obstacle to her happiness, to suffer with her.

History: the life of peoples.
Romance: the life of men.

FOUND at N—, an artist of my lineage, charming old man, straight and vigorous under his eighty years. I get him to turn the leaves of his life, stir the antique dusts of his memory. Delightful reminiscences. David, his cheek puffed out of all shape, his mouth full of soup, exacting from his pupils, whom he calls "thee" and abuses, the correction of their drawing· the anatomy of the finger, the nail. Then visits to Malmaison, to Josephine in Roman draperies of creole tissue, hedged round with tropic birds and marvellous flowers, that have come for her over hostile waters, from the very ends of the earth. Talma also

crosses the scene, Talma in the country, repeating the vagaries of the Duc d'Antin, upheaving his park, always getting into debt and having his obligations met by the Emperor. All this very simply told, during little halts, as he trotted about the sloping garden; and always at the end of the recital, a shake of the head, a far-away glance, a: "I saw that myself," like a signature of authenticity at the bottom of a picture.

CHAT at table, about the earliest dwellings of mankind. The round form given to cabins the world over, after the manner of the beaver, who builds in this fashion. I think the tree, with the shadow of its foliage, suggested the circular form of huts, as it gave also the first idea of the column and its capitals, the ogive, and so forth.

FINE touch of Gall's, discussing, in a lecture on phrenology, the amativeness of woman, citing a mistress who had adored him and whom he had loved passionately. Oh, the good, the lovely creature, so devoted, so tender! "I have her skull there, gentlemen, and, if you like, we will study it." Then to the attendant: "On the shelf, at the left, number eight."

CHARMING type of woman, affected with a timidity amounting to disease, so that her intimate friends alone are acquainted with her, in the true sense of the word, alone know she is beautiful, a musician, an exquisite creature. Under fire of eyes, in conversation, she is another woman, her whole being contracts.

Could never bring herself to have her portrait painted; wears the ring of Gyges, which renders her invisible to all that intimidate her. The husband, talented, jealous, greatly pleased at having his wife all to himself, smiles pityingly as he observes other women. Put beside her a "*femme pour les autres*," husband vain, a player to the gallery.

THE Goncourt romances, admirable cartoons on the nineteenth-century model; the *Serving-maid*, the *Bourgeoise*, and so forth.

BANVILLE, disgusted with the commonplaces of conversation, suppresses them, replaces them by a sort of legerdemain of word, a kind of *et cætera*, to arrive at the essential phrase.

CHARMING picture to be drawn in the world of ideas, from the recent discovery in science that light is nothing but motion. Is n't that the Midi, though?

ANGER. Between two beings united by the heart, by blood, by familiarity, from father to son, from brother to brother, it passes and ruptures everything. Looks of hate, words of hate; a thousand miles apart. "There is nothing more between us. I wish you were dead, struck down by my hand!" Afterward, oh! what tears, what straining to the heart to repair all this. Possible, when both are violent, but if only one is so, in time how tired the other becomes!

NOT to be lost: the impression made by that trio, violin, flute, and falsetto voice, rising suddenly under

my window, on the bank of Lake Lucerne, in the sonority of air and water. Italian melody of perfect grace, the loveliness of the day and of the sky, my whole soul stirred and mounting in song. And how far off it is! To be put somewhere as the echo of an ended love-affair.

BELIEVER by tradition, conventionality, respect for the priesthood. God in heaven; below, his road-inspectors.

ATTACKED by such a taste for precious stones as physiologists consider evidence of a cracked brain, he passed hours before the shop windows, enamored of an opal, bathed, lapped round in its fires. Then he wrote, and the words gave him a like sensation, tints, reflections, plays of light under his fingers; he engulfed himself in them.

SKETCH of X—, who has just died, long a banker, diplomat, high liver, regular old African of the Conquest, eater of hashish, fervent Catholic, disciple of Dupanloup. A great pallor, eyes lustreless, but all at once a mad flash of lightning in them when he spoke of religion. Boasting that he had had all the vices. I found in him a repetition of his father; the old Marshal derailed.

AH! the erudition of sentiment, how it deadens sensibility!

ONE *blinds* a spring, a water-course. It is because the water, with its shimmer, its movement, has indeed the life of a glance.

THE more I consider, observe, and compare, the more I feel how truly the initial impressions of life, those of early childhood, are almost the only ones which stamp us irrevocably. At fifteen years, twenty at most, one has "come from the press." The rest is but reprints of the first edition. Reading an observation of Charcot's confirms me therein.

NEITHER cheerful nor sad, impressionable; a reflection of the time, the circumstance.

BRAVE and a coward in one day, according to the disposition of his nerves.

FOR certain women in view, mundanity, vanity, sport; — even charity is a sport.

AS one goes northward, eyes grow pure, their fires burn out.

AUTHORITY: a sacrament that should be left in the inner temple, and exposed but rarely.

HE said — a writer by profession, and sincere: "All the good sense I have, all my insight and philosophy of life, I put into my books, give it to the good people who read me, and then I have it no longer." Word for word.

THAT a poet! — mounted infantry at most.

A TYPE, this C —, with his wild imaginings about people, his invention of shocking crimes;

and he names names, and his stories grow with each repetition; a forger of tragic gossip.

NOTE the sadness, the despair of my big boy, just entering Philosophy, reading Schopenhauer, Hartmann, Stuart Mill, Spencer. Terror and disgust at living; the doctrine gloomy, the professor hopeless, the conversations in class heartrending. The idea that everything is useless overcomes these lads. Spent the evening reanimating, stirring up mine; and, without realizing it, infused warmth into myself.

Ruminated on this all night. Is it a good thing to initiate them so abruptly? Might it not be better to continue to lie, leaving life to disillusion them, remove the bright masks one by one?

I AM reminded of the void left in my education by the complete absence of algebra and geometry, and my year of philosophy cut short and undirected. Thence my repugnance to general ideas, to abstractions, the impossibility of my having any philosophic formulas. But one thing I know; to cry to my children: "Live your Life!" Torn with trouble as I am, it's hard. As to the little fellow, six years, he spent the breakfast hour questioning his mother — for that child has faith in no one but the mother, and turns always to her; — asking what death is, the soul and heaven; how one can be at the same time underground and above the blue. Of the eternal joys promised, a sole thing touched him, the idea of living again to die no more — "That, that's nice!" And he ate his cutlet with infinite relish.

WHAT a touchstone is an act decisive, unforeseen and sudden, like my letter the other day to the Academy: you should have seen some of the faces, the double and contrary current of impressions.

TO meet, learn to know each other: — two hatreds thus brought together sometimes destroy each other.

INDIFFERENT people: there are none.

I HATE Sir Oracle.

HER first lover. Gave herself up, at a students' tea, stupidly, sadly, not to be a prude, not daring to say she was pure.

TO recount — drama or romance: The effort of a man married to his mistress, who wishes to have his wife received in the world. Ease with which the woman forgets what she has been.

J — AFFIRMS that what happens at a distance does n't interest her; it affects her like a deed of a thousand years ago. She confounds time and space, height with breadth; it 's all remoteness.

THE great beaker of A. R —. "Drink! draw in the cheer!" He is dead of it, poor giant, dead of his great bulk and his false strength.

IT is striking to see the transformation of certain beings, the changes life makes them undergo by divers meetings with good or bad fortune. A man whom I have always thought upright, appears to me at

bottom a knave; the hideous avarice of a certain woman suddenly discloses itself. Is it I who have changed? Is it the sharply ended friendship that clears my clouded eyes? No, all things change, are transformed. But then what becomes of my famous "issued from the press"? Alas! how dangerous to handle is a formula!

THE importance of good switching, at the moment when a life takes its direction. The careers of art are full of the derailed, the misdirected; full of routed lives. The assurance of him who passes, plume to the wind, sure of his road, and firm on the rails; how astonished he would be, if some one told him he is n't going to his destination. Musicians who paint, writers who are painters and nothing else.

GOOD title for a book: *In Distress!* to recount one of those crises of life when everything fails you at once.

HOW it rushes along, this end of a century! Transformations of a social order, shadow pictures on a screen! Cleave to the True, to the foundations of things.

MARK of a divided household, in spite of the prescribed smile of affection: always a friend at table, some one, no matter who, to put space between them.

THE man and the woman, a duality. And love lasts so long as there is not one vanquished, so long as

the other has not spoken his fiat, so long as the book holds a page interesting and noble, so long as the woman or the man reserves somewhat of body or spirit.

A FATHER'S authority, how far may it go? what is his duty? I see the flaw in the old world, the family imperfect, as the State is. The great cleft of the house of Usher, I perceive it from top to bottom of French society.

IRONY — what antiseptic!

WHERE is he, the man whose voice, whose manner does not change, the moment he is no longer tête-à tête in a company of comrades? Ah, vanities of print! am I then the only one of my kind who loves the true, whose speech is ruled by his heart-beats!

H— LOSES his only son, seven years old, a cherub. Eight days after, returns to the fencing-school; carriage in mourning, shooting costume all black, black mantle, a veritable personage of Italian comedy.

I WAS saying the other day, how few brave men there are. It is n't *brave* one should say, and Dostoïevski furnishes me the right word: *resolute*.

EVERY truth, once it is formulated, loses some of its integrity, verges toward a lie.

CURIOUS admission of a comedian, the last make-up. He is returning to real life, and stupefaction seizes him at sight of the distance between the two worlds. He was so happy before the scenes.

TITLE for a book: *Without Dissimulation.*

I HAVE a fear of installations! the dreamed-of table, the home of one's own: illness, death.

ANGER of the Midi; a debauchery of violence. Father F — comes in from hunting, fagged out, gameless, hungry, raging. Tempest in the kitchen of his country house; he abuses the servants, who move quickly and in silence and bend over the flame where the tardy pot is boiling. While the demoniac roars and perorates, a chicken comes in from the yard, making its little "pioo, pioo" gaily, confidently. Rage of the goodman, who with a kick sends the little chick rolling over the door-stone, half dead. The cat, passing, pounces on the chicken. Father F — more and more exasperated, darts forward: "Miserable cat, will you —" and seeing the cat run off without heeding him, the chick in its teeth, he takes the gun he had put down in a corner, fires on the cat, bowls it over, and stands exhausted and sobered before the bodies of his two pet animals, killed in an instant, because the soup was late. The emotion it gives him sets his blood surging again; he cannot eat, and goes to bed with a brew of vervain.

FOR *hypochondria* read: *ignorance of the doctors.*

WE have at our pension a very able fellow named So-and-So.

"What has he done, So-and-So?"

"Nothing, — but what he 's going to do some day — . . . Is n't it true, you others?"

The others: "So-and-So? Ah! you 'd better believe it!" and they laugh gloriously at the strong man of the group. There is such a man in every restaurant, café, club, atelier of Paris. The story of this unfortunate ought to be written, wearing his title in spite of himself, and ingenuously. Then the things he does to sustain his reputation, working himself gray, battering his brains, changing his language, his manners!

I AM thinking of the end of the world. Logically, according to human law, it will resemble its beginning, cold, the fires gone out, no more combustibles; the few survivors on the great raft, men and animals, crowded into caverns, groping about in the dark.

THE new honey.

I was working, the door open on the sloping garden, sweet-scented away down to the river, in the warm haze of a June morning. The bee came in, made a circuit, rocking and humming like a ball; lighted on the inkstand, on the ash-tray full of cigarette stumps.

Nothing for thee here, little bee; go roam about in the garden, over the flowers and honey-making grasses.

Out on the old honey! Out on Hymettus! I make the new honey, an individual honey, my own!

And the ambitious creature flew away to the kitchen and the refuse heaps of the backyard.

ON the train. A mosquito, trying to get out, beating the pane furiously, ceaselessly, in a frenzy. The

will of the little thing, all its stings out, its body tense; blows with the back, blows with the head, a trembling from one end to the other of its armor. And I have the thought: life, all life, is parted in equal doses, for great and small. These last, consumed in a breath, always in movement, in nervous commotion; needs of mating, of fighting, living in a day the hundred years of the pachyderm, with its scarce mating seasons, its slow-moving life, at large in a vast environment.

IN vain will forms of government change, kings disappear, and princes and nobility; men will always arrive at using whatever there is in them of native baseness, of the need to grovel and ingenuously vilify themselves.

"There are no longer fish in these nets," said an ex-minister, now deputy again.

"Never any fish at this season."

"Oh, come now! At this time last year the nets were full."

"But, hang it! last year you were minister," said the fisherman winking. He had passed eight days getting fish together, and had filled the nets himself.

CONTORTIONISTS of the phrase, dervishes, clowns, and cockneys; in the long run they end by believing in themselves.

UPON reflection, something truly diverting in *Choses Vues:* The profound utterance, 't is always he who made it; the large thought, always his. He has foresight, hindsight, everything.

A good bit of Tartarin in that.

MYOPIA: when I lose my monocle, I need a monocle to find it; type of scientific research.

A DELICATE thing to be made out of the three days the little Jesus passes, lost in Jerusalem! They leave him a child, they recover him a God. These three days passed with his Father, who confides to him his mission. Linen robe of ideal fineness and whiteness, and eyes, eyes wherein is written what he is to suffer.

A Jerusalem like Algiers, like Arles; Ramadan and Fair of Beaucaire; odors of frying. On the return, 't is he who is on the ass, the father and mother on foot.

EXAGGERATIONS of people of the world; every sick man is going to die, every man they don't know is a scoundrel.

I RECOGNIZE the Midi in this Talleyrand, and if Napoleon escapes me, he is the one I hope to paint. Club-foot, Meridional, eighteenth-century corruption, priest.

AH! the people in the same boat: Stendhal, author of *Le Rouge et le Noir*, of *La Chartreuse*, who does n't find Madame Cottin ridiculous; and I, I have come to the defence of G. O—!

FINE thing, politics! Thiers letting them shoot Monseigneur Darboy: "They must shoot an archbishop!" He was thinking of '48, of Monseigneur Affre, and the blow his death dealt the insurrection.

He 's a proud fellow; he accepts the favor without saying thank you; he even feels a little resentment against you, bears a grudge.

The guide asks on which side of you he shall walk.

The Misfortune of Boche, in two parts.

First part. Boche not bad, born with his eyes holden, does what he sees done, but feels nothing, perceives nothing; becomes a man of letters, initiation. His childhood very happy, he tells about it in a book, false, abominable. Everything turns deformed in his mind. It 's altogether worse when he takes notes; he observes and observes, sees nothing, maugre his grand efforts, and stands his phrases on their heads. A fall down a staircase makes Boche very ill, but he lives, and comes out of it a man of genius.

Second part. After the fall. A book that makes a revolution, new school, *verism*, or *nebulism*. Boche, head of the school, gives out its points; then come solitude, heart-burnings, the journals no longer talk of him. "Nothing happens," he says. There is cholera, war, old Europe in convulsion, and Boche: "Nothing in the papers!" His wife, his children, nothing counts.

Duration and destruction: two forces.

Objects of love: instruments of torture.

Poe wrote the *Raven*, later the genesis of this *Raven*. This — the after-stroke — American pleas-

antry, no doubt, but admired and emulated by our young school. The devil of the thing is to find the raven, the dry sob, the foreboding *never more.*

NAPOLEON at Saint Helena explains admirably all the acts of his life, with annotations. How sententious he is, how reasonable, how deliberate — he, the soul of spontaneity! Not a quarter of it true, not even in the notes.

THE Dark Chamber (in Wecker's dispensary), where stories confidential or fantastic grope about from bed to bed.

I HAVE a sudden thought of the moral good war has done me.

THE Midi: agitation in idleness.

HALT of a teamster at a turn in the road. Oh! but the way is long! The man, the horse, everything takes breath, the ponderous dray too, swaying from side to side.

SO many tenantless beings! One thinks he sees a spire of smoke, a lighted window; approaches. Nothing, the desert.

A FROG'S chant, harsh, rasping, that is what the voice of the nightingale becomes in June, when the nests are filled with fledgelings. As night falls, I hear in the park the birds twittering under the leaves Apparent confusion, but the whole thing as orderly as the clock-work of a cathedral tower. With a little attention, one is able to distinguish play, quarrels,

housekeeping, preparations for sleep. The chilly little bodies, like the swallows, get still first; the cuckoo, far off, watches late, a noctambulist. At Paris, my blackbird wakes at dawn: at sundown, larks, wagtails, goldfinches, sparrows, silence. Then the night-hawk, the frogs, the screech owl, night. The darkening trees seem taller and closer. Come in, the air freshens.

MEN grow old, but they do not ripen.

FOUND some pages of notes, journeys, tramps, landscapes, of thirty years ago! Absolutely the sensation of dreams, all these scraps of my life. Dreamed, not lived.

THE back is so expressive, simply because it is not suspicious, does not think itself observed

SEE a man fire — 't is to know him.

AND when they have told each other everything — they begin again.

NOTE in passing the avowal of X—, so heart-rending, so ridiculous. He had deceived his wife, then, deserted in turn, and seized with desperate remorse, he felt the need of telling everything to the wronged woman, of confessing his sins. I dissuaded him. "Make a hole in the ground, rather, and tell your fault, if that will soothe you: but why cause pain? You would be pardoned now, but the confession would mine ahead, you would meet it again and again." Thinking of this, recalls those husbands who

tell their young wives their past good fortunes. The wife says nothing, she expands toward life, listens curious and disturbed. Imprudent man, you will see later on!

THERE is always in families, especially those whose types are most salient and most similar, some brutal exception which seems a revenge, a violent protestation of Nature and her laws of equilibrium. Thus C—, in the midst of his tribe of Jewish bankers hoarding and grasping, is himself a capricious prodigal, a rudderless bohemian, the despair of all his kin. The strange part of it is that with his drawn eyelids and misshapen mouth, he is physically more a Jew than all the rest. I, in my environment so desperately bourgeois, was a little like that.

IN the train. A soul is passing; the wife of the switchman has just been struck by a buffer. She lies there on the other track, young, her heavy black hair about her. At night, on our way back, the husband stands in his doorway, holding the flag, his handkerchief to his eyes, sobbing. Two little children are playing round the little house, whose funeral tapers pierce the dusk of evening.

THE answer of Doctor S—: "How much a visit?" —"It is n't by the visit, it 's by the year."

HAVE been reading the journal of a poet. The great de Vigny, prisoner of expression, has the visions of genius, but a diction formal, heavy, painful: the head is eloquent, the hand halts.

MATERNITY in Paris: no more mothers. In society, of most young girls the physician says: "Do not let her marry, or beware of the first child!"

I NOTE this significant mark of the letters of Jacquemont: in a few days he had become the intimate friend of all those cold Englishmen, and was drawing from them a thousand confidential things of which they never spoke among themselves. How many joys those people forego, withholding the expression of tender feeling.

BELOW, the highway, the canal of the Durance, windmills, little stone bridges like asses' backs, a stream flanked by plane-trees with trunks as white as if plastered, the cafés and hotels of a rich town, the new walls of the school that is building. Above, the former village, clinging to the cliff; tottering buildings, wrought-iron balconies, a door of the Renaissance, pediment and columns crumbling to dust with their notary's signs. Higher yet, the really primitive village, narrow alleys, ruined walls, refuse heaps; every ten paces an arch, a postern, old women, the color of the stones, sitting on sunken doorsteps. Overhead, the crumbling dungeon tower, opening its windows to space. Then the mountain with its shrines along the rocky and zigzag route; and at the very top, new like the school, the convent, rising on the ruins of the old feudal castle dead at its feet, the Church alone playing its part against the modern world. It is Orgon. History is there, written in those stones — a history that lies not nor quibbles, the true.

FOUND again the genuine Provençal smack, in this last journey to Cavaillon. Decameron in front of the farmhouse, sunbonnets in the shadow of the great litter heap: the farmer and his wife listening gravely to discussions about the beginnings of Provence, Massilia, Carthage, Rome, the Gauls.

AT Saint-Rémy, the *antiques*. Sky gray, rocks gray, exquisite landscape in a circle of mountainets, with an opening on magnificent horizons. Away off, the sun's rays striking on bell towers, visible at phantasmal distances. A lane of pines leads to an old house, gloomy, mysterious, its fast closed gates, yellow shutters and high walls framed in soft green, at the turning of a white road. "Let 's come and see!" . . . The shouts of a voice, a voice of the North, not of this country, rise at intervals from behind the great walls. At once I think it may be the madhouse. We ask a passing peasant, and find that it is. When he has gone, we look at each other in silence, dismayed and saddened in this abruptly transformed landscape, which is always to stay with me in the colors of dreams, shot across by that cry, monotonous, almost animal. The first time I heard the lion at Matmatas, at nightfall, I had the same kind of sensation, was present at one of these sudden changes of scene. Once again, and always, everything is within us.

FRIENDLY and at ease all through his visit, then at the end, a "Good day, sir," which puts things back in their places; hands apart, nothing accomplished. Propriety.

DUEL in the stud-meadow. Great undulations of green, fenced in by wooden railings that one must stride. Horses untethered, bounding, that come to see, and are driven away. In the middle of the pasture, the tiny stable, and all about it the earth trodden and yellow, where they grappled on a field the size of a ship's deck. Remembrance of the two profiles, a modern struggling with a chevalier of the middle ages, hand to hand, walking, turning round the little building; horrified cries of the doctors, and we following this surge of battle, this mad-dog struggle. The sky clear, beautiful, and all at once a sense of the imbecility of our emotion, the pettiness and pretence of our gestures and our cries. All human resentment appeared to me base, ugly, profitless. Puerility, puerility! I was more than ever persuaded that man wrinkles, withers, silvers, loses his teeth, but remains a child.

THE pretty gesture, showing the baby's band she 's sewing.

THE unconsciousness of one's being, in moments of strenuous action. Courageous, cowardly? — one might have been either. And what a mist around it all!

THE incarnations of P. D— . Not a bit of personality, always playing a rôle in the town. All the professions I 've known him vaguely essay were to him veritable stock parts, as they say at the theatre. I 've seen him play the merchant, *à l 'américaine*, hurried, rude, "time is money," inexorable; the sportsman,

in a phaeton, tipping over at every turn, breaking his friends' crowns; the cynical bohemian, in a porter's cap, wide breeches, twirling an enormous bludgeon wind-mill fashion; but the part never came, for all that. Then, an old gentleman, small proprietor aping the big ones; frock-coat, ivory-topped cane, big platinum snuff-box. No real profession, a barn-stormer; he does n't live, he fills parts.

YES, Goethe is right, Othello is not a jealous man; he is ingenuous, a passionate primitive. He has an attack of jealousy, but not a jealous spirit: otherwise, and it is I who discover this, Iago would be needless. All the villainous and calumnious machinations of Iago, a jealous Othello would have found within himself. He would be his own poisoner, — bitter, subtle, insidious, devilish, all the time continuing to be a very brave man, a hero.

A MAN and his "*tirant d'eau*." The word is Napoleon's. But did he say how much this "*draught*" is modified by the years, by circumstances?

I BELIEVE there is in history nothing more extraordinary than the episode of that Bishop of Agra who followed the Vendean army, blessing the standards and cannon, and chanting the *Te Deum*. Suddenly, through a mysterious letter from the Pope, it is learned that the bishop is an impostor, unknown in the ranks of the Church. How proceed? Unmask him? the chiefs do not dare, what would the peasantry say? Besides, deprive themselves of this influence? And

the bishop continued to follow the army, to bless, to pontificate, to confirm — a little sad, but resigned, feeling that he had been discovered, for the generals and the priests scarcely spoke to him, though forced to honor him in public. Who was this man? It has been said, a spy of Robespierre's; but he was guillotined by the Jacobins. I think rather an ambitious man without a star, an adventurer in the Church, a priest in imagination.

MAKE a drama *à la* "Lorenzaccio," with Maximilian.

CRISPI visits Palermo, Catania, and so forth, disguised as a tourist, to deceive the police, and takes down notes in museums and cathedrals, and, at the same time, observations on barracks and bombs. Curious, the story of it; the page and its reverse.

A GOOD subject for comedy is Tiberge: What with counselling his friend and preaching to him, caught himself also, in the end.

THERE is fire there! I am thinking of passion, and its consuming side. "I am secure," says the plain and quiet gentleman. No security against passion, the fatal kind, the veritable; an ogress, to whom the being gives itself for food, and everything it loves — mother, wife, children. And a joy to give all this, and to suffer a thousand cruel deaths in the giving. A mystery; pathology very difficult.

BAUDELAIRE, quintessence of Musset; Verlaine, extract of Baudelaire.

I AM struck by the little variety, little originality, in this under-stratum of society, these depths of vice and crime. Nothing personal, a residue, an agglutination, which the individual goes to join, where he loses himself, confounds himself with the mass, having no longer human form.

THE heroes of evil. Sometimes crime demands for its accomplishment the same amount of energy, courage, intelligence, will, as the brilliant action, the heroic deed. Storehouse of vital force, cutler's stall, whence Nature has taken arms of like temper for crime or for duty.

FOR some months, coolness toward Montaigne: Diderot has taken his place. Very curious, these infidelities of the mind, little dramas of the libraries, the intellectual harems. My brain, an impassioned pacha, but right capricious.

BORN an outcast, he became an anarchist.

THE men of the advance-guard in literature need a peculiarly audacious temperament, the spirit of the spoiler, an unrestraint of action and of onslaught not permitted to the rank and file, nor to the mounted leaders.

LAST night there came to me the idea of a play, which should be a succession of tableaux giving the history of a family, with its heritage of maladies, infirmities, tempers, and fads; or again, a prologue in Louis XIV. costumes, with a radical type, which

should reappear a century later, and reproduce, in costumes of to-day, another *him*, with the same destiny. The piece was to be named *The So-and-So's, or the Heritage*. Perhaps, parallel with this, a younger son, called in the family the chevalier, who should renounce the paternal name and title, and in the end found a bourgeois family called simply *Chevalier*.

THE family reflects the State. It is democratized in France, at the present day: it was monarchic and then constitutional, after having been despotic and Louis-Quatorze.

STANDING in front of the library shelves, stretching out your hand on the hazard of a good choice, and gleaning a few pages here and there, this is for the mind, that delicious bite they sent you to get in the garden, when you were little, giving you a piece of bread, and permission to trespass as far as you could reach on the grape arbor or the espalier.

STRANGE apparitions, that seem to come unevoked, of certain people figuring in your past life, and also of certain episodes or places forgotten absolutely, which now pass before you with the rapidity of a bird-flight. Those who, like me, suffer from long hours of wakefulness, are familiar with this. One should never be taken unprepared, should note down these things he will probably never see again.

HOW vain are all these theories and discussions! What do they mean with their suppression of scenes in the romance? Scenes, there are always scenes

wherever there are beings and assemblies of beings. Scenes in the Bible, in that historical romance, the *Iliad*, and the romance of manners, the *Odyssey*. There are none in the *Imitation*, which is only philosophic dissertations. Eh, mon Dieu! no more scenes, no more scenes! The romantic taste is becoming debauched.

L— TOLD me this story. A young man having asked his sister in marriage, he took steps to get the *casier judiciaire* of the youth. The friend whom he had at the Palais de Justice said: "If there is nothing, if the papers are clean, we can tell you so; if there is anything in them, professional secrecy obliges us to be silent." A number of days passed, then the recorder saying: "I can tell you nothing, my friend." I find in this mystery something dramatic and torturing.

I AM thinking of Othello again: to have made him a black, a mulatto, in short, of an inferior race, is the stroke of genius; for the true jealousy, the tormenting, is accompanied by ugliness, infirmity, inferiority.

DOUBLE mystery of the foreign woman: mystery of the woman, mystery of the language. Two unknowns!

I AM thinking of the painter Legros, who did not know English, the language of his wife and children.

LOVE episode for a Shakespearean comedy: The young man has no understanding with the woman he

loves, pays her no attentions; delicious situation for another woman, who mistakes, thinks he loves her.

A WRITER who will not bear either quoting or reading aloud. There remains, when the book is closed, what remains of a conversation.

"RARE the soul that dares be what it is."

Verse and verity alike admirable. Guess whose: Boileau's.

OBSERVATION I've often made. People I have known, chanced to meet in life, then lost, forgotten, come to sight again before they die. So, quite recently, little V. D—, with whom I had long ago broken off all relations, and who came to renew them this year; so, too, M. R—, one of the last ministers of Napoleon III. And how many others!

SOMETIMES, little sure of the truth or originality of an idea, I have it adopted and offered by some one else. We don't lack men of this type in literature, lay-figures, like dressmakers' models, full of stateliness and grand airs, imagining the luxurious attire they wear is theirs.

THE ill-starred. That De Long, who commanded the *Jeannette;* the opposite of Stanley; appalling run of ill luck, in great things as in small: a mystic, heady, but not a quality of the man of action. Above all, without a star!

Beside these ill-starred, are those I call bastards of Fortune. Always a bar across the arms, that bar which tarnishes the scutcheon.

RE-READ last night *The Forest*, by Stanley; philosophized much thereupon. He sees in it the image of a life small and insignificant; for me, on the contrary, it is an admirable vision of the world disorganized, of chaos awaiting order, light: *Fiat lux!*

WHAT a beautiful study in these last few letters of Balzac: *A rich marriage!* What dramas between the lines, between the words; what lessons!

WHAT a marvellous instrument of sensation I have been, above all, in my childhood! At a distance of so many years, certain streets of Nîmes, where I passed only now and then, dark, cool, narrow, smelling of spices; the drugs, the house of Uncle David — all come to me in a far-off accord of time, sky, sound of bells, exhalations from the shops.

It must be that I was porous and penetrable; impressions, sensations to fill stacks of books; and all as intense as dreams.

GENIUS! genius! it is life, an accumulation of intense living. And as life burns low, in like measure does genius decline, and the disposition to feel, and the power to express.

A CITY of buffoons, a people of jugglers — Paris has become that.

A SAYING of Boche's after his fall: "I am fortunate to have lost my memory, for I always re-read myself with new pleasure."

"A VERY little boy
Was setting off for school . . ."

These dainty verses of Madame Desbordes-Valmore's always come to my mind, when I see in action one of those neo-naturalists, neo-symbolists, etc., doing a hard task in violence to his tastes and temperament, — setting off for school, in short!

AFTER reading the correspondence of the Ampères: Struck by the difference between the men of those times and the men of our own: gentleness, kindness. And always the academic lobbying.

A HOUSEHOLD, — so supposed to be, — and charming. The man's friend comes there, petted, pampered. In time the man himself makes a regular, bourgeois marriage. . . . What shall they do to see each other? It is the young wife who says to her husband: "I don't wish to rob you of a friend; this woman is honorable, you say, the story you told me is touching; let us see them." Annoyance of the husband; somewhat afraid of the lady; good fellow but very experienced. "They 're not married," he says, "it 's only pretence." . . . They see each other, nevertheless Then one fine day the friend marries the mistress Ugly reports abroad in the world — the two women in the same boat, both declassed; and I see confusedly attractive scenes, and a crowd of amusing figures of women.

WHAT an escape for inventive minds is the imagination. In a child's abridged history, three lines on Philippe le Bel, that I had the little chap recite —

food for dreams, invention, construction. All this rushes through my mind as I think of Shakespeare, and what a line of Plutarch becomes in the magical chamber of his brain. I think also of my light-keepers, and what this Plutarch, unique book, represented to them.

P— SAID a very good thing to me about the fashion in which black spreads, in painting as in literature. One puts down a dab, and the canvas, the whole book is full of it; it gushes, it creeps, oil and ink.

THE modern Napoleon: Stanley, a traveller.

MYSTERY of races. I am thinking of that Russian, K—, I had never seen before, who, at the end of a breakfast, related to me the reckless life of his wife, and her violent death on a pleasure jaunt. And as he talked on, I felt that he would bear me a grudge for his confidence, as involuntary. Never seen since.

AND that other, cousin of a great man, who talked to us a whole evening about himself and his, proffered his soul, open to its inmost recesses; love, faith, a whole confession: then good-night! never a word of him, even a reminder of his name, which I have completely forgotten. Beside these Slavs, we are, — we of the South, — hermetic, like emery, veritable Saxons.

FINE end for a romance: two brothers, whom marriage has separated, their children established, one unhappy in his home, the other having lost his wife,

begin again the life of their childhood, lodge together, ruminate on their early adventures.

WHAT horror, after all, to reflect that there is no joy so pure, so delicate as not to have lees, no happiness whose reverse can be looked at without fear.

HAVE re-read *Lorenzaccio*, struck by the disinterestedness of such a work. The theatre speaks to the crowd, the book to the individual: the difference of their two esthetics is there.

AS I read and re-read the letters and memoirs of the eighteenth century, — Memoirs of Vigée Lebrun, letters to Mademoiselle Volland, — it strikes me how often I have encountered that old France in my own home in the provinces, where the evolution of manners has been slower; countless details, convivial songs, even to the absence of a beard. Vision of that face of a clerk, book-keeper for the vine-growers of Camargue, seen at Fontvieille only three years ago: he was a personage of before '89.

VAUVENARGUES, from the heart of Provence: corroborates my observations on the colorless style of the men of the Midi.

NAPOLEON knows no jealousy of the past, that is null. But the other, the others, he has them all.

TALLEYRAND, reputation for craft, as some people have a reputation for good humor, because they arrive with a retinue. The genial Monselet: Ah!

ah! ah! here comes Monselet! Yes, yes, false, crafty — Talleyrand, and one side of him the spitefulness of infirmity.

APROPOS of the instantaneous: mistake of fixing transient things, the fugitive, a gesture, a fall. The same in the realm of morals; those sudden ideas that cross your mind in flight, and that you would like to submit to the microscope, to analysis. But a criminal thought may graze an honest brain without imbedding itself; that does n't count.

I SEE that the French nation has lost its amiability. This dates from the end of Louis Philippe's reign — even from the end of the Restoration. I attribute it to the entrance of the dollar, of money into France: hardness, rudeness. Perhaps also the admixture of realism in literature and art.

"HOW fast you live," H. J— said to me; "the most active nations of Europe are, intellectually, forty years behind Paris."

My friend the Anglo-American did not tell me all his thought. Yes, we live fast, very fast, skim things, without ever going to the bottom; the book read at a gulp, all subjects treated, all questions handled, elucidated. But how we lack application!

MIRAGE: To me, reflection carried thousands of leagues in the flanks of a cloud.

THE dinner where that provincial told us how his brothers and he had made a fortune through exploit-

ing the idea of Balzac, the silver scoria of the mines of Sardinia. I thought of the martyrdom of Balzac, of his quest, his chase of fortune, of his letters, passionate, feverish, of his bitter disappointment.

OUR young men less taken with the poets and novelists than with the critics and historians, didactic and dogmatic, who continue the tradition.

THE great antagonism between Paris and the provinces, which I find everywhere since 1870. The provincial Trochu hated Paris, and now L— of Montélimart, charged with the safeguard of the city, inspires in me only a half confidence. Tell some day of what Paris is made, what we owe her.

RUSSIAN pathos: I return to it again. No, Sonia is not the whole of human misery, it is not over her that *I* should have wept!

WHETHER we serve for anything: are we chance passengers, simply ballast of a packet going to a destination, or is it the contrary?

READING *Eugénie de Guérin* I cry out: "Why did not we all stay at home, in our own quiet corners of the earth?" How our minds would have gained, from the point of view of originality in the etymological sense of the word, that is to say, potency of origin.

BRAVE soldier, dying on the miserable pallet of the ambulance, open your eyes once more, raise yourself,

see what the great Emperor sends you; it is a bit of red ribbon, cut out of our flag; fasten it on your breast; your suffering will cease.

But see the soldier weeping, and if any one says it is for joy, believe not a word of it; there is no despair like his.

SKETCH of a politician, once a small journalist and writer of vaudeville, now turned statesman, trying to give himself ballast, mincing walk, his hands behind his back, gray academic coat, buttoned to the chin, and the *Journal des Débats;* mimic doctrinaire, nodding his head, mouth a round O, breath drawn in; putting stones in his pockets for fear the wind will abduct him.

ITCHING fingers, that do not wait to leave mine before testing the piece I slip into them, and show astonishment, joy, or discontent: "Only that!"

THERE was once a very crafty old cat, who claimed acquaintance with all the forms of mouse-traps, and all the ways of attaching bacon to catch the little animals. But there was a maker of mouse-traps, more crafty than he, who gave him very disagreeable surprises. And this maker of traps was called Life.

PEOPLE who never suffer the stroke, but the counter-stroke of fortune; joy or sorrow, they are struck only on the rebound. Observation on myself, and the small part I have taken in the things that have made me what I've been.

OF a woman: I count her visits by the griefs she 's caused me.

HISTORY, the life of collective man; the novel, the life of individual man.

ABRUPT new vision of life, when the brigand puts himself squarely outside of law, looks on theft as the chase, every shop-window as game, judges and police as gamekeepers. And the side Crusoe-like and childish, the wine drunk from the hogshead, through a straw, the perpetual and active vigilance.

THE laugh of Voltaire, left behind him at Berlin, made harsher, heavier, in the mouths of the Germans, is found again in some authors: Heinrich Heine, music of Offenbach.

I AM trying to analyze the feeling of chill at the heart, the shiver of fear or pain, that seizes me on certain winter mornings, when I put myself at my work-table, the light dim and yellow, the fire roaring, no sky.

This peculiar anguish, which makes me want to crouch in a corner, efface myself, comes without doubt from the custom of being played in the winter, published in the winter, above all, criticised in the winter. On such mornings one has the habit of remembering only that it is the hour for reading the newspapers, — so many papers whose venom besmirches you, — the hour when one must set himself at work, the habitual hour of battle.

OUR anger, confused as battles where the aides-de-camp are supposed to be the bearers of orders which from cowardice or accidental cause they never give. All our passionate impulses comparable to that. It is not till all is over that we pretend to have acted from such and such motives.

B—, SITTING opposite that young woman, each entirely preoccupied with self and the effect made on the other. They are both safe from all surprises. And this singular flirtation may last a long time.

MYSTERIOUS noise at the *Invalides*, in the tomb of Napoleon, at certain recent dates.

MAKE an episode out of the death of that British ship, cut in two by its vice-admiral, and foundered with fifteen hundred men. Mad suicide or recurrent mania; admirable matter in the stern framework of discipline, and the exotic landscape of a Bengal gulf.

HOW should one read the novels of the Goncourts? The question was put to me by a very ingenuous gentleman.

POSTSCRIPT of a letter of Bonaparte's, which speaks of his "Southern blood" flowing in his veins with the impetuosity of the course of the Rhone. To make an epitaph for my Napoleon, Emperor of the Midi.

WHEN I arrive at Champrosay, where I leave my Sainte-Beuve rusticating while I am in Paris, I have

always the sensation of finding again an old gentleman in silk cap, smooth-faced and erudite, whose talk, substantial and varied, makes a change from the silly chatter of all winter long. Naturally, while he asks questions and I respond, I cannot help contrasting the two epochs, and finding that in the times of Sainte-Beuve, if people were not more serious than now, they at least attempted to appear so.

RENAN, peripatetic of life.

THE bridges of Paris: peddlers of gossip from one society to another.

EVERYTHING is epileptic: we no longer laugh, we go into convulsions.

BEAUTIFUL anecdotes of love, chaste and well told, are they worth a book of amatory philosophy? Ah, pedantic Youth, vaguely imitative, nevertheless!

GOETHE in his "Elective Affinities" has felt the influence of the poor eighteenth-century French romances.

FELT two or three times, apropos of Napoleon, the horror of the human mess.

DESCRIBE some day the feeling of tenderness stirred within me by the apparition, at a turn in the way, of the rose and white peak of the Jungfrau; sensation delicately voluptuous, in which literature had no part. I comprehend the name of virgin,

maiden, given to this snow under the glimpses of the sun; — a maiden asleep, and whom sleep discovers; roses and lilies.

THE broken communications between the preceding generations and our own: incomprehension amounting even to hatred.

ACTION, action! Rather than dream, saw wood to make your blood circulate!

ODD enough, the love affairs of Byron and Countess Guiccioli! she, enraptured with the idea that the eyes of the world were on her, on the two together; and he, more tired of it all day by day. I think of all the Byronians I have known, and find them the same, of identical pattern. — Why?

ALL the picturesque topographical detail we have of the earthly paradise is that an angel with flaming sword guarded the entrance, and that the tree of knowledge flourished therein. The tree of knowledge! Knowledge, then, preceded love? Everything has come from beneath that tree.

FORTUNE. When Napoleon — to whom one must always return in thinking of fortune's wheel, of a star, of the fairy destiny of man — when Napoleon begins to decline, it is striking to see his best props fall first all around him. It is by Lannes that fate makes the first rent, then Duroc; — crackings in advance of the earthquake, warnings of the disaster to come.

I believe it is so with all fortunes; they are not

made at a stroke, nor do they fall in a moment. I think of this as I see my friends dying about me, my best and most valiant defenders. Strokes at the heart, the beginning of one's own death knell! It is for that reason, no doubt, that I feel these departures so deeply.

IT has not been sufficiently noted, that from Taine and his theories are drawn the principles of the two great schools of the novel — the naturalistic and the psychological: Balzac and Stendhal.

VANITY is carried outside, hampering like a sack of coins; pride, on the contrary, is worn within, invisible.

WHAT inclines me to believe in Hindoo superstitions, in the migrations of souls through different species to arrive at the state of man, is that we find all men to have, at the depths of them, something like a remembrance of the beast they have been and are always ready to become again.

WHAT is the most alarming thing in life? Great happiness.

CONVERSATION about pain, between Jesus and the two thieves on the cross.

STRIVE against men of ill-will, who are like submerged jetsam, moving and traitorous reefs which cleave the ship under its water-line.

And keep this formula: Let us try to heal with literature the evil literature has done.

SOMETHING fine to make out of "War." State of mind of a young man of the Second Empire, whose life, day in and day out, left no room for upward strivings, knew no standard of duty. Illuminated suddenly, he understood life, one long night of guard, while great flames mounted silently over the woods of Malmaison.

Then a soliloquy: "Had I been killed, what would have remained of me? what traces of my pride?—Nothing accomplished!" Fierce examination of conscience.

INTERESTING to write, the romance of the young consumptive, honest hitherto, then, in her illness, inaction, exaltation, head full of a young author. They write to each other, *poste restante*. The husband discovers it, and, filled with pity, explains to himself this sentimental need, which he perhaps could not satisfy.

DEATH! so I call the dark passage and its anguish, not the absence of being which precedes and follows life.

I READ in the memoirs of Constant, that the mechanician Maelzel had contrived an apparatus of automatic limbs for replacing those shot off in battle. Skeleton of a fine dialogue between the conqueror and the mechanician.

ACTORS unconscious and inglorious of a play whose end alone is known to us.

DREAMS

I RECORD here some of my dreams, which have appeared to me out of the common. Some day I shall elaborate them, if I have the time.

I have let not a few escape. Every one knows how dreams fade — how they impress you and then vanish.

THAT evening we had talked a long time of Maximilian. I had been much struck with the fine romantic flavor of his adventures. Here is a dream that came of it: We were trying to get a carriage, Place Saint-Sulpice, in the midst of an animated crowd. Arriving at the station, we found the first carriage just taken, a sort of gala carriage, white reins. Quick for the second: taken too. So there was a crush of cabs and carriages filled with people in gala dress. The last was a sort of cart, drawn by two horses, like a great truck over which a long tent had been thrown, giving it the appearance of a gypsy's canvas-covered wagon without a window. They said: "It is a Mexican cart." I approach, part the curtain, and see a bed: on this bed, her head lying on a lace pillow, a woman with the great coiffure of a gray sister, pale, like wax, her eyes closed, her hands crossed: I did not see her very well. At one side, on a table, a silver vase, as for holy water, a sprinkler, and a little candle that lighted it all. The daylight without, entering a little through the canvas, and the candle flaring pale red, made together a singular light, so

soft! — I was greatly moved: this woman, dead, there, in this place, in the midst of this life and bustle and sunshine, at this cab station — waiting.

It is in dreams that I have felt most deeply the intense poetry of landscapes. One night I saw a little pool, all shadowed with leaves — fine, airy, like Corot's. It was no bigger than a hand-mirror, gleaming there between the softly radiant leaves. Never did a loved face bathed in tears move me as that pool. — Strange!

A singular dream: Prussian soldiers at a farm, one singing a fine song, in a beautiful voice. The song said: "When the Prussian soldier comes to a farm, he does not ravage it nor set it afire, — nothing of that, for he is a father, and he sees little cradles all about."

Across the way the French were singing: *En avant, Fanfan la Tulipe!* (Written before the war.)

Verses recited in a dream:

> The while above her heart her white hand lies,
> She sees her happiness with inward eyes.

Other verses made while dreaming:

TO JULIA

> When sounds the hour supreme within thy soul,
> Weep not, nor cry aloud, nor know dismay;
> Make of thy thoughts one thought, of those one whole
> Who love thee, look on them, join hands, and pray.

To add to my studies in dreams. What impresses me most is the lavish intensity of life in them. Reality there is so impressive, everything strikes you, sinks in more deeply than in waking. 'T is there that one feels how the body, the senses cumber our delicate sensations and perceptions, since the spirit, freed from its bands, feels more deeply, sees better, suffers or enjoys more. Oh! the landscapes seen in dreams, simple as they may be, how they stay with you, how you see them!

In a dream: an eye without lashes, immense, undefined, covered with bluish mist, bleared, sightless. I said: "See it! it has the look of some one crying out, — calling into the night."

One of the strangest phenomena of dreams is the participation in them of reality; the very real noises about one often mingle with his dream, play a part in it.

Last night I had again a dream of nature, like the beautiful ones I used to have long ago. But I did not write it down at once, and I feel that it has faded.

There was a village, on the brink of an abyss, up on a mountain that was crumbling away, dragging down each day a bit of wall, a street corner, the angle of a house. A red flag, staff in the ground, warned against entering the village, and the guides, with great precaution, took us over the least dangerous quarters. Every instant a hollow thud, or a slide

of stones into the abyss, and the laughter of prying children, saving themselves from the houses as they tottered and went down to ruin in the great hole.

A DREAM. I was giving a lecture at college, and to explain in a figure by what series of attempts the idea arrives at its true formula, I told the story of a match, from the piece of wood dipped in pans of sulphur, to the phosphorescent match, the Swedish, the English. So many steps ahead, to retrograde in turn; so many completions that are not so.

THERE is a magical country I have seen only in dreams, but which I see there often, and always the same. There are cities, or rather islands, with white houses among rocks and clumps of wormwood, all leading down to the sea, to great quays full of sunshine, with fountains, girls in brilliant costumes, carrying water-jars on their heads, or seated on great stone steps. Odor of tar in the sun, of flowers crisping in the heat; the rigging of the ships quivering in the hot air. These islands are all on the left. The boat in which I am grazes them with its sails; the sea is smooth, profoundly blue, and I coast along this fairyland (realistic though fairy-like), full of emotion from these cries of joy, this life, this gayety in the sunshine. In my dream this is called Corsica, and its language is the Greek of the Archipelago. I always go by, never stop.

LONDON

FORBIDDING, the first impressions of Dover. Home-coming English; rocks, barracks, stretch of open country like Japan; glimpses of English decoration, Kate Greenaway scenes behind wooden fences, little cottages like toys, painted, varnished, all alike; horses at large, sheep and cattle grazing, mad course of a horse afraid of the train.

LONDON, Victoria Station, aristocratic quarter, houses uniform, all in a line, porticos of dark stone or red. Windows shut. One of the most striking impressions of your arrival — this mute and close aspect of the houses, this fastening of port-holes, portentous in the clear sunshine and beautiful spring weather we bring with us; one can easily imagine the distress of a poor man and a stranger under a pall of fog.

MORNING promenade, under a splendid sun, in Hyde Park, a lesser Bois, but in the midst of the city, not outside. Throng of landaus, carriages, horsewomen, young girls with loose masses of tawny hair and little boating caps, galloping on ponies; and just one side, separated from all this neighboring luxury by only a low rail of wood or iron, ragamuffins, vagabonds, coatless, shoeless, lying flat in the high grass, visions of squatting brutes, bison-backed, seeming to await the rifle-shot of Stanley. This drowsing antithesis is certainly to French eyes a most disquieting thing.

Not a glance falls from the equipages toward the brutes; no more does one of the brutes interrupt his sleep, or his sinister and sombre and furtive meal, to cast envious eyes on all this luxury. And as I was admiring the strange security of it all, an Englishman suddenly said to me: "Don't be too confident. In 1867 or '8 the people of London, as a punishment for some disobedience, were condemned by the Queen to enter Hyde Park no longer. In one night all the railings of the Park were down; not a yard of iron remained in place. Immediately the privilege was restored. There are mutual concessions between the English government and the people, and where there is need, the police look the other way."

FINE aspect of the Thames, at the giant bridge. Passage of a ship, the bridge opens, rises; trusses perpendicular, the roadway with its traces of horses, decorations which drop; tricks of the boards!

Many times in London this impression of pasteboard monuments, of a vast Middle-Age pandemonium; everywhere battlements, turrets, monoliths, statues on gigantic socles; a sense of solidity, but now and then, especially in the modern works, an exaggerated sense of it.

FROM the first, struck by the crying colors of the omnibuses covered with announcements and fluttering handbills — wandering signboards. Countless telegraph wires crossing one another on the roofs.

MISTAKE of the stranger who asks to see the under side, the horrors of London; these sights are all around you, under your hand — customs so different from ours.

HOME of the Dean of Westminster; tea in the great Gothic room with stained windows; then the visit to the Abbey. Promenade of a grub through the heavy stone pages of an enormous history; shades of Gloucester, Charles I., Cromwell.

Here the kings and queens are crowned: here all sorts of great men are buried. Admirable sight, but marred by the haphazard interment of the comedians. Some disorder anyway, as in the monuments of the city generally. The Latin genius and its rectitude are absent.

DICKENS' sons. The elder secretary of a theatre. Tale for children to be made from Dickens' little grandson, who wishes to pass a night in what he calls his grandfather's chamber. The night in Westminster: the child's terror.

PASSION for the Middle Ages in English architecture; it seems to have invented nothing since, a thing which makes the London decorations rather monotonous.

IN the country, Box Hill, little station with great columns and capitals, vaulted like a church of the twelfth or thirteenth century.

Arrival on the platform of George Meredith; not very tall, but looking it, English cap with two visors,

worn negligently, *à la française ;* face intellectual, nose straight and reddened, white beard, very short. He leans on the arm of a friend, walks with difficulty; sensation of fraternal irony, these two novelists who trail the wing like two wounded gulls, birds of the tempest, punished for affronting the gods. Chance for a story *à la* Swift. Meredith's humming as he walks. A fine monologist, learned in the Greco-Latin languages, knows all the Provençal writers, all the young men of the reviews.

Cottage in the midst of verdure, which he has n't left for twenty years; little alleys of box leading down a rather sharp incline to the rustic chalet where the novelist works, even sleeps sometimes; life of the recluse and artist. Idealist, Meredith, refusing to see anything near him, around him; and yet, what a beautiful piece of verse to France in 1870! A subtle writer, too much so for the general. His deafness, like a drawbridge always up, hampers him in his intercourse with men, and he soliloquizes perpetually, as he hums in walking, in an automatic voice, a rasping English voice. He speaks more slowly in French, with mouth wider open, as if our words were of smaller dimensions than those of the English. Never to be forgotten, that visit to Box Hill.

On the way back, H. J— tells about the life of Stevenson at Samoa: a return to primitive existence, his wife and her mother living in *gandouras*, a sort of night-dress, hair loose over the shoulders. A young midshipman to whom Stevenson had given a letter of introduction to H. J—, arrived at his house four or five months after Stevenson's death. "So," said the

graceful writer, "one Sunday morning I had at breakfast a fine, bronzed young fellow, who brought me the latest news of the dear friend already wept for many a day."

OPPOSITE us, in Dover street, typical old English residence, dingy sash windows, air-tight, rose blinds, clear glass. Before the door a great carriage — coachman and footman blooming with bouquets — into which gets an old lady, coiffed and robed in antique fashion, conducting to the drawing-room of Her Majesty a little miss in white, shoulders thin and sharp, décolleté astonishing in broad daylight. Two brothers coming with their bicycles to see their young sister's first court dress. In the middle of the silent street, a hand-organ, accompanying the songs and jigs that two or three burnt-cork minstrels, barefooted and hideously dressed in black, are droning and dancing to perfection: American foolery. Striking contrast of the old and new England. And to finish this corner of a picture *à la* Hogarth, — whose works I had reviewed the evening before, in two volumes of photographs, — away at the top of the old-time house there appeared in the narrow frame of a mansard window, a young maid in a light striped dress, following as she stood, with shoulders and hips, the demoniacal movements of the jig the minstrels were singing and dancing.

The mute and mysterious house that I had watched with curiosity from the hotel window, offered me that day, in five minutes, admission to its cloistered life; for we were invited by our neighbor, the old countess,

mistress of the aforesaid house, to an informal luncheon, *en famille.* Refused! Good for actors on a tour.

HOLLAND HOUSE, a residence unique in London. At Kensington, in the very midst of the city's throng and rush, a high seigniorial grille, before which stands a liveried porter, opens on a magnificent park of feudal verdure; winding gravel walks lead up to a sixteenth century château with turrets, posterns, great corridors broken here and there by uneven steps. We are received by the Countess of H—, in a great apartment with high ceiling, walls tapestried with a library of four or five tiers of books. In a great fireplace, hung round with eighteenth-century family portraits, a great fire is burning; for the day is dark and damp, remarkable at the end of April.

High windows of unstained glass open on lawns stretching as far as the eye can see, vast pastures where troops of cattle and sheep are grazing; and this in the heart of London, in a quarter where the land is worth nobody knows how much a foot.

Tea is served, on a portable table that two servants bring in. The Countess of H—, to whom Lady Holland, a distant relative, bequeathed this extraordinary dwelling-place, serves us graciously, aided by her young daughter. Then we visit the historic house, the fine library, a gallery of family portraits all painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds. I notice a portrait of Talleyrand. He was a frequent guest of the house, and it possesses thirty or forty of his letters, addressed to Lady Holland, the friend of Napoleon I.

WINDSOR; glimpses of old-time royal buildings, between the great trees on the left as the train comes in. At the station, conveyances that take you to the residence by way of a little city of purveyors and innkeepers, which has formed round the castle and its old abbey; first impression of Mennecy, Seine-et-Oise.

In a square, a statue of the Queen, her sceptre in her hand, which she holds with the authoritative gesture characteristic of Elizabeth and all the sovereigns of Great Britain. Then the postern, with a horse-guard in red, with heavy bear-skin, in the angle of the old crenelated rampart.

Different parts of the castle are of different epochs; the old church, Gothic, like that at Oxford; the abbeys of Westminster are mixed up in the remembrance. Opposite the church, little lodgings, about a dozen, built in the old wall, ornamented with gardens the size of an open drawer, where grow sunflowers yellow as the stones. They are the dwellings of old retired officers, to whom the Queen offers shelter. The guard is just about to be relieved, and we go up the winding gravel path to the palace. We are allowed to visit it, although the Queen is expected for dinner; beautiful apartments, pictures by master hands, along with a complete collection of Louis-Philippe brasses and Sèvres ornaments.

Then the park, the model farm, deer scattered over the grass; and then the exit into the open country, through a gateway of the Middle Ages, opened for us by an old, old guard, with white beard, high hat with galloons, shrunken and tottering in his blue and

silver livery. Beautiful road, verdure everywhere, rich pasturage, little bridges over the Thames, gigs and skiffs on the bank.

Eton and its building of old red brick, with arcades around the great court, and high windows to light the lecture rooms. Drive in the park to find the professor, H. J—'s friend. He has at his house pupils who eat, sleep, and study there, and follow the courses of the school. The students appear in their short black vests, great white collars round their rosy cheeks. Exquisite little house, — the professor's; tall shrubs, wistaria, and ivy away to the roof. The little village of Eton is all for the use of the professors and the furnishers of the college; the boys go about as they please, like little men. The instruction is for from twelve to eighteen years; then, Oxford or Cambridge.

Nothing we have in France would give us an idea of Oxford; to begin with, it was a city of convents, in the Middle Ages — twelve, fifteen, twenty convents, that the Reformation changed into colleges.

Trinity College, where we stayed awhile, is in large part three or four centuries old, and the modern buildings, on the old types of English architecture, are scarcely to be told from the ancient, because of the sombre color of their stone. Cloistered courts, ivy reaching up over the walls from its giant roots. The chambers of the students open on long corridors; we enter one, through a little sitting-room, finished in light colors, with its little library and artistic pic-

tures. Then we descend to the great gardens all equipped for athletic life — cricket, foot-ball; but at this hour the young men are scattered about under the trees, seated on benches and rustic chairs, reading and chatting, or are rowing on the river.

Visit to the chapel, the refectory, great hall with Gothic windows and old paintings, which reminds me of Westminster. Went through several colleges, the oldest, New College, the largest and richest, Christ College. More or less imposing and beautiful, and all more or less alike. Exquisite moment in one of them. I arrived on the arm of my son, in a splendid garden; deer were running over the grass, a giant lilac lapped me in its sweet odor mingled with the perfumes of the woods. An old clock, cracked but clear, sounded the hour, in the midst of the almost empty colleges, the students being on the Thames.

We follow to the river, along a shady path; each college has its float of distinctive color moored along the river, which is narrow here, and brazen in the May sunshine. Racing, outcries, uproar, chagrin of the vanquished, young men in striped sweaters coming out of the gigs, bronzed, perspiring, and for the most part lean and sleek as hounds.

Return under the great trees, soft tread of the English crowd over the dusty path, where my rolling chair is the only vehicle to be heard. Back to Christ College and its admirable entrance-way, its arch crowned by a giant rosette; illustrated menu cards on the tables of the immense refectory; on going out, am struck by a rickety chair, a remnant of the past, in a corner of the court.

In another, at the back, on the terrace, representation in monstrous sculptures of all the sins and crimes which tempt man. Magnificent, that afternoon at Oxford, which remains with me in the synthesis of a kaleidoscopic picture of mad races on the Thames, the river all scintillating with colors reflected in the mirror of the water and the dipping movements of the oars; of cricket and foot-ball games, on lawns intensely green; — all the luxurious sport of modern English life, viewed from the Gothic windows of an old sculptured cloister of the fifteenth century.

VENICE

ARRIVAL at Venice. The gondolas, — it is night, — great black swans, which press up to the steps of the landing. The imprisoned water is dashing against the old stones. The cry of the gondoliers — somewhat the same sensation as from the cry of our Piedmontese chimney-sweeps: "Ho — ho," but with the vibrations of the water added. Note this prolonged sensation of reverberated sound; in a measure like the effect on the eyes of the whiteness and scintillations in a country of ice and snows.

I HAVE in my eyes and mind the letter of Aretino to Titian, describing the delightful spectacles he had seen on the Grand Canal. I took a gondola, and had myself conveyed, with my Léon, that extension and expansion of myself, to a place whence I could

see the bridge of the Rialto, the Palace of the Chamberlains, etc.

How far away all that is now! how these stones have aged! I try in vain to bring to life that luxurious past of regal and artistic debauchery; it is all dead, dead.

THE Baux, the Baux! — they it is whom Venice calls up into me. But the wind is more destructive than the water, more corrosive, and the Baux are more dead than Venice.

I HAVE the key to all music; I know what the water of the Adriatic whispers to the stones of old Venetian palaces — oh! the melancholy song! Every night, in the silence of the old city and its canals, I hear this simple music. By day the cries and calls of boatmen, the general traffic of life, prevent me from distinguishing the meaning of the words, the rhythm of this perpetual lament: *Venezia la bella.*

ENCOUNTERED Father Saturn, his great scythe over his shoulder, under his arm a mysterious box he calls his tool-chest. For cutting down the life of kings and peoples along his route, the races of men and of beasts, the iron of his instrument suffices; but to get through stone, wood, metal, and the solid works of man, he needs more potent engines, and opening his box he showed me sun's rays ready to blaze forth, a leather bottle swelling with tempest, and a vessel full of salt water, that salt sea water so corrosive that it seems as if each of its waves were armed with little teeth of salt.

MUSIC that dies away, a passing boat. . . .

"LA FENICE," said my forward gondolier, at the bend of a *canaletto*. This name, spoken thus carelessly, stirred in a corner of my memory a whole romantic past of festivities and illustrious names: novels of George Sand and Balzac, verses of Musset, the love affairs of Byron, Malibran, Lablache, Rossini . . . and I have before me, beaten by waters that are turbid, oily, streaked, thick, black, slimy, three stone steps leading to a high iron grille before glass doors fast bolted, beyond which I divine the enchantment of great deserted corridors and dim staircases leading to the boxes; and the empty ticket bureau, seeming at the bottom of the water. Across the rectilinear pediment, between two enormous lanterns of elegant antique iron work, this name, pretentious, magniloquent, "La Fenice," The Phœnix, incrusts its letters in the sombre stones of the palace.

"I was eight when I saw the whole theatre on fire," said my old gondolier, head fine and bronzed, fringe of white beard, gold rings in his ears. "The fire raged three days and nights." And there succeeded to my romantico-amorous vision, the apotheosis of those long tongues of red flame, reflected in the dead water, and licking the neighboring palaces right and left.

VENICE! So many paintings, so many museums, and nowhere in them the representation of this city on piles, this extraordinary life, canals, gondolas, carnivals on the water. We are all the time obliged to question the rocks, to call up, on the steps of

marble palaces, apparitions of beautiful women going to a supper, a ball, entering their gondolas by the glimmer of torches repeated in the deep water as in a black metallic mirror.

And when one thinks of those painters of the North, who have so magically and minutely told the tale of their homes, of the corners most secret and secluded! . . . look at the "Dropsical Woman," for instance.

Here painting is all allegorical or religious, speaks but for the Church or the kings; and yet it must have been striking to see a procurator, in his gondola, going to his morning's business, or the pale face of a condemned criminal, behind the iron bars of the mysterious gondola of the prisons.

Discussed the matter the evening long. My wife and Lucien are for the Italian painters, putting themselves outside and above life and its platitudes: Léon and I hold with the painters of the North, who glorify existence, make their times the vanquisher of death and oblivion.

In certain hours which I call dead, hours colorless and arid, when the Venus de Milo herself has no message for you, when what is left of Thebes or of Memphis, when the stones of the most beautiful Venetian palaces, leave you blind and deaf, without one pulse-beat for Art, I understand how life appears to many; I have a notion of that sinister Sahara they call a flat existence.

Notice the lines, free and salient, of the gondolier rowing in the stern, like a silhouette of pantomime.

The movement is in three and a half time, broken in the middle; Scaramouche in outline. The forward gondolier is in general the chief. He is the one to make the melancholy cries with their *ai's* and their *o's*, that warn against shocks and collisions at the turnings of the little canals; he, too, it is who chats with the passenger opposite; and on carnival days and high festivals, when the gondola is decked and garlanded, I have noticed that it is he who wears the sailor collar latest laundered, and the freshest hat and ribbons. His comrade in the stern makes no holiday toilet. He says nothing, no one notices him, but as he rows along, he makes, over the head of the passenger, at the other gondolier and at those who pass, all the grimaces possible to his cocked eye and protuberant, hooked nose.

MORNING is announced by the angelus of Saint George's and of La Salute, two great chapels on the water, in the horizon of our windows. In my bed, my eyes yet heavy and sealed, I think I see the two isles, quaking with their tintinnabulations, splashing sky and water with their clear notes of waking. Many other bells respond, mingled with the wash of the waves against the steps of the old Giustiniani palace, with the hoarse and drowsy morning voices of the gondoliers mooring their boats at the foot of the hotel, with the sound of stretching chains and of boats driven against the high *palis.* Never the low of a beast or cry of a bird.

OPPOSITE the Lido, on the border of a great expanse of filthy water shunned by boats, the slaughter house.

WITH its clef-like prow, its swan's-neck stern, and its *felze*, near enough to the belly of a stringed instrument, the gondola partakes of the boat, the bird, and the contrabass. I see the possibility of a fantastic tale ending thus: The gondolier rises, sets his dripping gondola upright against his breast, plays an air on it with his oar, then, lowering it, springs astride the keel, and it flies off heavily, noisily, toward the high seas, as though it were a great black swan: "Fenice!"

THE END.

THIRTY YEARS IN PARIS

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

When this volume of fugitive articles, mainly reminiscent, was given to the public, in 1888, almost exactly thirty years had passed since the epoch-marking incident in Daudet's life to which the opening article is devoted. Ernest Daudet fixes for us the time of his brother's arrival in Paris as the early part of November 1857, when he was about seventeen and a half years old;[1] and his first appearance in print — the publication of *Les Amoureuses*, the volume of verses many of which he had brought with him from the provinces — did not take place until the following year. His journey to Paris and his arrival Daudet had already described in the first chapter of the second part of *Little What's-His-Name* — the chapter called *Mes Caoutchoucs*, with which the quasi-autobiographical part of that story ends. If we read Ernest Daudet's affectionate and admiring tribute to his brother in connection with the "history" of *Little What's-His-Name* in this volume, and with that story itself, we cannot fail, it seems to me, to be convinced that there have been few auto-

[1] *My Brother and I*, Chap. XVI.

biographies in the guise of fiction in which the general outline of the narrative is so closely in accord with actual fact, as in this case of Daniel Eyssette and Alphonse Daudet; and the result is that we have — the three supplementing one another — an extremely full and satisfactory biography of the novelist down to the beginning of his literary career. The first few years in Paris are described very briefly by the older brother, who has almost nothing to say of his brother's life after his marriage; and, as his little book was published in 1881, the last sixteen years of Alphonse Daudet's life are left untouched by him. He feels bound, he says, not to forestall the account which Alphonse may give for himself, either in his memoirs or in the story of his works. It is to be regretted that he exercised this self-restraint, for the only memoirs which his brother has left behind, so far as appears, are contained, with the histories of his books, in this volume and its companion — *Memories of a Man of Letters*, — and, vastly entertaining as these reminiscences are, and most illuminating as to his character and temperament and methods of work; and though they are written, as has been said, with infinite talent and with his unfailing humor, they are sadly lacking in material for anything like an adequate biography of the man.

Les Amoureuses, already referred to, was published in 1859, when Daudet was not yet twenty years of age, and many of the poems had been written long before; his next volume, *La Double*

Conversion, a "tale in verse," appeared in 1861. These, with the exception of some fugitive pieces, published in newspapers or written in albums, were his only ventures in the field of poetry, and the volumes are principally sought by collectors.

During the interval between the publication of *Les Amoureuses* and that of *La Double Conversion*, a very marked change had taken place in Daudet's position and prospects; he was no longer the timid, diffident Little What 's-His-Name; he had become acquainted with Villemessant, had made his mark in the columns of *Le Figaro*, which, says M. Ernest Daudet, "was a sort of consecration for an author, a brevet accorded to talent;" and he had, in 1860, accepted a position in the office of the Duc de Morny, President of the Corps Législatif, then and until his death one of the most powerful men in France. Although Daudet had not then seen the last of his Bohemian days, he had gone beyond the point where, if ever, he was in danger of falling to the level of many of those with whom he was thrown in contact; he had passed among them and come forth unscathed, "having lost none of his talent, having left behind none of the bloom of his youth, the freshness of his soul, the uprightness of his heart."[1]

The publication of *Les Amoureuses* called forth an extremely eulogistic article in *Le Moniteur* by M. Édouard Thierry, and may be said to have

[1] *My Brother and I*, Chap. XVI.

opened the columns of the newspapers to its author. It was not long after that *Le Figaro* (November 24, 1859) published his first article as *chroniqueur fantaisiste*, a study entitled *Les Gueux de Province*, in which he described the miseries of provincial school ushers. "This page, glowing with reminiscences of his personal experience and written with great emotion," says an anonymous writer in Larousse, "placed Daudet in full communication with the public."

In 1862, Daudet's third volume was issued by the house of Michel Lévy Frères. It contained, under the general title of *The Romance of Red Riding Hood, Scenes and Fancies*, six sketches: *The Romance of Red-Riding-Hood, The Souls of Paradise, The Trumpet and the Trumpeter, The Eight Mrs. Bluebeards, An Examination for Charenton, The Nightingales of the Cemetery.* In some subsequent editions, the *Adventures of a Butterfly and a Beetle* [1] was included with these sketches.

"What other than that incorrigible poet Little What's-His-Name would be capable of writing stories so chimerical, so intangible as *The Adventures of a Butterfly*, etc., *The Romance of Red-Riding-Hood*, and *The Souls of Paradise?*" asks M. Jules Lemaître; and, after a very brief *résumé* of the last-named sketch, he continues:

"There you have a mystery which smells a little of heresy; for the Church teaches not only that the elect will forget the damned, but that the

[1] From *Little What's-His-Name*, Part 2, Chap. VIII.

damned will abhor the elect (I do not commend this as an amiable dogma). But there is in this heterodox fantasy, so compromising to St. Peter, an altogether appetizing mixture of ingenuousness, grace and passion." [1]

It was in the office of the President of the Corps Législatif that Daudet met M. Ernest l'Épine, who "managed M. de Morny's office," and in collaboration with whom he wrote the next of his published works, in a hitherto untried field. In 1862 Michel Lévy Frères issued the "*Last Idol*, drama in one act, in prose, by MM. E. l'Épine and A. Daudet." The play, was first performed at the Odéon February 4, 1862, and the occasion is described by M. Ernest Daudet.[2] Alphonse had been compelled to leave Paris because of the condition of his health, and had passed the winter in Algiers, where, as he tells us in this volume,[3] he received the news of the first performance and was so stirred thereby that he forgot health and prudence in his longing to see Paris once more. While the play was not an absolute failure, it achieved no marked success; a *succès de douces larmes* is the most emphatic expression I have seen applied to it, and the *douces larmes* of the masqueraders on their way to Bullier seem to have impressed the author most vividly at the performance he witnessed on the night of his arrival in Paris: Mardi Gras, 1862.

[1] *Les Contemporains, Études et Portraits Littéraires*, 2d Series.

[2] *My Brother and I*, Chap. XVIII.

[3] Chapter entitled "My First Play."

In 1863 *The Absent* made its appearance from the press of Dupray de la Mahérie. This thin volume of 43 pages is very rare, and is highly valued by collectors. A copy presented by the author is inscribed:

"This is the copy of Paul Arène, my little Abbé Galiani.
"ALPHONSE DAUDET."

In 1865 *The Absent*, which in its original form was called a *proverb*, was published by Lévy as a comic opera in one act, words by M. Alphonse Daudet, music by M. Ferdinand Poise. There are divers variations between the two, and the *dénouement* is not the same.

The opera was first performed at the Opéra-Comique, October 26, 1864.

The second of the plays written by Daudet and l'Épine in collaboration was published by Lévy in 1865, under the title of *The White Carnation*, comedy in one act, in prose. The play had originally been called the *Lily*, but both the title and the *dénouement* — an émigré shot by a platoon of soldiers and shouting "*Vive le Roi!*" the while — failed to please the censorship of the Empire, so that the *Lily*, momentarily a *White Dahlia*, finally became the *White Carnation*, and as such was performed at the Comédie-Française, April 8, 1865.

The Elder Brother, the last of the joint productions of Daudet and l'Épine, was published by Lévy in 1868. The play, a "drama in one act"

had been produced at the Vaudeville, December 19, 1867, but obtained only a *succès d'estime.*

The same year (1868) was marked by the publication in book form of the first of those masterpieces upon which Daudet's fame rests secure. *Little What's-His-Name,*[1] *the Story of a Child* had appeared in serial form in the *Petit Moniteur Universel*, beginning with the number of the 27th November, 1866. The volume was published by Hetzel.

In 1881 MM. Dentu and Charpentier undertook an octavo edition of the "Complete Works" of Daudet, with illustrations, the publication continuing slowly until 1887, when the eighth, which proved to be the last, volume was issued. Each work was preceded by its history, written by the author especially for this edition. The first volume, *Fromont and Risler*, was published in 1881; *Jack, Jack* (conclusion) and *Robert Helmont* in one volume, and *Little What's-His-Name* in 1882; *Tartarin de Tarascon* and *Letters from My Mill* in one volume, in 1884; *Kings in Exile* in 1885, *The Nabob* in 1886, and *Numa Roumestan* in 1887. The "histories" written for this edition are to be found in the present volume and its companion, with two exceptions, namely that of the *Nabob*, and that of *Robert Helmont*, which latter has become a preface and occupies its appropriate place as such.

It is impossible to exaggerate the charm of these histories, which are absolutely unique and by the

[1] *Le Petit Chose.*

aid of which we seem actually to see the author at work. I venture to suggest that it is the very noticeable presence of that distinguishing quality of all Daudet's work which has been well called the "personal note,"[1] which makes these papers, all things considered, the most entertaining and absorbing of the contents of this volume, which has itself been declared by some critics to be the most entertaining of all Daudet's works.

Little What's-His-Name, we are told, is "an echo of my childhood and my youth." A purely bibliographical introduction is not perhaps a proper place to make or to answer criticisms of the quality of Daudet's work, but I cannot forbear a protest against the criticism that the autobiographical element in *Little What's-His-Name* is a blemish, "because the real incidents of the author's life are presented too much as they actually occurred."[2] Who could say, without the assistance furnished by Daudet himself and his brother, what incidents are told as they actually occurred? And does the information given by them go beyond this: that the first part of the *History of a Child* is, *in its general outline*, and only therein, the history of a particular child named Alphonse Daudet, even as the *Personal History and Experience of David Copperfield the Younger* was "an echo of the childhood and youth" of Charles Dickens?[3]

[1] Henry James in *Partial Portraits*, p. 210.

[2] Adolphe Cohn in the *Bookman*.

[3] On this point Daudet's own testimony cannot fail to be interesting, if not conclusive. On Monday, September 25, 1886,

The original edition of *Little What's-His-Name*, without an indication of the impression (of which there were some seven or eight), is very rare. "M. Daudet gave some complimentary copies to his friends. One was inscribed: 'To my friend Cladet, *alias* Popis, *alias* La Bataille.' When this copy was offered for sale, some ten years ago, there was a rumor that it had been stolen. On another copy we read: 'Copy belonging to my friend Duchesne, who did not steal it.' Strangely enough — but it is a fact — these two copies are to-day in the same hands; the collector who owns them paid an average of 25 francs each." [1]

This first extended work of M. Daudet was reprinted by Hetzel in 1878, in the form of a special edition for children, with numerous illustrations. It also formed volume two of the *Works of Alphonse Daudet*, which Lemerre began to publish as an

Edmond de Goncourt writes in his Journal: "To-day in our daily ante-breakfast chat, Daudet deplored the fact that he wrote *Le Petit Chose* when he was too young. He told me all that he would put in it to-day, and added: 'I was unfortunate enough to meet some one to whom I read the beginning of my book, and who told me that it was childish. That impelled me to stuff it with imaginary details, and adventures, and prevented me from putting into it the whole of my real childhood in the Lyonnais.'"

[1] M. Jules Brivois, *Essai de Bibliographie des Œuvres de M. Alphonse Daudet, avec Fragments Inédits.* In the Preface to this little book, which is invaluable to all those who are interested in its subject, M. Brivois says: "I have tried to supplement, by a work of pure bibliography, the works of M. Alphonse Daudet — *Thirty Years in Paris* and *Memories of a Man of Letters*, published in 1888 — bringing my investigations down to the present day." Unluckily the present day was December, 1894.

édition définitive in 1879, two years before the appearance of the first volume of the Dentu-Charpentier edition referred to above. This Lemerre edition was much more complete than the Charpentier edition; it extended to eighteen volumes, the last of which[1] appeared in 1891.

Little What's-His-Name was followed in 1869 by *Letters from My Mill; Impressions and Memories*, whose "history," as it appeared in the Charpentier edition, will be found in this volume.

The original edition contained nineteen letters or tales. Subsequent reprints — Volume I. of the Lemerre edition (1879), Volume V. of the Dentu-Charpentier edition (1884), and a later duodecimo edition (Charpentier, 1887), contain, in addition, five tales originally published with *Robert Helmont*, in the series entitled *Études et Paysages*, namely *The Stars*, *The Oranges*, *The Locusts*, *Custom-House People* and *In Camargue*, and one, *The Three Low Masses*, which had first appeared in the second edition of *Monday Tales* (Charpentier, 1876).[2]

The *Letters from My Mill* were dedicated to Mme. Daudet (Mlle. Julie Allard), to whom the author had been married two years before.[3]

[1] *Thirty Years in Paris*, including much of the first edition of *Memories of a Man of Letters*.

[2] The *Three Low Masses* was afterward published with *La Belle Nivernaise* (1886); in this edition it is restored to the *Monday Tales*.

[3] "They (the *Letters from My Mill*) had to my mind an extraordinary charm," says Mr. Henry James; "they put me quite on the side of Alphonse Daudet, whatever he might do in the future."

In this same year (1869) *The Sacrifice* was performed at the Vaudeville. With the exception of the unimportant comic opera, the *Absent* (1863), it was Daudet's first essay as a dramatist without the collaboration of l'Épine, and it was also the first play in which he had ventured beyond one act. It was published in the *Nouvelle Bibliothèque Dramatique* in 1869.

The second volume of "letters," so-called, *Lettres à un Absent*, was published in 1871 by Lemerre. It contained twenty-one sketches of which five now appear in *Memories of a Man of Letters*, namely, *The Francs-Tireurs*, *Les Évadés de Paris* (*An Escape*), *The Garden on Rue des Rosiers*, *The Summer Palace* and *The Shipwreck*. Of the remaining sixteen, seven — *The Surrender*, *The Dictators*, *A Mushroom Bed of Great Men*, *Rochefort and Rossignol*, *The Sentry-Box*, *The Knitters* and *A Year of Trouble* have never been reprinted in French, while the other nine were included in the second edition of the *Monday Tales;* and this, the author's latest arrangement, has been adhered to in this edition, only the seven sketches named above as having never been reprinted being included under the original title, and appended to *Letters from My Mill*.

The majority of the *Lettres à un Absent* had appeared in *Le Soir*, in February, March, April and May, 1871. *A Year of Trouble*, which was written by Mme. Daudet, may be found in the number of that journal for Sept. 23, 1871, with the sub-title: "Notes of a Parisienne."

The Defence of Tarascon, which is one of the most famous of all Daudet's shorter pieces, was reprinted on Japan paper by Lahure, in 1886, in a "*délicieuse plaquette*," of about fifty pages, illustrated by sixteen drawings engraved by the Gillot process and colored. Very few copies were printed and the book was never regularly offered for sale.

The Prodigious Adventures of Tartarin of Tarascon, after the diversified experience related by the author in his "history" of that work, were given to the world in 1872, in a volume bearing the imprint of Dentu. As we are told by M. Ernest Daudet, the materials for the Algerian portions of the story were gathered at the time of the trip to Algiers in 1861–62, which was brought so suddenly to a close by the news of the successful performance of *The Last Idol*. The author tells us that the book was not written until 1869, but in 1863 or thereabout *Figaro* published *Chapatin the Lion-Killer*, which was nothing less than *Tartarin* in embryo.

During the year 1872 Daudet made two more ventures into the dramatic field, resulting in the production of two plays, one of which is by common consent the worst, and the other in some respects the best of all his efforts in that line. *Lise Tavernier*, a drama in five acts and seven tableaux, was played at the Ambigu-Comique on January 29, 1872, and was published by Dentu. It can hardly be said to have obtained even what

is somewhat vaguely called a *succès d'estime*, and was not deemed worthy a place in the single volume of plays included in the Lemerre collected edition.[1]

L'Arlésienne (*Woman of Arles*), a play in three acts and five tableaux, with symphonies and choruses by G. Bizet, was first performed at the Vaudeville, October 1, 1872, and was published by Lemerre. In his history of *Fromont and Risler*, Daudet has described the part played by the *Arlésienne* in determining the destiny of the more famous work; how, as he sat listening to a rehearsal, he reflected that the Parisians would soon weary of hearing him chatter about grasshoppers, the maids of Arles, the mistral, and his mill, and that it was time to arouse their interest by a work that would come nearer to them and their everyday life; how he then and there determined to place his next drama amid the laborious activity of that business quarter, the Marais; and how the resplendent failure of the little play, despite the "prettiest music in the world," led to his determination to write no more dramas and to transform *Fromont*, which was already mapped out in his brain, into a novel. *L'Arlésienne* did, in truth, "score a failure," and received only three performances at that time; but Daudet's generous appreciation of the music was not fully shared by the public, and Bizet was partly responsible with Daudet for the fate of the play. The judgment of

[1] See *My Brother and I*, p. 444.

1872 has been reviewed, however, in later years, and somewhat modified, and M. Ernest Daudet's estimate of the work seems to have been justified in the lapse of time. It was reproduced with more satisfactory results at the Odéon, May 5, 1885, which fact is recorded in a second edition of the play.[1] "We may safely predict," says a recent writer, "that great renown awaits the shade of Alphonse Daudet by reason of the *Arlésienne*."[2] The play is little more than an elaboration of the tale with the same name included among the *Letters from my Mill.*

In 1873, Dentu issued, under the general title of *Monday Tales* (*Contes du Lundi*), a volume containing a collection of thirty-one short sketches, most of which had previously appeared in one or another newspaper. Some of these are among the most familiar of all Daudet's works, and two, *The Last Class* and *The Siege of Berlin*,[3] have figured for several years in the list of books required to be read in preparation for admission to Harvard College.

Monday Tales. New Edition revised and considerably augmented. So reads the title-page of a

[1] "My copy," says M. Brivois, "bears the following autograph address: 'To Madame la Comtesse de Chambrun the touching and refined interpreter of Rose Mamaï. Her respectful and grateful *Alph. Daudet.*'"

[2] Gustave Geffroy, *Le Théâtre d'Alphonse Daudet*, in *La Revue Encyclopédique*, January 15, 1898.

[3] *The Siege of Berlin* first appeared in *Lettres à un Absent* (*supra*), to which collection it has been restored in this edition.

volume issued by Charpentier in 1876. It contains all the thirty-one tales included in the earlier edition, nine others taken from the *Lettres à un Absent*, and two previously *unpublished* pieces: *The Three Low Masses* and *The Harvest by the Sea-shore*, both of which are included in the *Monday Tales* by the present publishers. This edition was preceded by an advertisement by the publisher, stating in effect that, as the author did not propose to republish the volume entitled *Lettres à un Absent*, he had borrowed therefrom a few reminiscences of a purely anecdotal character.

Beginning in May 1873, F. Polo published a series of fifteen *livraisons* under the general title of *Contes et Récits*, containing in all thirty articles, of which only two, *Le Bon Dieu de Chemillé* and the *New Master* had not been previously published. The other twenty-eight were all taken from *Lettres à un Absent* and *Contes du Lundi*. *Le Bon Dieu de Chemillé* was reprinted with the first edition of *Robert Helmont* (1874) as one of the *Études et Paysages*, printed in this edition in the volume with *Port Tarascon*. *The New Master* was reprinted with *La Belle Nivernaise* in 1886.

An interesting detail is given by Brivois: in the first impression of the sixth *livraison*, at page 93, there is an engraving after a drawing by Gill, representing Bazaine playing billiards. In subsequent copies, in which this engraving is missing, we read in the middle of the page: "Illustration prohibited by the censorship." At

this time Bazaine was at Île Sainte-Marguerite under sentence of twenty years' imprisonment for treason. He escaped in the following year.[1]

Artists' Wives, a collection of twelve studies of marital infelicity from various points of view, was the next volume from Daudet's pen to be offered to the public. It was published by Lemerre in 1874, and, so far as I have been able to learn, none of the twelve had previously appeared, even in newspapers. The original edition was entitled *First Series*, but no other series has ever been published.

In the same year appeared *Robert Helmont,* with the exception of *Little What's-His-Name* and *Tartarin of Tarascon*, the longest single work thus far put forth by Daudet. In the same covers were numerous tales, studies, etc., collected under the general title of *Études et Paysages.* The volume was published by Dentu; in 1888 the same publisher issued a new edition (octavo) of *Robert Helmont* alone, with many illustrations; and in 1891 a reduced copy (12mo) of the same, with the same illustrations. With its former companions (*Études et Paysages*), — except those that had already been reprinted in *Letters from My Mill* (Volume I.), — and with *Artists' Wives*, it forms Volume VII. of the Lemerre collected edition; and, with the second part of *Jack*, Volume III. of the Dentu-Charpentier edition (1882) of the "Complete Works." In this last-named volume it

[1] See *The Lesson in History* (*infra*), p. 359.

is preceded by its "history," written for this edition, which appears, in the shape of a *Preface* in the later editions and in the present edition in English.

Robert Helmont originally appeared in the *Musée Universel.* Of the *Études et Paysages*, none except *Le Bon Dieu de Chemillé*, had ever before been published, save in newspapers, and none, save those which were added to the *Letters from My Mill*, have ever been reprinted, except in the Lemerre collected edition, and in one or more of the collections entitled *Contes Choisis*, to which more extended reference will be made in the introduction to *Memories of a Man of Letters.* Among them were several, for example the *Death of the Duc de M——*, and *A Nabob*, which were afterward elaborated in the novels.

With the publication of the *Études et Paysages*, Daudet abandoned for many years, substantially forever, the style of composition which had given him even then, when he was but little past thirty, an enviable fame. *Tartarin*, though in form a continued story, is in reality but a succession of sketches in which, as his custom was, he describes, albeit with transparent exaggeration and with a more rollicking humor than usual, what he, the most ardent and loyal of Southerners,[1] had himself

[1] "'My Provence!' he said to me one day; 'people ask me if I love her, if I regret her! Why, I am dying of love and longing for her!'"

M. Auguste Marin in the *Revue Encyclopédique* of January 15, 1898.

seen and observed of one aspect of the Southern character.

Enough has been said of the confusing transfer of these shorter pieces from one collection to another to show how difficult a task it is to prepare an absolutely complete edition of them all. Although Daudet had not Balzac's extraordinary craze for revising and remodelling and transferring whole chapters and episodes from one novel to another, the sudden transformation of an *Étude* or *Paysage* into a *Letter from My Mill*, or of a *Lettre à un Absent* into a *Monday Tale* inevitably reminds one of the way in which, as the *Human Comedy* increased in bulk and scope, the different *Scenes* were transferred from one category to another, from *Parisian Life* to *Private Life* or to the *Études Philosophiques.* The collector who should attempt to secure all of Daudet's miscellaneous works in French, without duplicates, would be as badly off as one who had undertaken to collect a similar set of the writings of Rudyard Kipling. The list of publishers with whom Daudet had been associated in these first fifteen years of his literary career reaches the somewhat extraordinary number of nine or ten.

On the 25th of March, 1874, the newspaper called *Le Bien Public* began the publication of *Fromont and Risler*, and later in the year, when this publication was concluded, a *special impression* of the novel, printed in double columns, was made from the original type made up into pages, and issued from the office of that newspaper.

Such was the first appearance of the work with which Alphonse Daudet definitively won his great popularity, which endured without perceptible diminution to the day of his death, twenty-three years later, whatever the worshippers of the Academy may have dreamed for a moment, after the publication of *The Immortal* in 1888.

Close on the heels of this *special impression*, and in the same year, Charpentier[1] issued what we must call the original edition of *Fromont and Risler*. It was published at the sacramental price of 3 fr. 50, to be read on the back of all the familiar yellow-covered volumes of the "Bibliothèque Charpentier," and was worth in 1894 something like ten times that amount, according to M. Brivois, who records some interesting details concerning two copies. — "M. Paul de Boissy . . . once owned a copy at the head of which was the following interesting autograph: 'This copy of the first edition of *Fromont*, which I happened upon by chance, moves me deeply as I turn the leaves. My first great success — when I had my health, all my dear ones still living — ah! how light-hearted I was and how proud to be alive, when this copy came from the printer!

"'ALPHONSE DAUDET, 1890.'

"At the sale after the death of Adolphe Belot (April 1891), a copy of the fifteenth edition (dated 1876) was offered, bearing on the fly-leaf

[1] It is worth noting that this is the first appearance of this house as Daudet's publishers.

the following curious imprecation in the author's hand:

"'A MON (*sic*) ADOLPHE BELOT.

"'*Vers pour être chantés.*

"'Adolphe contempteur des Dieux,
Tu mourras foudroyé par leur main vengeresse;
Ils paieront d'un trépas odieux
Ta violence et ta paresse.

"'Mais Priape, Dieu des jardins,
Touché par le constant homage de ton culte,
Par ton amour des fleurs et des livres badins,
Priera pour toi ces Dieux que ton cynisme insulte.

"'*Musique de* LULLI; paroles d' ALPHONSE DAUDET.'"[1]

Fromont was dedicated to "the two poets, Jules and Léonide Allard. In testimony of my filial respect." The two poets were Mme. Daudet's father and mother, the latter of whom was, during the novelist's later years, a cherished member of his family.

[1] "TO MY (*sic*) ADOLPHE BELOT.

"*Lines to be sung.*

"Adolphe, thou scorner of the Gods,
Struck down by their avenging hand, thou 'lt die;
They 'll pay thee with a death detestable,
For all thy violence and indolence.

"But Priapus, the god of gardens fair,
Touched by the constant homage of thy adoration,
And by thy love of flowers and sportive books,
Will pray forgiveness for thee from these Gods
Whom thou dost with thy cynic ways insult.

"Music by LULLI; words by ALPHONSE DAUDET."

A reprint of this original edition, issued in 1876 (the "fifteenth edition" mentioned in the foregoing quotation), bore the inscription: "*Ouvrage Couronné par l'Académie Française*," an honor accorded to none of the author's subsequent books.

In the Lemerre collected edition, heretofore mentioned many times, *Fromont and Risler* forms Volume IV. (1884), and in the Dentu-Charpentier edition, preceded by "the history of this book," Volume I. (1881).

Jack, the second in order of publication of the series of novels properly so called, and the longest of all M. Daudet's works, began to appear in the *Moniteur Universel*, in June (15th), 1875, although, as the author himself tells us, he had not then completed the story and did not complete it until late in October. It had taken him nearly a year, and yet it was the "most quickly written" of all his books.

Jack was issued in two volumes by Dentu in 1876. It filled two volumes (5 and 6) of the Lemerre collected edition (1885) and Volumes II. and III. (with *Robert Helmont*) of the Dentu-Charpentier edition of the "Complete Works" (1882), wherein it was preceded by its "history," written especially for this edition.

I suspend at this point the chronological sketch of Daudet's works, to take it up anew, with the publication of the *Nabob*, in the introduction to

the *Memories of a Man of Letters.* A word or two may be said, however, concerning the various papers contained in *Thirty Years in Paris,* and concerning the later sketches printed therewith in this volume.

As to the former, they were written at divers times, most of them probably, always excepting the "histories of my books," before 1881; and the greater number, if not all, had been published prior to the first appearance of this volume, in 1888. Writing in 1881, M. Ernest Daudet says: "He (Alphonse) has spoken in the pages of his memoirs which have already been published of the first weeks of his sojourn in Paris, with a penetrating melancholy." And he proceeds to quote that passage of the first chapter which begins with the words: "With the exception of my brother, I knew no one." [1]

The article on Villemessant, we are told in a note, was written in 1879; an episode taken from *Little-What's-His-Name,* entitled *The First Coat,* was published in the volume with *La Belle Nivernaise* (Marpon and Flammarion) in 1886.

The histories of *Little-What's-His-Name* and the other books were written, as we have seen, especially for the Dentu-Charpentier edition of Daudet's "Complete Works," begun in 1881.

The article on the *Literary Salons* first appeared in the *Novoë Vremya* of St. Petersburg in 1879; Daudet's introduction to Mmes. Ancelot, Wal-

[1] *Infra,* p. 7; *My Brother and I,* p. 408.

dor, and Chodsko belongs to the very early years of his residence in Paris, when he was known solely as the author of *Les Amoureuses*.[1]

In the history of *Numa Roumestan*[2] we are told that some features of the character of Valmajour in that novel are authentic, — for example, the little phrase: "It came to me, at night," etc., "taken down word for word, from his ingenuous lip," and that the original of the character was "that Draguignanais whom my dear and great Mistral sent to me one day with these words: 'I send Buisson, *tambourinaire*, to you; pilot him.'" "But," says Daudet, "the real truth, which I could not tell in his lifetime for fear of injuring him, I may tell now that death has burst his drum, *pécaïre!* and stuffed with black earth the three holes of his flute. Buisson was only a bogus *tambourinaire*, a petty bourgeois from the south, a town clarinetist or bugler," etc. — An episode of *Numa Roumestan*, under the title of *My Drummer*, was published in the third collection of *Contes Choisis*, in 1884, but the story of Buisson seems never to have appeared, unless in some newspaper, until the publication of *Thirty Years in Paris*.

In connection with the history of the *Letters from my Mill*, where he tells of his visits to his friends the *Félibres* and of their journeyings together, it may be said that in 1868 Daudet's name appears as the translator (from Provençal into

[1] See *My Brother and I, p.* 412.
[2] *Memories of a Man of Letters.*

French) of Roumanille's *Lou Mège de Cucugnan,*[1] published by the *Librairie Internationale;* and that he himself occasionally ventured to write in the mellifluous *langue d'oc* is evidenced by the "epigraph" prefixed to *Arlatan's Treasure,* printed in this volume.

A most interesting account of some of the escapades in which Daudet took part with the brotherhood of Provençal poets, as given by Mistral in *Armana prouvençau,* a "popular almanac," is reproduced by M. Auguste Marin in an article entitled *La Jeunesse de Daudet,* in the *Revue Encyclopédique* of January 15, 1898. Only a short time before his death, he says, Daudet sat one day at his desk, turning the leaves of a copy of the almanac, fresh from Provence and exhaling an odor of seaweed.

"Whenever his eye caught a forgotten word, a picturesque phrase, in the little pamphlet composed by *trouvères,* who transform themselves into writers once a year without laying aside the hammer or the plough, he uttered a joyful exclamation; all his youthful memories throbbed at his temples; he found anew the accent of the soil with which to speak of Mistral, Roumanille and Aubanel. . . .

"Mistral relates that the author of *Les Prunes* (Daudet had then published nothing save a volume of poems, *Les Amoureuses*) was secretary to the Duc de Morny, a sort of 'honorary secretary'

[1] *The Physician of Cucugnan.*

evidently, for he went but once a month to see if his master, who presided over the Senate, was in good health and humor. Daudet was a comely youth, dark but with little color, with a silky beard just sprouting, and rampant hair. It was this too independent hair which disturbed the duke: 'Well, poet,' he would say, 'how about that underbrush, when are we going to have it cut?'

"'*Next week,*' the poet would reply.

"But when the next week came the hair was more bushy than ever; it overgrew the forehead and the cheeks; it became a wild tangle; and the duke fell instead of the hair. But this independent attitude was not assumed by Daudet with his haughty superior alone. He was fond of playing *casse-cou;* he plunged headlong, says Mistral, into everything that savored of life, light, noise and merriment.

"One evening, when they were supping together at the *Chêne-Vert,* a cabaret in the outskirts of Avignon, Daudet discovered that there was dancing at a neighboring house, at the foot of the terrace where the two friends sat at table. He gave one leap, from a height of three metres, through the trellis-work which concealed the dancers, and dropped, like the devil, into the midst of the ball. Another time, while crossing the bridge over the Bartelasse, he began to run along the parapet, at the risk of falling into the stream, and to horrify some worthy bourgeois who stopped to look, he cried: 'Tonnerre! it was from here that we threw

Brune's dead body into the river! yes, Maréchal Brune's! and let this serve as an example to the Frenchmen and Allobrogi who would harass us anew!'

"But the anecdote in which the future author of the *Letters from My Mill* is most fully revealed, is that of a walk through Arles, and a dinner at 'Trenquetaille,'—a revel! They (Mistral and Daudet, with Anselme Mathieu and the painter Grivolas) had taken it into their heads to have a feast *à la Provençale*, and they went about in search of a signless inn, through the narrow streets of Arles, where the old houses are whitewashed to the first floor and are always clean and fresh; where the 'Arlesian queens' smile at the passers-by from behind the light curtains at their doors. When they reached La Poissonnerie, toward nightfall, they asked an old woman, who was knitting stockings, if she knew of a little inn in the neighborhood where one could dine cleanly and *à la bonne apostolique*. The gossip, scenting a *galéjade*, called the neighbors, who showed their shrewd faces crowned with the white *cravate au chignon*. And each one commended the comely wayfarers to some inn whose name showed that they were laughing at them. But a stout man, who sat on a stone smoking his pipe, saw by the piteous manner of the four comrades that they were not making sport of the fishwives, and he offered to take them to the cabaret on the other side of the Rhone, at which the boatmen generally stopped.

"'I own my own boat,' he said, 'and I have followed the sea many years.'

"'Have you made long voyages?' said Daudet, as they followed the worthy man.

"'Oh! I have sailed mostly on small coasting craft; but if the Holy Marys had n't always had an eye on us, many 's the time we should have gone to the bottom, shipmates! I am Captain Gafet, at your service, when you want to go down the river.'

"They crossed the Rhone to the inn of Trenquetaille, where fifteen or twenty boatmen were already seated in front of a roast kid. The hostess, dismayed at the sight of such well-dressed guests, put some eels on the fire none the less, and, to whet their appetite, placed on the table some fine Bellegarde onions, a dish of peppers in vinegar, goat's-milk cheese wrapped in a walnut leaf, salted mullet roes and some bits of delicious codfish broiled over the embers.

"Daudet, who had never in his life been present at a Camarguese debauch, bravely attacked a great red onion, ate it with cheese and codfish, and consumed it; and as his companions were not to be outdone, Captain Gafet was kept busy filling the glasses, remarking that onions made one drink and kept the thirst alive.

"Meanwhile the boatmen, having made an end of their kid, were finishing their meal, according to the custom of Rhone watermen, with a plate of greasy soup. Having poured in a glass of wine,

each man held his plate in both hands and drank the mixture so. Then they began to sing. Daudet must needs do his part, a lively ballad, as old and light as the good wine. But the hostess was terribly afraid that she would be reported to the police for permitting such an uproar at night.

"'The police, the guard,' cried Daudet, 'oh! they have no terrors for us. Go and fetch the register in which you write the names of those who lodge in your inn; you 'll see who we are!'

"And the wine-inspired singer, whose rustic tastes were so in evidence, wrote on the blank page: 'Alphonse Daudet, secretary to the President of the Senate; Mistral, Chevalier of the Legion of Honor; Anselme Mathieu, *Félibre* of Châteauneuf-du-Pape; Grivolas, master-painter of the School of Avignon.'

"'Now,' said he with dignity to the old woman, 'if any one undertakes to make trouble for you, whether he be commissioner, gendarme, or subprefect, you need only put these fly-tracks under his nose. And if he molests you, just write to Paris. *Baste!* I will undertake to make him dance!'

"'We took our leave,' Mistral adds, 'accompanied by public veneration, like princes who have just made themselves known. But on Trenquetaille bridge, which was then a bridge of boats,—'

"'"Suppose we dance a farandole," says Daudet. "That 's the only proper way to cross a bridge in Provence."

"'Suddenly — we were half way across the Rhone — just before us, in the half-light, appears a procession of sweet damsels of Arles, each with her mate, walking slowly along, chattering and laughing. The rustling of the silk dresses, the amorous cooing of the pairs, in the placid evening air impregnated with the warm breath of the Rhone, all were caressing to the senses.

"'"A wedding-party," said the captain, who had not left us.

"'"A wedding-party?" echoed Daudet. With his imperfect sight he did not know the source of all this noise. "An Arlesian wedding! A wedding by moonlight! A wedding on the Rhone!"

"'And like a madman, our *Levantine* darted forward, threw his arms around the bride's neck, and, if you please, such kisses!

"'Ah! my friends in the Lord! Twenty resolute young blades surrounded us, pressed us close, brandishing their fists and shouting:

"'"Into the Rhone!"

"'But Captain Gafet rushed into the mêlée. "*Qu'es aco?*" he said, most opportunely. "Don't you see that they 've been drinking at Trenquetaille, to the health of the married pair, and that it would be bad for them to drink any more?"

"'"*Vivent les mariés!*" they shouted, one and all, with great good-will. Thanks to the brawn and presence of mind of honest Gafet, whom all the young men knew, we were allowed to cross the bridge.'

"He was a true, a pure Provençal, and Mistral writes in his graceful way: 'The lioness will never bear a grudge because her cub scratches her a little, in play.'

"Alphonse Daudet knew," adds M. Marin, "that only the Tartarins, the Roumestans and the Aunt Portals harbored malice against him in a country where 'everybody is a little Tarasconian.'"

As we have already seen, the play referred to in the title of the next of these papers is *The Last Idol*, written in collaboration with M. l'Épine and performed for the first time in the spring of 1862, in the absence of the author, but in the presence of M. le Duc de Morny, in whose department of the government both of the authors were employed. This paper had never been published in book form until the appearance of *Thirty Years in Paris;* the charming reminiscence of his Algerian wanderings, interrupted in the valley of the Chelif by the arrival of the Spahi with the telegraphic message for "Sidi Daoudi," which had been following him from camp to camp all the way from Milianah, is well worthy a place among the *Études et Paysages.*

Dealing as it does with a man still conspicuously prominent in contemporary French politics, the article on Henri Rochefort has a more intense *present* interest than most of Daudet's work. It was no longer ago than the election of M. Loubet to the presidency of the Republic that the founder of *La Lanterne* forced himself upon public atten-

tion as he has never failed to do on any occasion of more than ordinary interest for many years past. The paper was written for the same St. Petersburg journal in which the *Literary Salons* first appeared; it was published also in *Le Voltaire* of May 23, 1879.

The brief portrait of Henri Monnier, who is hardly known outside of France except as the creator of Joseph Prudhomme, was first published in *Thirty Years in Paris.* The same is true of the article on Desroches — *The End of a Buffoon*, etc. — a wonderfully lifelike description of the life which he saw at such close quarters during his early years in Paris, and which Henri Mürger, writing with an even more intimate acquaintance of his subject, pictured so vividly to an earlier generation in his *Scènes de la Vie de Bohème.*

The pretty little retreat under the willow-tree on the river by the *Île des Moineaux*, where Daudet first met Léon Pillaut, will be found described in *The Little Parish Church;* it was Lydie's "bath-room," one of the spots haunted by Richard after her flight with the prince; but the sketch as it appears in this volume had never before been printed.

It has always seemed to me that the "history" of *Fromont and Risler* is the most absorbingly interesting of all Daudet's narratives of the genesis of his various books; perhaps because it is the first of them that he wrote, and for that

reason contains more general information as to his method of work, and because the particular book to which it relates was his first venture in the direction of novel-writing; perhaps, too, because it contains that affectionate tribute to his wife which he epitomized in the dedication to the *Nabob.* He had been married in 1867, and his thirty years of married life were never clouded by a suggestion of infelicity of any of the varieties so powerfully described by him in *Artists' Wives.* — "Not a page which she has not revised and retouched, on which she has not cast a little of her lovely gold and azure dust," says Daudet, speaking of her share in his work.[1]

In the *Journal des Goncourt* there are one or two sympathetic references to Mme. Daudet. "1874, Friday, 5 June. Yesterday Alphonse Daudet came with his wife to lunch with me. A partnership which resembles that between my brother and myself. The wife writes, and I have reason to suspect that she is an artist in style."

"1885. Sunday, 25 January. — To-day Daudet and his wife came to see me. . . .

"Daudet talked of the first years after his marriage, told me that his wife did not know that there was such a place as the *mont-de-piété*, and that, when she found it out, a sort of modesty prevented her from mentioning it and she never taunted him with a: 'You have been there!' —

[1] See, too, *My Brother and I*, pp. 447-448.

The pleasantest part of the story is that this young woman, brought up in bourgeois fashion, never betrayed the slightest fright in her new existence, in the society of that circle of eaters of dinners, squanderers of five-franc pieces and borrowers of pantaloons.

"'Why, upon my word,' cried Daudet, 'the dear woman spent nothing, nothing at all, on herself. We still have our little account-books of those days, where, among louis taken by me or somebody else, there is an occasional entry, here and there, of *omnibus* 30 *centimes*, for her.' — Mme. Daudet ingenuously interrupted him, saying: 'I really think that I was not fully developed in those days; I did not understand.'"

The *portrait intime* of Turgénieff was, as the footnote tells us, written in 1880 for the *Century Magazine*. In his volume entitled *Partial Portraits*, Mr. Henry James draws a no less sympathetic portrait of the Russian novelist's private character, and emphasizes even more strongly the attractive traits described by Daudet. The concluding paragraph, beginning: "As I correct the proofs of this article, —" was first published in the *Temps* of November 10, 1883, the year of Turgénieff's death. It inadvertently conveys the impression that the *Souvenirs* to which it refers were written *by* his friend, whereas they were souvenirs *of* Turgénieff written by his secretary, one Pavlovsky, — a series of alleged private conversations between himself and his employer. As the pretended

strictures upon Daudet were, to say the least, of doubtful authenticity, — for their publication was, at the best, such a shameless breach of confidence that the person who perpetrated it might justifiably be suspected of exaggeration, if nothing worse — it would seem that Daudet would have been well advised to let the matter pass without notice. Perhaps he would have done so, except that the supposititious criticisms created a sensation and were made a handle upon which to hang attacks upon him. I have been assured by one who was the friend of both men that the incident was never considered to have any real importance or to throw any new light upon Turgénieff's character.[1]

GEORGE B. IVES.

[1] In the description of Edmond de Goncourt's last hours, entitled *Ultima*, printed in the volume with *Memories of a Man of Letters*, there is a further reference to this subject, indicating that Goncourt also was maltreated in the same work.

THIRTY YEARS IN PARIS.

PAGES FROM MY LIFE AND MY BOOKS.

I.

THE ARRIVAL.

SUCH a journey! Merely thinking of it thirty years after, I can still feel my legs encased in iron fetters, and I am seized with cramps in the stomach. Two days in a third-class railway carriage, dressed in thin summer clothing, and in bitterly cold weather. I was sixteen years old; I came from a long distance, from the very heart of Languedoc, where I was usher in a school, to devote myself to literature. When my ticket was paid for, I had just forty sous left in my pocket; but why should I be alarmed? I was so rich in hopes that I forgot to be hungry; despite the seductions of the bakeshop and the sandwiches displayed on the lunch counters at railway stations, I would not part with my silver coin, carefully stowed away in one of my pockets. Toward the end of the journey, however, when our train, groaning and tossing us from side to side, was whirling us across the melancholy plains

of Champagne, I was very near being ill. My travelling companions, sailors who passed their time in singing, offered me a flask. Worthy fellows! How jolly their rough songs were — and how good their fiery eau-de-vie, to a boy who had not eaten for twice twenty-four hours!

That saved and revivified me; my fatigue inclined me to sleep. I dozed — but with periodical awakenings when the train stopped, and relapses into drowsiness when it went on again.

The noise of wheels rattling over cast-iron plates, an enormous arched roof of glass, flooded with light, doors slamming, baggage-trucks rumbling, a restless, busy crowd, custom-house officials — Paris!

My brother was waiting for me on the platform. Being a practical youth, in spite of his tender years, he was fully alive to his duties as an older brother, and had engaged a hand-cart and a porter.

"We will go and load your luggage."

It was an imposing sight, that luggage! A wretched little valise, studded with nails, with many patches, and heavier than its contents. We started for the Latin Quarter along the deserted quays, through the sleeping streets, marching behind our little cart pushed by the porter. It was barely daylight; we met nobody but workmen with faces blue with cold, and newspaper carriers who deftly slipped the morning papers under the house doors. The gas-jets were extinguished; the streets, the Seine and its bridges, all appeared

to me in a sort of twilight through the morning mist. Such was my entrance into Paris; clinging to my brother, with anguish at my heart, I shuddered involuntarily from sheer terror; and still we followed the little cart.

"If you 're not over-anxious to see our rooms, let us go and have some breakfast first," said Ernest.

"Oh! yes, let us eat."

I was literally starving to death.

Alas! the creamery, a creamery on Rue Corneille, was not open; we had to wait a long while, walking about the neighborhood to keep ourselves warm, and making the circuit of the Odéon, which made a deep impression on me with its vast roof, its portico and its temple-like aspect.

At last the shutters were thrown back; a waiter, half-asleep, admitted us, dragging his feet heavily along in their loose slippers, and grumbling like stable-boys awakened at posting stations to harness the fresh horses. That breakfast at daybreak will never fade from my memory; I have only to close my eyes to see again the little room with its bare white walls, with its rows of pegs driven into the rough plaster, the counter piled with napkins arranged in circles, the marble tables, without cloths, but shining with cleanliness; glasses, salt-cellars, and tiny little decanters filled with a wine in which there was not the slightest trace of grape-juice, but which I considered excellent, such as it was, were already in place.

"*Three of coffee,*" the waiter ordered of his own motion when he saw us. As there was nobody but himself in the restaurant or kitchen at that early hour, he answered himself: "*Boum!*" and brought us "three of coffee," — that is to say three sous' worth of a delicious balsamic coffee, sweetened to a reasonable degree, which disappeared in short order, simultaneously with two little rolls served in a wicker basket.

Then we ordered an omelet; for it was still too early for a cutlet.

"An omelet for two, *boum!*" roared the waiter.

"Well cooked!" cried my brother.

I bowed with respectful admiration before the self-possession and grand manners of that sybarite of a brother of mine; and at dessert, what plans, what confidences we exchanged, as we sat eye to eye, our elbows on the table before a plate of nuts and raisins! A man becomes a better man when he has eaten. Adieu melancholy, adieu anxiety! that simple breakfast intoxicated me as thoroughly as champagne.

We went out arm-in-arm, talking very loud. It was broad daylight at last. Paris smiled upon me from all its open shops; even the Odéon assumed an affable air to greet me, and the white marble queens in the Luxembourg garden, whom I saw indistinctly through the railings, standing among the leafless trees, seemed to nod their heads gracefully to me and to bid me welcome.

My brother was rich. He performed the duties of secretary to an old gentleman who was dictat-

ing his memoirs to him, at a salary of seventy-five francs per month. We must needs live on that seventy-five francs pending the time when glory should fall to my lot, must share that little room on the fifth floor of the Hôtel du Sénat, Rue de Tournon; almost a garret, but in my eyes a superb apartment. A Parisian garret! The mere sight of the words *Hôtel du Sénat* standing forth in great letters on the sign flattered my self-esteem and dazzled me. Opposite the hotel, on the other side of the way, there is a house dating from the last century, with a pediment and two couchant figures, which always look as if they proposed to fall from the top of the wall into the street.

"That 's where Ricord lives," said my brother, "the famous Ricord, the Emperor's physician."

The Hôtel du Sénat, the Emperor's physician — those high-sounding phrases tickled my vanity, fascinated me. Oh! the first impressions of Paris!

The great restaurants on Boulevard Saint-Michel, the new buildings on Boulevard Saint-Germain and Rue des Écoles had not yet driven the studious youth from the Quarter, and, despite its pompous name, our hotel on Rue de Tournon could hardly boast at that time of an atmosphere of senatorial gravity.

There was a whole colony of students there, a horde from the south of Gascony, excellent fellows, a little vainglorious, self-assured and jovial, great connoisseurs in beer-mugs and tedious lec-

tures, who filled the stairways and corridors with their deep bass voices. They passed their time talking on all conceivable subjects and arguing without respite. We met them rarely, except on Sunday, and even then only by accident, that is to say when our purse permitted us to indulge in the luxury of a *table d'hôte* dinner.

It was there that I first saw Gambetta. He was already the man we have since known and admired. Happy in being alive, happy in being able to talk, that loquacious Roman, grafted on a Gallic stock, made himself giddy with the clatter of his harangues, made the window-panes tremble with the outbursts of his thunderous eloquence, and generally ended with a loud roar of laughter. He held sway even then over the multitude of his comrades. He was a personage of importance in the Quarter, especially as he received three hundred francs monthly from Cahors — an enormous sum for a student in those far-away times. We became intimate afterward. But I was as yet only a provincial, arrived overnight, with the rough surface hardly worn off. I confined myself to staring at him from the end of the table, with profound admiration and without a shade of envy.

He and his friends were intensely interested in politics; in the Latin Quarter they were already laying siege to the Tuileries, whereas my tastes, my ambitions turned toward conquests of another sort. Literature was the single goal of all my dreams. Sustained by the unlimited confidence of youth, poor but radiant with hope, I

passed that whole year in my garret, writing verses. That is a common and affecting story. Paris counts by the hundreds the poor young devils whose only fortune is a few rhymes ; but I do not believe that any one ever began his career in destitution more complete than mine.

With the exception of my brother, I knew no one. Short-sighted, awkward and shy, when I stole out of my garret I invariably made the circuit of the Odéon, I walked under its galleries, drunk with awe and with joy at the thought that I should meet men of letters there. At Mme. Gaut's shop, for instance. Mme. Gaut, who was quite old but had surprisingly sharp, bright eyes, allowed the public to look through the new books displayed on her shelves, on condition that they did not cut the leaves.

I can see her now, talking with the great novelist Barbey d'Aurevilly; she, knitting a stocking, the author of *Une Vieille Maîtresse* with his hand on his hip "à la Mérovingienne," and the collar of his wagoner's cloak, lined with fine black velvet, thrown back, so that every one may appreciate the splendor of that outwardly modest garment.

Some one approaches — it is Vallès. The future member of the Commune passed Mme. Gaut's shop almost every day, on his return from "Mère Morel's" office, where he was in the habit of going daily to work and read. Bilious, sneering, eloquent, always dressed in the same wretched frock-coat, he talked in a harsh, metallic voice,

with his lowering Auvergnat face enveloped in a beard as stiff as a brush, which reached almost to his eyebrows. That voice made me nervous. He had just written *L'Argent*, a sort of pamphlet dedicated to Mirès and embellished with a five-franc piece by way of vignette; and, pending the time when he should become Mirès's partner, he had become the inseparable comrade of Gustave Planche, the old critic. The Aristarchus of the *Revue des Deux Mondes* was at that time a corpulent old man with a forbidding manner, an inflated Philoctetes, who dragged one leg and limped. One day I had the audacity to spy upon them through a window in the café on Rue Taranne, hoisting myself up to the glass, and rubbing it clean with my fingers; it was the café next to the house, now pulled down, in which Diderot lived for forty years. They were sitting on opposite sides of the table; Vallès was gesticulating earnestly, Planche absorbing a decanter of eau-de-vie, glass by glass.[1]

And Cressot! the meek, the eccentric Cressot, whom Vallès afterward immortalized in his *Réfractaires ;* it would be hard for me to forget him. I have often seen him in the Quarter, gliding along the walls, with his sad, distressed face, and his long skeleton-like body wrapped in a short cloak.

Cressot was the author of *Antonia*, a poem.

[1] Planche died in 1857, the same year that Daudet arrived in Paris. Jules Vallès was at one time his secretary, and after his death published a monograph, "full of affectionate memories."

What had that poor Gringoire to live upon? No one knew. One fine day a friend in the provinces left him a little property; that day Cressot ate a square meal, and died of it.

Another face of that period is engraved in my memory, that of Jules de la Madelène, one of the best *poetæ minores* of our prose literature, the too little known author of creations which excel in lines genuinely antique: the *Âmes en Peine* and the *Marquis de Saffras.* Aristocratic manners, a fair head recalling Tintoret's "Christ," refined, somewhat sickly, features, eyes overflowing with melancholy and weeping for the sunshine of Provence, his home. His story was whispered from ear to ear, — that of an enthusiast and hero of good stock. In June, 1848, he was wounded on the barricades and left for dead in the ranks of the insurgents. Picked up in the street by a bourgeois, he remained in hiding in his rescuer's house, where the family nursed him and restored him to health. When he was fully cured, he married the daughter of the house.

Nothing more is needed to kindle the ambition than to meet famous men, to have the good luck to exchange a few words with them. "I, too, will make my mark!" you say to yourself with full confidence.

With what ardor I would climb my five flights — especially when I had succeeded in effecting the purchase of a candle, which would enable me to work all night, to elaborate, by its dim light, poems, outlines of dramas, succeeding one another

in an endless line on sheets of white paper. Presumption gave me wings; I seemed to see the future throw its doors wide open before me, I forgot my poverty, I forgot my privations; as, for instance, on that Christmas Eve when I dashed off rhymes in a frenzy, while the students below were holding high festival with a vast deal of noise, and Gambetta's voice, rumbling under the arches of the stairway, echoed by the walls of the corridor, made my frost-covered window rattle.

But in the street my former terrors regained the mastery. The Odéon, in particular, impressed me with dread; it seemed to me all through the year as cold, as imposing and inaccessible as on the day of my arrival. Oh, Odéon, — Mecca of my aspirations, goal of my inmost ambition, — how many times did I renew my hesitating, secret attempts to cross the august threshold of the little low door through which thy artists enter! How many times have I watched Tisserant pass through that door in all his glory, his shoulders stooping beneath his cloak, with a meek, slouching air, copied from Frédérick Lemaître! Behind him, arm-in-arm with Flaubert, and as like him as a brother, Louis Bouilhet, author of *Madame de Montarcy*, and frequently Comte d'Osmoy, to-day a deputy. Those three were then writing a fanciful play, which never saw the boards. Behind them, and following them, came a group of four or five giants, of military carriage, all Normans, all cut on the same cuirassier pattern, with light moustaches. That was the cohort of

Rouennese, Bouilhet's lieutenants, who applauded to order at first performances.

Then Amédée Rolland, Jean Duboys, Bataille,[1] a younger trio, enterprising, bold, trying to creep in through the little door in their turn, the tail of Tisserant's enormous cloak, as it were.

All three died like Bouilhet at the very outset of their literary careers, and that is why the galleries of the Odéon, when I walk there at twilight, seem to me to be peopled with friendly shades.

Meanwhile, having completed a volume of poems, I went the rounds of the publishers; I knocked at Michel Lévy's door, at Hachette's; where did I not go? I insinuated myself into all the great publishing houses, immense as cathedrals, where my boots squeaked frightfully and made a horrible noise notwithstanding the carpets. Clerks of bureaucratic mien scrutinized me with a cold and self-sufficient air.

"I would like to see M. Lévy — about some manuscript."

"Very well, monsieur; be good enough to give me your name."

My name duly given, the clerk would, in a leisurely way, put his lips to one of the orifices of the speaking-tube; then, putting his ear to the other, —

[1] In the sketch entitled *At the Salpêtrière*, page 345 of this volume, Daudet speaks of Duboys and Bataille as two of his best friends, who died insane. For Duboys see also page 45. He died in 1873.

"M. Lévy is not in."

M. Lévy was never in, nor M. Hachette; no one was ever in, always by favor of that insolent speaking-tube.

There was also the Librairie Nouvelle, on Boulevard des Italiens. There, there were no speaking-tubes, no red tape, quite the contrary. Jacotet, the publisher, who was then issuing his small one-franc volumes, — an idea of his own, — was a short stout man bearing some resemblance to Balzac, but without Balzac's forehead, always on the move, overwhelmed with business and with dinner-parties, constantly revolving some colossal project in his brain, and with gold burning holes in his pockets. That eddying whirl led him to bankruptcy in two years, and he crossed the Alps and founded the newspaper *L'Italie.* But his shop served the purpose of a salon for the intellectual aristocracy of the boulevards; there one might see Noriac, who had just published his *Cent-et-Unième Régiment*; Scholl, proud of his great success, *Dénise*; Adolphe Gaiffe, and Aubryet. All these habitués of the boulevard, irreproachably dressed, discoursing of money and women, gave me a feeling of bewilderment when I saw my own person reflected with theirs in the panes of the show-window, with my hair as long as a bagpiper's and my little Provence hat. As for Jacotet, he constantly made appointments to meet me at three in the afternoon at Maison d'Or.

"We will have a talk there," he would say, "and sign our contract on the corner of a table."

What a joker! I hardly knew where to find his "Maison d'Or!" Only my brother had a word of encouragement for me when I returned home in despair.

One evening, however, I brought home with me glorious news and exceeding joy! The *Spectateur*, a legitimist journal, had agreed to put my talents to the proof as a news-writer. One can readily imagine the ardor and care with which I wrote my first article; even to the point of laboring over the penmanship! I carried it to the office, it was read and found satisfactory, and sent to the composing-room. I waited, hardly breathing, for the number to appear. Presto! Paris is turned topsy-turvy, some Italians have fired on the Emperor.

We were wild with terror, the newspapers were prosecuted, the *Spectateur* suppressed! Orsini's bomb blew up my article.

I did not kill myself, but I thought of it.

And yet heaven took pity on my misery. The publisher whom I had sought in vain suddenly appeared under my nose, — Tardieu, on Rue de Tournon, at my very door. He was a literary man himself, and some of his works had been successful: *Mignon* and *Pour Une Épingle*, compositions of the sentimental order, written in rose-colored ink. I made his acquaintance by chance one fine evening, when I was strolling near our hotel and he was sitting in front of his shop. He published my *Amoureuses*. The title proved attractive and so did the dainty exterior of the

volume. Some newspapers spoke of my work and of me. My timidity took flight. I walked boldly under the galleries of the Odéon to see how my book was selling — and I even ventured after a few days to accost Jules Vallès! I had appeared.[1]

[1] *Les Amoureuses* were published in 1857–58.

II.

VILLEMESSANT.[1]

SOMETIMES — when my personal necessities and the hazards of my wanderings coincide — I go to be shaved or have my hair cut at Lespès's. A curious and distinctively Parisian spot is that great barber's shop, occupying the whole corner of the Frascati building, on Rue Vivienne and Boulevard Montmartre! Its clientage is *All-Paris;* that is to say, that infinitely small fragment of Paris which leads its life between the Gymnase and the Opéra, Notre-Dame-de-Lorette and the Bourse, and fancies that it alone exists; hangers-on of the greenroom, actors, journalists, to say nothing of the restless, busy legion of worthy *boulevardiers,* who do nothing at all. Twenty or thirty permanent attendants shave and curl them all.

Superintending everything, with one eye on the razors and the other on the jars of pomade, the master, Lespès, prowls about here and there, an active little man whom the fortune he has made — for he is very rich — might have fattened, were it not that a certain disappointed ambition keeps him in a suitably feverish frame of mind.

[1] Written in 1879.

It was in that house, predestined in very sooth, that *Le Figaro* had its offices twenty years ago, on the same entresol where Lespès shaves his clients. There were the passage way, the subscription department, the counting-room, and, behind an iron-wire grating, the round eye and hooked nose of Père Legendre, always vexed, rarely good-natured, like a parrot playing the rôle of cashier. There was the editorial office (*The Public not admitted!* on the soiled glass panes of the door), a few chairs and a large table covered with an enormous green cloth. I can see it all distinctly at this moment, and I can see my bashful self, seated in a corner, holding tight under my arm my first article, rolled and tied with fatherly care. Villemessant had not arrived and they had told me to wait: I was waiting.

There were half-a-dozen of them around the green table that day, clipping from newspapers and writing. They laughed and talked and consumed cigarettes; the infernal caldron bubbled gayly. Among them was a short man with a red face beneath a mass of perfectly white hair, standing on end, which suggested Riquet à la Houppe. It was M. Paul d'Ivoy, the famous news-writer, kidnapped from the *Courrier de Paris* by a lavish use of gold; Paul d'Ivoy, in short, whose fabulous salary — it was fabulous for the time, but would seem smaller now — was the envy and admiration of the literary breweries. He wrote with a smile on his face, like a man content with himself; the sheets of paper rapidly grew black

under his pen; and I watched M. Paul d'Ivoy write and smile.

Suddenly there is a sound of heavy footsteps, a cheerful, hoarse voice: Villemessant! The pens scratch busily, the laughter ceases, the cigarettes are hidden; Paul d'Ivoy alone raises his head and dares to gaze familiarly upon the god.

VILLEMESSANT. — Very good, my children; I see that we are getting on. (*To Paul d'Ivoy, affably.*) Are you satisfied with your article?

PAUL D'IVOY. — I think it rather good.

VILLEMESSANT. — So much the better; it happens very nicely, as it will be your last.

PAUL D'IVOY (*pale as a ghost*). — My last?

VILLEMESSANT. — Just so! I am not joking — your copy is something terrible; there 's only one opinion on the boulevard; you 've been hanging around our necks long enough.

Paul d'Ivoy had risen: "But, Monsieur, our agreement?"

"Our agreement? Very good! Try going to law about it, that will be amusing; I will have your articles read aloud in court, and we will see if any agreement can compel me to stuff such idiotic trash into my newspaper!"

Villemessant was the man to do as he threatened, and Paul d'Ivoy did not go to law. But none the less that way of shaking his editorial staff out of the window, like an old rug, sent a shiver down my back, unsophisticated creature that I was. I would have liked to be a hundred

feet underground with my unfortunate manuscript, rolled in such an absurd way. That was an impression I have never forgotten. I met Villemessant frequently afterward and he was always very agreeable to me, but I always felt when I saw him the unpleasant thrill of terror which little Hop-o'-my-Thumb must feel when he meets the ogre.

Let me add, in order to do him justice, that, later on, at the death of that same Paul d'Ivoy whom he had so brutally dismissed, it was Villemessant — an ogre with the lining of a Saint-Vincent de Paul — who insisted upon assuming the expense of his children's education.

"Is he kind? — is he cruel?" It is difficult to answer the question, and Diderot's comedy seems to have been written with him in mind. Kind? He certainly was! Cruel, too, according to the day and hour; and a painter might make two portraits of him, without falsifying a line or a tone — one fatherly, the other pitiless; one all black, the other all rose-color — which would in no wise resemble each other, but would both resemble the subject.

If one wished to relate characteristic anecdotes of that strange dual personality, he would find only too many to select from.

Before the war I made the acquaintance of a worthy man, the father of a family, who was a clerk at the central Post Office on Rue Jean-Jacques Rousseau. He remained in Paris during the Commune. Had he some trace of sympathy

with the insurrection in the depths of his heart? I would not swear that he had not. Did he say to himself that, as letters continued to arrive at Paris, it was necessary, after all, for some one to assort and distribute them? That also is possible. Perhaps, too, with a wife and grown-up daughters it was not an easy matter for him to move at a moment's notice. At that time Paris contained no small number of poor devils in such a plight, barricaders by force of circumstances, insurgents without knowing why. However that may be, despite M. Thiers's orders, my friend remained at his office, behind his railing, assorting his letters amid the roar of battle as if nothing were happening; he refused to accept promotion or increase of pay from the Commune. When the Commune was overthrown, however, he found himself none the less — fortunate to escape a court-martial — thrown on the street, penniless, discharged from his post as he was on the eve of retirement with a pension. Thereupon a pitiful yet comical existence began for him. He had not dared to inform his family of his dismissal from the government service; every morning his daughters laid out the freshly starched shirt — a government clerk must be neat! — and carefully, merrily, as before, tied his cravat and kissed him on the doorsteps at the regular hour, imagining that he was going to his office. His office? Ah! it was a long distance away, was the office, cool in summer, well warmed in winter, where the hours passed so placidly. Now he must tramp

around Paris, in the rain, through the snow, seeking employment which he never found, and go home at night, with death in his heart, to lie and invent stories about a deputy chief who did not exist, about an imaginary office-boy, forcing himself to assume a cheerful air. (I made use of the poor man as the model of Père Joyeuse in *The Nabob*; he too was in quest of employment and told fibs to his daughters.) I met him sometimes, and it was heartrending. His distress led me to go to Villemessant. Villemessant, I thought, will surely find him some little corner in the managerial department of *Figaro*. Impossible: every place was filled. And a Communard, too, fancy! A fine outcry there would be if it were discovered that Villemessant employed a Communard in his offices. But the story of the daughters, the clean shirts, the cravat bows, had touched the excellent ogre, so it seemed.

"I have an idea!" he said; "how much did your protégé earn a month?"

"Two hundred francs."

"Very well! I will give you two hundred francs a month for him until he has found a place. He can still pretend to be going to his office, his daughters can still tie his cravats for him." And he concluded his speech with the everlasting: "It will be very pleasant!"

It was very pleasant, in truth: for three months the good man received his little income. After three months, having found a place at last, he practised such strict economy and kept himself

on such short commons, that one fine morning he came to me with the six hundred francs and a beautiful letter of thanks for M. de Villemessant, whose name I had divulged to him, and whom, despite their disagreement in politics, he nobly called his benefactor. I carried the money to Villemessant.

"It 's very pleasant! But I gave him that money! and now he wants to return it to me. It 's the first time that ever happened to me. And a Communard, too! It 's very pleasant."

How Villemessant shouted and laughed, and how enthusiastic he was! He threw himself back in his chair. But now follows a touch which will complete the man's portrait. Overjoyed, delighted, both by the kind deed he had done and by the very natural pleasure that we feel — however sceptical we may be — in the discovery that we have not been deceived and have not wasted our kindness on an ingrate, Villemessant, as he talked, amused himself by playing with the six hundred francs and arranging them in six little piles on the table. Suddenly he turned to me:

"Why! I say, Daudet, the money 's a hundred sous short!"

It was, in fact, a hundred sous short, a wretched gold piece overlooked in a fold of the coat-lining. At the height of his enthusiasm the practical man of business appeared.

Such is that man's complicated nature; a shrewd calculator, very malicious in reality beneath an appearance of good-fellowship and

impulsiveness that would make one believe that Toulouse is a near neighbor of Blois and that the turrets of Chambord are located on one of the arms of the Garonne![1]

In private and even in public life, Villemessant has made familiarity a principle — in his treatment of others, be it understood! for he exacts a full measure of respect when he himself is concerned. On the day following one of those intensely bitter *echoes*, which he was in the habit of inserting in his newspaper, at the last moment, while the presses were at work, Villemessant was summoned to the office of the president of the Corps Législatif. (This took place under the Empire.) He was requested to explain — I do not think I can be mistaken — the famous "Morny is in the affair," which old *boulevardiers* must remember. The duke was very angry, or pretended to be, but the man from Blois was not disconcerted.

"What! Monsieur le Duc, you did not send for me to present me with a decoration? That *garde de Paris*, with his sealed missive and his helmet, can boast of having caused me a thrill of emotion — my editors are already preparing to

[1] Villemessant resuscitated *Figaro* in 1854. In 1868 he founded *Le Diable à Quatre*, and while not relinquishing his control of *Figaro* allowed M. Jules Richard to adopt in its columns a tone somewhat more agreeable to the government. In 1873 he offered *Figaro* for sale and announced his determination to retire from journalism, but did nothing of the kind. In 1874 the Governor of Paris suspended *Figaro* for a fortnight.

Villemessant died in 1879, having apparently retained his con trolling interest in the journal to the end.

illuminate. Upon my word, this is very pleasant!" — And in an instant, an amusing story, an anecdote, an exceedingly shrewd, intensely Parisian remark, enveloped in a loud laugh; and, with all the rest, an air of profound concern, a keen and very manifest pleasure in saying: "Monsieur le Duc!" — and the grievance was forgotten.

Elsewhere, at Persigny's[1] for example, familiarity was less successful; and on a certain day Villemessant found that his most bewildering buffoonery congealed in the cold official atmosphere and fell stiff and lifeless. But Morny, for his part, forgave everything; that man doted on Villemessant, and, thanks to his all-powerful protection, *Figaro* was able to indulge in innumerable tricks. What respect, therefore, what veneration he had for the president! I looked forward to the time when they would build a little chapel to him in the walls of the editorial sanctum, as to the protecting genius of the place, as to a household god. All of which did not prevent the *Figaro's* publishing, one morning, in a prominent place, apropos of the Duc de Saint-Rémy's plays — that was the name assumed by the duke as a man of letters — an article by Henri Rochefort, as corrosive as a test-tube filled with acid, as sharp

[1] Jean G. V. F., Comte, afterwards Duc de Persigny, 1808-1872, Bonapartist conspirator and politician. He was concerned in the Bonapartist plots of Strasbourg in 1836 and Boulogne in 1840, and was one of the leading conspirators in the *coup d'état* of 1851. He held various important posts under the Second Empire: Minister of the Interior 1852–54 and 1860–63, and Ambassador in London 1855–58 and 1859–60.

and unpleasant as a handful of needles left in an easy-chair.[1]

"Why has this M. Rochefort a grudge against me? I never injured him in any way!" said the duke, with the artless vanity which not even the most sophisticated statesmen escape when they have dipped their finger in ink; and Villemessant, assuming a distressed expression, exclaimed: —

"It 's horrible! Such an article would never have passed me — you see how distressed I am. But on that particular day I did n't go to the office, and the rascals took advantage of it; I did n't read the proofs."

The duke thought whatever he chose of the excuse; but the article made a sensation. People showed it to one another, snatched it from one another's hands. That was all Villemessant wanted.

From this incident we see (and herein lies the unity of that apparently many-sided and contradictory character) that Villemessant was, before and above all else, the editor of his newspaper.

[1] As to the relations between Morny and Rochefort, see the article upon the latter in this volume, page 138. The Duc de Morny was born in 1811 and died in 1865. He was an officer in the army from 1830–32. He entered public life in 1842, was chosen to the Corps Législatif from Puy-de-Dôme in 1849, and was one of the most prominent actors in the *coup d'état* of 1851. He was Minister of the Interior 1850–52, and President of the Corps Législatif from 1854 until his death, serving also as Ambassador to Russia in 1856–7.

As the Duc de Mora he plays a prominent part in Daudet's novel of *The Nabob.* He also appears under the same name in the sketch: *Memoirs of a Chief Clerk,* in this volume.

After the gropings in the dark at the outset, volleys fired here and there, somewhat at random, feelers put forth to all the points of the compass, — when the course was once laid, he took his bearings and sailed straight. His newspaper became his life.

The man and his work resemble each other; and one may fairly say that no man was ever shaped more exactly to the measure of his destiny. Marvellously active, restless, lively, displacing a vast quantity of air, and, withal, sober in his habits, as men used to be sober, which astonishes those of the present day; a non-drinker, a non-smoker, fearing neither loud talk nor blows nor adventures; unscrupulous in reality, always ready to throw his prejudices overboard; never having had any very profound political beliefs, but fond of making a show of platonic legitimism and of a certain respect which he considered becoming to him, Villemessant was the very man who was needed to command that audacious corsair, which roamed the seas for twenty years, under the royal flag studded with fleurs-de-lis, doing business to some extent on its own account.

He was tyrannical and capricious; but probe the affair to the bottom and the interest of the newspaper will always afford an explanation of his tyranny and his caprice. We are at the *Café des Variétés* or the *Café Véron* at eleven o'clock on a Thursday, in the year of grace 1858. *Figaro* has just appeared, Villemessant is breakfasting. He talks, tries experiments with anecdotes which he

will put in the next number if they raise a laugh, which he will forget if they fall flat. He listens and asks questions. — "What do you think of So-and-So's article?" "Charming!" "And such talent, eh?" "Extraordinary talent!" With radiant face Villemessant points to the paper: "Where is So-and-So? Send for So-and-So! Extraordinary talent! He's the only man! All Paris is talking about his article!" — And behold, So-and-So is congratulated, petted, and has his salary raised. Four days later, at the same table, the same guest declares the same So-and-So's article tedious, and Villemessant draws himself up once more, not radiant now, but in a rage, not to increase his salary but to settle his account. Doubtless the scene between Villemessant and Paul d'Ivoy, which so scandalized my pristine innocence, was the result of one of these consultations between the fruit and the cheese.

Of what consequence was an editor to Villemessant? When one had gone another turned up; and the last comer was always the best. According to him, *every man has his article inside of him;* the only thing is to get it out. Monselet embroidered a fascinating legend upon that theory: Villemessant meets a chimney-sweep in the street; he takes him to the offices of *Figaro*, washes his face, seats him in front of a sheet of paper, and says to him: "Write!" The sweep writes, and his article proves to be delightful. So it is that All-Paris, illustrious or obscure,

which can hold a pen, has passed through the columns of *Figaro.* So it is that some worthy fellows — seeing the story of Saint-Aulaire's quatrain repeated in their favor — have had their quarter of an hour of celebrity, by virtue of a lucky find of fifteen lines. Afterward, the miracle not being repeated, it was discovered that they were empty, had been emptied by Villemessant. I have known a Paris filled with people thus emptied. What an epoch of innocence, when one was emptied by the discharge of fifteen lines!

Not that Villemessant despises literature: far from it! Although himself unlettered, he has the respect of a peasant for his curé's Latin for those who write well, who *hold their tongue,* as he expresses it. But he realizes instinctively, and not without reason, that they are the people of bulky tomes and of the Academy. To cakes of that weight and that shape he prefers for his shop the dainty Parisian puff-cake. He said one day to Jouvin, in my presence, with the cynical frankness for which his outspoken manner wins forgiveness:

"You work over your articles; they are the work of a literary artist, as everybody agrees, remarkable, learned, admirably written, and I publish them. But nobody reads them in my paper."

"Nobody reads them? Upon my word!"

"Do you want to make a wager? Daudet here will be a witness. I will print Cambronne's

remark[1] in the middle of one of your most finished pieces, and I have lost my wager if any one discovers it!"

My impartiality as a witness compels me to say that Jouvin refused to bet.

1 See the article on Cambronne in Larousse. See also Victor Hugo's LES MISÉRABLES: *Cosette,* Book I. Chap. XV.

III.

MY FIRST COAT.

How did I come by that coat? What tailor of primitive times, what unlooked-for M. Dimanche[1] decided, on the faith of fantastic promises, to bring it to me one morning, all glaringly new, and artistically pinned in a cambric handkerchief? It would be very difficult for me to tell. Of the honest tailor I remember nothing at all — so many tailors have crossed my path since then! — nothing, unless it be, in a luminous mist, a pensive brow and a heavy moustache. But the coat is here, before my eyes. Its image is still engraved in my memory, after twenty years, as on imperishable brass. Such a collar, young men, and sûch lapels! And, above all, such skirts, cut like the mouthpiece of a flute! My brother, a man of experience, had said: "A man must have a coat if he wants to make his way in the world!" And the dear fellow relied much on that garment for my renown and my future.

Augustine Brohan had the honor of christening that first coat of mine. These are the circumstances, worthy to be handed down to posterity:

[1] A creation of Molière; introduced in the most comical scene of *Don Juan*. The name became proverbial as the type of the timid creditor who lends money but dares not demand repayment.

My volume had blossomed, virginal and fresh in its rose-pink covers. Some newspapers had mentioned my rhymes. Even the *Officiel* had printed my name. I was a poet, no longer in manuscript, but published, launched, displayed in shop-windows. I was astounded that the crowd did not turn to look when my eighteen years sailed through the streets. I really felt on my brow the gentle pressure of a paper crown made of reviews clipped from the journals.

One day some one proposed to procure me an invitation to Augustine's evenings. Who was that SOME ONE? Why, SOME ONE, *parbleu!* — You can see him from here, the sempiternal SOME ONE who resembles everybody else, the obliging, providential person, who, although he amounts to nothing in himself, goes everywhere, takes you everywhere, the friend of a day, the friend of an hour, whose name nobody knows, an essentially Parisian type.

You can imagine whether I accepted! To be invited to Augustine's, — Augustine, the famous actress, Augustine with the laughing white teeth of Molière and with a suggestion of the more modern poetic smile of de Musset; — for, although she played soubrette parts at the Théâtre Français, de Musset had written his comedy of *Louison* at her house; — Augustine Brohan,[1] in fact, whose

[1] Augustine Brohan was a brilliant and versatile actress, who succeeded Rachel at the Conservatoire. She was a member of the company of the Comédie Française from 1847. She lived until 1893.

wit Paris eulogized, and quoted her *bons-mots*, and who already wore in her hat, not as yet dipped in ink, but cut with a sharp knife and all ready for use, the quill of the hue of the bluebird with which she was to sign the *Lettres de Suzanne.*

"Lucky dog!" said my brother, as he helped me to put on my coat, "now your fortune is made."

Nine o'clock was striking; I started.

Augustine Brohan lived at that time on Rue Lord-Byron, at the upper end of the Champs-Élysées, in one of those dainty houses which poor little provincials, of poetic imagination, see in the dreams inspired by novelists. An iron fence, a small garden, a flight of four steps under an awning, a reception-room full of flowers, and in another instant the salon, a green salon brilliantly lighted, which I can see now so distinctly.

How I ascended the steps, how I entered, how I presented myself, I have no idea. A servant announced my name, but that name, mumbled as it was, produced no effect on the assemblage. I remember nothing but a woman's voice, which said:

"Good, a dancing man!" It seemed that dancing men were lacking. What an entry for a lyric poet!

Terrified, humiliated, I slunk out of sight in the crowd. How describe my dismay! In a moment another adventure: my long hair, my sulky, lowering eye aroused public curiosity. I heard whispering about me: "Who is it? — just

look at him!" and everybody laughed. At last some one said:

"It 's the Wallachian prince!"

"The Wallachian prince? — ah! yes, of course."

It was evident that a Wallachian prince was expected that evening. I was identified, and they left me in peace. But you can hardly conceive, all the same, how my usurped crown weighed upon me all the evening. First a dancing man, then a Wallachian prince! In heaven's name, did not those people see my lyre?

Luckily for me, a piece of news which was suddenly repeated from mouth to mouth from one end of the salon to the other, caused the little dancing man and the Wallachian prince to be forgotten at the same instant. Marriage was then very much in vogue among the female contingent of the drama, and it was at Augustine Brohan's Wednesdays, where the fine flower of official journalism, of finance and of the higher circles of the Imperial government assembled about the pretty *sociétaires* or *pensionnaires* of the Théâtre Français, that most of these romantic matches were planned. Mlle. Fix, the clever actress with the long Jewish eyes, was soon to marry a great banker and to die in childbirth; Mlle. Figeac, a Catholic and romanticist, was already dreaming of having her future warerooms on Boulevard Haussmann solemnly blessed by a priest, as a ship is blessed when launched; Émilie Dubois, even the fair-haired Émilie, although

destined by her fragile beauty to play *ingénue* rôles forever, had visions of orange-flowers beneath the protecting shawl of Madame, her mother. As for Madeleine Brohan, Augustine's beautiful and majestic sister, she was not marrying, not she! but was in the act of unmarrying herself and of giving Mario Uchard the necessary leisure and materials for writing the four acts of *La Fiammina.* What an explosion there was, therefore, in that atmosphere charged with marital electricity, when this report was circulated: "Gustave Fould has married Valérie," — Gustave Fould, the son of the Minister; Valérie, the charming actress! That is all far away now. After flights to England, letters to the newspapers, pamphlets, a war *à la Mirabeau* against a father as inexorable as the *Friend of Mankind,*[1] after the most romantic of romances, capped by a most commonplace *dénouement,* Gustave Fould, following Mario Uchard's example, wrote the *Comtesse Romani,* and described his misfortunes in eloquent language on the stage. Mlle. Valérie has forgotten her name of Mme. Fould and signs with the pseudonym of "Gustave Haller" volumes entitled *Vertu,* with a beautiful picture on the delicate blue cover, — great passions calming themselves in a bath of literature. But that evening, gossip and excitement were rife in Augustine's green salon. The men, the government officials shook their heads

[1] The father of the great Mirabeau so styled himself. His character is drawn with characteristic energy by Carlyle in his *French Revolution.*

and rounded their mouths into the shape of an O to say: "It 's a serious matter! very serious!" — One could hear such remarks as: "Everything is going by the board." "Respect is a thing of the past." "The Emperor ought to intervene — sacred rights — paternal authority." The women, for their part, openly and merrily took sides with the lovers, who had fled to London. "Whose affair is it if they suit each other?" "Why should n't the father consent?" "He 's a minister, but what then?" "Since the Revolution, thank God! there 's no Bastille, or For-l'Évêque!" — Imagine everybody talking at once, and above and around the hurly-burly, like embroidery, the sparkling laughter of Augustine, a short, plump creature, and the merrier on that account, with eyes on a level with her face, pretty, short-sighted eyes, bright as diamonds, and always wearing a look of surprise.

At last the excitement subsided and the quadrilles began. I danced; I could not avoid it. I danced very badly, too, for a Wallachian prince. The quadrille at an end, I became a wall-flower, foolishly held in check by my myopia, not bold enough to sport a monocle, too much of a poet to wear spectacles, and always afraid to make the slightest movement lest I should strike my knee against the angle of a piece of furniture, or plant my nose between a woman's shoulders. Ere long hunger and thirst took a hand; but not for an empire would I have ventured to approach the buffet with the crowd. I watched for the moment

when it should be deserted. Meanwhile I mingled with the group of politicians, maintaining a serious expression, and pretending to look disdainfully upon the amusements of the small salon, whence there came to me, with the sound of laughter and of little spoons tinkling in porcelain cups, a subtle odor of steaming hot tea, of Spanish wines and sweetmeats. At last, when the dancing began again, I summoned courage. Behold me at last in the refreshment room; I am alone.

A bewildering spectacle, that buffet! in the light of the candles, with its glasses, its decanters, a white, dazzling pyramid of crystal, cool to look upon, like snow in the sunlight. I take a glass, fragile as a flower; I am very careful not to grasp it tightly, for fear of breaking the stem. What shall I pour into it? Come! courage, for no one sees me! I find a decanter, by feeling, without attempting to choose. It must be kirsch; one would say it was liquid diamond. Here goes then for a *petit verre* of kirsch; I love its odor, which makes me dream of tall trees, — its bitter, slightly wild odor. And behold me pouring out the transparent liqueur, drop by drop, like a gourmand. I raise the glass, I put out my lips. Horror! Pure water! What a wry face! Suddenly there is a twofold burst of laughter: a black coat and a pink dress flirting in a corner, whom I have not noticed and who are amused at my mistake. I try to replace the glass; but I am confused, my hand trembles, my sleeve catches on something or

other. A glass falls, two, three glasses! I turn, my coat-tails take a hand, and the white pyramid falls to the floor, with the scintillation of thousands of stars, the roar of a hurricane, the countless crashings of a crumbling iceberg.

The mistress of the house comes running in at the crash. Luckily she is as near-sighted as the Wallachian prince, and he is able to escape from the buffet unseen. My evening is spoiled, however. That massacre of glasses and decanters weighs upon me like a crime. I think of nothing but taking my leave. But Maman Dubois, dazzled by my principality, clings to me, insists upon it that I must not go without dancing with her daughter, — what do I say! with her two daughters. I excuse myself as well as I can. I escape from her, I am about to leave the house, when a tall old man, with a shrewd smile, the face of a bishop and a diplomat, stops me on the wing. It is Doctor Ricord, with whom I exchanged a few words a moment ago, and who, like the others, believes me to be a Wallachian. — "But, Prince, as you live at the Hôtel du Sénat, and we are near neighbors, wait for me. I have a seat for you in my carriage." — I would be glad to accept, but I came without an overcoat. What would Ricord say to a Wallachian prince without furs, and shivering in his dress-coat? Let us be off at once; let us trudge home on foot, through the snow and fog, rather than disclose our poverty. Still short-sighted and more confused than ever, I reach the door and am stealing away, not

without getting entangled in the hangings. "Does not Monsieur mean to take his overcoat?" a foot-man calls to me.

Behold me, at two o'clock in the morning, a long way from home, wandering through the streets, famished, frozen, and hardly a sou in my pocket. Suddenly hunger inspired me, a happy thought flashed through my mind: "Suppose I go to the market!" I had often heard of the market and of a certain Gaidras, open all night, who furnished a succulent cabbage stew for three sous. *Parbleu*, yes, I will go to the market. I will take my seat there, like a vagabond, a night prowler. My pride has vanished. The wind is freezing cold, my stomach is hollow. "My king-dom for a horse!" said the other fellow; but I, as I trot along: "My principality, my Walla-chian principality for a good bowl of soup in a warm place!"

Externally it was a genuine hovel, that estab-lishment of Gaidras, buried under the pillars of the old market, dirty and wretchedly lighted. Very often since then, when *noctambulism* was fashionable, we have passed whole nights there, a party of great men *in futuro*, with our elbows on the table, smoking and talking literature. But the first time, I confess, I nearly drew back, not-withstanding my hunger, at sight of those black walls, that thick smoke, those people at the tables, snoring with their backs against the wall, or lapping up their soup like dogs, those caps of sidewalk Don Juans, the enormous white felt

hats of the market men, and the coarse, healthy blouse of the market-gardener beside the greasy rags of the prowler about the barriers. I entered, however, and I must say that my black coat found company at once. They are by no means rare in Paris, black coats after midnight in winter, without overcoats, and hungry for three sous' worth of cabbage soup! Delicious cabbage soup, by the way; as fragrant as a garden, and smoking like a crater. I ate two portions, although the habit, inspired by healthy suspicion, of fastening the forks and spoons to the table with a chain, embarrassed me a little. I paid, and with my heart strengthened by that substantial fare I resumed my journey to the Latin Quarter.

You can imagine my return, the return of the poet trotting up Rue de Tournon, with his coat collar turned up, and with the elegantly-attired ghosts of a fashionable party dancing before his eyes, — which are heavy with fatigue and drowsiness, — blended with the famished figures of the market, and kicking his boots against the corner of the Hôtel du Sénat to knock off the snow, while the white lanterns of a coupé light up the front of a venerable mansion opposite, and Dr. Ricord's coachman calls: "Gate, please!" Life in Paris is made up of such contrasts.

"An evening wasted!" said my brother the next morning. "You were supposed to be a Wallachian prince, and you did n't start your volume. But there 's no reason to despair yet. You can make up for lost time at your party call." — A

party call for a glass of water — what irony![1] It took me quite two months to make up my mind to that call. One day, however, I conquered my irresolution. Beside her regular Wednesdays, Augustine Brohan gave more select morning receptions on Sunday. I betook myself resolutely to one of them.

In Paris a self-respecting morning reception does not dream of beginning before three or even four o'clock in the afternoon. I, ingenuous creature, took the word "morning" seriously, and made my appearance at precisely one o'clock, supposing that I was late even then.

"How early you come, Monsieur," said a page of five or six years, fair-haired, in a velvet jacket and embroidered breeches, who was riding through the verdant garden on a tall mechanical horse. That young man made a profound impression on me. I saluted the fair hair, the horse, the velvet, the embroidery, and, being too shy to turn back, I ascended the steps. Madame was finishing her toilet and I had to wait, all alone, half an hour. At last Madame appears, blinks at me, recognizes her Wallachian prince, and, for the sake of saying something, begins: "So you 're not at La Marche, Prince?" — At La Marche, I, who had never seen a horse-race or a jockey!

At last I began to feel ashamed, the blood

[1] It is impossible to translate this passage so as to make clear the play upon words in the French. The phrase used for "party-call" is *visite de digestion*. Then follows — "Digestion of a glass of water — what irony!"

rushed suddenly from my heart to my brain; and then that bright sunlight, that perfume of a garden in springtime entering through the open window, the absence of solemnity, that good-natured, smiling little woman, and a thousand other things gave me courage, and I opened my heart, I told everything, I confessed everything in a breath: that I was neither Wallachian nor prince, but a simple poet, and my adventure with the glass of kirsch, and my supper at the Market, and my pitiful return home, and my provincial terrors, and my myopia, and my hopes, — all heightened by my Southern accent. Augustine Brohan laughed like a madwoman. Suddenly the bell rang.

"Ah! my cuirassiers," she said.

"What cuirassiers?"

"Two cuirassiers who are sent to me from the camp at Châlons, and who have, it would seem, an amazing aptitude for acting."

I started to retire.

"No, no, stay; we are going to rehearse the *Lait d'Ânesse*, and you shall be the influential critic. Here, beside me, on this couch!"

Enter two tall fellows, bashful, tightly girthed, crimson-coated (one of them, I believe, is acting somewhere to-day). They arrange a screen, I take my position, and the rehearsal begins.

"They don't do badly," said Augustine Brohan to me in an undertone, "but what boots! — Monsieur le Critique, do you smell the boots?"

That semblance of intimacy with the cleverest

actress in Paris raised me to the seventh heaven of delight. I threw myself back on the couch, shaking my head, smiling with a knowing air. My coat fairly split with joy.

The most trivial of these details seems to me of enormous consequence to this day. But just see what perspective will do: — I had told Sarcey the comical story of my début in society. Sarcey repeated it one day to Augustine Brohan. And that ungrateful Augustine — whom I have not seen, by the way, for thirty years — swore with perfect sincerity that she knew nothing of me but my books. She had forgotten it all! yes, all of the details that filled so large a place in my life, — the broken glasses, the Wallachian prince, the rehearsal of the *Lait d'Ânesse*, and the cuirassiers' boots!

IV.

HISTORY OF MY BOOKS.—"LITTLE WHAT'S-HIS-NAME."[1]

NOT one of my books was written under such capricious, such chaotic conditions as this. Neither plan nor notes, but a frantic improvisation on long sheets of wrapping-paper, rough and yellow, on which my pen stumbled as it ran, and which I threw fiercely on the floor as fast as they were blackened. The scene was two hundred leagues from Paris, between Beaucaire and Nîmes, in a large country house, isolated and deserted, which some relatives had obligingly placed at my disposal for a few months in winter. I had gone thither in search of the concluding scenes of a drama, the *dénouement* of which did not run smoothly from my pen: but the peaceful sadness of those vast fields of mulberry and olive trees, of undulating vineyards extending to the Rhone, the melancholy of that retreat in the heart of nature, were hardly adapted to the conventional requirements of a dramatic work. Probably, too, the air of the province, the sunshine lashed by the mistral, the proximity of the town where I was born,

[1] *Le Petit Chose* appeared in 1868, just after Daudet's marriage.

the names of the little villages where I played as an urchin — Bezouces, Redessan, Jonquières — stirred a whole world of old memories within me, and I soon laid aside my drama to undertake a sort of autobiography: *Little What's-His-Name, the Story of a Child.*

Begun in the early days of February, 1866, that work was continued energetically, without stopping for breath, until the second fortnight of March. Nowhere, at no time in my life, not even when a capricious inclination for silence and solitude caused me to shut myself up in the chamber of a lighthouse, have I ever lived so entirely alone. The house stood at some distance from the road, among the fields, separated even from the farmhouse appurtenant to it, whose various noises never reached my ears. Twice a day the *bailo's* (farmer's) wife served my meals at one end of the enormous dining-room, the shutters at all the windows save one being tightly closed. That Provençale, indistinct of speech, dark, flat-nosed like a Kaffir, unable to understand what strange necessity had brought me to the country in the middle of winter, could not shake off a certain distrust and fear of me, but would set down the plates hurriedly, and run away without a word, avoiding a backward glance. And hers was the only face I saw during that Stylite existence, my only distraction being a promenade toward evening in an avenue of tall plane-trees, shedding their bark to the wailing of the wind, in the melancholy light of a cold red sun, whose

early setting the frogs saluted with their discordant croaking.

As soon as the rough draft of my book was finished, I began at once upon the second copy, the painful part of the work, especially antipathetic to my nature as an *extemporizer*, an inventor; and I was working zealously at it with all my courage, when one morning the voice of the *bailesse* called to me vehemently in the local patois: "*Moussu moussu, vaqui un homo.*" (Monsieur, monsieur, here 's a man!)

The man was a Parisian, a newspaper man sent down to attend some meeting of local interest in the neighborhood, and, knowing that I was there, he came to seek news of me. He lunched with me, we talked newspapers, theatres, boulevards; the Paris fever attacked me, and at night I started for the capital with my intruder.

That abrupt breaking off of work in the middle, that laying aside of the book when the casting was half done, gives an accurate idea of my life in those days, open to all the winds of heaven, with only brief flights, impulses instead of wishes, never following aught save its caprice and the blind frenzy of a youth which threatened never to end. Having returned to Paris, I allowed my manuscript to lie for a long time and turn yellow in the bottom of a drawer, unable to find in my minutely subdivided existence the necessary leisure for a work requiring time and thought; but in the following winter, being annoyed by the thought of that unfinished book, I took the

violent course of tearing myself away from the distractions, the uproarious invasions which, at that time, made of my defenceless house a veritable gypsy camp, and I took up my quarters with a friend, in the small apartment then occupied by Jean Duboys on the entresol of Hôtel Lassus, Place de l'Odéon.

Jean Duboys, whose plays and novels had given him some celebrity, was a kindly, gentle, timid soul, with a childlike smile in a Robinson Crusoe beard, an unkempt, ragged beard, which seemed not to belong to that face. His work lacked character; but I loved his kindly disposition, I admired the courage with which he harnessed himself to interminable novels, cut up beforehand into regular slices, of which he wrote each day so many words, lines and pages. At last he had succeeded in having a great play called *La Volonté* (*The Will*) produced at the Comédie Française; and, although it was manifested in execrable verses, that *will* made a profound impression on me, who so utterly lacked anything of the kind. So that I went to cling to the skirts of its author, hoping to gain a taste for work from the contact with that indefatigable producer.

It is a fact that for two or three months I worked steadily at a small table near his, in the light from a low, arched window which formed a frame for the Odéon and its porch, and the deserted square, all gleaming with frost. From time to time Duboys, who was working at some magnificent Jack-in-the-Box affair, would stop to

describe the plots within plots of his novel, or to develop his theories concerning "the cylindrical motion of mankind." Indeed there were in that methodical and mild-mannered scribbler certain symptoms of the visionary, the *illuminé*, just as there was in his library a shelf reserved for the Cabala, for the Black Art, for the most curious lucubrations. Eventually that crack in his brain grew larger, allowing insanity to enter; and poor Jean Duboys died a madman at the close of the siege, leaving unfinished his great philosophic poem, *Enceldonne*, wherein all mankind was to revolve upon its cylinder. But who could have suspected at that time the melancholy destiny of that estimable, placid, sensible youth whom I watched enviously as he covered with his fine, regular handwriting the innumerable sheets of a novel for a petty newspaper, and assured himself by a glance at the clock from hour to hour that he had done his whole stint?

It was very cold that winter, and notwithstanding the baskets of coal consumed in the grate, we saw, during those toilsome vigils, indefinitely prolonged, the frost coat the window-panes with fanciful arabesques. Without, shivering shadows wandered through the opaque fog on the square; they were the audience coming from the Odéon, or the flock of young men and women on their way to Jardin Bullier, shouting and yelling to guide one another. On the evenings of masquerade balls, the narrow stairway of the hotel shook beneath a reckless downward scampering, accom-

panied every time by the jingling of the little bells on a fool's cap. The same fool's cap would ring out its carnival peal on its return when the night was far advanced; and often, when the hotel attendants were sleeping soundly and delayed admitting it, I could hear it shake its bells with a discouraged movement, with diminishing vigor, which made me think of Edgar Poe's *Cask of Amontillado*, of the poor imprisoned wretch, weary of imploring, of crying out, and betraying his presence only by the last convulsive movements of his cap. I have retained a charming impression of those winter nights during which the first part of *Little What's-His-Name* was written. The second part did not follow it until much later. Between the two an event intervened, totally unexpected by me, but most serious and decisive: I married. How did that come about? By what witchcraft was the inveterate Bohemian I then was, caught and laid under a spell? What charm was able to tether the everlasting caprice?

For months the manuscript was neglected, left lying in the bottom of the trunks that accompanied us on our wedding-journey, spread out upon hotel tables before an empty inkstand and a dry pen. It was so pleasant under the pines of Estérel, so pleasant to fish for sea-urchins near the cliffs of Pormieu! Afterward, the installation of the little household, the novelty of that domestic existence, the nest to build and to decorate, — so many pretexts for not working!

It was not until summer had come, under the dense foliage of the Château of Vigneux, whose Italian roof and lofty trees we could see spread out before us in the plain of Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, that I returned to my interminable novel. Six delightful months, far from Paris, at that time turned topsy-turvy by the Exposition of 1867, which I would not even go and see.

I wrote *Little What's-His-Name* partly on a moss-covered bench in the depths of the park, disturbed by rabbits leaping and snakes crawling among the underbrush, partly in a boat on the pond in which were reflected all the changing hues of the summer sky, and partly, on rainy days, in our room, while my wife played Chopin, whom I can never hear without imagining the dripping of the rain on the swaying green branches of the hornbeams, the harsh cries of the peacocks, the tumult in the pheasant house, amid the odors of tree blossoms and damp wood. In the autumn the book, finished at last, appeared as a *feuilleton* in Paul Dalloz's *Petit Moniteur*, was published by Hetzel, and attained a measure of success, notwithstanding all that it lacks.

I have told how this, my first serious work, was undertaken, without reflection, on the wing as it were; but its greatest fault is that it was written prematurely. One is not mature enough at twenty-five to review and comment on his life. And *Little What's-His-Name*, especially in the first part, is in substance only this, an echo of my childhood and my youth.

Later I should have been less afraid to pause at the childish fancies of the beginning, and should have developed more fully those far-off memories which contain our initial impressions, so vivid and profound that all that comes after renews them without excelling them. In the more rapid movement of life, the onward flow of days and years, incidents fade from sight, are effaced by others, disappear, but that past remains, standing erect, luminous, bathed in the rays of dawn. You may forget a recent date, a face seen yesterday; you always remember the design of the wall-paper in the room in which you slept as a child, a name, a tune of the time when you did not know how to read. And how far memory travels in these backward journeys, striding across empty years, hiatuses, as in dreams! For instance, I can remember, in my third year, a display of fireworks at Nîmes in honor of some Saint-Louis, and that I was carried in somebody's arms to the top of a pine-covered hill. The slightest details of that event are still present in my memory, the murmur of the trees in the night wind — my first night out of-doors, doubtless — the noisy delight of the crowd, the "Ahs!" ascending and bursting with the rockets and suns, whose reflection lighted up the faces about me with a ghostly pallor.

I can see myself, at about the same period, mounted on a chair in front of a black table at the Brothers' school, and tracing my letters with chalk, proud of my precocious learning. And then there is the memory of the senses, those

sounds, those perfumes which come to you from the past as from another world, without the slightest trace of any accompanying event or emotion!

At the rear of the factory where *Little What's-His-Name* passed his childhood, near abandoned buildings whose doors were noisily slammed by a breeze of solitude, there were some tall rose-laurels, in the open air, giving forth a bitter fragrance which haunts me still after forty years. I would that there were a little more of that fragrance in the first pages of my book.

The chapters on Lyon are too short; I allowed many vivid and delightful sensations to escape me there. Not that my childish eyes could have grasped the originality, the greatness of that manufacturing city, with its suggestion of mysticism due to the permanent mist which rises from its rivers, permeates its walls and its people, and imbues the productions of its writers and its artists — Ballanche, Flandrin, de Laprade, Chenavard, Puvis de Chavannes — with a vague Germanic melancholy. But if the mental individuality of the province escaped me, the enormous hive of toil of the Croix-Rousse, humming with its hundred thousand looms, and, on the hill opposite, Fourvières carolling and marching in procession through the narrow lanes of its slope, lined with religious images and stalls for the sale of relics, left on my mind an ineffaceable impression, for which a place was reserved in *Little What's-His-Name.*

The points that I consider to be faithfully de

picted in the book are the ennui, the sense of banishment, the distress of a Southern family lost in the Lyonnese fog, — the change from one province to another, change of climate, customs and language, the mental distance which facility of communication does not lessen. I was ten years old at the time, and being already tormented by the longing to go outside of myself, to become incarnate in other people, due to a dawning mania for observing and annotating mankind, it was my chief amusement, during my walks, to select some passer-by and follow him about through Lyon, wherever his saunterings or his business led him, to try to identify myself with his life and comprehend his secret preoccupations.

One day, however, when I had escorted in that way a very beautiful lady in a bewitching costume as far as a low house with drawn blinds, the ground floor occupied by a *café chantant*, where hoarse voices were singing to the accompaniment of harps, my parents, to whom I confided my surprise, forbade my continuing my wandering studies and observations of real life.

But how could I, while I was marking the stages of my adolescence, fail to say a word of the religious paroxysms which shook *Little What's-His-Name* violently between his tenth and his twelfth year, of his revolts against the absurdities and mysteries in which he was compelled to believe, revolts followed by fits of remorse, of despair which caused the child to prostrate himself in dark corners of the deserted church, whither he

furtively crept, dreading and ashamed to be seen? Above all, how could I have attributed to the little man's exterior aspect that gentleness and air of good-breeding, without mentioning the devilish existence into which he abruptly plunged about his thirteenth year, in a desperate longing to live, to exert his strength, to tear himself away from the unrelieved gloom, the tears that stifled him beneath his parents' roof, darkened from day to day by financial ruin. It was the effervescence of the Southern temperament and imagination too sternly compressed. The delicate and timid child was transformed, became bold, vehement, ready for all sorts of mad freaks. He played truant, passed his days on the water, in the crowd of skiffs, barges and tugs, rowed about in the rain with a pipe between his teeth and a flask of absinthe or eau-de-vie in his pocket, escaped a thousand deaths, from the paddles of a steamboat, from collision with a coal-barge, from the current which threw him against the piles of a bridge or under a towing rope, drowned, fished up, his head split open, cuffed by bargemen who were annoyed by the awkwardness of the little monkey too weak to handle his oars; and in that fatigue, those blows, those perils, he was conscious of a savage joy, a broadening of his existence and of the dark horizon.

In some of the *Monday Tales* there are some sketches of that troubled period, made at a later date; but how much more valuable they would have been in the *Story of a Child.*

Even then that harebrained *Little What's-His-Name* possessed a strange faculty which he has never lost, the gift of seeing himself, of judging himself, of surprising himself red-handed in all sorts of crimes, as if his footsteps were always attended by a pitiless and redoubtable spy. Not what is known as conscience, — for conscience preaches, scolds, takes a hand in all our acts, modifies them or arrests them. And then we can put that excellent conscience to sleep with ready excuses or subterfuges, while the witness of whom I speak never relaxed his severity, never interfered in anything, simply watched. It was like an inward glance, impassive and fixed, a lifeless, cold *double*, who, during *Little What's-His-Name's* most violent outbreaks, kept an eye upon everything, took notes, and said the next day: "This is for us two to settle!" Read the chapter entitled: "He is Dead! Pray for Him!" an absolutely true page of my life. My older brother's death was announced to us in just that way, and in my ears there still rings my poor father's cry when he divined that his son was dead; so heartrending, so poignant was that first loud outcry of human grief within my hearing, that all night, as I lay weeping in my despair, I surprised myself repeating: "He is dead," in my father's tone. In that way was revealed to me the existence of my *double*, of the implacable witness who, in the midst of our mourning, had retained, as on the stage, the faithful echo of a death-shriek, and tried it upon my despairing

lips. I regret, on re-reading my book, to find therein not a word of these confessions, especially in the first part, where the character of Daniel Eyssette resembles me so strongly.

Yes, he is myself, that *Little What's-His-Name*, compelled to earn his living at sixteen in that horrible calling of school-usher, and performing its duties in the heart of a province, of a region of smelting-furnaces, which sent me vulgar little mountain imps, who insulted me in their harsh, brutal Cevennese patois. Defenceless against the persecution of those little monsters, surrounded by bigots and pedants who despised me, I underwent the degrading humiliations of the poor man.

In that depressing prison-house I had no other sympathy than that of the priest whom I have called Abbé Germane, and of the horrible "Bamban," whose absurd little face, always smeared with ink and mud, looks mournfully into mine while I write these lines.

I recall another of my pupils, a refined, unusual character, to whom I became attached and for whom I set special tasks, solely for the joy of seeing that youthful intellect develop like a bud in the spring. The child, being deeply touched by my interest in him, had made me promise to pass my vacation with him in the country. His parents would be so glad to know me, to thank me. And so, on the day of the distribution of prizes, after a great triumph which he owed to me in some degree, my pupil came and took my hand,

and politely led me to his people, — father, mother, fashionably-dressed sisters, — all of whom were engaged in loading the prizes on a great break. I must have cut a sorry figure in my threadbare clothes, or have had something about me to offend the eye; for the family barely glanced at me, and the poor little fellow went away, with tears in his eyes, heartily ashamed because of his own disappointment and mine. Humiliating, cruel moments, which wither, which degrade life! I trembled with rage in my little room under the eaves, while the carriage bore away the child, laden with wreaths, and the vulgar bourgeois who had wounded me in such a das tardly way.

A long time after I left that dungeon at Alais, it often happened that I woke in the middle of the night, weeping bitterly; I had dreamed that I was still an usher and a martyr. Luckily that cruel début in life did not poison my mind; and I do not curse too bitterly that wretched time which enabled me to endure lightly the trials of my literary novitiate and my first years in Paris. Those were hard years, and the story of *Little What's-His-Name* conveys no idea of them.

There is almost nothing taken from real life in the second part except my arrival without shoes, my blue stockings and my rubbers, and my brother's welcome, the ingenious devotion of that Mère Jacques, whose real name is Ernest Daudet, who is the radiant figure of my child-

hood and early youth. Aside from my brother all the characters are purely imaginary.

I had a plentiful supply of models, however, and models of the most interesting and rarest types; but, as I said just now, I wrote that book when I was too young. One whole stage of my existence was too near me; I was not far enough away to see it distinctly, and, not seeing it, I invented. For instance, *Little What's-His-Name* was never an actor; indeed he was never able to say a single word in public. The porcelain trade also is unfamiliar to him. Pierrotte and her black eyes, the lady on the first floor, Coucou-blanc her negress, are done with spirit, as the painters say; but they lack the relief, the real articulation of life. So it is with the literary silhouettes, in which some people have fancied that they could detect insulting personalities of which I never dreamed.

Let me point out, however, one other of the realities of my book — the chamber under the eaves, over against the steeple of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, in a house now demolished, so that my glance is unsatisfied whenever I seek with my eyes, as I pass, the scene of so many follies, of so much misery, of so many long vigils of toil or of gloomy, desperate loneliness.

V.

THE LITERARY SALONS.[1]

I DO not think that there is a single one left to-day. We have other salons, more "in the swim," as they say: political salons, — Madame Edmond Adam's, Madame d'Haussonville's, all white or all red, where prefects are made and ministers unmade, and where Messieurs the Princes or Gambetta sometimes appear on great occasions. Then there are the salons where the guests enjoy themselves, — I dare not say try to enjoy themselves. Memories and regrets! they sup and play cards, they renew the parties at Compiègne as far as they can: attractive conservatories, a fragile shelter, beneath whose crystal roof blooms in all its trivial splendor the odorless flower of a purely superficial and worldly life. But the genuine literary salon, the salon where, around a charming and mature Muse, men of letters, or those who deem themselves such, assemble once a week to repeat little poems, dipping little dry cakes in a little tea, — that species of salon, I say, has definitively disappeared. Although I am not an old man, I have known some of those blue salons of

[1] Written in 1879, for the *New Times* (*Novoe-Vremya*) of St. Petersburg.

Arthenice,[1] which are to-day relegated to the provinces, more out of fashion than the guitar, the "void in the soul" and album verses.

Suppose we breathe upon our memories of twenty years since. *Pouf! pouf! pouf!* The dust rises in a fine cloud, and in that cloud, as distinctly as if for a fairy spectacle, the amiable features of good Madame Ancelot[2] assume form and substance. Madame Ancelot lived at that time on Rue Saint-Guillaume, a short provincial street in the heart of Paris, overlooked by Haussmann, where the grass grows between the pavements, where the rumbling of carriage wheels is never heard, where the tall houses, too tall for their three floors, allow only a cold and distant reflection of the daylight to find its way. The old, silent mansion, with the shutters of its balcony windows always closed, its front door never open, had the air of having slept for centuries beneath a magician's wand. And the interior fulfilled the promises of the street front: a white-walled hall, a dark, echoing stairway, high ceilings, broad windows surmounted by paintings set in panels. It was all faded and pale, seemed really to have ceased to live, and in the midst of

[1] Arthenice was an anagram of Catherine, Marquise de Rambouillet, whose salon was so famous in the later years of the 17th century. The anagram was invented by Malherbe.

[2] Madame Ancelot, born at Dijon in 1818, was a dramatist and author of some pretensions. She wrote at first in collaboration with her husband, "seeking only the pleasure of expressing her ideas," but after her comedy, *Un Mariage Raisonnable*, was produced at the Français in 1835, she worked independently.

it, in her proper frame, Madame Ancelot, dressed in white, plump and wrinkled like a little red apple, — in a word, exactly as we picture to ourselves the fairies in children's tales, who never die, but who grow old for thousands of years. Madame Ancelot loved birds, therein again resembling the good fairies. All around the salon, covering the walls, were tiers upon tiers of cages, chirping like the show-window of a bird-fancier's on the quay. But the very birds seemed to be singing old-fashioned tunes. In the place of honor, well in sight and in an excellent light, was a large portrait by Baron Gerard, hung at the proper angle, representing the Muse of the domicile with her hair dressed like a child's, in a costume cut after the fashion of the Restoration, and smiling with the smile of those days; the pose was three-quarters profile, as if about to fly, *à la Galatea*, the better to show a bit of a marvellously white and well-rounded shoulder. Forty years after the portrait was made, at the time of which we write, Madame Ancelot still wore low-necked dresses, but truth compels us to say that she no longer displayed the white, weil-rounded shoulders painted by Baron Gerard. But what cared the good woman for that? She imagined in 1858 that she was still the fair Madame Ancelot of the year 1828, when Paris was applauding her play, *Marie, ou les Trois Époques*. Indeed, there is nothing to give her warning; everything about her fades and grows old with her: the roses in the carpets, the ribbons of the hangings,

persons and memories; and while the century advances, that arrested life, that household of another age, motionless as a vessel at anchor, bury themselves silently in the past.

A simple remark would break the spell. But who will pronounce those sacrilegious words, who will dare to say: "We are growing old!" The habitués of the house less than others, for they too are of the same epoch; they too fancy that they are not growing old. There is M. Patin, the illustrious M. Patin, lecturer at the Sorbonne, playing the young man yonder by the window, in the corner at the left. He is a little man, as white as snow, but so jauntily curled and perfumed, and quivering with circumspection, as befits a University man of the First Empire. And Viennet, the Voltairian fabulist, as long and skinny as the heron of his dull fables. The god of the salon, surrounded, admired, petted, was Alfred de Vigny, a great poet, but a poet of another age — a strange, superannuated creature, with his archangel's expression and his weeping white hair, too long for his short figure. When he died, Alfred de Vigny bequeathed his parrot to Madame Ancelot. The parrot took his place in the centre of the salon, on a varnished perch. The old habitués stuffed him with sweetmeats; he was de Vigny's parrot! Some jokers dubbed him Eloa,[1] because of his long beak and mystic eye. But I am getting ahead of my story; at the time when I was presented at

[1] De Vigny, author of *Cinq-Mars*, died in 1862. He published in 1822 *Eloa, ou la Sœur des Anges*.

Madame Ancelot's, the poet was still alive, and the parrot's shrill little old-fashioned note was not yet added to the formidable chirping which, by way of protest, I imagine, arose from all the cages when M. Viennet attempted to repeat a few verses.

Sometimes the salon renewed its youth. On those days we met there Lachaud, the famous advocate, with Madame Ancelot's daugher, whom he had married: she a little inclined to melancholy, he stout and sleek, with a fine head worthy of a Roman, of a jurist of the Later Empire. Poets: Octave Lacroix, author of the *Chanson d'Avril*, of *L'Amour et son Train*, acted at the Théâtre Français; he made a very deep impression on me, although he was most benignant in appearance, being Sainte-Beuve's secretary. Emmanuel des Essarts came there with his father, a distinguished writer, librarian at Sainte-Geneviève. Emmanuel des Essarts was at that time a very young man, had hardly made his début in literature, and still wore, if I remember aright, the green palm-leaf of the Normal School pupils in his buttonhole. He fills now the chair of Literature in the Faculty of Clermont, which does not prevent his publishing one or two volumes a year on an average, in which are some fine poems. A delightful professor, as you see, with a sprig of myrtle in his cap. And then the ladies, — lady poets like Madame Anaïs Ségalas, and from time to time a newly discovered young Muse, with an azure eye, hair like refined gold, in the then

somewhat out-of-date attitude of the Delphine Gays and Elisa Mercœurs. One fine day appeared the fair Jenny Sabatier, whose real name was Tirecuir,[1] a most prosaic name for a Muse. I too, was sometimes asked for verses like the others, but it seems that I was timid and that my voice showed it. — "Louder!" Madame Ancelot would always say, "louder; Monsieur de la Rochejacquelein does n't hear!" — There were half-a-dozen of them like that, deaf as Etruscan pots, unable to hear a word, but always very attentive, with the left hand in a circle around the ear by way of speaking trumpet. Gustave Nadaud, for his part, always made himself heard. Short and thickset, with a turned-up nose and a large, expansive face, affecting an amiable rusticity which did not lack charm in that drowsy circle, the author of *Les Deux Gendarmes* would seat himself at the piano, sing at the top of his voice, pound the keys, and wake everybody. How popular he was in consequence! We were all jealous of him. — Sometimes, too, an actress anxious for a start would come there and recite poetry. There was a tradition that Rachel had recited several stanzas in Madame Ancelot's salon; a picture near the mantelpiece attested the fact. People continued to recite stanzas there, but they were not Rachels. That picture was not the only one; they came to light in every corner, all from the hand of Madame Ancelot, who did not disdain to handle the brush in her hours of leisure, and all devoted

[1] Draw-leather.

to her salon, destined to perpetuate the memory of some momentous event in that miniature world. The curious can find reproductions of them (made, O irony! by E. Benassit, the most cruelly sceptical of painters), forming a sort of autobiography: *Mon Salon*, by Madame Ancelot, published by Dentu. Each one of the faithful has his or her counterfeit presentment therein, and I think that mine is somewhere there, rather in the background.

That slightly heterogeneous party assembled every Tuesday on Rue Saint-Guillaume. They arrived late, and for this reason: on Rue du Cherche-Midi, two steps away, there was a rival salon, Madame Mélanie Waldor's,[1] set up there as if for the express purpose of serving as a permanent protest. The two Muses had formerly been intimate friends; indeed, Madame Ancelot had to some extent launched Mélanie in society. Then one day Mélanie shook herself free, and raised altar against altar: a repetition of Madame du Deffand's experience with Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. Mélanie Waldor wrote; we have had from her hand novels, poems, and a play, *La Tirelire de Jeannette!* Alfred de Musset, one day when he was in a savage humor, wrote some crushing, superb lines about her, a highly-spiced blend of Arétin and Juvenal, which, in default of anything better, will bear the Muse's name to

[1] Madame Waldor was older than Madame Ancelot, having been born in 1796. She was a very prolific writer of history, novels, sketches of manners, poetry and dramatic works.

posterity, on the wings of secret publications. Pray, what had Mélanie Waldor done to the *enfant terrible?* I remember her very well, all in velvet, with black hair — the hair of a century-old crow who persists in not growing gray — stretched out on her couch, languid and drooping, with attitudes indicative of a broken heart. But the eye kindled, the mouth became viperous at once when *She* was mentioned. *She* was the other, the enemy, dear old Madame Ancelot. There was war to the knife between those two. Madame Waldor purposely chose the same day, and about eleven o'clock, when you tried to steal away, in order to run across the street, cold glances nailed you at the door. You must needs remain, wag your tongue, blackguard Père Ancelot and outdo yourself in scandalous little stories. Opposite, they took their revenge by repeating innumerable mysterious legends concerning Madame Waldor's political influence.

How much time was wasted, how many hours frittered away in those venomous or absurd little trifles, in that atmosphere of moss-grown little poems and rancid little calumnies, on those pasteboard Parnassuses, whence no stream flows, where no bird sings, where the poetic laurel has the color of the green leather badge of a chief of department! And to think that I too have climbed the slopes of those Parnassuses! One must see everything in one's youth! That will last as long as my coat.

Poor dear coat, how many narrow halls it

rubbed with its skirts in those days, how many stair-rails it polished with its sleeves! I remember sporting it in Madame la Comtesse Chodsko's salon. The countess's husband was an excellent old scientist who seldom appeared and who counted for little. She must have been very beautiful; she was a tall, straight, thin woman, with an imperious, almost ugly manner. It was said that Murger, being deeply impressed by her, took her for the model of his *Madame Olympe*. Murger did, you know, undertake a brief journey in the first society, and that particular social circle was the one he discovered in his innocence. Somewhat confined quarters, truly, for the first society, and a little too far from the ground, that third floor suite on Rue de Tournon, consisting of three cold, bare little rooms, with windows looking on the courtyard. People came there, however, and the company was by no means commonplace. It was there that I first met Philarète Chasles,[1] restless genius, nervous pen, of the race of the Saint-Simons and Michelets, whose astounding *Mémoires*, quarrelsome, mischievous, made up of thrusts and parries, and filled, as it were, from the first chapter to the last, with the incessant clash of foils and crossed swords, appeared recently, and are allowed to pass almost unnoticed in the hurly-

[1] Philarète Chasles was one of those whom the late James Russell Lowell called Balzacidae. He wrote a very long and elaborate preface to the second edition of Balzac's *Peau de Chagrin* (*Magic Skin*), which is reprinted in M. de Lovenjoul's *Histoire des Œuvres de Balzac.* His miscellaneous works fill eleven volumes.

burly of a Paris that is really too indifferent to anything unconnected with painting or politics. A man of letters to the core, but tormented all his life, as Balzac was, by an appetite for a broader life and for dandyism, he lived, a librarian, at the very threshold of the Academy, which, no one knows why, would have none of him; and he died of cholera at Venice.

I also met there Pierre Véron, Philibert Audebrand, and an interesting couple, very interesting, and at the same time very congenial, whom I ask your leave to introduce to you. We are in the salon, let us sit down and watch: the door opens, enter Philoxène Boyer and his wife. Philoxène Boyer! another of those extraordinary youths, the terror and chastisement of families, chance productions which no theory of atavism explains, seeds brought no one knows whence, on the wings of the wind, across the seas, and some fine day blooming in a field of cabbages, in the midst of a bourgeois kitchen-garden, with their outlandishly irregular foliage, and their flowers of strange and gorgeous coloring! The son of that Boyer who knew more Greek than any man in France of his time; born between two pages of a lexicon; knowing nothing, in his childhood, of walks or of gardens outside the learned garden of Greek roots; fed on Greek, oiled with Greek, Philoxène with his Greek name seemed inexorably destined to see that name inscribed on marble, beside the Eggers and Estiennes in the Pantheon of Greek scholars. But Père Boyer reckoned

without Balzac. Philoxène, like all schoolboys of that day, had Balzac in his desk; so that, having inherited a hundred thousand francs from his mother, he could not come soon enough to Paris to squander the hundred thousand francs as Balzac's characters do. His project was carried out in the most orthodox fashion: bouquets given away, tips of gloved fingers kissed, duchesses subjugated, girls with golden eyes purchased, — nothing was left undone, and the whole was crowned by a wild revel after the style of the one described in *La Peau de Chagrin.* The *peau de chagrin,* that is to say, the hundred thousand francs, had lasted just six months. The Hellenist's son had enjoyed himself prodigiously. With empty pockets and his brain full of rhymes, he declared that he proposed thenceforth to carry on the trade of poet. But it was written that Philoxène, so long as he lived, should be *a victim of books.* Having left Balzac, he fell in with Shakespeare; Balzac had consumed only his five-franc pieces, Shakespeare consumed his life! — One morning, perhaps as the result of a dream, Philoxène awoke, absolutely infatuated with the works of Shakespeare. And as that self-willed, fragile creature, of mildly vehement disposition, could do nothing by halves, he devoted himself to Shakespeare body and soul! To study Shakespeare, to learn him by heart, from his least known sonnets to those of his plays of which the authorship is most disputed, was a mere nothing, and it took only a few months. But Philoxène

aimed higher than that: proposing to write a book upon Shakespeare, a complete, definitive book, a monument, in short, worthy of the god, he conceived the impossible project of reading, in the first place to extract its quintessence, everything (everything, I say, not excepting the most insignificant article or the most trivial document) — everything that had been published concerning Shakespeare from two hundred years ago down to our own times. A mass of dusty folios sufficient to build a Babel: and the Babel, alas! was soon built in Philoxène's brain. I have seen him in his own home, no longer master of himself, overflowed on all sides by Shakespeare. Five thousand, ten thousand volumes on Shakespeare, of all sizes, in all languages, rising to the ceiling, blocking the windows, crushing the tables, encroaching on the chairs, piled up, toppling over, consuming air and light, and in the midst of them Philoxène, taking notes, while his brats howled about him. For he had married, with no very clear idea why, and had had children between the reading of two books. Over-excited by his fixed idea, talking to himself when he was alone, with his eyes fixed on the horizon, lost in reverie, he walked through Paris like a blind man. His wife, a gentle creature, inclined to melancholy, followed him everywhere, acted as his Antigone. I used to see them at the Café de la Régence, always together. She would prepare his absinthe with great care, a mild absinthe, barely tinged with greenish opal, for the enthusiastic poet

needed no stimulants. She was always seen, too, in the front row at the conferences held by Philoxène in the hall on Quai Malaquais, always upon Shakespeare. Sometimes the word would not come — a painful spectacle! — the orator would seek it, clench his fists in vain. Every one felt that in that overcrowded brain ideas and sentences jostled one another, unable to come forth, like a frantic crowd around a door in a conflagration. The wife, divining the word, would whisper it gently, maternally. The sentence would come forth and fly away; and at such times that painful improvisation, that frantic gesticulation, were illumined by vivid flashes, eloquent outbursts. There was a genuine poet at the core of that gentle monomaniac. Philoxène ended his life sadly, working at obscure tasks to earn his livelihood and buy books, always dreaming of his great monograph, but never able to write it. For he wished to read everything concerning Shakespeare; and every day books appeared in England, in Germany, which went beyond him and compelled him to postpone his first line until the morrow. He died, leaving no effects save two short plays written in collaboration with Théodore de Banville, an unfinished *Polichinello,* original in design, which was afterwards retouched by adapters, and a volume of verse collected and published by the exertions of his friends. They obtained a small stamp office for his widow. After long mourning her poet, the worthy, simple-hearted woman married again

two years ago. Guess whom she married? The postman!

Was I not justified in directing your attention to Philoxène and his wife? For my own part, I can never forget them, and I can still see them, reserved and shy, in the corner of the little salon; he twitching nervously, she with her knees pressed closely together, marvelling; while Pagans, recently arrived from the land of citron, sings his Spanish ballads; while Madame la Comtesse Chodsko serves light, weak tea — genuine exile's tea! — to superb Polish dames, with their luxuriant hair twisted in heavy masses on the neck, gleaming hair of the color of parched corn; and while worthy Père Chodsko, as the clock strikes twelve, appears in the doorway, with the regularity of a cuckoo, with a candlestick in his hand, casts a circular glance on the assembled company, mutters with a marked Slavic accent a "Good-evening, Moussiou," to the men who are presented to him, then disappears, automatically, between the folds of a portière.

The desire to display my coat carried me even farther sometimes, way to the other extremity of Paris, on the other side of the Seine. I followed the quays a long, long while, inhaling the odor of wild beasts, listening to the lions roar behind the iron fence of the Jardin des Plantes; I crossed a bridge, I gazed by gaslight or moonlight at the fanciful pediments and curiously pierced turret of the ruins of the Hôtel de Lavalette; and so I arrived at the Arsenal, — at the old Arsenal, to-

day a library, with its long iron railing, its stoop, its doorway of the time of Vauban, whereon bombs are carved, — at the Arsenal, still full to overflowing with souvenirs of Charles Nodier.[1] Nodier was no longer there: the famous little green salon, from which romanticism took its flight, which has seen Musset, Hugo and George Sand weep over the adventures of Brisquet's dog, the little green salon, more celebrated, and justly so, than Arthenice's blue salon, was occupied now by M. Eugène Loudun. The spirit of revolution, the spirit of freedom, no longer fluttered in its curtains. After the champions of romanticism, poet workmen, Christian rhymers had found their way into that eighth castle of the King of Bohemia. Of the old romanticists a single one remained, unswervingly faithful at his post, as stanch and straight in his frockcoat as a Huguenot cavalryman in his coat of mail.

That one was Amédée Pommier, a wonderful workman in *bons-mots* and rhymes, a friend of the Dondeys and Pétrus Borels, the author of *L'Enfer*, of *Crâneries et Dettes de Cœur*, excellent books with flaming titles, a feast for men of letters, a terror to the Academies, and full of lines as noisy and as brilliant in coloring as an aviary of tropical birds.

Amédée Pommier was poor and dignified. He lived in close retirement, earning his living by

[1] A most attractive picture of Nodier's life at the Arsenal will be found in the first chapter of the elder Dumas's *Woman with the Velvet Necklace*.

making translations for Hachette, which he did not sign. It is an interesting fact that it was in collaboration with Amédée Pommier that Balzac, always possessed with the idea of writing a great classical comedy, undertook *Orgon*, five acts in verse, as a sequel to *Tartufe.*[1]

In that green salon at the Arsenal I also met M. Henri de Bornier. He often repeated some very clever little poems, one of which I have always remembered; each couplet ended with this refrain:

"Eh! eh! je ne suis pas si bête!"[2]

No such fool, indeed! for M. de Bornier wrote *La Fille de Roland*, which achieved a great success at the Théâtre Français, and will carry its author into the Academy. On certain evenings there was a great clearing of decks, screens were produced, chairs without arms and chairs with arms arranged in lines, and we acted charades. I have acted in charades there, I confess it! and I can see myself at this moment in a Turkish bazaar, as a Circassian girl, swathed in long white veils. I had Madame de Bornier for my companion in slavery. M. de Bornier, in turban and belted tunic reaching to the knees, made an apology for a sultan, and purchased us. As for the slave-merchant, he was, by your leave, no less a per-

[1] Of *Orgon*, M. de Lovenjoul says in his *Histoire des Œuvres de Balzac*, "that it was never published and never acted."

[2] "Ha! ha! I'm no such fool!"

sonage than M. L——, senator, former minister, then much in the public eye, and afterwards convicted of financial irregularities. The fall of the Empire treated us to many surprises; and this great Parisian highroad sometimes develops strange windings!

VI.

MY DRUMMER.[1]

I WAS at home one morning, still in bed, when some one knocked.

"Who is that?"

"A man with a great box!"

I supposed that it was some package from the railway station; but, instead of the porter I expected to see, a short man with the round hat and short jacket of Provençal shepherds appeared before me. Jet black eyes, mild and restless, a face at once ingenuous and obstinate, and, half lost beneath heavy moustaches, an accent perfumed with garlic, probably not southern. The man said to me: "I am Buisson!" and handed me a letter, on the envelope of which I at once recognized the beautiful, fine handwriting, regular and placid, of Frédéric Mistral the poet. His letter was short.

"I send you my friend Buisson; he is a drummer, and goes to Paris to exhibit his talents; pilot him about."

[1] *Mon Tambourinaire.*—The *tambourin* is a species of drum (*tambour*), smaller and longer than the ordinary drum, and is beaten with a single drum-stick to accompany the shrill notes of a *galoubet* (flute), which is held to the mouth with the other hand.

Pilot a drummer! These Southerners stick at nothing. Having read the letter, I turned to Buisson again.

"So you 're a drummer?"

"Yes, Monsieur Daudet, the best of all drummers; I 'll show you!"

And he went to fetch his instruments, which he had discreetly deposited on the landing behind the door, before entering my room; a small, square, flat box, and a huge cylinder covered with green serge, similar in dimensions and shape to the monstrous affairs which the hurdy-gurdy men trundle through the streets. The little flat box contained the *galoubet*, the simple rustic flute which goes *tu-tu* — while the drum goes *pan-pan!* The veiled cylinder was the drum itself. Such a drum, my friends! the tears came to my eyes when I saw it unpacked: an authentic drum of the age of Louis XIV., touching and laughable at once by reason of its huge size, groaning like an old man if one so much as touched it with the end of the finger, made of fine walnut embellished with light carved work, polished, delicate, light, resonant, and made supple, as it were, by the mellowing hand of time. Buisson, solemn as a pope, fastened his drum to his left arm, took the flute in three fingers of his left hand — you must have seen the instruments and the attitude in some eighteenth century engraving or on a plate of Vieux-Moustier ware — and, wielding the little ivory-tipped drumstick with his right hand, he touched up the big drum, which, with its quav-

ering note, its constant locust-like humming, marks the time and plays the bass to the sharp, piercing chirp of the flute. — *Tu-tu! Pan-pan!* — Paris was far away and so was the winter. — *Tu-tu! pan-pan! tu-tu!* — Bright sunlight and warm perfumes filled my room. I seemed to be transported to Provence, on the shore of the blue sea, in the shade of the poplars of the Rhône; serenades with voice and instruments arose beneath my windows, they sang Noël, they danced the Olivettes, and I saw the *farandole* wind in and out under the leafy plane-trees on the village squares, over the wild lavender on the scorched hillsides, in the white dust of the highroads, disappearing to appear again, more and more excited and wild, while the drummer followed slowly, never quickening his pace, — very sure that the dance will not leave the music behind, — grave and solemn, and limping a little with a movement of the knee to push the instrument forward at every step.

There are so many things in an air upon a drum! Yes, and many others, too, which you might not have seen, perhaps, but which I certainly saw. The Provençal imagination is made that way; it is of tinder, kindles quickly, even at seven o'clock in the morning, and Mistral was right to rely upon my enthusiasm. Buisson, too, became excited. He told me of his struggles, his efforts, and how he had stopped flute and drum half-way down the slope as they were falling into the abyss.

Some savages, it seems, wished to perfect the

galoubet, to add two holes. A *galoubet* with five holes! what sacrilege! He clung religiously to the *galoubet* with three holes, the *galoubet* of his ancestors, without fear of rivalry, however, in respect to the richness of the chords, the animation of the variations and trills. "It came to me," he said modestly and with a vague suggestion of inspiration, with that peculiar accent which would make the most touching of funeral orations ridiculous, — "it came to me one night when I was sitting under an olive-tree listening to a nightingale, and I thought: 'What, Buisson, the good Lord's bird sings like that, and you can't do with three holes what he does with just one hole?'" Rather an idiotic way of putting it! But it seemed charming to me that day.

A true Southerner never really enjoys his emotion unless he can induce somebody else to share it. I admired Buisson: one could not help admiring him. Behold me, therefore, on my journey through Paris, exhibiting my drummer, putting him forward as a phenomenon, enlisting my friends, arranging for an evening party at my house. Buisson played, described his struggles, said again: "It came to me." He was decidedly fond of that phrase, and my friends pretended to be overcome with admiration when they went away.

That was only the first step. I had a play in rehearsal at the Ambigu Theatre, a Provençal play! I mentioned Buisson, his drum and his flute, to Hostein, then manager, with such eloquence as you

can imagine! For a week I pestered him. At last he said to me: —

"Suppose we bring your drummer into the play? It lacks a nail; he may perhaps serve to hang success on."

I am sure that the Provençal did not sleep that night. The next day we all three took a cab, he and the drum and I; and at "noon for the fourth," as the notices of rehearsals put it, we alighted amid a group of idlers, attracted by the strange aspect of the machine, at the shamefaced, low door which, in the most sumptuous theatres, affords a far from triumphal entry to authors, artists, and employés.

"Good God, how dark it is!" whispered the Provençal, as we followed the long corridor, damp and windy, like all theatre corridors. — "Good God, how cold and dark it is!" — The drum seemed to be of the same opinion, and banged against all the angles of the corridor, against every step of the spiral stairway, with ominous vibrations and rumblings. At last we arrived, limping, on the stage. The rehearsal was in progress. It is a horrible thing to see the theatre at such a time, in the privacy of its undress uniform, without the excitement, the life, the paint, and the illumination of the evening: people full of business, walking softly and speaking low, depressing shades on the banks of the Styx, or miners in the depths of a mine; an odor of dampness and of escaping gas; men and things, — men running hither and thither and scenery jumbled fantastically together, everything

of the color of ashes in the grudging light of infrequent lamps and gas-jets, veiled like Davy lamps; and to make the darkness denser, the impression of being underground, intensified from time to time as a door opens up above, on the second or third floor of the dark auditorium, and admits a ray of daylight as if through the distant opening of a well. That spectacle, being entirely a novel one to my compatriot, disconcerted him a little. But the rascal soon recovered himself and courageously allowed himself to be stationed all alone in the darkness at the very rear of the stage, on a cask which they had prepared for him. With his drum there were two casks, one on top of the other. In vain did I protest; in vain did I say: "In Provence drummers play while walking, and your cask 's an impossibility;" Hostein assured me that my drummer was a minstrel, and that a minstrel could not be imagined otherwise than as sitting on a cask on the stage. The cask it is, then! Indeed, Buisson, full of confidence, had already climbed upon it, and said to me as he moved his feet about to establish his equilibrium: "It makes no difference!" So we left him with his flute at his mouth and his drumstick in his hand, behind a virgin forest of flies, uprights, pulleys, and ropes, and took up our positions, manager, author, and actors, at the front of the stage, as far away as possible, to judge of the effect.

"It came to me," sighed Buisson, "one night, under an olive-tree, while I was listening to a nightingale."

"All right! all right! play us something," I cried, irritated already by his eternal phrase.

Tu-tu! Pan-pan!

"Hush! he 's beginning."

"Now we will see what the effect is!"

Great God! what an effect was produced upon that sceptical audience by that rustic, piping music, quavering and thin as the noise of an insect, buzzing away in a corner! I saw the actors, always delighted professionally by the failure of a comrade, slyly and ironically curl their clean-shaven lips; the fireman, under his gas-jet, writhed with silent laughter; even the prompter, aroused from his usual somnolence by the singularity of the episode, raised himself by his hands, and stuck his head out of his box, so that he looked like a gigantic turtle. Meanwhile Buisson, having finished playing, reverted to his phrase, which he apparently considered pretty.

"What! the good Lord's bird sings like that, and you can't do with three holes what he does with just one?"

"What 's this fellow of yours saying with his chatter about holes?" said Hostein.

Thereupon I tried to explain the significance of the matter, the importance of having three holes instead of five, the originality of the idea of one person playing two instruments. "I must say," observed Marie Laurent, "that it would be more convenient with two."

To support my argument I tried to give an idea of the *farandole* step on the stage. No one paid

any attention to it, and I began to realize vaguely the cruel truth that, in order that others might share the impressions, the poetic memories, which the drum and its simple old airs aroused in me, it was essential that the musician should bring with him to Paris a hill-top, a patch of blue sky, a bit of Provençal atmosphere. — " Come, children, let 's go on, let 's go on ! " — And, with no further heed to the drummer, the rehearsal proceeded. Buisson did not stir, but remained at his post, assured of his triumph, honestly believing that he was already a part of the play. After the first act I felt a pang of remorse at leaving him on his cask at the rear of the stage, where his figure could be indistinctly seen.

" Come, Buisson, down with you at once ! "

" Are we going to sign the contract ? "

The poor devil believed that he had produced a tremendous effect, and he showed me a stamped paper prepared beforehand with the characteristic foresight of a peasant.

" No, not to-day ; he will write to you. But take care, *sapristi !* your drum knocks against everything and makes a great racket ! "

I was ashamed of the drum now : I feared that somebody would hear it ; and what joy, what a sense of relief I felt when I had stowed him away in the cab once more ! I dared not go to the theatre again for a week.

Some time after, Buisson came to see me again.

" Well, what about that contract ? "

" Contract ? Oh, yes ! that contract. Well, Hostein is hesitating ; he does n't understand."

"He's a fool!"

From the harsh and bitter tone in which the sweet-tempered musician uttered those words, I realized the full extent of my crime. Intoxicated by my enthusiasm, my praise, the Provençal drummer had lost his head, gone daft; he took himself for a great man in all seriousness, and was confident — had I not told him so, alas! — that great triumphs were in store for him in Paris. Just try, I pray you, to stop a drum when it is rolling thus, with a great noise, among the rocks and bramble bushes, on the downward slope of illusion! I did not try; it would have been mere folly and a waste of time.

Moreover Buisson now had other and more illustrious admirers: Félicien David and Théophile Gautier, to whom Mistral had written when he wrote to me. Poetic, dreamy souls, easily charmed, quick to forget their surroundings, the author of travels in the Orient and the musician of the land of roses had had no difficulty in imagining a landscape in harmony with the rustic melodies of the drum.

The first, while the flute mimicked the nightingale, fancied that he saw once more the shores of his native Durance and the crumbling terraces of his hills of Cadenet; the other let his dreams wander farther away, and found in the dull, monotonous beating of the drum some delicious reminiscence of nights on the Golden Horn and the Arabian *derboukas*.

Both conceived a sudden and ardent fancy for Buisson's real talent, out of its element though it

was. For a fortnight the newspapers were full of extravagant articles; they all had something to say of the drummer, the illustrated journals published his picture, in a majestic pose, his eye flashing with triumph, the light flute between his fingers, the drum slung over his shoulder. Buisson, drunk with glory, bought newspapers by the dozens and sent them to his province.

From time to time he came to see me and told me of his triumphs: a punch at an artist's studio, evening parties in society, in Faubourg Saint-Germain — his mouth was full of his *Faubourg de Séïnt-Germéïn* — where the rascal made beplumed dowagers dreamy and pensive by repeating shamelessly his famous sentiment: "It came to me one night under an olive-tree, as I listened to a nightingale."

Meanwhile, as it was important that he should not grow rusty, but should preserve, despite the innumerable distractions of artistic life, his mellowness of touch and purity of phrasing, our ingenuous Provençal conceived the plan of rehearsing his serenades and *farandoles* late at night, in the heart of Paris, in his room on the fifth floor of the furnished lodging-house in the Bréda Quarter. *Tu-tu! Pan-pan!* The whole quarter was stirred to its depths by those unusual noises. The neighbors rebelled, they entered a complaint; but Buisson continued with renewed vigor, spreading harmony and insomnia abroad with a turn of his hand, until the *concierge*, at the end of his forbearance, refused him his key one night.

Buisson, robing himself in his artistic dignity, sued for his rights before the justice of the peace, and won. The French law, which is very harsh to musicians and banishes hunting-horns to the cellars throughout the year, allowing them only on Mardi Gras, — one day out of three hundred and sixty-five to blow their coppery blasts in the free air, — the French law, it seems, had not foreseen the drum.

After that victory, Buisson was daunted by nothing. One Sunday morning I received a card: he proposed to display his talents, that afternoon, in a grand concert at the Salle du Châtelet. Duty and friendship called: I went to hear him, therefore, not without a feeling of depression due to a secret presentiment.

It was a superb audience, the hall filled from pit to arched ceiling; evidently our newspaper articles had told. Suddenly the curtain rose: general agitation, profound silence. I uttered a cry of horror. In the centre of the vast stage, so vast that six hundred ballet-dancers can perform freely upon it, Buisson, with his drum, arrayed in a coat that was too small for him, and gloves that made him resemble the insects with yellow claws whom Granville, in his fanciful sketches, represents puffing desperately at fantastic instruments, — Buisson made his appearance alone. I saw him, with my opera-glass, waving his long arms and moving his shoulders up and down; the poor devil was evidently playing, beating his drum vigorously and blowing with all the strength of his lungs; but no

perceptible sound reached the audience. It was too far, everything was swallowed by the stage. It was like a cricket singing his serenade in the middle of the Champ de Mars! And it was impossible for any one to count the holes at that distance, or for him to say, "It came to me," or to talk about the good Lord's bird!

I was red with shame; I saw bewildered faces all about me, I heard voices muttering: "What's the meaning of this wretched joke?" The doors of the boxes began to slam, the hall gradually became empty; however, as it was a well-bred audience, there was no hissing, but they left the drummer to finish his tune in solitude.

I waited for him at the stage door to console him. Console, indeed! He thought he had made a tremendous hit; he was more radiant than ever. "I'm waiting for Colonne to sign this," he said, showing me a bulky document spotted with stamps. That was too much, upon my word; I could not contain myself; I took my courage in both hands and told him bluntly, without stopping for breath, just what I thought: —

"Buisson, we have all made a mistake in trying to make Paris understand the charm of your great drum and the melody of your fife. I made a mistake; Gautier and David made a mistake; and the result is that you are making a mistake. No, you're no nightingale."

"It came to me —" interposed Buisson.

"Yes, it came to you, I know; but you're no nightingale. The nightingale sings everywhere,

his song is of all countries, and in all countries his song is understood. But you are only a poor cricket, — whose monotonous, shrill refrain is well suited to the pale olive-trees, the pines weeping pitch in golden tears, the deep blue sky, the bright sunlight, the stony hills of Provence, — but an absurd, pitiful cricket under this gray sky, in the wind and rain, with your long wings dripping wet. So go back to Provence, take back your drum, play your serenades, play for the pretty girls to dance the *farandole*, for the triumphal march of the conquerors in the bull-fights. There, you are a poet, an artist; here, you will always be an unappreciated mountebank."

He made no reply; but in his visionary glance, in his mild but stubborn eye, I could read: "The trouble with you is that you 're jealous!"

A few days later, my man came to me, as proud as Artaban, to inform me that Colonne — another imbecile, like Hostein — had refused to sign a contract; but that another opportunity had presented itself, a marvellous opportunity: an engagement at a café-concert, at 120 francs per evening, signed in advance. He actually had the paper. Ah! a precious paper, truly! I learned the truth afterward.

Some ill-fated manager or other, borne onward, blinded by the muddy current of bankruptcy, had conceived the idea of clinging to that brittle willow-branch, Buisson's drum and fife. Being sure that he could not pay, he signed whatever he was asked to sign. But the Provençal did not look so

far ahead; he had a stamped paper, and that stamped paper was enough to gladden his heart. Moreover, as it was a café-concert, he must have a costume. "They have dressed me as a troubadour of ancient times," he said with a condescending smile, "but as I have a very good figure, it does n't look badly on me, as you 'll see!" I did see, in very truth.

In one of the cafés-chantants in the neighborhood of Porte Saint-Denis, so fashionable in the latter years of the Empire, with the tawdry tinsel of its strange half-Chinese, half-Persian decorations, the daubs and streaks of gold being made more offensive to the eye by the gas-jets and chandeliers; its proscenium boxes, locked and barred, where duchesses and ambassadresses concealed themselves on certain evenings, to applaud the contortions and vocal gymnastics of some eccentric diva; its sea of heads and of beer-glasses, levelled, like the waves on a foggy day, by pipe-smoke and the vapor of many breaths; its waiters running to and fro; its customers calling; its orchestral conductor, in his white cravat, dignified and impassive, arousing or allaying with a gesture *à la Neptune* the hurricane of fifty brass instruments; — between an idiotically sentimental ballad, bleated by a very pretty girl with eyes like a sheep, and a pastoral ditty, cynically roared by a sort of red-armed Theresa, on the stage where some half-dozen damsels in white, very *décolletées*, sat around in a circle awaiting their turn to sing and ogling the audience, there suddenly appeared a person-

age whom I shall never forget while I live. It was Buisson, with his flute at his mouth, his drum on his left knee, in troubadour costume as he had promised me. But such a troubadour! a doublet (imagine that!) half apple-green and half blue, one leg of his breeches red, the other yellow, and everything so skin-tight that it made one shudder; cap with slashed edges, high-heeled shoes with peaked toes, and with all the rest, moustaches, those superb moustaches, too long and too black, which he could not make up his mind to sacrifice, falling around his chin like a cascade of shoe-blacking!

Fascinated presumably by the exquisite taste displayed in that costume, the audience greeted the musician with a long murmur of approval, and my troubadour smiled affably and was happy, seeing that sympathetic audience before him, and feeling on his back the flaming glances of the lovely ladies seated in a circle and admiring him. Ah! but it was another matter when the music began. The *tu-tus*, the *pan-pans*, could not charm those ears, surfeited as a palate is by alcohol, and burned by the vitriol of the repertory of the resort. And then the company was not, as at the Châtelet, a reserved and distinguished one.—"Enough! enough! Take him away! Have n't you finished, learned pig?"—In vain did Buisson try to open his mouth and say: "It came to me—" the benches rose in their wrath, the curtain had to be lowered, and the green, blue, red, and yellow troubadour disappeared in the tempest of hisses, like

a poor macaw stripped of its feathers and whirled away by a gust of wind in the tropics.

Would you believe it? Buisson persisted! An illusion strikes deep and is hard to uproot in a Provençal brain. Fifteen evenings in succession he appeared, always hissed, never paid, until the moment when a bailiff's clerk affixed a certificate of bankruptcy on the openwork doors of the café-concert.

Thereupon the downward course began. From music-hall to music-hall, from brothel to brothel, still believing in his success, still pursuing his chimera of an engagement on stamped paper, the drummer descended to suburban gin-shops — where gambling is carried on in secret — accompanied by a keyless piano for orchestra, to the keenest delight of an audience of tired, tipsy boatmen and dry-goods clerks spending Sunday in the country.

One evening — winter was barely at an end, and spring had not arrived — I was crossing the Champs-Élysées. An open-air concert, being in a greater hurry than others, had suspended its lanterns from the still leafless trees. It was drizzling a little and was dismal enough. I heard a *Tu-tu! Pan-pan!* Buisson again! I saw him through the entrance, drumming a Provençal air before half-a-dozen auditors, sitting under umbrellas, who had entered on complimentary tickets, I doubt not. I dared not go in: after all, it was my fault! It was the fault of my imprudent enthusiasm. Poor Buisson! poor bedraggled cricket!

VII.

HISTORY OF MY BOOKS. — TARTARIN OF TARASCON.

NEARLY fifteen years have passed since I published the *Adventures of Tartarin*, and Tarascon has not yet forgiven me; indeed, travellers worthy of credence inform me that, every morning, at the time when the little Provençal town opens the shutters of its shops and shakes its carpets in the breath of the great Rhone, from every doorway, from every window, there is the same angry shaking of fists, the same flashing of black eyes, the same cry of rage Parisward. "Oh! that Daudet — if he ever comes down here just once!" — as in the story of Bluebeard: "Come down, or I will come up!"

And, joking aside, once Tarascon did come up.

It was in 1878, when the provinces were much in evidence, — in the hotels, on the boulevards, and on the gigantic bridge thrown across the river from the Champ de Mars to the Trocadéro. One morning the sculptor Amy, a native of Tarascon naturalized in Paris, was called upon by a formidable pair of moustaches which had come to Paris by excursion train, ostensibly to see the Universal Exposition, but really to have an explanation with

Daudet on the subject of the gallant commandant Bravida and the *Defence of Tarascon*, a little tale published during the war.

"*Que?* — we 're going to Daudet's!"

Those were the first words spoken by the Tarasconian moustaches on entering the studio; and for a fortnight the sculptor Amy heard nothing but the question: "And, by the way, where can we find that Daudet?" The unfortunate artist exhausted his imagination to spare me that heroi-comic visitation. He took his countryman's moustaches to the Exposition, lost them on the Street of the Nations, in the machinery gallery, watered them with English beer, Hungarian wine, mare's milk, divers outlandish drinks, bewildered them with Moorish music, gypsy music, Japanese music, fatigued them, wore them out, hoisted them — like Tartarin on his minaret — to the towers of the Trocadéro.

But the Provençal's rancor held firm, and as he surveyed Paris from the summit he asked with a frown: —

"Can we see his house from here?"

"Whose house?"

"Why, that Daudet's, *pardi!*"

And it was like that everywhere. Luckily the excursion train got steam up and bore away the Tarasconian's vengeance unwreaked; but when he had gone others might come, and while the Exposition lasted I did not sleep. It is something, I tell you, to feel the hatred of a whole town on your shoulders! Even to this day, when I travel

in the South, I am always ill at ease when I pass through Tarascon. I know that it still bears me a grudge, that my books are banished from its libraries, cannot be found even at the railway station; and from the farthest point at which I can descry the castle of good King Réné from the railway carriage, I am uncomfortable and would like to rush through the station. That is why I avail myself of this new edition to offer to the people of Tarascon, with my most profuse apologies, the explanation which the ex-commander-in-chief of their militia came to demand at my hands.

Tarascon was, so far as I am concerned, simply a pseudonym picked up on the line from Paris to Marseille, because it had a sonorous sound in the Southern accent, and rang out triumphantly, among the names of stations, like the yell of an Apache warrior. In reality, the country of Tartarin and the *helmet-hunters* is a little farther on, some five or six leagues, "on the other hand" of the Rhone. There it was that I, as a child, saw the baobab languishing in the little mignonette pot, the image of my hero in the narrow confines of his little town, where the Rebuffas sang the duet from *Robert le Diable;* and it was from there that Tartarin and I, armed to the teeth and with Algerian sharpshooters' caps on our heads, set out one day in November, 1861, to hunt the lion in Algeria.

To tell the truth, I did not go solely for that purpose, being especially desirous to patch up my somewhat dilapidated lungs in the warm

sunshine. But not for nothing, bless my soul! was I born in the country of the *helmet-hunters;* and as soon as I set my foot on the deck of the *Zouave*, upon which our enormous arm-chest was embarked, more Tartarin than Tartarin, I really fancied that I was going to exterminate all the wild beasts in the Atlas Mountains.

O the enchantment of one's first journey! It seems to me as if it were but yesterday that we set sail on that blue sea, blue as a liquid dye, its surface ruffled by the wind, sparkling with grains of salt, while the bowsprit reared and plunged, pricked the waves, then shook itself all white with foam, and rushed on, pointing seaward, always seaward; and all the bells in Marseille striking the noon hour, and my twenty years ringing a resonant peal in my brain.

I see it all again, simply from speaking of it: I am in Algiers, strolling through the bazaars in a half-light that smells of musk and amber, pressed rose-leaves, and warm wool; the *guzlas* give forth their nasal notes on three strings before the little Tunisian wardrobes with mirrors for panels and mother-of-pearl arabesques, while the fountain drips with cool, refreshing note on the porcelain tiles of the *patio.* And here am I snatching a glimpse at Sahel, the orange woods of Blidah, Chiffa, the brook of the Monkeys, Milianah and its green slopes, its orchards of tangled helianthus, fig-trees, and gourd-trees, like our Provençal country-houses.

Here is the immense valley of the Chelif, thickets

of lentils, dwarf palms, dry beds of torrents lined with rose-laurels; on the horizon the smoke of a *gourbi* rising straight in the air from a clump of cactus, the gray-walled enclosure of a caravansary, a saint's tomb with its white turban-like cupola, its *ex-votos* on the dazzlingly white wall, and here and there, in the glaring, parched expanse, moving dark specks which are flocks and herds.

And I still hear, with the sensation in the pit of my stomach caused by the jolting of my Arab saddle, the clashing of my great stirrups, the cries of the shepherds in that wavy, pure atmosphere where the voice leaps from wave to wave: "Si Mohame-e-ed-i — ;" the fierce barking of watch-dogs around the villages, the shooting and shouting of the horse-races, and the wild music of the *derboukas*, at night, in front of the open tents, while the jackals yelp in the fields as persistently as our crickets, and a crescent moon, Mahomet's crescent, casts its gleam over the starry velvet of the night. Very distinct in my memory too is the melancholy of the home-coming, the sensation of exile and cold on landing at Marseille, and the dark, veiled aspect of the blue sky of Provence compared with those Algerian landscapes, that palette with its vivid and varied scale of coloring, dawns of an indescribable green, mineral green, the green of poison, short evening twilights with changing shades of purple and amethyst, pink wells to which pink camels come to drink, where the well-cord, and the Bedouin's beard, lapping the very bucket, stream with pink drops; — after the

lapse of twenty years, I am still conscious of that regret, that homesick longing for a light that has disappeared.

There is in Mistral's language a word which defines and summarizes an instinct of the race: *galéja*, to make sport of, to jest. And one can see the flash of irony, the mischievous gleam in the depths of Provençal eyes. *Galéja* recurs on all occasions in conversation, under the form of a verb or a substantive. — "*Vesés-pas? Es uno galéjado.* — Don't you see? It's a joke." — "*Taisote, galéjaïré.* — Hold your tongue, you wretched scoffer." — But the being a *galéjaïré* does not exclude either kindness of heart or affectionate disposition. They are simply amusing themselves, *té!* they say it laughingly; and down yonder laughter goes with all sentiments, the most impassioned, the most tender. In an old, old ballad of our province — the story of little Fleurance — this liking of the Provençaux for laughter appears in an exquisite guise. Fleurance has married, when a mere child, a knight who takes her so young — *la prén tan jouvencto se saup pas courdela* — that she does not know how to clasp her belt. But they are no sooner married than Fleurance's lord and master is obliged to start for Palestine and leave his little wife all alone. Seven years have passed, and the knight has given no sign of life, when a pilgrim with a shell in his hat and a long beard appears at the drawbridge of the castle. He has just returned from among the *Teurs;* he brings news from Fleurance's husband;

and the young lady at once orders that he be admitted, places him opposite her at table.

What takes place between them thereafter I can tell you in two ways; for the story of Fleurance, like all popular ballads, has made the tour of France in the pedler's pack, and I found it in Picardie with a significant variation. In the Picard ballad, the lady begins to weep in the midst of the repast.

"You weep, lovely Fleurance?" queries the pilgrim, trembling with emotion.

"I weep, because I recognize you and you are my dear husband."

The little Provençal Fleurance, on the contrary, has hardly taken her seat opposite the long-bearded pilgrim when she begins prettily *to laugh at him*. "*Hé!* why do you laugh, Fleurance?" —"*Té!* I laugh because you are my husband."

And, still laughing, she jumps upon his knees, and the pilgrim laughs too in his wig of tow, for he, like her, is a *galéjaïré*, which fact does not interfere with their loving each other dearly, in close embrace, lip to lip, with all the emotion of their faithful hearts.

And I, too, am a *galéjaïré*. In the mists of Paris, in the splashing of its mud and its melancholy, I may perhaps have lost the taste and faculty for laughter; but on reading Tartarin you will see that there still remained, in the depths of my being, a trace of gayety which suddenly developed in the genial light of the South.

Most assuredly I agree that there was room for

something more to be written concerning French Algeria than the *Adventures of Tartarin;* for example, a true and pitiless study of its manners and morals, the results of close observation of a new country on the borderland between two races and two civilizations, with their reciprocal action upon each other, the victor vanquished in his turn by the climate, by the enervating mode of life, by Oriental carelessness and rottenness, clubbing and marauding, the Algerian Doineau [1] and the Algerian Bazaine, those two perfect products of the Arab administration. What revelations might be made concerning the vileness of those barrack-room morals, the story of a colonist, the founding of a town amid the rivalries of three powers face to face, — the army, the magistracy, and the government! Instead of all that, I brought back naught save *Tartarin*, a burst of laughter, a *galéjade*.

To be sure, my companion and I looked a fine pair of fools, as we disembarked in red belts and glaring sharpshooters' caps in the good city of Algiers, where there were hardly any Turks except our two selves. With what a meditative, satisfied air did Tartarin remove his enormous hunting-boots at the doors of the mosques and enter the sanctuary of Mahomet, with grave face and tightly

[1] Auguste Édouard Doineau, a French officer in Algiers, was in 1852 appointed head of a bureau there. He was sentenced to death for murdering a prominent Arab official and his interpreter. His sentence was commuted to imprisonment for life, and in 1859 Napoléon pardoned him on condition that he should never return to France or Algiers. He was afterwards more or less in the public eye for various unsavory reasons.

closed lips, in colored socks! Ah! that fellow believed in the Orient, the Indian dancing-girls, the muezzins, the lions, the panthers, the dromedaries, — everything that his books had chosen to tell him; and his Southern imagination magnified them all.

I, as faithful as the camel in my tale, followed him through his heroic dream; but at times I was a little doubtful. I remember that one evening, at Oued-Fodda, as we started out to lie in wait for a lion, and passed through an encampment of *Chasseurs d'Afrique* with our whole outfit of leggings, rifles, revolvers, and hunting-knives, I felt keenly the absurdity of the situation as I remarked the silent stupefaction of the honest troopers eating their soup in front of the lines of tents. "Suppose there should n't be any lion!"

And yet, that sensation to the contrary notwithstanding, an hour later, after nightfall, when I was on my knees in a clump of laurel, searching the darkness with my glasses, while cranes flew screaming far overhead, and jackals crept through the grass around me, I felt my rifle tremble on the hilt of the hunting-knife which was stuck in the ground.

I have attributed to Tartarin that shudder of fear and the burlesque reflections which accompanied it; but that is a great injustice. I give you my word that, if the lion had appeared, honest Tartarin would have received him, rifle at rest, and knife in the air; and if his bullet had missed its mark, if his knife had betrayed him in a hand-to-

hand struggle, he would have ended the conflict body to body, would have suffocated the monster in his more than muscular arms, torn him with his nails and teeth, without turning a hair; for he was a rough fighter, was that *helmet-hunter,* and furthermore a man of spirit, who was the first to laugh at my *galéjade!*

The history of Tartarin was not written until long after my trip to Algeria. The trip was in 1861–2, the book was written in 1869. I began to publish it as a serial in the *Petit Moniteur Universel,* with amusing sketches by Émile Benassit. It was an absolute failure. The *Petit Moniteur* was a popular newspaper, and the common people have no comprehension of printed sarcasm, which bewilders them, makes them think that you mean to make sport of them. Words fail to describe the disappointment of the subscribers to the one-sou journal, who relish so keenly *Rocambole* and Ponson du Terrail, when they read those first chapters of the life of Tartarin, the ballads and the baobab,— a disappointment which went as far as threats of stopping their subscriptions, and personal insults. Some one wrote to me: "Ah! indeed — and what then? What does that prove? Imbecile!" — and fiercely signed his name. Paul Dalloz was most to be pitied, for he had incurred considerable expense in advertising and illustrations, and he paid dear for an experiment. After some ten or twelve instalments, I took pity on him and carried *Tartarin* to *Figaro,* where it was better understood by

the readers, but came in collision with other animosities. The secretary of the editorial staff of *Figaro* at that time was Alexandre Duvernois, brother of Clement Duvernois, former journalist and minister. As ill-luck would have it, nine years before, during my playful Algerian expedition, I had met Alexandre Duvernois, then a modest clerk in the civil service at Milianah, who had always retained a feeling of genuine adoration for the colony. Irritated and disgusted by the light tone in which I spoke of his dear Algeria, although he could not prevent the publication of *Tartarin*, he arranged to divide it up into intermittent fragments, alleging the nauseating, stereotyped excuse of "abundance of matter," so that that poor little novel dragged its slow length along in the newspaper almost as interminably as the *Wandering Jew* or the *Three Musketeers*. "It drags, it drags," rumbled Villemessant's double-bass, and I was terribly afraid that I should be obliged to break off a second time.

Then there were fresh tribulations. The hero of my book was at that time called Barbarin of Tarascon.

Now there was at Tarascon an old family of Barbarins, who threatened me with a lawsuit if I did not instantly remove their name from that insulting buffoonery. Having a holy dread of courts and the law, I consented to substitute Tartarin for Barbarin in the proofs already struck off, which had to be gone over line by line in a careful hunt for *B's*. Some must have escaped in

those three hundred pages; and in the first edition there are Barbarins and Tartarins, and even *tonsoir* for *bonsoir.* At last the book appeared, and succeeded very well from the publisher's standpoint, despite the very local flavor which every one does not enjoy. One must be from the South, or know it very well, to realize how common the Tartarin type is among us, and that under the hot Tarascon sun, which warms and magnetizes them, the absurd fancies of men's brains and imaginations are developed into monstrosities as diverse in form and dimensions as the gourds.

Judged impartially, at a distance of some years, Tartarin, running his wild, unbridled course, seems to me to possess the qualities of youth and life and truth, — the truth of the country beyond the Loire, which inflates and exaggerates, never lies, and *tarasconizes* all the time. The grain of the work is neither very fine nor of very close texture. It is what I call "standing literature," spoken and gesticulated with my hero's exuberant enthusiasm. But I must confess that, great as is my love of style, of beautiful prose, melodious and highly colored, in my opinion these should not be the novelist's only care. His real delight should consist in the creation of real persons, in establishing, by virtue of their verisimilitude, types of men and women who will go about thenceforth through the world with the names, the gestures, the grimaces, with which he has endowed them and which make people speak of them — whether they be loved or detested — without reference to their

creator and without mentioning his name. For my part, my emotion is always the same, when I hear some one say of a person he has met in his daily life, of one of the innumerable puppets of the political comedy, "He is a Tartarin — a Monpavon — a Delobelle." At such times a thrill runs over me, the thrill of pride that a father feels, hidden in the crowd while his son is being applauded, and all the time longing to cry out: "That is my boy!"

VIII.

HISTORY OF MY BOOKS. — LETTERS FROM MY MILL.

On the right-hand side of the road from Arles to the quarries of Fontvielle, beyond the hill of Corde and Montmajour Abbey, and above a large village, as white and dusty as a stoneyard, rises a little mountain covered with pines, always green amid the parched, brown landscape. The wings of the windmill turn in the wind on the summit; at the foot stands a great white house, the manor of Montauban, an ancient and unique structure which begins as a château — broad stoop, Italian terrace with pillars — and ends with the whitewashed walls of a Provençal farm, with perches for the peacocks, a vine over the door, the well with its iron-work entwined by the branches of a figtree, sheds in which harrows and ploughshares gleam, the enclosure for the sheep, and beyond it a field of slender almond trees with bunches of pink flowers quickly scattered in the March wind. Those are the only flowers at Montauban. There are no flower-beds, no greensward, nothing to remind one of a garden, an enclosed estate; nothing but clumps of pines among the gray rocks, a natural, wild park, with paths through the underbrush, slippery with dry pine needles. Within, there is

the same contrast of manor and farm-house; — cool, flagged galleries, furnished with Louis Quatorze couches and easy-chairs, with cane seats and twisted legs, so convenient for siestas in summer; broad staircases, echoing halls where the wind blows at will, whistles under the chamber doors and waves the old-fashioned broad striped curtains. Descend two steps and lo! you are in the rustic living-room, with no floor save the hard-trodden earth, low in the centre, where the hens scratch for the crumbs from the farm breakfast, and with rough-cast walls against which stand walnut side-boards and the roughly made basket and kneading trough.

An old Provençal family lived there twenty years ago, a family no less unique and charming than its dwelling-place. The mother, a country bourgeoise of advanced age, but still perfectly straight in her widow's cap, which she had never laid aside, was the sole manager of that estate, which was of considerable extent and included olive and mulberry plantations, wheat fields and vineyards; her four sons lived with her, four old fellows who were commonly designated by the professions which they severally had practised or were still practising: the Mayor, the Consul, the Notary, the Advocate. Their father being dead and their sister married, they had all four gathered around the old woman, sacrificing their ambitions and their tastes to her, united in a single-hearted love for her whom they called their "dear mamma," with an inflection indicating profound respect and emotion.

Excellent people, blessed house! How often in winter have I gone thither to recuperate in the arms of nature, to cure myself of Paris and its fevers in the healthful emanations of our little Provençal hills. I would appear unheralded, sure of a welcome, my arrival announced by the bugle-call of the peacocks and hunting dogs, Miracle, Miraclet, Tambour, which gambolled around the carriage, while the startled maid-servant's Arlesian head-dress fluttered in the wind as she ran to inform her masters, and "dear mamma" pressed me to her little gray plaid shawl, as if I were one of her own boys. Five minutes of confusion, and then, when the greetings were at an end and my trunk in my room, the whole house became silent and calm once more. I would whistle to old Miracle — a spaniel found on a piece of wreckage at sea by fishermen from Faraman — and I would go up to my mill.

The mill was a ruin; a crumbling mass of stone, iron and old boards which had not turned in the wind for many years and which lay, with broken limbs, as useless as a poet, while all around on the hillside the miller's trade prospered and ground with all its wings. Strange affinities exist between ourselves and inanimate things. From the first day that cast-off structure was dear to my heart; I loved it for its desolation, its road overgrown with weeds, those little grayish, fragrant mountain weeds with which Père Gaucher compounded his elixir; for its little worn platform where it was so pleasant to loiter, sheltered from the wind, while a rabbit hur-

ried by, or a long snake, rustling among the leaves with crafty detours, hunted the field mice with which the ruin swarmed. With the creaking of an old building shaken by the north wind, the flapping of its ragged wings like the rigging of a ship at sea, the mill stirred in my poor, restless, nomadic brain memories of journeys by sea, of landings at lighthouses and far-off islands; and the shivering swell all about completed the illusion. I know not whence I derived this taste for wild and desert places which has characterized me from my childhood, and which seems so inconsistent with the exuberance of my nature, unless it be at the same time the physical need of repairing by a fast of words, by abstinence from outcries and gestures, the terrible waste which the Southerner makes of his whole being. Be that as it may, I owe a great deal to those places of refuge for the mind; and no one of them has been more salutary in its effect upon me than that old mill in Provence. Indeed, I was tempted for a moment to purchase it; and at the office of the notary at Fontvielle may be seen a deed which never went beyond the stage of being drawn, but which I made use of in the preface to my book.

My mill never belonged to me. But that fact did not prevent my passing there long days filled with dreams and memories, until the hour when the winter sun sank between the low, bare hills, filling the valleys as with molten metal, with a smoking stream of gold. Then, at a blast upon a sea-shell, the horn with which M. Séguin called

his goat, I returned to partake of the evening meal at the hospitable and unconventional table at Montauban, where every one was served according to his tastes and habits; the Consul's Constance wine beside the water gruel or plate of white chestnuts of which the old mother made her frugal dinner. Having taken our coffee and lighted our pipes, and the four boys having gone down to the village, I remained behind to talk with the excellent woman, an energetic, kindly character, a keen intellect, a memory full of anecdotes which she told with such simple eloquence: incidents of her childhood, people who had disappeared, vanished customs, the gathering of vermilion from the leaves of the kermes-oaks,[1] 1815, the invasion, the heartfelt cry of relief of all mothers at the fall of the First Empire, the dances, the fireworks discharged on all the public squares, and the handsome Cossack officer in a green coat, with whom she had gambolled like a kid, had danced the *farandole* one whole night on the bridge of Beaucaire. And then her marriage, the death of her husband and her oldest daughter, whom, when she was several leagues away, a presentiment, a sudden pulsation of the heart used to reveal to her; and other deaths, and births, and the translation of beloved ashes when the old cemetery was closed. It was as if I were turning over the leaves of one of those old account-books, with worn edges, wherein the moral history of families

[1] The *kermes* insect, allied to the cochineal insect, and found on several species of oak near the Mediterranean, has long been used in dyeing.

used to be written down, mingled with the trivial details of everyday life, and accounts of good crops of wine and oil side by side with miracles of sacrifice and reisgnation. In that half-rustic bourgeoise housewife I was conscious of a thoroughly feminine, refined, intuitive mind, the mischievous and innocent fascination of a little girl. When she was tired of talking, she would bury herself in her great easy-chair, at a distance from the lamp; the shadow of the falling night would close her hollow eyelids, creep over her aged, deep-lined face, wrinkled, furrowed with crevasses and ravines by the ploughshare and the harrow; and as she sat there mute and motionless, I might have believed that she was dead but for the rattling of her rosary as her fingers told the beads in the depths of her pocket. Thereupon I would steal softly from the room to finish my evening in the kitchen.

Beneath the overhang of a gigantic fireplace where the copper lamp was hung, a numerous company would have assembled in front of a bright fire of olive-tree stumps, its intermittent flashes casting a curious light upon the pointed caps and jackets of yellow *caddis*. In the place of honor, on the hearthstone, sat the shepherd in a crouching attitude, with his closely shaven chin, his skin like tanned leather, and his *cachimbau* (short pipe) in the corner of his finely-cut mouth; he spoke but little, having acquired the habit of contemplative silence in the long summer months when he kept his flocks on the mountains of Dauphiné, beneath the stars, all of which he knew by name, from *Jen*

de Milan to the *Char des Âmes*. Between two whiffs of his pipe he would utter in his sonorous patois fragmentary sentences, incomplete parables, mysterious proverbs, a few of which I remember.

"The ballad of Paris, the most pitiful thing on earth. — [You can tell] man by his speech and the ox by his horns. — A monkey's job, mean and hard. — Pale moon, 't will rain soon. — With a red moon, you know, the wind will blow. — When the moon is white, the day will be bright." — And every evening the same quotation, with which he closed the session: "The older she grew, the more she knew, and so did n't want to die."

Next him was the keeper Mitifio, called Pistolet, with the merry eyes and the little white spaniel, who entertained the company with a multitude of tales and legends which his mocking, mischievous, thoroughly Provençal wit made ever new. Sometimes, amid the laughter aroused by one of Pistolet's anecdotes, the shepherd would remark with the utmost gravity: "If to have a white beard entitles one to be considered wise, goats ought to be." — There was old Siblet too, Dominique the coachman, and a little hunchback nicknamed *lou Roudéirou* (*Le Rôdeur*),[1] a sort of hobgoblin, a village spy, with keen eyes that could pierce the darkness and stone walls, a quick-tempered creature, consumed by religious and political animosities.

You should have heard him describe and imitate old Jean Coste, a Red of '93, recently dead and

[1] The Prowler.

loyal to his beliefs to the end. There was Jean Coste's journey, twenty leagues on foot, to see the curé and the two *secondaries* (vicars) of his village guillotined. — "I tell you, my children, when I saw them stick their heads through the little window — and they didn't like to put their heads through the little window — but God bless me! I enjoyed it all the same (*taben aguéré dé plesi*)." And Jean Coste, shivering with cold, warming his old carcass against some wall in the blazing sun. and saying to the boys about him: "Young men, have you read Volney? — *Jouven auès legi Voulney?* — He proves mathematically that there 's no God but the sun! — *Gès dé Diou, doum dé Liou! rèn qué lou soulèu!*" — And his opinions concerning the men of the Revolution: "Marat, good man; Saint-Just, good man; Danton, also a good man. But, toward the end, he ruined himself, he fell into the snare of moderatism — *dins lou mouderantismo!*" — And Jean Coste's death-agony when he sat up like a spectre in his bed and spoke French for once in his life, to roar in the priest's face: "Out with you, crow — the carrion is n't dead yet!" — The little hunchback would utter that last outcry in such a tone that the women would exclaim: "Ah! holy mother!" and the sleeping dogs would wake and plunge growling at the door where the night wind wailed through the cracks, until a shrill, fresh female voice would strike up, to do away with the painful impression, one of Saboli's Christmas chants: "I saw in the air — an angel clothed in green — who wore great wings —

above his shoulders." Or the arrival of the Magi at Bethlehem: "Behold the Moorish king — with his eyes all red with weeping — the Child Jesus weeps — the king dares not enter;" — a simple, lively air for the flute, which I noted down with all the local metaphors, expressions and traditions collected among the ashes on that venerable hearth.

Often too, my fancy indulged in little excursions around the mill. I went hunting or fishing in Camargue, in the direction of the pond of Vacarès, among the cattle and wild horses running at will in that region of desolate plains. Another day I would go to visit my friends the Provençal poets, the Félibres.[1] At that time the Félibrige had not become a dignified academical institution. Those were the early days of the *Church*, the fervent, ingenuous hours, without schisms or rivalries. Five or six good fellows, laughing like children in apostles' beards, met by appointment, sometimes at Maillane, in Frédéric Mistral's little village, separated from me by the lace-like heights of the Alpilles; sometimes at Arles, in the forum, amid a swarm of drovers and shepherds come thither to hire themselves out to the farmers. Sometimes we

[1] The movement which resulted in the "Provençal Renaissance" was founded by Roumanille, when, it is not possible to say definitely, but probably between 1840 and 1850. It is said by Larousse to have been due to the fact that his mother was unable to understand some verses which he wrote for her when he left college, because she had forgotten her school French. He thereupon determined to write and to encourage others to write poetry for the common people of Provence in their language. Frédéric Mistral acquired the greatest fame of those who supported him in his undertaking.

went to Aliscamps, to listen, lying in the grass among the sarcophagi of gray stone, to one of Théodore Aubanel's beautiful dramas, while the air vibrated with grasshoppers and the hammers in the machine-shops of the P. L. M. rang out ironically behind a curtain of pale trees. After the reading, a turn on the Lice to see the haughty and coquettish Arlesian girl for love of whom poor Jan killed himself pass by in her white neckerchief and little cap. At other times our rendezvous was at Ville des Baux, that crumbling heap of ruins, of wild cliffs, of ancient escutcheoned palaces, crumbling away, swaying in the wind like an eagle's nest on the height, whence one descries beyond vast plains and plains, a line of deeper, sparkling blue, which is the sea. We would sup at Corneille's inn; and wander all the evening, singing poetry, through narrow jagged lanes, among crumbling walls, remains of stairways, of uncrowned capitals, in a ghostly light which touched the grasses and stones as with a light snow. "Poets, *anén!*" said Master Corneille. "Those who love to look at ruins by moonlight."

The Félibrige still met among the reeds of the island of Barthelasse, opposite the ramparts of Avignon and the papal palace, which witnessed the scheming and adventures of little Vedène. Then, after a breakfast in some sailor's wine-shop, we went up to the poet Anselm Mathieu's at Châteauneuf-des-Papes, famous for its vineyards, which were for a long time the most renowned in Provence. Oh! the wine of the popes, the golden,

royal, imperial, pontifical wine! we drank it there on the shore, singing Mistral's verses the while, new fragments of the *Îles d'Or:* —

"En Arles, au temps des fades — florissait la reine Ponsirade — un rosier;" [1] or the beautiful ballad of the sea: "Le bâtiment vient de Mayorque — avec un chargement d'oranges." [2]

And one could readily fancy oneself at Majorca, looking at that blazing sky, those vine-clad slopes, terraced with walls of loose stones, and the olive-trees, pomegranates and myrtles. Through the open windows flew the rhymes, humming like bees; and we flew behind them, for days and days, through the smiling landscapes of the Comtat, attending elections and brandings, making brief halts in the villages, under the plane-trees of the Cours and the Place and, from the *char-à-bancs* that bore us, distributing orvietan to the assembled populace with much shouting and gesticulation. Our orvietan consisted of Provençal poems, beautiful poems in the language of those peasants who understood and applauded the strophes of *Mireîlle*, Aubanel's *Vénus d'Arles*, a legend of Anselm Mathieu or Roumanille, and joined with us in singing the song of the sun: "Grand Soleil de Provence — gai compère du mistral — toi qui siffles la Durance — comme un coup de vin de Crau." [3] The

[1] At Arles, in the days of the *fades*, flourished Queen Ponsirade — a rose bush.

[2] The ship hails from Majorca — with a cargo of oranges.

[3] Bright sunshine of Provence — the minstrel's merry comrade — thou who dost drink the Durance dry — like a draught of Crau wine.

whole celebration would end in an improvised ball, a *farandole*, boys and girls in their working clothes, and corks popping over the little tables; and if any old mumbler of prayers attempted to criticise our unconventional gayety, the handsome Mistral, proud as King David, would say to her from the eminence of his grandeur: "Let be, mother, let be — poets are allowed full liberty." And he would add confidentially, winking at the old woman as she bowed in respectful bewilderment: "*Es nautré qué fasen li saumé.* We are the ones who wrote the psalms."

And how pleasant it was after one of these lyric escapades to return to the mill, stretch myself out on the grass-grown platform, and think of the book I would write later, describing it all, a book in which I would put the ringing I could still hear in my ears of those songs, that bright laughter, those mystic legends, and a reflection of that pulsing sunshine, the perfume of those parched hills, and which I would date from my ruin with the dead wings.

The first *Letters from my Mill* appeared about 1866 in a Parisian newspaper in which those Provençal chronicles, signed at first with a double pseudonym borrowed from Balzac, "Marie-Gaston," struck a jarring note by their strange flavor. Gaston was my comrade Paul Arène, who, when he was a mere boy, had had a play produced at the Odéon, a little one-act affair sparkling with wit and bright color, and who lived very near me on the outskirts of the forest of Meudon. But although

that finished writer had not yet to his credit *Jean des Figues* nor *Paris Ingénu* nor many other refined and solid pages, he had too much genuine talent, a too real individuality to be long content with that position of miller's assistant. I was left alone therefore to grind my little stories, at the caprice of the wind and the hour, in a terribly agitated life. There were intermissions and breaks; then I married and took my wife to Provence to show her my mill. Nothing had changed, neither the landscape nor the welcome. The old mother pressed us both affectionately against her little plaid shawl, and they made a little place for the new-comer at the boys' table. She sat beside me on the platform of the mill, where the north wind, remarking the presence of this Parisian, a foe to wind and sun, amused himself by buffeting her, by snatching her up and carrying her away in a whirlwind like Chénier's young Tarentine. And it was on our return from that journey that, being taken captive once more by my Provence, I began in *Figaro* a new series of *Letters from my Mill,* — *The Old People, The Pope's Mule, Pere Gaucher's Elixir,* etc. — written at Champrosay, in Eugène Delacroix's studio, which I have mentioned heretofore in *Jack* and *Robert Helmont.* The volume was published by Hetzel in 1869; two thousand copies were sold with difficulty, awaiting, like my other earlier works, the times when the popularity of the novels should result in increasing their sale and their circulation. Be it so! that is still my favorite book, not from a literary standpoint, but because it reminds me of

the pleasantest hours of my youth, wild laughter, intoxication without remorse, beloved faces and sights which I shall never see again.

To-day Montauban is abandoned. "Dear mamma" is dead, the boys scattered, the wine of Château-neuf exhausted to the juice of the last grape. Where are Miracle and Miraclet, Siblet, Mitifio, the Prowler? If I should go there, I should find no one. But the pines, they tell me, have grown much taller; and over their gleaming green swell, my mill, fitted with new spars and canvas, like a corvette afloat, turns in the sunshine, a poet once more exposed to the breeze of inspiration, a dreamer returned to life.

IX.

MY FIRST PLAY.

OH! how long ago it was! I was far, very far from Paris, in the midst of gayety and light, at the farthest extremity of Algeria, in the valley of the Chélif, one fine day in February, 1862. A plain thirty leagues in extent, bordered on the right hand and the left by a double line of mountains, transparent in the golden mist and purple as amethyst. Lentils, dwarf palms, dry torrents whose stony beds are overgrown with rose laurel; at intervals a caravansery, an Arabian village, or, on the height, a marabout, whitewashed and dazzling, like a great die capped with half an orange; and here and there, in the white expanse of sunlight, moving spots, which are flocks, and which one would take, were not the sky of a deep and immaculate blue, for shadows cast by great clouds passing over. We had hunted all the morning; then, the afternoon heat being too intense, my friend the *bachaga* Boualem had pitched the tent. One of the sides being raised and held up by stakes formed a sort of marquee; the whole horizon entered the tent that way. In front the hobbled horses stood motionless, hanging their heads; the great greyhounds lay curled up in circles fast

asleep; lying on his stomach in the sand, among his little kettles, our coffee-maker prepared the mocha over a small fire of dry twigs, the slender thread of smoke rising straight into the air; and we rolled stout cigarettes without speaking,—Boualem-Ben-Cherifa, his friends Si-Sliman and Sid' Omar, the aga of the Atafs, and myself,—lying at full length on the couches in the shadow of the white tent, to which the sun outside gave a yellowish tinge, outlining on the canvas the symbolic crescent and the print of the bloody hand, compulsory decorations of all Arabian dwellings.

A delicious afternoon which ought never to have come to an end! One of those golden hours which still stand forth after twenty years, as luminous as on the first day, against the grayish background of life. And observe the illogicalness and perversity of our pitiful human nature. To-day I cannot think of that siesta under the tent without regret and homesickness; but candor compels me to confess that at the time I regretted Paris.

Yes, I regretted Paris, which my health, seriously endangered by a literary novitiate of five years, had compelled me to leave abruptly; I regretted Paris because of the beloved objects I had left there, its fogs and its gas-lights, its newspapers, its new books, the discussions, in the evening, at the café or under the porch of the theatres; because of that fine artistic fever, that never-failing enthusiasm, which I saw then only on their sincere sides; I regretted it especially because of my play

— my first play! — which, I was informed on the very day of my departure, had been accepted at the Odéon. Beyond question the landscape upon which I was gazing was beautiful, and its frame had a singularly poetic charm; but I would gladly have exchanged Algiers and the Atlas, Boualem and his friends, the blue of the sky, the white of the marabouts and the pink of the rose-laurels, for the gray colonnade of the Odéon and the little passage-way by which the artists entered, and Constant's office — Constant, the concierge and man of taste — its walls covered with autographs of actors and photographs of actresses in costume. But there I was, suddenly transported into Algeria, leading the life of a *grand seigneur* of the heroic times, when I might have been walking triumphantly, with the hypocritically modest mien of the new author whose play is about to be acted, through those unamiable corridors which had seen me shy and trembling! I was trifling away my time in the society of those Arab chiefs, picturesque doubtless, but unsatisfying in the matter of conversation, when the prompter, the scene-shifters, the stage-manager and the acting-manager, and the whole innumerable tribe of over-painted actresses and blue-chinned actors were intent upon my work! I was inhaling the pungent and refreshing aroma of the orange-trees kissed by the breeze, when it was within my power to regale my nostrils with the close and damp, but peculiarly seductive odor exhaled by the walls of a theatre! And the ceremony of reading the play to the actors, the carafe and

glass of water, the manuscript glistening under the lamp! And the rehearsals, at first in the greenroom around the high fireplace, then on the stage, the mysterious stage with its unfathomable depths, all encumbered with scaffoldings and scenery, facing the empty auditorium, resonant as a cellar and freezing to look upon, with its great chandelier covered with gauze, with its boxes and its proscenium, its stalls covered with gray drugget covers! Later would come the first performance, the façade of the theatre shedding upon the square the cheerful brilliancy of its rows of gas-jets, the carriages arriving, the crowd at the box-office, the anxious waiting in suspense at a café opposite, all alone save for one faithful friend, and the great throb of emotion, striking the heart as if it were a bell, at the moment when black-coated shadows, outlined against the transparent mirror in the greenroom, announce with much animation, that the curtain is falling, and that amid the applause and shouting the author's name has been proclaimed.

"Come!" says the friend, "courage; now we must go and see how it went off, thank the actors and shake hands with the fellows who are waiting impatiently in the private dining-room at Café Tabourey."

Such was the dream I dreamed wide-awake, under the tent, in the benumbing heat of a lovely African winter month, while in the distance, amid the oblique rays of the setting sun, a well — white but a moment before — assumed a pinkish hue, and in the profound silence of the plain no sound

could be heard save the tinkling of a bell and the melancholy calls of the shepherds.

Nor did aught happen to disturb my reverie. My four guests collectively knew perhaps twenty words of French; I, barely ten words of Arabic. My companion, who had been my guide and ordinarily served as my interpreter — a Spanish grain merchant, whose acquaintance I had made at Milianah — was not there, having persisted in prolonging the hunt; so that we smoked our fat cigarettes in silence, sipping black Moorish coffee from microscopic little cups resting in egg-cups of silver filigree.

Suddenly there was a great uproar: the dogs barked, the servants ran hither and thither, and a long-legged devil of a Spahi in a red burnous stopped his horse short in front of the tent: — "Sidi Daoudi?"

It was a despatch from Paris, which had followed my trail from village to village, all the way from Milianah. It contained these simple words: "Play produced yesterday; great success; Rousseil and Tisserant magnificent."

I read and reread that blessed despatch, twenty times, a hundred times, as one reads a love-letter. Think of it! my first play! Seeing my hands tremble with excitement and happiness gleaming in my eyes, the agas surrounded me and talked to one another in Arabic. The most learned resorted to all his learning to say to me: "France — news — family?" Well, no, it was not news from my family that made my heart beat with such a delicious

sensation. And being unable to accustom myself to the idea of having no one to whom to divulge my joy, I took it into my head to explain, to the aga of the Atafs, to Sid' Omar, to Si-Sliman and to Boualem-Ben-Cherifa, with the four words of Arabic which I knew and the twenty words of French which I supposed them to know, what a theatre is, and the importance of a first performance in Paris. An arduous task, as you can imagine! I cudgelled my brains for comparisons, I gesticulated freely, I waved the blue cover of the despatch, exclaiming: *Karaguez! Karaguez!* as if my affecting little play, intended to touch men's hearts and to compel virtuous tears, had any possible connection with the ghastly farces in which the abnormal Turkish Mr. Punch finds his enjoyment; as if one could without blasphemy compare the classic Odéon with the secret dens of the Moorish city, to which the good Mussulmans resort in the evening, despite the prohibition of the police, to enjoy the spectacle of their favorite hero's prurient prowess!

Those were the mirages of the African atmosphere. Disillusionment awaited me in Paris. For I returned to Paris; I returned forthwith, sooner than prudence and the faculty would have had me. But what cared I for the fog and snow toward which I hastened, what cared I for the balmy azure which I left behind? To see my play, that was my sole object in life. Embarked! disembarked! I rushed through Marseille, and behold me on the railway, shivering with excitement. I arrived at Paris about

six o'clock in the afternoon; it was dark. I did not dine. "To the Odéon, driver!" O youth!

The curtain was just about to rise when I took my place in my stall. The theatre had a strange look; it was Mardi-Gras, there would be dancing all night at Bullier, and not a few students of both sexes had come in their masquerade costumes, to while away a couple of hours at the theatre. There were buffoons, Follies, Polichinellos, Pierrettes and Pierrots. "It is hard, very hard," I thought, "to make a Polichinello weep!" But they did weep, they wept so profusely that the spangles on their humps where the light struck them seemed like so many glistening tears. I had on my right a Folly whose emotion kept her cap and bells constantly quivering, and at my left a Pierrette, a buxom tender-hearted wench, comical to see in her emotion, with two great springs gushing from her great eyes and ploughing a double furrow through the flour on her cheeks. Decidedly the despatch had told the truth; my little curtain-raiser was a tremendous success. Meanwhile, I, the author, would have liked to be a hundred feet underground. The play which those good people applauded seemed to me disgraceful, odious. O misery! was that what I had dreamed of, that vulgar creature who had made himself up after the style of Béranger, in order to appear paternal and virtuous? I was unjust, be it understood; Tisserant and Rousseil, both artists of great talent, acted as well as men can act, and to their talent my triumph was due in no small measure. But the disillusionment was too

complete, the difference too great between what I had thought I was writing and what appeared before me now, with all its wrinkles visible, all its holes lighted up by the pitiless glare of the foot-lights; and I really suffered to see that my ideal was stuffed with straw. Despite the emotion of the audience, despite the bravos, I was conscious of a feeling of unspeakable shame and embarrass-ment. Hot waves, burning flushes, rose to my cheeks. It seemed to me that all that carnival audience must know me and was laughing at me. Perspiring, suffering acutely, losing my head, I repeated the gestures of the actors. I would have liked to make them walk faster, talk faster, rush madly through the dialogue and across the stage so that my torture might be the sooner ended. What a relief when the curtain had fallen, and how quickly I fled, keeping close to the walls, with my collar turned up, as furtive and shamefaced as a thief!

X.

HENRI ROCHEFORT.

About 1859 I became acquainted with a most excellent fellow, an under-clerk in one of the departments at the Hôtel de Ville. His name was Henri Rochefort, but that name meant nothing then. Rochefort was leading a modest and very orderly life, living with his parents on the ancient Rue des Deux-Boules, close at hand to his place of employment in that swarming Saint-Denis Quartier, now invaded by commerce and by the petty industries of Paris, with their house-shops, plastered with signs from top to bottom, samples displayed and frames hung on the door-posts: "Feathers and Flowers — False Jewelry — Paper Toys and Silver Thread — Hollow Pearls;" — trades on every floor, a continuous roar of toil passing out through the windows into the street; drays loading, packages being corded, clerks running about with pens behind their ears; a work-girl passing in a smock-frock, with gold-filings clinging to her hair; and at intervals some sumptuous mansion transformed into warerooms, its escutcheon and carvings carrying your thoughts back two centuries and causing you to muse upon servants grown rich, bankers stuffed with gold, the Count of Horn, the Regent, Law and the Mississippi, the System,

in a word, upon the time when, in those streets now given over to commerce and the bourgeoisie, the most fabulous fortunes waxed and waned from hour to hour, with the ebb and flow of fever and of gold, as impassive as the tide, to and from that narrow reeking rift, close at hand, which is still called Rue Quincampoix! My friend Rochefort was a little like his street, and held his past very cheap. He was known to be of noble birth, the son of a count; he seemed not to know it himself, allowing people to call him plain Rochefort; and that American simplicity did not fail to make an impression on me, who had just landed in Paris from our vain, legitimist South.

Monsieur de Rochefort, the father, belonged to that generation of young men to whose future the Revolution of July, 1830, interposed an insurmountable obstacle, and whose careers it interrupted. An especially attractive and clever generation, preserving a sort of perfume of the old régime in the atmosphere of Louis-Philippe's reign, turning its back upon the new dynasty, but not upon France, attached to the elder branch, but knowing so well that any restoration was out of the question for a long while that its sceptical loyalty never displayed the sombre humor of the fanatic or sectary. While some protested against the dull monotony of bourgeois manners by descending the legendary pavement of La Courtille[1] with a great uproar, amid

[1] La Courtille, "a portion of the faubourgs on the northern side of Paris where there are many wineshops." The "descent of La Courtille" means the return of the maskers to Paris after celebrating Mardi Gras at La Courtille. — LITTRÉ.

the shouts of masked figures and the jangling of bells, or amused themselves by bombarding the Tuileries with volleys of champagne corks, others, less scatterbrained or less wealthy, tried to provide themselves by labor with resources for which they could no longer rely on the favor of the sovereign. Thus did M. de Lauzanne, whom we have seen very recently, still fresh and smiling, still erect despite his great age, still a gentleman despite his trade of vaudevillist and the sobriquet of Père Lauzanne bestowed upon him by the affectionate familiarity of his confrères; thus must M. de Rochefort's father have done, who was in his time a prominent figure among the ardent royalist youth and a particular friend of the ex-body-guard *Choca*. Having a fondness for strolling through the wings, the elder Rochefort, like Lauzanne, remembered the road to the theatre as soon as the cold weather arrived, and betook himself thither; but it was to seek his livelihood. Every lover of the theatre has an author under his skin, and it is an easy transition from applauding plays to trying to write them. M. de Rochefort-Luçay, then, wrote plays and became a vaudevillist.

These details were not unnecessary, because they may serve to give us an idea of Rochefort's childhood. A curious, characteristic, thoroughly Parisian childhood, passed wholly between the school and the theatrical world — which is more patriarchal than is generally supposed — the actors' and authors' cafés to which his father took him on Sunday, and where one heard, instead of the drunken

orgies dreamed of by provincials, the sharp sound of the dice thrown on the backgammon board, or of the dominoes as they were moved over the table. Thus Rochefort was the schoolboy, son of an artist or man of letters, of whom we have all known the type, initiated in his childhood into the secrets of the wings, calling famous actors by their names, familiar with the new plays, giving theatre tickets to his tutor on the sly, and acquiring thus the privilege of composing with impunity in the secrecy of his desk, between a tame lizard and a pipe, a heap of masterpieces, dramatic or other, which he will carry, on holidays, with his cap pulled over his eyes and his heart beating as if it would burst the buttons off his jacket, to drop them in the never-opened boxes of newspapers, or leave them with cunning theatre concierges. The destiny of such boys is all prearranged: at twenty they enter some department of the civil service, national or municipal, and continue to write secretly behind their desks, hiding from their superiors as they hid from their teachers. Rochefort did not escape the common fate. After having tried his hand at serious literature and sent I know not how many sonnets and odes to all the poetic competitions in France, always without success, when I first knew him he was using the pens and paper of the Parisian municipality to write petty theatrical reviews for *Charivari*, which was then changing its editorial management and trying to secure an infusion of younger blood.

Although I could not divine what Rochefort

would one day grow to be, his face interested me from the outset. It was evidently not the face of a man likely to be long content with that clerk's life, regulated by the coming and going of office hours as by the exasperating tic-tac of a cuckoo in the Black Forest. You are familiar with that unusual face, which was the same then that it has been ever since, that hair of the color of blazing punch over a too-expansive brow, a box for sick-headaches and a reservoir of enthusiasm, those black deep-set eyes gleaming in the shadow, that straight thin nose, that sneering mouth, in a word that whole face, lengthened by a beard trimmed to a point like a boy's top, which inevitably makes me think of a sceptical Don Quixote, or a Mephistopheles of a mild type. He was very thin, wore a villainous black coat that was too small for him, and had a habit of always keeping both hands buried in the pockets of his trousers. A deplorable habit, which made him appear even thinner than he really was, emphasizing wofully the sharpness of his elbows and the narrowness of his shoulders. He was of a generous disposition and a good friend, capable of the greatest sacrifices, and nervous and easily irritated beneath an appearance of coldness.

One day he had an affair with the manager of the *Gaulois*, growing out of some article or other, I do not now remember what it was. The *Gaulois* of that day — for the title of a newspaper in France has more incarnations than Buddha and passes through more hands than the King of Garbe's betrothed — the *Gaulois* of that day was one of

those ephemeral cabbage-leaves which spring up between the pavements in the neighborhood of theatre cafés and literary breweries. Its manager, a jovial, clever little fellow, chubby and pink-cheeked, was named Delvaille, if I remember aright, and signed Delbrecht, doubtless considering that the prettier name. Delvaille or Delbrecht, as you please, had challenged Rochefort. Rochefort would have preferred pistols, not that he was a very deadly shot, but he had sometimes won a prize at fairs; as for the sword, he did not remember that he had ever seen one, at a distance or close at hand. Delvaille, being the person insulted, had the choice of weapons and chose the sword. "Very good," said Rochefort, "I will fight with the sword." The duel was rehearsed in Pierre Véron's rooms. Rochefort was willing to be killed, but he did not wish to seem ridiculous. So Véron had sent for a tall devil of a sergeant-major of Zouaves, afterward cut in two at Solferino, who was very expert in the way of salutes, attitudes and good manners, as understood in the fencing-rooms in barracks:—"After you." "By no means." "I insist." "Go on, monsieur." After ten minutes' practice, Rochefort had attained, so far as grace was concerned, the level of any moustachioed La Ramée. The two champions met the next day, between Paris and Versailles, in those lovely Chaville woods which we knew well, as we often went there on Sundays intent upon less warlike pastimes. On that day a fine, chilly rain was falling, which made bubbles on the pond and veiled with a light mist

the green circle of the hills, a ploughed field on the slope and the reddish excavations of a gravel-pit. The combatants removed their shirts, notwithstanding the rain, and, except for the gravity of the occasion, one would have been tempted to laugh at the spectacle of those two standing face to face — that short, stout man, fair of skin, in a flannel undershirt stitched with blue about the hips, standing on guard as correctly as if on the fencing-room floor, and Rochefort, tall, thin, yellow, gaunt, and so cuirassed with bones as to make one doubt whether there was a crevice in his body for a sword to enter. Unluckily he had forgotten all the sergeant-major's valuable lessons over night, held his weapon like a candle, thrust like a deaf man and laid himself open. In the first exchange he received a straight thrust which slid along his ribs. The sword had drawn blood, but so little! That was his first duel.

I shall astonish no one when I say that at that time Rochefort possessed wit; but it was a sort of interior wit, a peculiar essence, consisting especially in stinging remarks long meditated, in unexpected combinations of astounding ideas, in monumental absurdities, in cold, savage jests, which he would utter between clenched teeth, in the voice of Cham and with the silent laughter of Leatherstocking. Unfortunately that wit remained congealed, useless. There were occasional good things to repeat, to laugh over a little between friends; but to write them, to print them, to rush through literature with such frantic capers — that

was what seemed impossible. Rochefort did not know himself; as almost always happens, it was a mere chance, an accident, that revealed him to himself. He had for a friend, for an inseparable companion, a most extraordinary puppet, whose name will certainly bring a smile to those of my own age who remember having known him. His name was Léon Rossignol. A perfect type of the son of a septuagenarian; one might say that he was born old. As thin and pale as a blade of grass growing in a cave, at eighteen he was an inveterate snuff-taker, coughed and spit and leaned with a dignified air on grandpapa's canes. Compounded of most incongruous elements, or rather having a screw loose somewhere in his brain, that excellent creature, strange to say! had a horror of blows and a great liking for quarrels. As impertinent and cowardly as Panurge, he was quite capable of insulting a carabineer in the street, reserving the right — if the carabineer took the jest in bad part — to fall upon his knees and implore forgiveness with such exaggerated humility that the insulted individual really did not know whether he ought to laugh or be angry. A great child, in short, weak and sickly, whom Rochefort loved for his vulgar chatter, witty after the style of the faubourgs, and whom he saved more than once from the consequences which certain too venturesome sallies might have brought upon his back. Rossignol, like Rochefort, was employed at the Hôtel de Ville. He had a perch there on the upper floor, under the eaves, in an out-of-the-way office at the

end of a labyrinth of narrow staircases and corridors, and there, in the capacity of superintendent of stationery, he gravely distributed, upon requisition, paper, pens, pencils, erasers, paper-cutters, paper-weights, pieces of rubber, jars of powdered pumice, blue ink, red ink, yellow sand, illustrated calendars, and heaven knows what — the innumerable useless articles with which the idle quill-drivers in the government departments love to surround themselves, and which are, as it were, the flowers of bureaucracy. Naturally, Rossignol too had his literary ambitions. To put his name upon something printed was his dream, and we, that is to say Pierre Véron, Rochefort and I, used to amuse ourselves by scratching off bits of articles for him or improvising quatrains, with which he would hurry off, as proud as Lucifer, to the *Tintamarre.* How strange are the effects of irresponsibility! Rochefort, who was always hampered by a tendency to imitate and to stick to the conventional lines when he wrote for himself, developed originality and individuality as soon as he began to write over the signature of Rossignol. He was free then, he no longer felt the irritated eye of the Institute following on the paper the by no means academic contortions of his thought and his style. And it was a pleasure to witness the untrammelled working of that mind, very cold, very nervous, astounding in its audacity and familiarity, with a fashion entirely its own of *feeling* the details of Parisian life and of making them the text for all sorts of buffooneries, planned with great patience and without pity,

wherein the words maintain the seriousness of a clown between two grimaces, contenting itself with a sly wink when the paragraph is finished.

"Why, this is charming, novel, original, it is like you; why don't you write thus on your own account?"

"Perhaps you are right; I must try."

Rochefort's style was found; now let the Empire look to itself.

Some one has said that it was de l'Arnal reduced to writing, and that Rochefort had simply arranged the dialogues of Duvert and Lauzanne in paragraphs. We do not deny the influence. Evidently certain ways of looking at things and certain tricks of speech, a certain habit — which had become a rule — of using the dialogue form and of making the thought perform strange antics, which, during the endless games of dominoes on Boulevard du Temple, had made an impression on his schoolboy's brain, were of some use to him later. But they are the unconscious imitations which nobody avoids altogether. There is no law, in literature, against picking up a rusty weapon; the important thing is to be able to sharpen the blade and to reforge the hilt to fit one's hand.

Rochefort made his first appearance in the *Nain Jaune*,[1] edited by Aurélien Scholl. Who does not know Scholl? If you have, no matter how infrequently, trodden the Parisian boulevard during the last thirty years, or visited its appurtenances, you certainly have noticed, it may be in front of Tor-

[1] Yellow Dwarf.

toni's pavilion, or under the lindens of Baden-Baden or the palms of Monte-Carlo, that eminently Parisian and boulevardist physiognomy. Scholl, by virtue of his always cheerful tone, his clear and concise workmanship, and the keen and slashing brilliancy of his style, when Paris was overrun by the patois of parliamentary scribes and the idiotic scribbling of reporters, was one of the last, one might almost say the very last, *petit* journalist. The *petit* journalist in the accepted meaning of the phrase, is a journalist who considers himself called upon to be at the same time a writer; the *grand* journalist dispenses with it. Like many others, in these later troublous times, Scholl, without intending any harm, gradually became involved in the political hurly-burly. He is in the thick of the fight now, and it is a pleasure to see that grandson of Rivarol, turned republican, directing against the enemies of the Republic the golden arrows, with a little curare rubbed on the point, borrowed from the reactionary arsenal of the *Acts of the Apostles.* But in the days of the *Nain Jaune* politics were stagnant and Scholl was hardly looking forward to a republic, any more than Rochefort. He was content to be one of the most good-natured sceptics and cleverest scoffers in Paris. Being very much in love with the *paroistre*, as a native of Bordeaux, he maintained — and in those days of the canonization of Bohemia the doctrine could not fail to savor slightly of paradox — he maintained that it is the duty of a man of letters to pay his bootmaker, and that one may be clever with fresh gloves and clean linen.

In conformity with his principles, he indulged in all the refinements of the period, even the monocle set into the eye, to which he still clings; he breakfasted at Bignon's and afforded the Parisians the truly novel spectacle of a simple news-writer partaking daily of egg in the shell and cutlets with the Duc de Grammont-Caderousse, the king of swelldom for the moment. The *Nain Jaune* was the only serious rival Villemessant ever encountered. Admirably seconded by his social connections, Scholl succeeded in a few months in making his paper the official sheet of high life and the clubs, the arbiter of Parisian fashion; but, after a year, he became disgusted with it, he was fitted for something better than that; he was too much of a writer, too much of a newspaper man to remain long a manager.

Rochefort's success in the *Nain Jaune* was rapid; in *Figaro*, which made haste to enlist him, it was even more brilliant. The Parisians, always inclined to grumble and for a long while unaccustomed to independence, enjoyed those pamphlets, which introduced the fashion of addressing themselves in familiar language, in a tone of good-humored mockery, to all sorts of solemn and official matters which hitherto even the boldest had hardly dared to make fun of beneath their breath. Rochefort is fairly launched, he fights duels — with better fortune than the one on the shore of the pond at Chaville; he plays a bold game, lives freely, fills Paris with the echoes of his name, and remains in spite of everything, in spite of the triumph of an evening or

of a single hour, the same Rochefort whom I had known at the Hôtel de Ville, still of a kindly and obliging disposition, still modest, always anxious concerning the next article, always afraid that he has emptied his bag, exhausted the lode and that he will be unable to go on.

Villemessant, naturally despotic with his editors, had a sort of awestruck admiration for him. That impassive, scoffing mask, that self-willed and capricious temperament astonished him. It is a fact that Rochefort was extraordinarily obstinate and had strange whims. I have described elsewhere the effect of his article concerning M. de Saint-Rémy's theatrical works, and the mischievous familiarity with which he dealt the *coup de grâce* to that ill-fated presidential and ducal volume, which all the Dangeaus, all the Jules Lecomtes of journalism crowned with the most flattering periods. Paris was delighted with his audacity; Morny was touched to the quick by it and appealed from it.[1] With the candor of an irritated author, well adapted to cause wonder when displayed by a man of intellect, he sent his dramatic works to Jouvin, confident that Jouvin would have more taste than Rochefort and would publish a compensatory article in *Figaro*.

Jouvin accepted the volume, did not write the article, and the unhappy duke was compelled to

[1] The Duc de Morny, died 1865, President of the Council (introduced by Daudet as the Duc de Mora in the *Nabob*), wrote plays under the nom de plume of M. de Saint-Rémy. — *Vide ante*, p. 24.

keep in his heart the bitter prose that Rochefort had forced him to swallow. Thereupon an extraordinary thing took place, improbable at first glance, but in spite of everything profoundly human. Morny, the flattered and fawned upon, the omnipotent, suddenly conceived for the man who was not afraid to poke fun at him, a sort of timid, spiteful affection. He desired to see him, to know him, to have an explanation with him, as between two friends, in a corner. His adherents exerted all their ingenuity to prove that Rochefort possessed neither wit nor style, and that his judgment was entitled to no weight. Sycophants (a vice-emperor never lacks them!) went about upon the quays collecting little vaudevilles, youthful sins of Rochefort's, analyzed them, plucked them to pieces, and maintained by dint of a thousand conclusive arguments that M. de Saint-Rémy's were far superior to them. Imaginary crimes were imputed to Rochefort. A fanatical saint came running in one day, red with virtuous indignation, his eyes starting from his head; "You know Rochefort, that famous Rochefort who makes himself out such a paragon? Well, what do you suppose we've discovered about him? He was a *boursier* of the Empire!"[1] What a black-hearted wretch he must be, after having been a *boursier* of the Empire at the age of eight, to consider Monsieur le Duc's plays vile trash at the age of thirty! A little more, and they would have held Rochefort responsible

[1] That is to say, he had pecuniary assistance from the government while he was at the public school.

for his nurse's political opinions! Vain efforts; fruitless revelations. Morny, like a rejected lover, became more and more persistent in his fixed idea of winning Rochefort's regard. The whim became a mania, a mania the more besetting because Rochefort, being advised as to what was in the wind, displayed a sort of comical coquetry in avoiding the duke's acquaintance. I can see Morny stopping Villemessant in the corridor at the first performance of *La Belle Hélène* — "You really must introduce me to Rochefort this time!" — "Monsieur le Duc! Yes, Monsieur le Duc! We were talking about that very thing not a second ago." — And Villemessant ran after Rochefort, but Rochefort had disappeared. Thereupon it occurred to some one to resort to stratagem, to form a sort of conspiracy to bring the duke and Rochefort together. The latter was known to be a great authority on curios — did he not publish the *Little Mysteries of the Public Auction Room?* — and a zealous collector of pictures. The duke had an interesting gallery. They would bring Rochefort to see the gallery, the duke would happen to be there at the time, and the introduction would naturally follow. The day is appointed, a friend undertakes to bring Rochefort, the duke is waiting in his gallery; he waits one hour, two hours, tête-à-tête with his Rembrandts and his Hobbemas, and again the longed-for monster does not appear.

So long as the duke lived — by the merest chance, doubtless, for I do not think that that friendship at long range and so inadequately re-

quited can have extended so far as to protect the ungrateful pamphleteer against the thunderbolts of the law — so long as the duke lived, Rochefort was hounded comparatively little. But when Morny had disappeared the persecutions began. Rochefort, spurred on by them, redoubled his insolence and audacity. Fines poured down upon him like hail, imprisonment succeeded fines. Ere long the censorship took a hand. The censorship with its sensitive palate as a taster of principles concluded that everything that Rochefort wrote had a political after-taste. *Figaro's* very existence was threatened, and Rochefort had to leave the paper. Thereupon he founded *La Lanterne*, unmasked his batteries and boldly hoisted the pirate's flag. Once more it was Villemessant, Villemessant the conservative, the Villemessant of the rascals assembled around the green table, who freighted that fire-ship. The censorship and Villemessant on that occasion rendered a peculiar service to conservatism and the Empire. Everyone knows the history of *La Lanterne*, its bewildering success, the little flame-colored paper in every hand, sidewalks, cabs, railway-carriages all gleaming with red sparks, the government beside itself, the scandal, the prosecution, the suppression and — the expected and inevitable result — Rochefort Deputy for Paris.

Even there Rochefort remained the same; he carried to the benches of the Chamber, to the tribune, the insulting familiarity of his pamphlets, and refused, to the very end, to treat the Empire as a serious adversary. Do you remember the

sensation? A ministerial orator, adopting a lofty tone, with the disdain with which a stiff, precise parliamentarian may look upon a simple journalist, had made use of the word ridiculous in reference to him. Rochefort rose from his bench, pale and with clenched teeth, and, lashing the sovereign across the face over the heads of his ministers, exclaimed: "I may have been ridiculous sometimes, but no one ever met me in the costume of a tooth-extractor, with an eagle on my shoulder and a piece of bacon in my hat!"—M. Schneider was presiding that day. Well do I remember the terror depicted on his fat, good-natured countenance. And, imagining in its place the Duc de Morny's refined, impassive, sneering face, with its silky moustaches, I said to myself: "What a pity he is not here! he would have gratified his whim at last and made Rochefort's acquaintance."

I have seen Rochefort but twice since then: the first time was at the burial of Victor Noir,[1] riding in a cab, fainting, exhausted by a two hours' struggle beside Delescluze against a frantic crowd, two hundred thousand unarmed men with women and children, who insisted with all their might upon taking the body to Paris where the cannon awaited them, upon marching to certain slaughter. And I saw him once more during the war, in the chaos of the battle of Buzenval, amid the crackling of musketry, the dull roar of the heavy guns of

[1] Victor Noir was a journalist who was shot near Paris in January, 1870, by Prince Pierre Bonaparte, in an altercation over a newspaper article published by the prince.

the forts, the rumbling of ambulance wagons, amid the feverish excitement and the smoke, bishops riding about on horseback in masquerade costumes and gallant bourgeois going forth to be killed, full of confidence in the Trochu plan; amid the heroic and the grotesque, amid that never-to-be-forgotten drama, moulded, like Shakespeare's, from the sublime and the comical, which is known to history as the siege of Paris. It was on the road to Mont Valérien; it was cold and muddy, the leafless trees shivering sadly against the lowering sky. My friend passed in a carriage, still pale and gaunt as I saw him through the glass, still tightly buttoned in a scanty black coat, as in the far-off days at the Hôtel de Ville. I cried out to him through the storm: "How are you, Rochefort?" I have never seen him since.[1]

[1] This portrait of Rochefort appeared in Russia, in the *New Times* (*Novoë Vremya*) in 1879.

XI.

HENRY MONNIER.

I SEE myself in my youthful garret, in winter, with frost on the window-panes and a hearth à la Prussienne, with no fire. Sitting in front of a small, unpainted wooden table, I am at work scribbling verses, my legs enveloped in a travelling rug. Some one knocks. "Come in!" And a decidedly fantastic spectacle appears in the doorway. Imagine a protruding stomach, a false collar, a ruddy, clean-shaven bourgeois face, and a Roman nose surmounted by spectacles. The individual bows ceremoniously and says: "I am Henry Monnier."

Henry Monnier, a celebrity of that period! Actor, author, designer, all in one; people pointed him out on the street, and M. de Balzac, a keen observer, esteemed him highly for his powers of observation. Observation of a strange sort, it must be said, which in no wise resembles the observation of most people. Many writers have acquired wealth and renown by making sport of the faults and infirmities of others. But Monnier did not go far in search of his model: he planted himself before his mirror, listened to himself think and speak, and, deeming himself prodigiously ridiculous, he conceived that pitiless incarnation,

that tremendous satire of the French citizen of the middle class, known as Joseph Prudhomme.[1] For Monnier is Joseph Prudhomme and Joseph Prudhomme is Monnier. They have everything in common, from the white gaiters to the cravat with thirty-six turns. The same swelling turkey's frill, the same burlesque air of solemnity, the same commanding glance through the golden circle of the spectacles, the same unmeaning apothegms pronounced in the voice of an old vulture with the influenza. "If I could only come out of my skin for an hour or two," says Fantasio to his friend Spark, "if I could be that gentleman who is passing!" Monnier, who bore only a distant resemblance to Fantasio, never desired to be the gentleman who was passing; as he possessed in a higher degree than any other person the curious faculty of bipartition, he came out of his skin sometimes to laugh at himself and his own make-up; but he very soon resumed the cherished skin, the precious envelope, and that pitiless satirist, that cruel scoffer, that Attila of bourgeois idiocy, became once more, in private life, the most artlessly idiotic of bourgeois.

Among other preoccupations, really worthy of Joseph Prudhomme, Henry Monnier was possessed of a fixed idea, common, by the way, among all

[1] The salient feature of Monnier's creation of Prudhomme is his custom of making the most trivial, often the most idiotic remarks with the utmost solemnity of manner. He was the outcome of his sketches of popular types made in M. Girodet's studio and combined with comical (written) sketches. The character was developed more carefully in his later works.

provincial magistrates who write wretched impromptu verses, and among all the ex-colonels who employ their leisure hours on half-pay translating Horace: he wished to bestride Pegasus, to don Thalia's buskins, to stoop, at the risk of bursting his braces, and scoop up a little of the pure stream of Hippocrene in the hollow of his hand; he dreamed of laurel wreaths, of academic triumphs, of a play accepted at the Théâtre-Français. Already — does any one remember it to-day — a play of his had been produced on the Odéon stage — a play in three acts and in verse, by your leave! as the posters say: *Peintres et Bourgeois*, written in collaboration with a young man, a travelling salesman, I believe, and very expert in the art of turning rhymes. The Odéon is very well; but the Français, Molière's play-house! And for twenty years Henry Monnier prowled about the famous temple, haunted the Café de la Régence, the Café Minerve, every place patronized by the members of the company, always dignified and well-dressed, clean-shaven like a noble father, and with the knowing, self-satisfied air of the typical argumentative personage of the old plays.

The worthy man had read my poems, he relied upon me to assist him to realize his dream, and it was to propose to me that we should work together that he had climbed the numerous and steep flights of stairs to my lodging on Rue de Tournon, puffing slightly with the exertion. You can imagine whether I felt flattered and whether I accepted the offer joyfully!

The next morning I was at his house; he lived on Rue Ventadour, in an old house of bourgeois exterior, where he occupied a small apartment of very characteristic aspect, which smelt of the economical, careful actor of virtuous habits as well as of the old bachelor. Everything, furniture and floor, glistened with cleanliness. In front of each chair was a small round mat with a border of red cloth carefully pinked. Four cuspidores, one in each corner. On the mantel were two saucers, each containing a few pinches of very dry snuff. Monnier took a pinch occasionally, but offered me none.

That apartment produced an impression of avarice on me at first. I have learned since that that parsimonious exterior concealed a very hard life. Monnier was without means; from time to time only, a performance of one of his plays, a newspaper article, the sale of a few sketches augmented, but to no considerable extent, his slender revenues, So he had gradually adopted the habit of dining out every day. People were glad to invite him. He paid for his dinner by telling, by acting rather — for there was nothing extemporaneous in his performance — salacious stories at dessert. Perhaps it was particularly indecent dialogue, with imitations of both voices; or else his favorite hero, Monsieur Prudhomme, carrying his paunch and his imperturbable solemnity through the most *risqué* adventures. And all without a smile, for the bourgeois element in Henry Monnier's character rebelled secretly against that rôle of buffoon. And furthermore he was despotically exacting in

certain respects: he must have a quarter of an hour's nap, for instance, after the repast, however exalted the place; and there were fits of jealousy and sulkiness, the angry outbursts of an old parrot at any one who steals his cutlet bone, if by chance it happened that some other than he took the floor and seemed likely to eclipse him. At one time there was a plan to obtain a pension for him: it would have been wealth to him; but at that juncture his after-dinner pleasantry served the poor man a bad turn. Malassis had published a collection of his anecdotes in Belgium, a copy crossed the frontier, ministerial prudery declared itself insulted thereby, and the promised pension vanished on the spot. Do not confuse them with the *Bas-fonds de Paris*, which might seem, in comparison with them, to have been written for young girls, although the publication was authorized only by special favor, and of such a limited number of copies and at a price so high that the volume could not in any event exert its baneful influence beyond the excommunicate frontiers of the world of bibliophiles.

Such was the twofold man — *homo duplex* — who did me the honor to wish to associate his literary labors with mine. Slave of my imagination as I was at twenty, I might perhaps have come to terms with the buffoon; but, unfortunately, it was the bourgeois Prudhomme, and the bourgeois Prudhomme alone, who suggested collaboration with me. After a few sessions I went no more. Doubtless Henry Monnier felt little regret, and naught

remains of my first dream of glory save the memory of that comical old man, in his poor, neat home, smoking little pipes with little puffs in the leather arm-chair, in which he was found dead one morning fifteen years ago!

XII.

THE END OF A MOUNTEBANK AND OF MURGER'S BOHEMIA.

WHEN I was about eighteen years old, I met a most extraordinary character, who appears to my mind, at a distance, as the living incarnation of a world apart, with a language and strange manners of its own, a world to-day vanished and almost forgotten, but which filled a great space at that time in the Paris of the Empire. I refer to that gypsy band, irregular troops of art, rebellious subjects of philosophy and letters, capricious followers of all caprices, audaciously camped in front of the Louvre and the Institute, which Henri Murger, not without embellishing and idealizing the picture a little, has commemorated under the name of Bohemia. We will call this personage Desroches. I had met him at a ball in the Latin Quarter, with some friends, one summer evening. Having returned home very late — to my little room on Rue de Tournon — I was sleeping soundly the next morning, when there appeared at the foot of my bed a gentleman in a black coat, a scanty coat of that curious shade of black which only police officers and undertakers' men have the art of obtaining.

"I come from Monsieur Desroches."

"Monsieur Desroches? Who is Monsieur Desroches?" I exclaimed, rubbing my eyes, for my memory persisted in waking much later than my body that morning.

"Monsieur Desroches, of *Figaro;* you passed last evening together; he is at the police station and refers to you."

"Monsieur Desroches — why, yes — of course — he refers to me; very well, let him go!"

"I beg your pardon, it will be thirty sous!"

"Thirty sous! Why?"

"That 's the custom."

I produced the thirty sous. The black coat departed, and I remained seated on my bed, half dreaming and with no very clear comprehension of the strange adventures which had resulted in my being called upon — a newly enlisted Brother of Mercy — to ransom an editor of *Figaro* from the claws, not of the Turks but of the police, at a cost of one franc fifty.

My reflections were not of long duration. Five minutes later Desroches, freed from his fetters, entered my apartment smiling.

"A thousand pardons, my dear confrère, this is all the fault of the *Raisins Muscats*[1] — yes, the *Raisins Muscats,* my first article, which appeared yesterday in *Figaro.* Accursed Muscat grapes! I had received the money, you understand — my first money — and it went to my head. We wandered all over the quarter after leaving you, and — my memory is a little confused, but I have a vague

[1] Muscat grapes.

sensation of receiving a kick somewhere. Then I found myself in the station; a charming night! First they put me down below, you know — the black hole; how it stunk! but I made the fellows laugh, they were glad enough to take me with them into the guardhouse; we talked and played cards — I had to read them the *Raisins Muscats*, a great success! Wonderful, what good taste policemen have!"

Imagine my stupefaction and the effect produced upon an ingenuous provincial youth like myself by the revelation of such disorderly morals in literary men! And my confrère who thus described his adventures was a plump little man, well brushed and shaved, with an affectation of polished manners, whose white gaiters and frock-coat of bourgeois cut formed a most perfect contrast to his frantic gestures and the contortions of his mountebank's face. He surprised and alarmed me, he realized that fact and evidently took pleasure in exaggerating for my benefit the cynicism of his paradoxes.

"I like you," he said, as he left me; "pray come and see me next Sunday afternoon. I live in a fascinating nook, near the Château des Brouillards, on the hills, the side overlooking Saint-Ouen, — you know where I mean — Gérard de Nerval's vineyard! I will introduce you to my wife; she is well worth the journey. I have just received a fresh cask of wine; we will drink it by the goblet, as they do at the wholesale wineshops at Bercy, and we will sleep in the cellar. And then a friend of mine, a Dominican unfrocked day before yes-

terday, is to come and read me a drama in five acts. You shall hear him! a superb subject; full of ravishing and that sort of thing — that is understood. Gérard de Nerval's vineyard, don't forget the address!"

All of Desroches' promises were fulfilled. We drank the new wine, and in the evening the alleged Dominican read us his drama. Dominican or not, he was a tall, magnificent Breton, with broad shoulders modelled for the gown, and with something of the preacher in the fulness of his voice and his gestures. He afterwards made a name for himself in the world of letters. His drama did not surprise me. It is true that, after an afternoon at Gérard de Nerval's vineyard, in what Desroches called his interior, surprise was not easily aroused.

Before climbing the hills, it had occurred to me to read once more the exquisite pages which Gérard, the lover of *Sylvie,* in his *Promenades et Souvenirs,* devotes to a description of that northern slope of Montmartre, a corner of the fields enclosed within the walls of Paris, and all the dearer and more precious to us on that account: — "We still have a number of hills girdled with dense green hedges which the barberry adorns with its violet flowers and later with its purplish berries. There are windmills, wineshops and arbors, rustic elysiums and silent lanes; there is even one vineyard there, the last of the famous vintage of Montmartre, which, in Roman times, rivalled Argenteuil and Suresnes. Each year that humble hill loses one row of its stunted vines, which fall into a

quarry. Ten years ago I might have bought it for ten thousand francs; I would have built such a light and airy house in that vineyard! a little villa in the Pompeiian style, with an *impluvium* and a *cella*."

In that Greek poet's dream my friend Desroches dwelt. There it was — oh! shocking antithesis! — that, on a lovely, bright summer's day, beneath an arbor of flowering elder-bushes in which swarms of bees were buzzing, he presented to me an androgynous monster in a wagoner's costume: blue blouse, velvet waistcoat, a cap with red stripes tipped over her ear, and a whip over her shoulder.

"Monsieur Alphonse Daudet — Madame Desroches!"

For that monster was really his wife, his lawful wife, always dressed in that costume, which pleased her and which, to be sure, harmonized as well as possible with her masculine face and voice. Smoking, spitting, swearing, with all the vices of the other sex, she managed the household with loud cracks of the whip; first of all her husband, who was thoroughly tamed, and then two thin daughters — her daughters! — of a curious, boy-like build, whose thirteen and fifteen years, ripened prematurely and gone to seed, gave promise of all that their mother's forty years displayed. It was indeed well worth the journey, as he had said, to make the acquaintance of that household.

And yet Desroches was the son of a wealthy Parisian tradesman in good standing, a manufacturer of jewelry, I believe. His father had cursed

him several times and paid him a small allowance. It is not an uncommon experience in France to find these wild creatures, a sort of scourge sent by God, appearing suddenly in families to disturb their tranquillity and put the hoarded gold pieces in circulation; in short, to punish the bourgeoisie in those of its sentiments which are too egotistically bourgeois. And I have known more than one of these ducklings, hatched by hens, who, as soon as they have burst their shells, have waddled away to the pond. The pond is art, letters, the trade that is open to all without licence or diploma. Desroches, then, on leaving school, had paddled about in art, in all the arts. He had begun with painting, and that cynic's passage through the studios, cold-blooded, punctual in his attendance, close-mouthed, and retaining, amid the wildest flights of his imagination, the stigma, the indelible brand of his borgeois origin, had become a sort of legend. As painting would have none of him, Desroches fell upon literature. He had just written the *Raisins Muscats* — inspired by his vineyard perhaps — a hundred lines, an article! He tried in vain afterward to write another; he never could strike the vein again and reached the age of forty with the *Raisins Muscats* for his complete works!

The conversation, the sky-rockets of friend Desroches amused me; but his home was by no means attractive to me. I went no more to Montmartre, but I sometimes crossed the river in the evening to meet him at the brewery on Rue des Martyrs. The *Brasserie des Martyrs*, now such a

peaceful resort, where the drapers on the street go for their game of checkers, was at that time a power in literature. The brewery issued decrees, reputations were made by the brewery; and in the profound silence of the Empire, Paris turned to listen to the noise made there every evening by eighty or a hundred good fellows as they smoked their pipes and emptied the beer-glasses. They were called Bohemians and they did not resent it. The *Figaro* of those days, which was non-political and appeared only once a week, was generally their tribune.

You should have seen the brewery — we used to call it the Brewery, just as the Romans said the City when speaking of Rome — you should have seen the brewery about eleven o'clock when all the voices were talking at once and all the pipes lighted.

Murger was enthroned at the table in the centre; Murger, the Homer of that world by him discovered, to which his fancy has imparted a somewhat roseate hue. Although he was then decorated and famous, publishing his novels in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, he still came to the brewery none the less, to retemper himself, he said, and also to receive the homage of the honest fellows he had described. He was pointed out to me: a fat, melancholy face, red eyes and a scanty beard, indications of second-rate Parisian blood. He lived at Marlotte, near the forest of Fontainebleau; he always had a rifle on his shoulder, pretending to hunt, but pursuing health rather than partridges

or hares. His residence in the village had attracted thither a whole Parisian colony, men and women, flowers of the asphalt and the brewery, who produced a curious effect under the great oaks; Marlotte still feels it. Ten years after Murger's death — he died, as every one knows, at the Hôpital Dubois. — I happened to be there with a few friends one day, at Mère Antony's, a famous wine-shop! An old peasant was drinking near where we sat, a peasant *à la* Balzac, with a tanned, earth-colored face. An old woman came to fetch him, dressed in rags, with a red handkerchief about her head. She called him glutton, drunkard; and he tried to make her drink.

"Your wife is n't very mild in her manners!" said some one, when she had gone.

"She ain't my wife, she's my mistress!" retorted the old peasant.

You should have heard the tone in which he said it! The goodman evidently had known Murger and his friends, and was leading the bohemian life after his fashion.

Let us return to the brewery. As my eyes became accustomed to the stinging of the smoke, I saw famous faces emerge through the mist, on the right hand and the left, from every corner.

Each great man had his table, which became the kernel, the centre of a whole clan of admirers.

Pierre Dupont, old at forty-five, stout and bent, his beautiful eye, like that of an ox, hardly visible beneath its drooping lid, would sit with his elbows on the table, trying to sing some of the political or

rustic ballads with the golden rhythm, quivering with the splendid dreams of '48, resonant with the sounds of the thousand trades of the Croix-Rousse, fragrant with the thousand perfumes of the Lyonnese valleys. The voice was no longer there, it had been burned by alcohol and resembled a death-rattle.

"You need the fields, my poor Pierre!" said Gustave Mathieu, the singer of *Bons Vins*, the *Coq Gaulois*, and *Les Hirondelles*. Mathieu, born of excellent bourgeois stock in the Nivernais, had travelled in his youth, and retained from his travels a most intense fondness for fresh air and the open country. He found them both in the neighborhood of his little house at Bois-le-Roi, and seldom visited the brewery except to walk through, erect and smiling, with the air of a Henri IV., and a bunch of wild flowers in his buttonhole at all seasons.

Dupont died, wretchedly enough, at Lyon, in the smoky manufacturing city. He was as sound and as thin as a vine-shoot. Mathieu outlived him a long while. It was only a few years ago, after a brief illness, that his friends escorted his body to the little cemetery at Bois-le-Roi, separated only by a slender hedge from the open fields; a fitting cemetery for a poet, where he sleeps under the roses in the shade of the oaks.

The first evening that I saw Gustave Mathieu, a tall, thin, red-haired devil, with the swaggering airs of a bully, was seated beside him, mimicking his voice, copying his gestures: Fernand Desnoyers, an original creature who wrote *Bras-Noir*, a panto-

mime in verse! On the other side of the table, some one was arguing with Dupont; it was Reyer, shrunken and excitable, who was jotting down the airs composed without musical talent by the poet; Reyer, the future author of the *Statue*, of *Sigurd*, and of so many other beautiful works.

How many memories that mere name, the Brewery, evokes within me! how many faces that I first saw there in the reflection of the beer mugs, through the dense smoke!

Let me mention at random a few names of those who still survive, while the great majority have vanished. Here is Monselet, refined prose-writer, refined poet; M. de Cupidon, plump and curled and smiling, resembles a gallant abbé of the old *régime;* one looks for the little cloak on his back, the little cloak as buoyant as a pair of wings. Champfleury, too, at that time the leader of a school, the father of realism, who confounded in the same frantic passion Wagner's music, old porcelain and pantomime. Porcelain finally won the day: Champfleury, his dearest ambition satisfied, is to-day superintendent of the ceramic museum at Sèvres.

Here is Castagnary, in a waistcoat with broad lapels, *à la* Robespierre, cut from the velvet cover of an old easy-chair. He is chief clerk to a solicitor, but has escaped from the office to come and recite Victor Hugo's *Châtiments*, with all their flavor of forbidden fruit. He is surrounded and acclaimed; but he is off again to find Courbet; he must see Courbet, he must talk with Courbet about

his *Philosophy of Art in the Salon of* 1857. Without renouncing art, and continuing to write with graceful pen more than one noteworthy page upon our annual Salons, the sly Saintongeois,[1] always smiling a cunning smile behind his drooping moustaches, has allowed himself to glide by slow degrees into politics. Municipal Councillor, then manager of the *Siècle*, and to-day a member of the Council of State, he no longer declaims poetry and no longer wears a red waistcoat.

Here is Charles Baudelaire, a great poet beset by a passion for the unexplored in art, in philosophy by fear of the unknown. Victor Hugo said of him that he invented a new shiver. In truth, no one else has succeeded as he has done in making the souls of things speak; no one has brought from a greater distance those flowers of evil, brilliant and strange as tropical flowers, which grow apace, swollen with poison, in the mysterious depths of the human soul. A patient, sensitive artist, devoting much thought to the turn of the phrase and the choice of words, Baudelaire, by a cruel sarcasm of fate, lost the power of speech before he died, retaining his intelligence intact, as was made painfully clear by the plaint of his black eye, but unable to translate his thoughts except by the same indistinct oath, mechanically repeated again and again. Correct and cold in bearing, endowed with a wit as cutting as English steel, and with a courtesy that seemed paradoxical, he astonished the habitués of the brewery by drinking liqueurs from across the Chan-

[1] Native of Saintonge.

nel, in company with Constantin Guys, the designer, or Malassis, the publisher.

Such a publisher as we seldom see was that same Malassis; a clever fellow, with a curious taste for letters, he devoured a handsome provincial fortune in royal fashion by printing the works of people whom he liked. He too is dead, he died smiling, far from rich, but without a complaint. And I never think without emotion of that jovial, pale face, made longer by the two points of a reddish beard, a Mephistopheles of the days of the Valois.

Alphonse Duchesne and Delvan, two more who have gone, I used also to see in a corner at the brewery. A strange destiny, that of that generation, so soon mowed down, in which no one passes his fortieth year! Delvan, a Parisian interested in Paris, who admired her in her beauties, loved her in her blemishes, the descendant of Mercier and Rétif de la Bretonne, whose little books, very carefully written, filled with trivial facts and picturesque observations, have become a feast for gourmands and the joy of bibliophiles. Alphonse Duchesne, at that time heated by his quarrel with Francisque Sarcey who, planting the banner of the Normal School in front of the banner of the Bohemians, had just made his début in literature with a bellicose article: *Les Mélancoliques de Brasserie.*[1]

It was at the brewery that Alphonse Duchesne and Delvan wrote those *Letters of Junius*, which a

[1] As these pages were passing through the press the news came of Francisque Sarcey's death (May, 1899).

mysterious messenger delivered every week at the office of *Figaro,* and which turned Paris topsy-turvy. Villemessant swore by the mysterious Junius. He was evidently some great personage. Everything indicated it: the style of the letters, their insolent, aristocratic tone, a flavor of nobility and of the old faubourg. Imagine his rage, therefore, on the day when the mask fell to the ground, and he learned that those aristocratic pages were written by two needy Bohemians on a wine-shop table, to eke out their living! Poor Delvan! poor Duchesne! Villemessant never forgave them.

I pass on, for it would require a whole volume to describe the whole brewery, table by table. Here is the thinkers' table: these fellows say nothing, they do not write; they think. We admire them on trust, we say that they are as deep as wells, and indeed one can readily believe it to watch them swallow beer. Bald heads, dishevelled beards, an odor of cheap tobacco, cabbage soup and philosophy.

Farther on, blouses, skull-caps, cries of animals, thrusts and parries, puns; those are artists, sculptors, painters. In their midst a sweet, refined face, Alexandre Leclerc, whose fanciful frescoes covering the walls of the Moulin-de-Pierre tavern at Châtillon the Prussians destroyed.

They found him dead one day; he had hanged himself, sitting down and pulling himself up by a rope, in the midst of a multitude of graves in the highest part of Père-Lachaise, where Balzac stands calling Rastignac's attention to the immensity of

Paris. In my memories of the brewery Alexandre Leclerc is always in high spirits, singing Picardie ballads; and those provincial airs, those rustic verses diffused about his table, in the tobacco-reeking atmosphere, an indefinable perfume, poetic and pervading, of the country and of waving fields of grain.

And then the women, whom I had forgotten, for there are women there, ex-models, lovely creatures if slightly faded. Unusual faces and strange names, sobriquets which smell of bad places, pretentious *des:* Titine *de* Barancy and Louise Coup-de-Couteau. Abnormal types, strangely refined, for, having passed from hand to hand, they have retained a sort of smearing of artistic erudition from each of their innumerable liaisons. They have opinions on every subject, and declare themselves, according to the views of the lover for the time being, realist or idealist, Catholic or atheist. It is affecting and laughable.

Some new ones there are, quite young, just admitted by the awe-inspiring areopagus; but most of them have grown old there and have acquired by prescription a species of uncontested authority. And then there are the widows, the ancient flames of famous authors or artists, engaged in superintending the education of some débutant recently arrived from his province. And all of them sprawling about, smoking cigarettes which contribute their tiny bluish spirals to the gray fog of pipe-smoke and breath.

The beer flows freely, the waiters run to and fro,

the discussions wax warmer; there are excited exclamations, arms raised in air, manes shaken threateningly, and in the thick of it, shouting for two, gesticulating for four, standing on a table and apparently swimming in an ocean of heads, Desroches guides and dominates with his mountebank's voice the deafening uproar of the fair. He looks well so, with an inspired air, his shirt open, his cravat untied and floating in the wind, a true natural son of Rameau's nephew!

He comes here every evening to stupefy himself, to fuddle himself with talk and beer, to arrange collaborations, to tell of his projects in the way of writing books, to lie to himself and to forget that his home has become hateful to him, sedentary work impossible, and that he would not even be capable of writing the *Raisins Muscats* again.

Doubtless there were noble minds at the brewery, intent upon serious subjects; and sometimes a beautiful poem, an eloquent paradox freshened the atmosphere like a current of pure air, and scattered the pipe-smoke. But for every man of talent, how many Desroches! For a few moments of elevating excitement, how many unhealthy, wasted hours!

And then what dejection on the morrow, what bitter awakenings with the depression caused by nausea, what disgust with such a life without the moral strength to change it! Look at Desroches; he no longer laughs, his grimace vanishes, he is thinking of the children who are growing up, of the wife who is growing older and becoming more and more degraded, of the whip and the cap and

the smock-frock, of the wagoner's costume, which was amusing one evening long ago, when she wore it for the first time at a ball, but is sickening to-day.

When those black thoughts seized him Desroches would disappear, go away into the provinces, dragging his strange family after him.

Dealer in watches, actor at Odessa, bailiff's follower at Brussels, juggler's assistant — what extraordinary trades had he not followed? Then he would return, speedily tired out and disgusted, even with that.

One day, in the Bois de Boulogne, he tried to hang himself, but some keepers cut him down. They made fun of him at the brewery and he himself talked about his adventure with an affected little laugh. Some time after, having determined to make an end of it, he threw himself into one of those horrible quarries, abysses of limestone and clay, which are numerous about the fortifications of Paris. He passed the night there with his ribs crushed, his wrists and thighs broken. He was still alive when they took him out.

"Deuce take it!" he said, "they will call me the man who always misses fire."

Those were his last words. He lived in agony for sixty days, then died. I shall never forget him.

XIII.

HISTORY OF MY BOOKS. — JACK.

I HAVE before me, on the table on which I am writing these lines, a photograph by Madar, the portrait of a boy of some eighteen or twenty years, a sweet, sickly face with undecided features, the eyes of a child, playful and clear, whose animation contrasts sharply with a weak mouth, flabby and drooping as if the muscles had lost their elasticity, the mouth of a poor man who has suffered much. It is a portrait of Raoul D—, the Jack of my book, as he was when I knew him in the latter part of 1868, as he was when I welcomed him at the little house I was then occupying at Champrosay — shivering with cold, round-shouldered, his arms drawing his thin coat tight over a narrow chest in which the cough rang like a funeral knell.

We were neighbors in the forest of Sénart. Already ill, worn to a shadow by the terribly laborious life forced upon him by the whim of a lover of his mother's, he had come to seek rest in the country, in a large solitary house, much out of repair, where he lived like Robinson Crusoe, with a bag of potatoes and credit for a daily loaf at the baker's at Soisy. Not a sou had he, not even enough to pay his passage to Paris. When he

was homesick for a sight of his mother, he did six good leagues on foot, and returned exhausted but overjoyed; for he adored his mother, spoke of her with affectionate admiring enthusiasm, the respect of a half-breed for his white wife, the superior being. "Mamma is a canoness!" he said to me one day, and in such a tone of conviction that I had not the heart to ask him of what chapter. But a few remarks of that sort enabled me to judge what manner of woman that foolish creature was, ambitious of titles, of noble connections, who consented to make her child a mechanic. Why, at one time she told him that he was the son of the Marquis de P——, a name well known under the Empire! And the idea of being a nobleman's son amused the poor boy, seasoned his distress and the usual melancholy of the old dairy farm with a spice of vanity. Later, forgetting that first confession, she gave him for a father an officer of high rank in the artillery; and it was impossible to say which time she lied, or whether she spoke with honest intention, at the will of her capricious vanity and of a heavily laden memory. In my book this characteristic detail offended certain readers; although taken from real life, it seemed an exaggeration of the psychologist, who most assuredly would never have invented it.

But Raoul forgave his mother even that; and I have never seen any other indication of rancor on his part than a sad smile which implored pardon for the mad creature. "What would you have? she is made that way."—It should be said, too,

that the common people know nothing of many moral refinements and delicate shades of feeling; and Raoul was of the common people, among whom he had been thrown at the age of eleven, after a few months passed at a fashionable boarding school at Anteuil. From that experiment in bourgeois education, he had retained some vague notions, names of authors, titles of books, and a great love for study which he had never been able to satisfy. Now that the doctor forbade him to do any manual labor, and I threw the doors of my library wide open to him, he turned his attention to reading, and read ravenously, like a famished man making up for lost time. He would leave me, laden with old books for his evenings, his nights, his long nights of fever and coughing, when he lay shivering in his cold, poorly lighted house, with all his wretched clothes piled on his bed. But he liked above all things to read at my house, sitting in the window-recess of the room where I was working, with the window open on the fields and the Seine.

"I can understand better here," he used to say. Sometimes I assisted him to understand, for, in obedience to a sort of superstition, an ambition of his mind, he selected deep reading, Montaigne, La Bruyère. One of Balzac's or Dickens's novels amused him too much, nor did it make him so proud as the slow deciphering of some classic work. In his intervals of repose I led him to talk about his life, about the condition of the working class, of which he had a very clear perception, far above his years and his occupation. He was

quick to see the painful or comical side of things, the grandeur of certain incidents in factory life. For instance, the first trial of the machine which I describe in *Jack* is one of his reminiscences as an apprentice. The thing that interested me above all else was the awakening, the rounding out of that intellect, like a far-off memory which came back to his mind more and more vividly under the spur of books and our pleasant chats. A change took place even in the physical being, invigorated by the intellectual effort. Unfortunately, life was soon to part us. And while I returned to Paris for the winter, Raoul, resuming his tools, obtained employment in the shops of the Lyon railway. I saw him two or three times in six months; each time thinner and more changed, in despair at the feeling that he was much too weak for his trade. "Very well—leave it. Let us look for something else." But he chose to struggle on, fearing to distress his mother and touched in his manly pride. And I dared not insist, not realizing how deep-seated his disease was, and dreading above all things to take that poor mechanic out of his proper station, to make a *raté*[1] of him, in the name of romance.

Time passed. One day I received a pitiful little note in a trembling hand: "Ill, at La Charité, hall of Saint-Jean de Dieu." And there I found him, lying on a litter, because the winter which was just closing had been very severe and there was no unoccupied bed in that hall, which was set aside for consumptives. Raoul would have one

[1] Literally, one who has missed fire.

when death made the first vacancy. He seemed to me very ill, his eyes were so hollow and his voice so hoarse, and, more than all else, his imagination was so impressed by his sad surroundings, the groans, the racking coughs, the prayer of the nun in attendance at nightfall, and the chaplain, in red slippers, attending those patients whose lives were despaired of. He was afraid that he should die there. I did my utmost to encourage him, but was greatly surprised that his mother had not taken him home to nurse him. "I was the one who objected," said the poor victim. "They are getting on in the world; they are building a new house; I should have been in their way." And, as if in reply to the reproach in my eyes, he added: "Oh! mamma is very good. She writes to me and comes to see me." I am convinced that he was lying; his evident destitution, the plain hospital accommodations, without the slightest delicacy, not even an orange, savored of friendlessness. It occurred to me, when I found him so lonely and unhappy, to induce him to write down what he saw, what he underwent there, convinced that in that way it would make a deeper impression on his mind. And then, who could say? Perhaps it might become a source of income to that proud creature, whom it was so hard to induce to accept a little money. At my first word, the sick man sat up, clinging with both hands to the wooden handles hanging at the head of the bed.

"Really, do you really mean it? do you think that I could write?"

"I am sure of it."

As it turned out I did not find ten words to change in the four articles Raoul sent me from the hospital. Their tone was simple and sincere, with a painful air of reality well suited to their title: LIFE IN THE HOSPITAL. Those persons who happened to read those brief pages in an ephemeral medical sheet, the *Journal d'Enghien*, never could have suspected that they were written on a hospital cot, and with such a painful effort, such feverish excitement. And how delighted he was, the fine fellow, when I carried him the few louis produced by his writings! He would not believe in his good fortune, he turned them over and over on the counterpane in front of him, while curious faces from the neighboring beds leaned forward toward that unfamiliar chink of gold. From that day the hospital was beautiful in his eyes, because he made it his study. He left it soon after, in a burst of youthful vigor; but the interns who attended him did not conceal from me the gravity of his condition. The wound still existed, ready to reopen, incurable, especially if the poor fellow should resume the hard trade of iron-worker and machinist. Thereupon I remembered that when I was of the same age, and my health seriously impaired, a stay of a few months in Algiers was of the greatest benefit to me. I applied to the prefect of Algiers, whom I knew slightly, asking him to give Raoul employment. M. Le Myre de Vilers, now the representative of France at Madagascar, probably has forgotten the incident long ago, but I have not

forgotten with what promptness and good will, which doubled the value of the service, he answered my letter and offered me for my friend a fifteen-hundred-franc clerkship in the land-registry office; five hours' work a day, work that was not fatiguing, in the loveliest country on earth, with a stage-setting of green trees and blue water before his eyes.

That departure, that long journey, were genuine enchantment to Raoul, coupled with the thought that he need never return to the workshop, that he would have black hands no more and could earn his daily bread without killing himself. In the family in which I live I am surrounded by kindly creatures with great, noble hearts whom that boy's misfortunes had conquered; and they clubbed together to provide for his comfort. "I will pay for the journey," said the old grandmamma. Another undertook to provide the linen, another the clothes, for he must leave the blue blouse and overalls at the factory. Raoul accepted everything, now that he had a place, and the certainty of paying his debts. Think of it! Fifteen hundred francs a year? And then he would write, he would send me articles. He planned many other joys beside, of which he talked to me on the evening that we bade each other adieu: he meant to send for his mother, to have her come and lead a happy respectable life with him. Others had had her long enough; now it was his turn. In his new clothes, which became him well, his eyes sparkling and his face intelligent and handsome once more, while he

talked to me in that strain he was no longer the poor, disinherited wretch, but a comrade, one of my comrades who was about to leave me — and whom I was never to see again.

He wrote to me often from Algiers. — "I am dreaming, I am dreaming. It seems to me that I am in heaven." — He lived in a suburb, separated from the sea by a forest of orange trees, near the house of a painter, a friend of mine, to whom I had given him letters, as well as to Charles Jourdan, who lost no time in throwing open his house at Montriant, with unreserved hospitality, to the poor exile. His office work took but little of his time and gave him leisure to continue his education by a course of reading which I had marked out for him. But we had taken hold too late to rescue him from his miserable fate. He had suffered so much and so early in life: the wounds of infancy grew with the man. "I have just had a good shaking-up," Raoul wrote me on June 18, 1870, "but thanks to energetic treatment I am on my feet again, weak, very weak, to be sure, and obliged to count my steps when I walk. During the fortnight of convalescence I have just passed through, without leaving the house, my imagination took many walks with you in the forest, and we talked a deal together in the great studio. My head was too weak for reading and I was lying and dreaming, a little lonely and depressed, when Charles Jourdan, the kind-hearted giant, came in a *bourricot* to fetch me, and took me away to a house which would be very dear to me if there were no such place as

Champrosay. The air at Montriant is so pure, the view so lovely, the silence so profound that I feel as if I were born again. And what a charming fellow Jourdan is, so full of heartiness and youthful vigor! His study is provided with a great library, and I pass my days turning over the leaves here and there as I used to do with you. He also dictates to me his articles for the *Siècle* and the *Histoire*. To-day we have been scoring the general councils." His tone was cheerful enough, but one could detect genuine fatigue, and toward the end the long, straight handwriting wavers, and the ink changes color; he was obliged to stop and rest several times before finishing it.

Then came the war and the siege. I heard nothing more from him and I forgot him. Who among us, during those five months, thought of anything save the country? As soon as the gates of Paris were opened, in the flood of letters which overflowed my table there was one from a physician in Algiers, informing me that Raoul was very ill and asking for information as to his mother; it would be charitable to him to let him know something about her. Why did the mother, after she was told of his condition, still refrain from giving any sign of life so far as her child was concerned? I have never known. But, on February 9th, she received from Charles Jourdan these indignant lines; "Madame, your son is at the hospital. He is dying. In pity's name send a word in your handwriting to the child whom you will never see again."

A short time after, the sad news reached me:

"Raoul died at the civil hospital in Algiers on the 13th of February last, after a long and painful death agony. Until the last he begged for the caress which his mother refused him. 'I am suffering terribly,' he said to me, 'A word from my mother would allay my suffering, I am sure.'—That word did not come, was not sent. I tell you, that woman has treated her son cruelly, pitilessly. Raoul adored his mother; and yet, on his death-bed, he pronounced a terrible sentence upon her: 'I can no longer esteem her either as mother or woman; but my whole heart, on the point of ceasing to beat, is filled with her; I forgive her the wrong she has done me.'—Raoul talked to me a long while about you before he died. In the midst of his melancholy life of suffering and privations, he was surprised to find one pleasant, cheerful memory.—'Say to him that, as I am leaving this world, I most regret losing him and his dear wife.'—I had become very intimate with the unhappy invalid whom you sent to us. I live in a great expanse of open country, inundated with flowers and sunlight; I wished Raoul to look upon it as his usual place of resort, but the sweet-natured, excellent youth was always afraid of being a trouble. Toward the last I begged him to come to my house to be taken care of. He refused and entered the hospital, on the pretext that he would receive better care there. The truth is that the poor fellow felt that his end was near and did not wish to subject a friend to the sad spectacle of his death."

So much of my material real life furnished me. For a long time I saw in this story nothing more than one of the innumerable external afflictions which alternate with our own afflictions. It had taken place too near me for my novelist's glance; the study of humanity was lost sight of in my personal sorrow. One day at Champrosay, as I sat with Gustave Droz on a fallen tree, in the melancholy atmosphere of the woods in autumn, I described Raoul's wretched existence to him, only a few steps from the red-brick hovel in which his hours of illness and friendlessness had worn themselves away.

"What a fine subject for a book!" said Droz, deeply moved.

That very day, laying aside the *Nabob*, upon which I was at work, I started off on this new scent with feverish haste, with that quivering at the ends of my fingers which seizes me at the beginning and the end of all my books. On comparing Raoul's story and the novel of *Jack*, it is easy to distinguish what is true from what is invented, or at least — for I invent but little — from what came to me from other sources. Raoul did not live at Indret, he was not a stoker. He has often told me, however, that, during his apprenticeship at Havre, the neighborhood of the sea, the air of travel, with the shouts of the sailors and the ringing of hammers in the refitting dock, sometimes made him long to go to sea, to accompany in its journey around the world one of the mighty machines made by the firm of Mazeline.

The whole episode of Indret is imaginary. I needed a great centre of the iron-working industry; I hesitated between Creuzot and Indret. I finally decided in favor of the latter because of the river life, the Loire and the Port of Saint-Nazaire. It occasioned a journey and many short trips during the summer of 1874. Taking my little Jack thither, I set about becoming familiar with the atmosphere, the class of people among whom his life was to be passed. I spent many long hours on the island of Indret, walked through the enormous shops during working hours and in the more impressive periods of repose. I saw the Roudics' house with its little garden; I went up and down the Loire, from Saint-Nazaire to Nantes, on a boat which rolled and seemed tipsy like its old rower, who was much surprised that I had not preferred to take the Basse-Indre railway, or the Paimbœuf steamer. And the harbor, the transatlantic liners, the engine-rooms, which I inspected in detail, furnished me with the real notes for my study.

In these excursions I was almost always accompanied by my wife and my little boy — I had but one at that time, a pretty little urchin with tawny curls, displaying his ingenuous wonder amid these varied surroundings. When the trip was too rough for them, the mother and child waited for me in a little inn at Piriac, a genuine Breton inn, square and white like a die on the shore of the vast ocean, with its great chamber with rustic beds, one of which shut up like a wardrobe in the roughly whitewashed wall, the mantel adorned with sponges

and sea-horses as at the Roudics', two little windows secured by the transverse bar familiar in the coast provinces, one looking on the jetty and the infinite expanse of the sea, the other revealing orchards, a corner of the church and cemetery, with the black crosses, crowded together and toppling over, as if the rolling of the waves near by and the wind from the offing shook even the graves of the coast population. Below us was the common-room, a little noisy on Sunday evenings, where they sung old provincial airs whose echo can be found in my book. Sometimes, when the handsome brigadier Mangin was there — yes, brigadier Mangin, I have changed neither his name nor his rank — our host allowed them to move the benches out of the way and to dance "to mouth music." Thither came, with their wives, fishermen and sailors who were friends of ours and took us in their skiffs to breakfast on Île Dumet, or on some rock out at sea. They knew that the big waves no longer had any terrors for my little Parisian or his mamma; and one of them, an old whaler, told us that, seeing monsieur, madame, and the little boy always travelling together reminded him — with due respect — of three "spouters" in the North Sea who always swam in company, father, mother, and child.

On all our excursions we talked of nothing but Jack. He was so completely a part of our lives that to-day, when I think of that corner of Bretagne, it seems to me that my poor Raoul was with us there. On my return to Paris I went to work at

once. I had no notes as to the life of Parisian workingmen. I knew naught of it beyond what the street has to tell of misery, debauchery and fighting; but what of the factory, the wine-shops, the low taverns on the shore of the lake at Saint-Mandé, where I photographed Bélisaire's wedding-party, the dust of the Buttes-Chaumont, where I idled away divers Sunday afternoons, drinking thin beer and watching the kites ascend? As for the hospital, which occupies so large and so sad a place in the life of the common people, with that I was familiar; I had made long visits there during Raoul's illness, to say nothing of the information in his articles. But as the Goncourts had described La Charité exhaustively and definitively in *Sœur Philomène*, I could not go over the same ground. So I have barely touched upon it, and only in short passages.

But what served me best in depicting the people of the faubourgs, in the third part of *Jack*, were my memories of the siege and of the National Guard, the battalion of workmen with whom I patrolled Paris and the suburbs for four months, sleeping on the damp floors of the barracks, on the straw in ox-wagons, and who taught me to love the common people even in their vices, born of poverty and ignorance. The Bélisaire of my book — his true name was Offehmer — was with me in the *Sixth* of the *Eighty-Seventh;* and I can see him now, with his huge, deformed feet, breaking the rank by his limping, always the last man in the battalion on the interminable Rue de Charenton.

Denis Poulet's book, *Le Sublime*, which Zola's fine novel has since made popular, was also of great assistance to me, being full of typical expressions, of a slang peculiar to certain trades, just as I found in Turgan's *Manuel Roret* and *Les Grandes Usines* the technical details of the interior of the workshops, all new to me. Such are the foundations of a novel, the preparation, as gradual as possible, but compact and thorough, which are to furnish the author with the plot, the style, the real prestige of the work. And to think that some people insist upon asking you two months after you have published a new book: "When may we look for the next book? — Come, lazybones!"

The *ratés* and their environment cost me much less labor and investigation. I had only to look behind me through my twenty-five years in Paris. The prosy Dargenton exists as I have described him, with his vast forehead, his imaginary paroxysms, his egotism, the blind and savage egotisim of a powerless Buddha. Not one of his "cruel remarks" was invented; I culled them from his fruitful lips as they blossomed there; and his faith in his genius is so profound that, if he has seen himself painted at full length in my book, as black and solemn and dismal as a country bailiff, he must have smiled disdainfully and said: "That's envy!" — Ten copies of Labassindre can be seen in a well known café on the boulevard, during the summer, when the mullets are idle. — Hirsch is a more specialized type; twenty years ago I used every day to see that *raté* of medicine, slovenly in his

person, cracked-brained, with a phial of ammonia protruding from the pocket of his ample nankeen waistcoat, perfectly possessed to attend and dose the sick without a diploma. He always had some victim in hand, studying the effect upon him of strange and dangerous drugs; then, in default of patients, he doctored himself and died, at the hospital at Bordeaux, as the result of taking his own remedies. Moronval the mulatto is also a real person; he had a share in the management of the *Revue Coloniale*, and was in the Chamber of Deputies for some time after 1870. When I knew him, he occupied a little house with a garden at Batignolles and lived with some half-dozen little negroes forwarded to him from Port-au-Prince and Tahiti, who had been brought up together and acted as his servants, going to market and blacking boots while explaining the *Epitome*.

I have retained, practically intact, the principal character of the real living drama, the main features of his life and his cruel death. The mother, whom I never knew, I have represented as I made her out to be from what her child told me. Also true and closely resembling the truth is worthy Doctor Rivals, a hero, a saint, who has been travelling for thirty years the paths familiar to Jack and his biographer. For fear of distressing him, of causing embarass-ment to his great modesty, I refrain from giving here his name, which a whole population of peas-ants has blessed for two generations; I beg his forgiveness for having, in the moral of my story, mingled a gloomy drama, drawn from other sources,

with his noble, straightforward, upright existence.[1] I had almost forgotten two other witnesses of Raoul's great destitution: the wife of the keeper who still occupies the humble house in the forest, where the poor little fellow more than once found a place at table and by the fire, and old Salé, to whom I have left her true name, the hooked-nose peasant, the terror of the abandoned child, who used to dream of her at night in the hospital. I have a weakness for sometimes retaining the real names of my models, imagining that a change of name impairs the completeness of creations which are almost always reminiscences of life, of exhausting, haunting visions, not to be appeased until I place them in my work, as like as possible.

All these foundation stones firmly in place, my characters ready for action, my chapters outlined, I set to work. It was in the spacious study, lighted by two broad, high windows, of the Palais Lamoignon. Read the first pages of the chapter entitled *Jack en Ménage*, and you will obtain the general view of workingmen's houses, of zinc roofs, of tall factory chimneys supported by long iron cables, which my eyes, when they looked up from the paper, saw through the streaming window-panes and the haze of Parisian days. At night, all the windows crowded closely together on every floor of those towering façades were brightly lighted, outlining the

[1] He is dead to-day; his name was Doctor Rivals, and his bust still adorns the pretty green square of the village of Draveil. — AUTHOR'S NOTE.

figures of brave-hearted toilers, leaning over their work far into the night, especially about the first of the year, when that toy-makers' quarter supplies material for the street booths and shop-windows. But the best pages were written at Champrosay, where we arrived with the first lilacs for a sojourn in the country often prolonged till the snow flew.

Our most carefully closed and guarded houses in Paris are open to too many distractions and unexpected incidents. There is the friend who brings you his cares or his joys, the morning newspaper with exciting news, the unblushing bore who forces his way by the servants, and the burdens of society, the dinners, the first nights, from which the observer, the painter of modern manners, has no right to absent himself. In the country there is plenty of space, the air is pure, the days long, and being able to dispose of his person and his time as he pleases, one has, above all else, the sense of security due to that independent life, the comforting consciousness of being quite alone with one's idea. There is a sort of intoxication of thought and of work. I never felt it more clearly than when I was writing *Jack*. Those days of frenzied production left delightful memories behind. Long before daylight I was installed at my unpainted table, two steps from my bed, in the dressing-room. I wrote by lamp-light, under a window in the sloping-roof, still cold and wet with dew, which reminded me of the misery of my early years. Beasts of night crept over the roof, scratching the tiles, an owl shrieked, cattle lowed in the straw of a shed close

by; and without glancing at the clock which ticked in front of my pen, without raising my eyes to look at the pale rays of dawn, I knew the time by the crowing of the cocks, by the bustle in a neighboring farmhouse, the tramping of wooden shoes, the jangling of the iron hoops on pails that were being filled with water for the cattle, hoarse voices calling to one another in the keen air of daybreak, with shouts and screaming and the heavy flapping of wings. Then the sleepy tramp of bands of workmen passing on the road; and a little later a swarm of children hurrying toward the school a league away, with the whirring noise of a covey of partridges.

The fact that spurred me on and gave intense interest to that terrible, breathless task was this: in the month of June, and long before I had finished my book, the *Moniteur*, conducted by Paul Dalloz, began to publish it. I have the habit, which may seem at variance with my slow and conscientious method of working, of turning over the chapters to the newspapers as fast as they are finished. I am the gainer by it, in that I am obliged to part from my work, without yielding to that tyrannical craving for perfection which leads authors to go back and remodel the same page ten, yes, twenty times. I know some who wear themselves out in that way, consume their strength to no purpose for years on a single work, paralyze their real faculties, and finally produce what I call "deaf men's literature," whose beauties and refinements are appreciated by none but themselves.

I am also the gainer in that I put the spurs to my natural indolence, that inherited capacity for idling which makes long-continued attention and reflection distasteful, its effect being doubled in my case by a disgusting faculty of analysis and criticism. Once in the water, one must swim; and that is why I resolutely throw myself in. But what feverish excitement, what panics; and the fear of falling ill, and the agony of feeling that that serial with its giant strides is always close upon one's heels!

Jack was finished late in October. I had taken nearly a year to write it; it is by far the longest and the most rapidly done of all my books. So it was that it left me in such a state of exhaustion that I went with my two dear travelling companions to recuperate in the genial sunshine of the Mediterranean, among the violets of Bordighera. There I passed long days of genuine cerebral convalescence, with the silences, the absorbed contemplations of nature, the blissful inspiration of pure, life-giving air which follow a serious illness. On my return *Jack* appeared with the imprint of Dentu, in two thick volumes, but did not have so large a sale as *Fromont*. A story in two volumes is long and dear according to our French ideas. — "A little too much paper, my son," said my great Flaubert, to whom the book is dedicated, with his kindly smile. I was also blamed for having dwelt too much on the poor martyr's sufferings. George Sand wrote me that her heart was so oppressed by reading the book, that "for three days she was unable to

work." The impression must have been profound indeed to interrupt that noble toil, always undaunted and imperturbable.

Well, yes! it is a cruel book, a bitter book, a dismal book. But what is it compared with the *real existence* I have described?

XIV.

ÎLE DES MOINEAUX.—A MEETING ON THE SEINE.

In those days I had no rheumatism, and, six months in the year, I worked in my boat. Ten leagues above Paris there is a pretty bit of the Seine, of the true provincial Seine, limpid and rustic, invaded by reeds, irises, water-lilies, freighted with tufts of grass and roots on which the wagtails, tired of flying, float downward with the current. On the slopes on either bank are fields of grain and vineyards; here and there a green island, the Île des Paveurs, and the Île des Moineaux, a tiny affair, a veritable bouquet of brambles and riotous branches, which was my favorite port. I would pull my yawl in among the reeds, and when the silky rustling of the long stalks had ceased and my wall had closed in behind me, a little round harbor with water as clear as crystal, in the shadow of an old willow, became my study, and two oars, crossed, my desk![1] I loved that odor of the river, the buzzing of insects among the reeds, the murmur of the long leaves quivering in the wind, all that mysterious, infinite movement which the silence of man arouses in nature. What happiness that

[1] This spot is described in *The Little Parish Church.*

silence causes! how many living things it reassures! My island was more thickly peopled than Paris. I heard creatures ferreting in the underbrush, birds chasing one another, the whirring of wet wings. No one stood on ceremony with me, they took me for an old willow. The black spiders spun their webs under my very nose, the fish spattered me as they leaped flashing into the water; the swallows came to drink under the very oar.

One day, on pushing my way in to my island, I found my solitude invaded by a light beard and a straw hat. At first I saw nothing but that, a light beard under a straw hat. The intruder was not fishing; he was stretched out in his boat, his oars crossed like mine. He was actually writing, writing on my premises! At first sight we both made the same wry face. However, we bowed. There was no escape; the shadow of the willow was limited in extent and our two boats touched. As he did not seem disposed to go away, I settled myself without speaking; but that hat and beard so near me upset my work. I evidently embarrassed him too. Inaction forced us to speak. My yawl was named the *Arlésienne*, and the name of Georges Bizet put us on friendly terms at once.[1]

"You know Bizet? Do you happen to be an artist?"

The beard smiled and answered modestly:

"I am interested in music, monsieur."

Literary men as a general rule abhor music.

[1] Bizet wrote the incidental music for Daudet's play, *L'Arlésienne*.

Every one knows Gautier's opinion concerning "the most disagreeable of all noises." Leconte de Lisle and Banville shared it. As soon as a piano is opened Goncourt turns up his nose. Zola has a vague remembrance of having played something in his youth; he has no idea now what it was. The good Flaubert, to be sure, claimed to be a great lover of music, but he did it to please Tourgueneff, who, in reality, never cared for any other music than that which he heard at the Viardots. For my part I love all kinds to distraction, the scientific and the simple, Beethoven, Glück and Chopin, Saint-Saëns, the *bamboula*, Gounod's *Faust* and Berlioz', popular ballads, street-organs, the tambourine, even the church-bells. Music that dances and music that dreams, all kinds appeal to me and move me. The melodies of Wagner lay hold of me, subdue me, hypnotize me like the sea, and the zigzag movements of the Hungarians' fiddle-bows kept me from seeing the Exposition. Whenever those infernal violins seized me as I passed, it was impossible for me to go on. I must needs sit until evening in front of a glass of Hungarian wine, with a tight feeling at my throat, my eyes beyond my control, my whole body shaken by the nervous thrumming of the dulcimer.

That musician suddenly appearing on my island finished me. His name was Léon Pillaut. He had a mind and ideas of his own, a very pretty wit; we took to each other at once. As we had both renounced almost the same notions, our paradoxes made common cause. From that day my island

was as much his as mine; and as his boat, a flat-bottomed Norwegian, rolled horribly, he fell into the habit of coming into mine to talk music. His book: *Instruments et Musiciens*, which procured his appointment as professor at the Conservatoire, was already buzzing in his head and he told me about it. He and I lived that book together.

I find between his lines the echo of our unreserved chats, just as I used to watch the Seine sparkle between the reeds. Pillaut told me some absolutely novel things concerning his art. Endowed with musical talent, and brought up in the country, his delicate ear has retained and noted all the sounds of nature; he hears as a landscape painter sees. In his ears every sound of wings has its peculiar note. The confused buzzings of insects, the rustling of autumn leaves, the rippling of streams over pebbles, the wind, the rain, the sound of voices in the distance, the rumbling of trains, wheels creaking in the ruts — all these details of life in the country you will find in his book. And many other things beside, ingenious criticisms, an attractive display of the erudition of a man with a hobby, the poetical biography of the orchestra and all its instruments, from the *viole d'amour* to the Saxe trumpet, told by him for the first time. We talked about it under our willow, or in a waterside inn, drinking muddy white wine of the new vintage, dissecting a herring on the corner of a broken plate, among quarrymen and boatmen; we talked about it as we rowed on the Seine and explored the little streams that flow into it.

Oh! our rows upon the Orge, a pretty, changing stream, all black with shadow and edged with fragrant lianes, like a brook in Oceanica! We rowed on and on, not knowing whither. At times we passed between worldly lawns, where a white peacock flaunted his tail amid a bouquet of light dresses. A picture by Nittis. In the background the château, gayly decked out with its old-fashioned flower-beds, retreated beneath the high, luxuriant foliage, embellished by melodious trills, by the warbling of rich men's birds. Farther on we found the wild flowers of an island, the tangled branches, the grizzly, gnarled willows, or perhaps an old mill, tall as a fortress, with its moss-grown bridge, its high walls irregularly pierced with holes, and on the roof, covered with pigeons and Guinea fowl, a constant whirring of wings which the bulky machine seemed to set in motion. And then the floating down with the current, singing the simple old melodies of nature! The screams of the peacocks echoed over the bare lawns; in the middle of a pasture we could see the shepherd with his little wagon, collecting his sheep to drive them to the fold. We started up the kingfisher, the blue bird of the small streams; we stooped at the mouth of the Orge, to pass under the arch of the bridge, and the Seine, as it suddenly appeared in the twilight haze, gave us the impression of the open sea.

Among all our delightful vagabond rambles, one remains especially clear in my memory, a luncheon one autumn day at a waterside tavern. I can see now that chilly morning, the Seine sluggish and

melancholy, the countryside lovely in its silence, the ruddy folds of a penetrating mist which made us turn up our coat-collars. The tavern was a little below the Coudray dam, a former posting-station, to which the good people of Corbeil go to make merry on Sundays, but which is frequented in winter only by the dam-keepers and the crews of barges and tugs. At that moment the kettle was steaming for the passage of the *chaîne*. God! what a pleasant puff of warmth as we entered! "And with the beef, messieurs? — How would you like a tench *à la casserole?*" — It was perfectly delicious, that tench served on a common earthenware plate, in a small room hung with a paper which offered pleasant suggestions of a bourgeois merry-making. The repast at an end and our pipes lighted, we began to talk of Mozart. It was a typical autumn conversation. Outside, on the inn terrace, I could see through the leafless arbors a swing painted green, a game of *tonneau*, the targets of a shooting gallery, all shivering in the cold wind from the Seine, in the touching melancholy of deserted places of amusement. — "Ah! — a spinet!" said my companion, raising the dusty cover of a long table covered with plates. He tried the instrument, produced some cracked, quavering notes, and until nightfall we drank ourselves blissfully drunk with Mozart.

XV.

HISTORY OF MY BOOKS. — FROMONT AND RISLER.[1]

THE first idea of *Fromont* came into my mind during a general rehearsal of the *Arlésienne* at the Vaudeville theatre. With a magnificent bit of Camarguese scenery for stage-setting, which the gas-jets, arranged in triangles, lighted brightly even to the curtain at the rear, the pastoral unfolded its slow, rhythmic scenes, to the accompaniment of Bizet's charming music, with refrains of old Christmas ballads and old-fashioned marches. Contemplating that impassioned fairy-like spectacle, which fascinated me, Southerner that I am, but which I felt to be too local, too simple in its action, I said to myself that the good people of Paris would soon weary of hearing the talk about grasshoppers, the girls of Arles, the mistral and my mill, that it was time to interest them in a work upon some subject closer to them, a work dealing with their every-day life, its action taking place in their atmosphere; and as I was then living in the Marais, it naturally occurred to me to locate my drama in the midst of the active working life of that business quarter. The partnership idea tempted me; being the son

[1] *Fromont and Risler* was published in 1874; the *Arlésienne* was produced in 1872.

of a manufacturer, I knew the vexations of that commercial collaboration, in which common interests associate in the performance of a never-completed task, sometimes for years, men who differ widely in temperament and education. I was familiar with the jealousies between families, the bitter rivalry of the women, in whom the spirit of caste retains its vigor better and fights more fiercely than in man, and all the tribulations of life under the same roof. At Nîmes, at Lyon, at Paris, I had ten models at hand, all in my own family, and I began to meditate upon a work in which the plot should turn upon the honor of the firm's signature, of the firm itself. Unfortunately, one must introduce an element of passion even on the stage. Adultery engrosses attention with its falsehoods, its excitements, its risks; and it was for that reason that the interest of my study was lessened, diverted, concentrated on Sidonie and her adventures, when the partnership was intended to be its leading theme; but I propose to return to it some day.

The *Arlésienne*, as we know, did not succeed. It was insane to think that, at the heart of the boulevard, in that coquettish corner of the Chaussée d'Antin, right in the path of the fashions and whims of the day, of the changing, bewildering eddy of all Paris, people would be interested in that love-drama, the action of which takes place in a farm-yard, in a Camargue plain, exhaling the fragrance of well-stocked granaries and flowering lavender. It was a gorgeous failure, with the sweetest music imaginable, and silk and velvet

costumes amid opera-comique scenery. I went away discouraged, sick at heart, with the idiotic laughter called forth by the emotional scenes still ringing in my ears; and, without attempting to defend myself in the newspapers, where every one assailed that play with its lack of unexpected incident, that picture, in three tableaux, of manners and adventure of which I alone could know the absolute fidelity to nature, I determined to write no more plays, and I piled up the hostile reviews as a rampart to my determination. *Fromont*, which was all thought out and prepared, almost done to a turn, seemed to me capable of being transformed into a novel. I was obliged thereupon to change the framework of the plot, to rearrange the order and sequence of the sentiments; but nothing is so difficult as this demolition of a work whose pieces fit together, supplement one another and form a perfect mosaic; nothing is so cruel as this voluntary miscarriage of our conceptions when the mind has borne them for a long time, intensely alive and painful. And as the elements of the drama — I mean the drama as I had shaped it in my mind, and not as it was acted later — did duty for the novel, that is how it happens that the plot of *Fromont and Risler* is slightly conventional and romantic, with types of character and environments strictly true to life, copied from nature.

From nature!

I have never had any other system of work. As painters carefully preserve sketch-books in which they jot down silhouettes, poses, an effect

of perspective, a movement of the arm, taken on the wing, so I have been collecting for thirty years a multitude of little note-books, containing observations and thoughts, sometimes comprised in one closely written line, with which to recall a gesture or a tone, to be developed and magnified later as one of the harmonious elements of an important work. In Paris, in the country, travelling, these sheets become black unconsciously, without a thought of the future work that is heaping up there; I sometimes find proper names jotted down which I cannot make up my mind to change, finding in the names a characteristic physiognomy, a striking likeness of the persons who bear them. Some of my books have given rise to a great hue and cry, to much talk about *novels with keys;* the keys have even been published, with lists of illustrious personages, without regard to the fact that, in my other books as well real persons had figured, but unknown persons, lost in the crowd where no one would dream of looking for them.

Is not that the true method of writing novels, that is to say, the story of people who will never have a story? All the characters in *Fromont* have lived or are still living. With old Gardinois I caused pain to a man of whom I am very fond, but I could not suppress that type, the selfish, redoubtable old man, the implacable parvenu, who sometimes said to his assembled children, as he stood on the terrace of his park, embracing with his miser's glance the great buildings of the farm and château: "The thing that consoles me for

having to die is the thought that after I am gone no one of you will be rich enough to keep up the estate." — Planus the cashier was really named Schérer. I knew him in a banking-house on Rue de Londres, where he would stand in front of his well-filled safe, shaking his head and murmuring in his German accent with tragi-comic distress: "Ja, ja, money, much money; put I haf no gonfidence." — Sidonie too exists, and her parents' humble home, and Mère Chèbe's little box set with diamonds in a corner of the Empire commode, the only luxury the poor Chèbe household had seen for a long time. But the true Sidonie is not so black as I have painted her. Scheming, ambitious, dazzled by her new fortune, drunk with dissipation and extravagant toilets, but incapable of adultery in her own home, a detail invented with a special view to effective scenes. — Madame Fromont still polishes her rings with the same conscientious care, down in the provinces; but she will never read the book, for she does not read at all, her fingers are too busy. — Risler is a memory of my childhood. That tall fair-haired factory draughtsman worked for my father. I transformed him from an Alsatian to a Swiss, in order not to introduce into my book sentimental patriotism, the declamation which wins applause so easily. — Delobelle lived near me, and has said to me ten times: "I have no right to abandon the stage." In him, to perfect the type, I summed up all that I knew about actors, their manias, the difficulty they find in recovering their footing in

life when they go off the stage, in maintaining an individuality under so many varying masks. I find among some old notes which I have been looking over to assist me in writing these lines, a "Benediction of the Sea," narrated by an actor, which is really the most extraordinary thing you can imagine. I do not transcribe it, despairing of my ability to do justice to the rolling of eyes and voice, the emotion at an angle of sixty-seven and a half degrees, the puffing, the pose quivering with intense feeling, which accompanied that strange tale, heard in the greenroom of the old Vaudeville. And, here again, in a sketch-book, the amazing attitude of another Delobelle, standing in front of his house which the Prussians had burned, and expressing a genuine feeling of regret by the aid of artificial gestures of the most comical sort; for it is the special privilege of that race, whose study it is to interpret life, to understand everything wrong, and to retain in their eyes the conventional, unshaded perspective of the stage. Thus Delobelle was firmly planted in my mind, but I had not yet rounded him out by his family when I attended, about that time, the funeral of a great actor's daughter; there I saw, in a courtyard on Rue de Bondy, the theatrical world in its entirety, and all the details that I introduced later at the death of little Désirée: the typical *entrées* of the guests, their pump-like action in shaking hands, varied according to the practices of their respective rôles, the tear caught in the corner of the eye and looked at on the end of the glove. I

instantly conceived the idea of giving Delobelle a daughter, and I determined to represent the child as having inherited a trace of her father's extravagance and as having transformed the artistic frenzy into the gentle sentimentality of a woman and a cripple. In view of her infirmity, and by way of contrast, I gave her a fanciful, ornamental trade. At first I made her a doll's dressmaker, so that that humble, disfigured creature might at least be able to satisfy her taste for refinement and elegance, to clothe her dreams, if not herself, in scraps of silk and gold lace. The trade was characteristic of that noisy, humming Marais, whose smoke-begrimed five-story houses, whose venerable escutcheoned mansions shelter the amusement of Paris in course of preparation, scattering bits of fine gold and valuable woods in the dust of their garrets and their iron-bound staircases. Enter those narrow halls, climb those dismal flights of stairs; through the open doors on each landing you will see in the light of the stone lamp, around a meagre fire, women and children working. A bit of wire, a bit of glue, a scrap of gilt paper, of velvet, that is all they need to fashion with their finger-tips, almost without tools, by dexterity and ingenuity alone, in spite of cold and hunger, those trivial articles, "pretty and well made," as the hucksters say when they offer them to you: clowns, dancers, butterflies that flap their wings, marvels for four sous, the toys of the poor made by the poor, wherein the shrewd, kindly taste of that amazing Parisian populace is clearly discernible.

Following my mania for talking about my book aloud when I am constructing it mentally, I spoke one day to André Gill, the painter and designer, who was every inch an artist, of the little Delobelle as I intended to create her; he informed me that in one of Dickens's novels with which I was not familiar, *Our Mutual Friend*, there was precisely the same conception of a young cripple who was a doll's dressmaker, rendered with all the great English novelist's profound tenderness for the lowly, with his magic art of depicting low life. It was a pretext for me to recall how many times I had been compared to Dickens, even long, long before, when I had not read him, before the time when a friend, returning from a trip to England, told me of the resemblance between *David Copperfield* and *Little What's-His-Name*. An author who writes according to his eyes and his conscience has no answer to make to that, unless it be that there are certain mental relationships for which one is not oneself responsible, and that on the day of the grand kneading of men and novelists, nature, in a moment of distraction, may have mixed the dough. I feel in my heart Dickens's love for the deformed and the poor, for the child-life steeped in misery of great cities; like him I had a heart-rending introduction to life, being obliged to earn my living before I was sixteen; therein, I imagine, consists our greatest resemblance. In spite of everything I was disheartened by that conversation with Gill, and, abandoning my doll's dressmaker, I tried to find another trade

for little Delobelle. But such things are not to be invented; and how was I to find a trade so poetically chimerical as that of doll's dressmaker, making possible what I wished to depict: exquisite grace in poverty, smiling dreams within dismal walls, the fingers giving shape to the fanciful flights of longing. Ah! I searched many dark houses that year, climbed many cold stairways with a rail of rope, seeking my ideal environment among the innumerable petty industries. One day, on Rue du Temple, on a leather sign in one of the frames in which, for the convenience of customers, all the industries carried on in a house are inscribed and advertised, I read these words in faded gold letters, which fairly blinded me:

BIRDS AND INSECTS FOR ORNAMENT.

The habit, which I mentioned a moment ago, of talking aloud about my books, is with me one method of working. While explaining my work to others, I make my subject clearer to myself, I saturate myself with it, I experiment upon my auditors to see what passages will make a hit, and the conversation results in surprises and discoveries which I do not forget, thanks to an excellent memory. Woe to the visitor who interrupts me in my fever of creation. I continue pitilessly in his presence, talking instead of writing, tacking together as well as I can, so that they may be intelligible to him, the different portions of my novel, and, heedless of the ennui, the evident wandering of glances which try to avoid a copious improvisa-

tion, I construct my chapter, I develop it in words. In my study at Paris, in the country, in my excursions through the fields or on the river, I have bored in this way many of my friends who had no suspicion of their mute collaboration. But my wife has had more to endure than any other of these repetitions of my work, of this turning and re-turning a subject twenty times in succession: "What do you think of killing Sidonie off? — Suppose I should let Risler live? What would Delobelle say or Frantz or Claire under such circumstances?" — That sort of thing from morning till night, every minute in the day, at table, in cabs, on the way to the theatre, on returning home at night, during those long cab drives through silent, sleeping Paris. Ah! ye poor wives of artists! It is true that mine is a consummate artist herself and has taken the deepest interest in everything I have written! Not a page which she has not looked over and retouched, on which she has not sprinkled a little of her lovely gold and azure powder. And so modest, so simple, so little of a literary woman! I had given expression to all these thoughts one day and testified to her untiring, loving collaboration, in the dedication of the *Nabob;* my wife would not allow that dedication to appear, and I printed it in only some ten or twelve copies for my friends, which are very rare now and which I commend to collectors.[1]

[1] "To my devoted, judicious and unwearying collaborator, to my beloved Julia Daudet, I offer, with all the thanks of a grateful and loving heart, this book, which owes so much to her."

My method of work is well known. When all my notes are made, the chapters arranged in order and separated, the characters well defined and living in my mind, I begin to write rapidly, in a round hand. I dash off ideas and incidents, without taking time to revise or even to correct, because the subject hurries me on, overflows upon me, both details and characters. When one page is covered I pass it to my collaborator; then I look it over again and finally recopy it, with such delight! The delight of a schoolboy who has finished his task, retouching certain passages, perfecting, polishing: that is the most enjoyable stage of the work. *Fromont* was written thus in one of the oldest mansions in the Marais, where my study, with its enormous windows, looked out upon the foliage, the blackened trellises of the garden. But outside of that zone of tranquillity and of chirping birds was the busy life of the faubourgs, the columns of smoke from the factories, the rumbling of the vans; and I can still hear on the pavement of a neighboring courtyard the jolting of a wheelbarrow which, when the time for New Year's gifts approached, went about delivering toy drums from seven o'clock in the evening far into the night. There is nothing so healthy, so inspiring as to work in the very atmosphere of your subject, in the environment in which you can feel your characters moving. The going to and from the workshops, the factory-bells passed across my pages at stated hours. Not the slightest effort was required to find the local color, the ambient atmosphere, for I was invaded by it.

The whole quarter assisted me, carried me along, worked for me. At the two ends of the enormous room were my long table and my wife's little desk, and, running with the sheets from one to the other, my oldest boy, now a medical student, then a little urchin with thick flaxen curls falling over his little pinafore, black with the ink of his first scrawl. It is one of the pleasantest memories of my life as an author.

Sometimes I found it necessary to go to some special locality for greater precision of detail. Thereupon the whole family would set out in search of the required impression. Risler and Sigismond's dinner after the crash I myself ate, with my wife and son, at the Palais Royal, at the hour when the band was playing, when the straw chairs arranged in a circle, the bored attitudes of the people listening, even the dripping of the fountain in the dust at the close of a hot day, exhale a peculiar atmosphere of melancholy: the emptiness, the provincialism of Paris in summer. I felt permeated with that atmosphere; and, full of my subject, I was suddenly profoundly affected by that commonplace military music and fancied it playing a subdued accompaniment to the melancholy conversation of my two worthy friends. Risler's death necessitated another longer expedition; I remembered Poulet-Malassis the publisher's little house near the fortifications, and I had installed Planus there, facing the green slopes with yellow flowers, trodden and stripped by the Sunday promenaders. I must needs inspect the region once more, follow

Risler's trail from the house door to the dark archway where he was to hang himself, near those barracks from which the view of Paris resembles the view of it from the suburbs — a smoky, compact mass of cupolas, steeples and roofs, with suggestions of a vast harbor where chimneys represent the masts. After that I had frames for all my chapters. I had nothing more to do but write, and under those circumstances, the drama being figured, so to speak, illustrated by my memories and my walks, the work was half done.

Fromont and Risler appeared as a serial in the *Bien Public*, and during its publication I was conscious for the first time of the serious interest of the multitude in my work. Claire and Désirée had friends; I was blamed for Risler's death; I received letters interceding for the little deformed girl. Life contains nothing more charming than that upspringing of popularity, that first communication between the author and the reader.

The book was published by Charpentier, who was then just establishing himself on Quai du Louvre, in cheerful quarters flooded with sunlight, in that delightful, hospitable shop which has become a veritable rendezvous for literary folk. Upon leaving there one autumn-like evening late in April, as I stood among the rows of plants arranged for the following day's market, gazing at the Seine streaked with bands of light from lanterns, I had a very distinct vision of Désirée Delobelle's death.

The large sale of my book surprised me greatly. I had theretofore been admitted to fellowship in a

small artistic group, but had never dreamed of great popularity, and I remember my happy surprise on being informed that a second edition was necessary, when, a few days after my book appeared, I went in fear and trembling to make inquiries as to its fortune.

Soon fresh impressions began to succeed one another rapidly, then there were orders for translations for Italy, Germany, Spain, Sweden and Denmark; England also joined the ranks, but less promptly. That is the country where I have found it most difficult to gain a footing, with all my taste for homely things, which, it would seem, should prove more attractive there than elsewhere.

One more detail, in conclusion.

In those days we used to have, at Gustave Flaubert's, Sunday reunions, which gradually made of a small group of writers, united in their respect and passionate love for letters, a group of warm friends. It was on Rue Murillo, in a suite of small rooms overlooking the carefully-tended shrubbery, the artificial ruins of Parc Monceau. Within, there was the silence of a private house looking on a park, and an unconstrained artistic conversation which afforded me the keenest enjoyment. We four, or five when Tourgueneff had not the gout, always dined together once a month — the dinner was jocosely called "the dinner of authors who have been hissed" — and roundly cursed the prevailing indifference to literature and the alarm of the public at every new revelation. The fact is that

not one of us had the good luck to please that terrible public.

Flaubert was tormented by the melancholy of past triumphs, drained to the very dregs, even to the reproaches of the critics and the common herd who are forever throwing your first book in your face, and who held up *Madame Bovary* as a glorious obstacle to the success of *Salammbô* and the *Éducation Sentimentale*. Goncourt seemed fatigued, sick at heart, as the result of a great mental effort of which a whole new generation of novelists would reap the advantage, and which would, at all events he so believed, leave him, the originator, almost unknown. Suddenly I found myself the only one in the party who felt popularity coming his way to the tune of several thousand copies, and I was embarrassed, almost ashamed, in presence of authors of such talent. Every Sunday, when I arrived, they questioned me: "How about new editions? what's the number now?" Every time I had to own up to new impressions; really I no longer knew what to do with myself and my success. "We others shall never sell," said Zola, without envy but with a touch of sadness.

That was twelve years ago. To-day his novels sell by hundreds of editions. Goncourt's are in every hand, and I smile when I remember that heart-rending resigned lament: "We others shall never sell!"

XVI.

TURGÉNIEFF.

It was ten or twelve years ago at Gustave Flaubert's on Rue Murillo. Small, daintily furnished rooms, upholstered in Algerian stuffs, and looking on Parc Monceau, the prim, aristocratic garden which hung blinds of verdure at the windows. We met there every Sunday, five or six of us, always the same, upon a most delightfully intimate footing. No admittance for mutes and bores.

One Sunday, when I went as usual to join the old Master and our friends, Flaubert waylaid me at the door.

"You don't know Turgénieff? He is here."

And without awaiting my reply, he pushed me into the salon. A tall old man with snow-white beard rose, as I entered, from the couch on which he was stretched out, uncurling on the pile of cushions the rings of his boa constrictor's body with its immense, astonished eyes.

We Frenchmen live in extraordinary ignorance of all foreign literature. Our minds are as domestic as our limbs, and, because of our horror of travelling, we read no more than we establish colonies when we are exiled. It so happened that I knew Turgénieff's work through and through. I had read with great emotion the *Memoirs of a*

Russian Nobleman, and that book, which fell into my hands by chance, had led me on to an acquaintance with the others. We were bound together, without knowing each other, by our mutual love for grain-fields, for underbrush, for nature generally — a twin-like comprehension of its development.

In general, descriptive writers have only eyes and content themselves with painting. Turgénieff has the sense of smell and hearing. All his senses have doors opening into one another. He is full of the fragrance of the country, of the sound of rippling water, of cloudless skies, and allows his nerves to be soothed by the orchestra of his sensations without becoming a partisan of any school.

Does not such music reach every ear? Those who live in cities, whose ears are deafened in childhood by the great city's roar, will never detect it; they will not hear the voices that speak in the silence, that is no silence, of the woods, when nature deems itself alone, and man, by holding his peace, has caused his presence to be forgotten. Do you remember the fall of an oar on the bottom of a boat, which you heard on one of Fenimore Cooper's lakes? The boat is miles away, you cannot see it; but the size of the forest is magnified by that far-off noise echoing over the sleeping water, and you feel the thrill of solitude.

It was the Russian steppes that brought Turgénieff's senses and heart to maturity. Man becomes kind-hearted by dint of listening to nature, and they who love it do not lose their interest in mankind. Hence that sympathetic gentleness, sad

as one of the Russian peasants' ballads, which sob through the Slav novelist's books. It is the human sigh of which the Creole song speaks, the safety-valve that prevents the world from bursting: "Si pas té gagné, soupi n'en mouné, mouné t'a touffé." And that sigh, repeated again and again, makes the *Memoirs of a Russian Nobleman* another *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, minus the declamation and the shrieks.

I knew all this when I met Turgénieff. For a long time he had been enthroned in my Olympus, on an ivory chair, among my gods. But, far from having a suspicion of his presence in Paris, I had never asked whether he was dead or alive. Imagine my amazement, therefore, when I suddenly found myself face to face with him, in a Parisian salon, on the third floor of a house on Parc Monceau.

I laughingly told him the truth and expressed my admiration for him. I told him that I had read him in the forest of Sénart. There I had found his soul, and the pleasant memories of the scenery and of his books were so completely blended in my mind that such an one of his novels had retained in my thoughts the coloring of a little field of pink heather, already withered by the approach of autumn.

Turgénieff was greatly surprised.

"What! you have read me?"

And he gave me some details concerning the small sale of his books and the obscurity of his name in France. Hetzel published for him as an act of charity. His popularity had not crossed the frontier. It was distressing to him to pass his life

unknown to a country of which he was very fond, and he confessed his disappointment, a little sadly, but without bitterness. On the other hand, our disasters in 1870 had drawn him nearer to France, he could not make up his mind to leave it. Before the war he had passed his summers at Baden, now he no longer went thither but was content with Bougival and the banks of the Seine.

As it happened there was no one else at Flaubert's that Sunday, and our tête-à-tête was prolonged. I questioned him as to his method of work and was surprised to find that he did not make his own translations, for he spoke very pure French, possibly a little slowly because of the subtlety of his mind.

He confessed to me that the Academy and its dictionary froze the blood in his veins. He turned the leaves of that formidable dictionary with fear and trembling, as if it were a codification of the laws governing the use of words, and of the penalties for audacious violations thereof. He came away from his investigations with his conscience stuffed with literary scruples which destroyed his vein and disgusted him with the venture of writing French. I remember that in a novel he was then writing he thought that he could not risk "*ses yeux pâles*," for fear of the Forty and of their definition of the phrase.

It was not the first time that I had come in contact with this same anxiety; I had found it in my friend Mistral, who likewise was fascinated by the dome of the Institute, the burlesque monument

which adorns in the shape of a circular medallion the cover of the Didot publications.

On that subject I said to Turgénieff what I felt in my heart, that the French language is not a dead language, to be written with a dictionary of defini tive expressions, classified as in a *Gradus*. For my own part I felt that it was quivering with life and energy, a noble river flowing full between its banks. The river gathers up much rubbish on the way for everything is tossed into it; but let it roll on, it will do its own filtering.

Thereupon, as the day was advancing, Turgénieff said that he was going to meet "the ladies" at the Concert Pasdeloup, and I left the house with him. I was overjoyed to learn that he was fond of music. In France literary men as a rule hold it in horror; painting has invaded everything. Théophile Gautier, Saint-Victor, Hugo, Banville, Goncourt, Zola, Leconte de l'Isle, all are music-haters. So far as my knowledge goes, I am the first who ever confessed aloud his ignorance of colors and his fondness for notes; this peculiarity is due doubtless to my Southern temperament and to my near-sightedness; one sense is highly developed at the expense of another. In Turgénieff's case the taste for music was a part of his Parisian education. He had acquired it in the environment in which he lived.

That environment was an intimate friendship of thirty years' standing with Madame Viardot,[1]

[1] M. Louis Viardot (1800–1883) who married in 1838 Mlle. Pauline Garcia, sister of the famous Malibran, and herself an

Viardot the great singer, Viardot-Garcia, Malibran's sister. A bachelor and without kindred, Turgénieff had lived for years at the family mansion, 50 Rue de Douai. "The ladies" of whom he spoke to me at Flaubert's were Madame Viardot and her daughters, whom he loved as his own children. It was at that hospitable abode that I called upon him.

The house was furnished with refined sumptuousness, with much care for artistic effect and for physical comfort. As I passed through the hall on the ground floor, I saw through an open door a gallery of paintings. Fresh voices, the voices of young girls, reached my ears through the hangings; they alternated with the impassioned contralto of *Orphée*, which filled the hall and went upstairs with me.

On the third floor was a small suite, as luxurious and snug and crowded as a boudoir. Turgénieff had borrowed from his friends their artistic tastes: music from the wife, painting from the husband.

He was lying on a sofa.

I sat beside him, and we at once resumed the conversation begun the other day.

artiste of great merit, was a versatile and accomplished character. He began life as a lawyer, then adopted the profession of journalism. He wrote for many periodicals, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, *Revue de Paris*, etc., and in 1841 founded with George Sand the *Revue Indépendante*. He was for a time joint director with M. Robert and afterward sole director of the Théâtre des Italiens. He visited many countries with his wife on her tours, wrote interestingly of them and helped to spread knowledge of their literature in France. Translated Cervantes, Nikolai, Gogal, Pouchkine, Turgénieff, etc.

He had been impressed by my remarks and promised to bring to Flaubert's on the following Sunday a novel that was being translated under his eyes. Then he mentioned a book that he proposed to write, *Virgin Soil*, a picture in sombre colors of the new strata rumbling in the depths of Russia, the story of those poor "simplified," whom a pitiful misunderstanding is forcing into the arms of the people. The people do not understand them, mock at them and reject them. And while he was speaking, I reflected that Russia is in truth virgin soil, soil still soft, where the lightest step leaves its mark, a land where everything is new, to be explored and worked. With us on the contrary there is not a deserted road, not a path which the crowd has not trodden hard; and, to mention the field of novel-writing only, Balzac's shadow stands at the end of every avenue.

After that interview we met frequently. Among all the moments that we passed together, there is one Sunday afternoon in spring on Rue Murillo which has remained fixed in my memory, unique and luminous. We had been talking about Goethe, and Turgénieff had said to us: "You do not know him." The following Sunday he brought us *Prometheus*, and the *Satyr*, that Voltairean tale, rebellious and impious, expanded into a dramatic poem. Parc Monceau sent up to us its shouts of children playing, its bright sunshine, the cool air from its freshly watered shrubbery, and we four, Goncourt, Zola, Flaubert and I, deeply moved by that impressive improvisation, listened to the render-

ing of genius by genius. That man, who trembled when his pen was in his hand, had, when he was on his feet, all the audacity of the poet; it was not the lying translation which coagulates and petrifies; Goethe lived and spoke to us.

Often too Turgénieff hunted me out in the depths of the Marais, in the old Henri II. mansion where I lived at that time. He was entertained by the strange spectacle of that court of honor, of that royal abode with its gables and *moucharabies*, overflowing with the petty branches of Parisian commerce, with manufacturers of tops, seltzer water and sugar-plums. One day when he came in, a colossal figure, leaning on Flaubert's arm, my little boy whispered to me: "Why, they 're giants!" Giants in very truth, kindly giants, great brains and great hearts in proportion to their chests and shoulders. There was a bond between those two genial natures, the affinity of ingenuous kindliness. It was George Sand who brought them together. Flaubert, hyperbolical, grumbling, Quixotic, with his voice like a bugle-blast, the powerful irony of his observation, the bearing of a Norman of the Conquest, was the virile half of that marriage of minds; but who could have divined in that other colossus, with his eyebrows like bunches of tow and his enormous frame, the woman, the keenly sensitive woman whom Turgénieff has depicted in his books, that nervous, languid, passionate Russian, slothful as an Oriental, tragic as a latent force in revolt? So true is it that in the confusion of the great human manufactory, souls often mistake their proper envelopes,

and we find men's souls in feminine bodies, women's souls in Cyclopean frames.

It was about that time that the suggestion was made of a monthly meeting around a bountifully spread table; it was called the "Flaubert dinner," or the "dinner of authors who have been hissed." Flaubert was admitted by virtue of the failure of his *Candidat*, Zola with *Bouton de Rose*, Goncourt with *Henriette Maréchal*, I with my *Arlésienne*. Girardin tried to insinuate himself into our circle; he was not a literary man, so we rejected him. As for Turgénieff, he gave us his word that he had been hissed in Russia; and as it was a long distance away we did not go there to see.

There could be nothing more delightful than those dinner-parties of friends, where we talked without restraint, with minds alert and elbows on the table-cloth. Like men of experience, we were all gourmands. There were as many different varieties of gluttony as there were temperaments; as many tastes as provinces represented. Flaubert must have Normandy butter and Rouen ducks *à l'étouffade;* Edmond de Goncourt, with his delicate, exotic appetite, ordered sweetmeats flavored with ginger; Zola, shell-fish; Turgénieff smacked his lips over his caviare.

Ah! we were not easily fed, and the Parisian restaurants must remember us. We often changed. At one time we dined at Adolphe and Pelé's, behind the Opéra, at another time on Place de l'Opéra-Comique; then at Voisin's, where the

cellar satisfied all our demands and won the favor of our appetites.

We sat down at seven o'clock, and at two we had not finished. Flaubert and Zola dined in their shirt-sleeves, Turgénieff reclined on the couch; we turned the waiters out of the room — an entirely useless precaution, for Flaubert's roar could be heard from top to bottom of the house. And we talked literature. We always had one of our own books which had just appeared. Flaubert brought his *Tentation de Saint-Antoine* and *Trois Contes*, Goncourt his *Fille Élisa*, Turgénieff the *Living Relics* and *Virgin Soil*, I *Fromont* and *Jack*. We talked with perfect freedom, without flattery, without any agreement for mutual admiration.

I have before me a letter from Turgénieff, in a coarse, foreign, old-fashioned hand, a manuscript hand, which I transcribe at length, for it gives an excellent idea of the tone of sincerity that characterized our relations.

Monday, May 24, '77.

"My dear friend, —

"My reason for not having spoken to you about your book before this was that I wished to do so at length and not to content myself with a few trite phrases. I postpone all that to our next interview, which will take place soon, I trust, for Flaubert is coming back and our dinners will begin anew.

"I confine myself to saying one thing: the *Nabob* is the most remarkable and the most uneven book that you have written. If *Fromont and Risler* be represented by

a straight line, thus ——, the *Nabob* should be represented thus /\/\/\/\, and the highest points of the zigzags cannot be reached by any save a *talent of the first order.*

"I ask your pardon for explaining myself so geometrically.

"I have had a very long and very violent attack of the gout. I went out for the first time only yesterday, and I have the legs and knees of a man of ninety. I very much fear that I have become what the English call a *confirmed invalid.*

"A thousand regards to Madame Daudet; I press your hand most cordially.

"Yours,

"IVAN TURGÉNIEFF."

When we had done with books and the interesting topics of the day, our chat assumed a broader range, we recurred to subjects and ideas that were ever present; we talked of love and of death.

The Russian on his divan held his peace.

"And you, Turgénieff?"

"Oh, as for death, I never think of it. With us, no one has a clear conception of it, it remains in the distance, shrouded in the Slavic mist."

That remark was very eloquent concerning the nature of his race and his own genius. The Slavic mist hovers over all his work, clouds it, makes it quiver, and his conversation too was drowned in it as it were. What he said to us always began painfully, hesitatingly; then suddenly the clouds, traversed by a shaft of light, an incisive word, would vanish. He described his Russia to us, not the historical, familiar Russia of the Beresina, but

a Russia of summer sunshine, of fields of grain, of flowers hatched under the snow; Little Russia, alive with budding plants and the humming of bees. And so, as we must give some habitation to the exotic stories that are told us and frame them in a familiar landscape, Russian life appeared to me, as the result of his descriptions, like the existence of a châtelaine on an Algerian estate surrounded by native villages.

Turgénieff told us of the Russian peasant, of his ingrained taste for alcohol, of the torpid state of his conscience, of his ignorance of liberty. Or else it was some fresher page, a fragment of an idyll, the memory of a miller's daughter, whom he had met in the hunting-field, and with whom he had been in love for some time.

"What shall I give you?" he always asked her.

And the lovely girl would reply with a blush:

"Bring me some soap from the city so that I may perfume my hands, and then you can kiss them as you do to the ladies."

After life and death we talked of diseases, of the slavery of the body dragged along like a ball. What melancholy confessions we hear from men who have passed the fortieth mark! For my part, as rheumatism had not yet begun to devour me, I laughed at my friends, at that poor Turgénieff who suffered tortures with the gout and came limping to our dinners. Later, I lowered my tone.

Alas! the death of which we used always to talk came at last. It took Flaubert from us. He was the soul, the bond that united us. When he van-

ished, our lives changed, we met only at long intervals, as no one felt brave enough to resume the meetings interrupted by mourning.

After many months Turgénieff tried to bring us together once more. Flaubert's place was always reserved at our table, but we missed his loud voice and hearty laugh too much; they were not like the old dinners. I met the Russian novelist afterward at a reception at Madame Adam's. He had brought the Grand Duke Constantine, who, as he was passing through Paris, wished to see some of the celebrities of the day, a Madame Tussaud collection, alive and feasting. Turgénieff was depressed and ill. The cruel gout! It laid him flat for weeks, and he asked his friends to call upon him.

Two months ago I saw him for the last time. The house was still full of flowers, the same fresh young voices at the foot of the stairs, the same friend upstairs on his couch: but how changed and enfeebled! He was in the clutches of angina pectoris, and was still suffering with a ghastly wound, caused by the removal of a cyst. As he did not take chloroform, he described the operation to me with a perfectly clear memory. At first there was the sensation of a circular movement of the knife as when one peels an apple, then the excruciating pain of the cutting into the living flesh. And he added:

"I have analyzed my sensations for you to describe at one of your dinners, thinking that they would interest you."

As he could still walk a little, he went downstairs to escort me to the door. We went into the picture gallery on the ground floor and he showed me some of the works of his fellow-countrymen: a halt of Cossacks, billowy fields of grain, landscapes of hot Russia, the Russia he has described.

Old Viardot was there, slightly indisposed. In an adjoining room Garcia was singing, and Turgénieff, encompassed by the arts he loved, smiled as he bade me adieu.

A month later I learned that Viardot was dead and Turgénieff in the agony of death. I cannot believe in that agony. There must be a reprieve for noble and sovereign intellects so long as they have not said all that they have to say. The weather and the mild air of Bougival will give Turgénieff back to us, but there will be for him no more of those intimate meetings which he was so delighted to attend.

Ah! the "Flaubert dinners!" We began them again the other day: there were only three of us.[1]

While I am correcting the proofs of this article, which first appeared several years ago, a book of *Souvenirs* is handed me, wherein Turgénieff, from the grave,[2] excoriates me in the most approved style. As a writer, I am at the foot of the list; as a man, the lowest of men. And my friends are well aware of it, and they tell some fine stories about me! To what friends does Turgénieff

[1] Written in 1880, for the *Century Magazine*, New York.

[2] Turgénieff died near Paris, September 3, 1883.

refer? and how have they continued to be my friends since they know me so well? Indeed, who compelled the excellent Slav himself to wear that mask of friendliness? I can see him now in my house, at my table, gentle, affectionate, embracing my children. I have cordial, delightful letters from him. And this is what there was beneath that kindly smile. My God, how strange a thing life is, and how pretty that pretty Greek word: EIRONEIA! [1]

[1] Dissimulation.

ULTIMA.

ULTIMA.

FOR Edmond de Goncourt's friends, and for them alone — for to others these pages, like everything which has no other merit than that it is inspired by affection, would seem childish — I describe the illustrious author's last visit to Champrosay, in other words the last moments of his life. That visit was so brief — from Saturday evening to an early hour on Thursday — that I have been able, supplementing my own memory by that of the members of my household, to clothe my narrative in the familiar, vivid form of a journal, which he preferred above any other because of its warm atmosphere of intimacy, its flexibility, and because it more nearly approaches actual verity, fits it more closely; the form to which he resorted to describe the death of his brother, an imperishable masterpiece of sympathy and clearness of vision. Not that I assume the power to write anything so thrilling, so profoundly touching as those leaves of the *Journal des Goncourt* of June, 1870, but my affection, as a friend and as one who witnessed his last moments, moves me to try to do for him what he did for his brother Jules.

Saturday evening, July 11.

EDMOND DE GONCOURT arrived at six o'clock this evening. I went to meet him at the Ris-Orangis station — ten minutes from Champrosay on the other bank of the Seine — in the two-horse landau which I have kept in the country during the summer, ever since my legs became indolent. The approaching fêtes of the 14th of July, the extraordinary number of cars and the multiplication of stations have delayed the train half an hour. At last the gate opens, people flow through in waves upon waves, but not my *Grand*. What has happened? I am beginning to worry, aware of the weariness, the intense weariness which "his cursed *Journal*" has caused him of late. If only he is not ill; that threatened attack of his liver trouble he mentioned in his last letter. But no. The coachman has turned on his seat with an air of delight: "There 's Monsieur de Goncourt!" He is so cordial and open-handed — all my servants adore him.

My son Lucien, who has met him at the Lyon station in Paris, appears first, carrying a red leather bag which I know well, and the sight of which makes me smile affectionately. Outside of, aside from the actual flesh and blood, and fraught perhaps with even deeper meaning, we all have what I will call our little effigies, the impression of ourselves, of our ways, of our gestures, which we leave upon all the objects which we constantly use. If some one whom we love

dearly disappears, leaves us forever, a garden hat hanging on a nail, a broken eye-glass in a drawer, often brings him before us more vividly than a portrait, affects us far more deeply. In my eyes that little red bag, which I have seen so many times on the Champrosay road, is Goncourt travelling, Goncourt astray in railway stations, his horror of the crowds and the jostling, the feverish unrest of his hands, the long, supple hands of a born artist. On the instant I see his poor dear hands, empty and quivering with impatience, waving in the distance.

"Pray what has happened to you, my Goncourt?"

He shouts at me from afar:

"They have lost my trunk, little one — there are times when one has no luck."

And while he continues his altercation with the railway people, I contemplate admiringly the dauntless virility, the slender grace of his seventy-four years, which seem no more than fifty. Sturdy and erect, in his gray suit and little hat of brown straw, he has never seemed to me younger than to-day.

Luckily the trunk is not lost, it is simply delayed until the evening train, when the coachman will come and fetch it. Goncourt, reassured, enters the carriage; we embrace and the landau starts. At closer quarters our friend does not look so well. His eye seems restless and preoccupied, his skin is burning. He speaks nervously.

"Ah! I tell you I have had trouble enough,

and of a superior quality. Godfrey told you, did n't he? — a line omitted in my text, and the botheration it caused — all the excellent people whom I wounded unintentionally. And threats of law-suits, volumes to be withdrawn from circulation; and that Fasquelle with his tranquil air. For my part, I passed two nights without sleep, tossing and turning, till my shirt was twisted like a well-rope. I thought I was surely going to have an attack. But, no, I think I shall avoid it."

Already, the cool air of the river as we drive across, the fresh breeze from the avenue of poplars, as from a huge fan, the prevailing peacefulness of the atmosphere relax his nerves and soften him.

"And how is everybody here, little one? Léon is still at the sea-shore, so Lucien tells me; he also told me of your old Tim's death; you must have felt very badly."

"Very, Goncourt; we have been closely attached to each other for thirty-five years. Now I have no friend left in the south but Mistral; in the north I have only you."

The carriage has stopped, we are at home.

Mademoiselle Edmée, aged ten, tall and slender in her English frock, with her red-gold hair falling in bunches over her shoulders, leaps on her godfather's neck.

"*Bonjour*, godfather. How do you do? — you know, the gardener's cat has a kitten — oh! such a pretty one, with blue eyes. And the little

donkeys have had their hair cut; and we have a new cow that gives good milk, but she 's very naughty."

Although deeply interested in this local chronicle, Goncourt is obliged to interrupt it in order to salute the mistress of the house and her mother, Madame A., who come to greet him. Before going up to his room he gazes longingly through my study at the background of verdure sloping to the bank of the Seine.

"I say, Madame Daudet" — *Mon Dieu!* it seems to me that I hear him now — "suppose we take a turn in the garden? Come, master, take my arm."

And we wander, all three, among the paths, where the daylight still lingers, halting by flower-beds whose fragrance evaporates in the warmth of the declining day. Madame Daudet shows him her roses, he tells us about his own, his *espaliero*, the trellised porches of his house at Auteuil, where he has workmen even now, repairing the roof. Luckily Pélagie is at hand, keeping watch and ward, sternly forbidden to leave the premises on any pretext. And suddenly, as if his anxiety concerning his unroofed house has reminded him of other causes of anxiety, he returns to the annoying mischance he told me about a moment ago. I feel that he feels some embarrassment about telling us of the fresh irritation his journal is causing him. Doubtless he foresees one of the friendly discussions which we have had heretofore on the same subject, and which can all be summarized thus:

I. — You are not careful enough, my Goncourt; you take for good money whatever any one chooses to hand you.

GONCOURT. — Oh! if I took your advice I should never believe anything.

And then, after an exchange of feints, he would deal me this home thrust, to close the discussion:

"After all, little one, whose fault is it? Who but you persuaded me to publish my journal?"

"Very good, but according to my idea you should not have gone beyond the year '71, Jules' death, the siege and the Commune. That year makes a sort of fissure in contemporary history, or a high cemetery wall riddled with bullets, at which everything stops. The other side of the wall is a hundred leagues away from us; on this side everything is within reach of our hand, there is no recoil, no perspective. I had a feeling that as to anything of later date you would be accused of writing nothing but gossip and small talk."

"Might not the same thing be said of Saint-Simon?"

This discussion, almost always the same, shall not be repeated to-day. Our friend seems too depressed, disturbed above all by the enmities, the indignation which his journal has kindled against him; they have gone so far as to threaten him with an action for defamation of character.

"And yet I publish nothing but the truth or what I believe to be the truth; I tell the truth about those whom I love most dearly, myself as well as others."

And the sincere, the ingenuous tone, the straightforward glance, the glance of an honest man, which accompany these words, would suffice to absolve him in the eyes of his most determined enemies.

But the dinner-gong sounded a long while ago.

"What luck to be all by ourselves!" says Goncourt as we take our seats.

And when he learns that we had thought of inviting two or three literary friends to make the house more lively, he protests, declares his preference for a family party; to have company on Thursday will be quite enough.

Nevertheless no one is more fond than he of literary chat, those games of intellectual tennis in which the players are enlivened by the smiles of a gallery, and words and ideas fly back and forth as if from rackets. This latest experience with his journal must have changed him, depressed him strangely, to give him this inclination for solitude and a small dinner-table. I should be greatly surprised if such savagery is of long duration with this thrice-refined devotee of art, this model of super-exquisite civilization. The dinner speedily enlivens him and he eats heartily, something that he has not done for a long while. Every day, he tells us, he is thirsty only, his tongue is dry, there is a bitter taste in his mouth, and he has been living at a restaurant on a slice of melon and a plate of soup, with a glass of good champagne to wash it down.

"Oh! Monsieur de Goncourt," the grandmother

interrupts him, moved to indignation. "For a man subject to liver complaint!"

"That makes no difference, Madame. These doctors are knaves. As soon as you 're ill, they ask you confidentially what you like best and then proceed to deprive you of it, like cowards. That 's what they call dieting."

The dispute waxes warm, is carried to other subjects. We recognize once more the Goncourt of the good old days, him whom none but his intimate friends ever knew, artless and loving, entirely free from moodiness and distrust, and yet endowed with a disconcerting keenness of vision, an armed candor which I have never observed in any other mortal. Divers facts concerning Auteuil and his villa, Fasquelle the publisher's banquet, an afternoon in the country, at his dear Mirabeau's, in company with the poet Robert de Montesquiou, his meeting with the very learned author of *Aphrodite*, at Jean Lorrain's table — on such varied themes his mind played until the end of the meal, which seemed to us very short. It was quite dark when we went out on the terrace and stood there a few moments. The air was very heavy. Silent lightning flashes laid bare the lowest depths of the sky. On the shores of the ponds the frogs emitted their crystal notes. We had been talking of a literary friend whose disposition, morals and talent had undergone a curious modification, quite without warning, and from that subject we passed to the transformations which life imposes upon certain beings

through contact with different types and through the underhand strokes of destiny, and Goncourt exclaimed, putting his head out of the sheltered bay in which he had shiveringly taken refuge, despite the sultriness of the air:

"Aha! my boy, in that case what becomes of your theory that we *are all put in type very early in life*, and that, after thirty, the impressions that life leaves with us are simply reprints?"

MADAME DAUDET. — That theory of his is sickening, abominable; you should see how I slashed at it in his little note-book!

GONCOURT. — And you were quite justified, Madame, because it is not true. I believe, on the other hand, that man changes constantly to the last day of his life, that we change our skins an infinite number of times, like snakes.

I. — You are probably right, Goncourt, and it only proves what dangerous things to handle formulæ are. Our best ideas perish because of their formulæ, which wither before the ideas themselves. Opportunism, naturalism, in themselves are not evil things; but the label is no longer of any value. Don't you remember our telling Zola that one evening?

GONCOURT. — At a dinner with Flaubert, on Place de l'Opéra-Comique, was n't it? That was a devilish long while ago!

The flashes became more frequent, great drops of rain pattered on the veranda. We returned to the salon for tea, served by Mademoiselle Edmée; a spacious country-house salon, hung

with Genoese linen, where Goncourt found his easy-chair in the same place as in other years, between the fireplace and the divan. At times, when an idea makes an impression upon him, he rises, walks back and forth two or three times, says what is in his mind or meditates on it, then resumes his seat, always in the same corner. Although very talkative, he has no chance to work himself up, for we have no dispute. A volume of verses recently published displays its flower-bedecked cover on the table. Goncourt makes a wry face as he spies it. We know that he has almost as intense a horror of poetry as of music. My wife, to punish him, compels him to listen to two or three pieces taken at random; and, when we unanimously expressed our admiration —

"It would be much finer in prose," says our friend, in whose eyes the most beautiful poetry in the world is not worth a page of the *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*, of Victor Hugo's *Choses Vues*, or ten lines of Joubert, Labruyère, Veuillot, or Vallès.

This name of Vallès, being casually mentioned in conversation, suggests the name of a collaborator on *La Rue*, a poor devil who disappeared a long while ago and from whom I received this very morning a heart-rending letter that would have brought tears to Inspector Javert's eyes.

"My brother and I knew him at Vichy, in the last days of the Empire," muses Goncourt aloud. "It was Vallès who introduced him to us. Later I undertook to write a preface for a book Char-

pentier was to publish for him, when we learned of the charming profession he was practising in addition to that of man of letters."

After a pause, he adds:

"All the same he had a fine touch, the brute! If you do anything for him, count me in."

When old friends like us begin to fan the flame of reminiscence, they never know when to stop. The clock on the little parish church near by strikes ten. Mademoiselle Edmée has left the salon long ago; now it is the grandmother's turn, then Lucien's, who takes the first train every morning because of his studio. Goncourt, as he says good-night to the tall youth whom he has known from his birth, asks him what they are doing at the studio, if they have a model at the moment.

"Yes, monsieur, a female model till the end of the week."

We glance at each other with a smile. Why, it was only yesterday that Goncourt, to amuse a little fellow of five years, mad over bright colors and daubing, drew up a commission on parchment, as in the days of Louis XV., the Well-Beloved, sealed with huge red seals, and countersigned Blanche Denis, daughter of Pélagie Denis, the excellent maid-servant at Auteuil — a commission constituting Lucien Daudet his little pastel artist! And now, the female model! What a magic lantern, this life! There are only three of us left in the salon. Another hour of intimate conversation, of reviving old memories. Men-

tioned Georges Brandès' visit to Champrosay, his keen comments upon Ibsen, Tolstoï, Turgénieff.

I. — You know that Brandès insists that the unkind allusions to you and me attributed to Turgénieff are pure invention.

GONCOURT. — He did not care for us, my boy. I have always felt certain of it, despite his Slavic cajolery.

MADAME DAUDET. — I had my suspicions too.

GONCOURT. — Turgénieff's antipathy was due to the fact that he was never able to understand your irony, nor my brother's. You disconcerted him. All foreigners are the same. French irony frightens them, they think people are making fun of them.

I. — Like working men and women and children. But what can be the matter with this Goncourt to-night, that he keeps us sitting up so late? Are we never going to bed, pray?

The lighted candles await us at the foot of the stairs. There is a shaking and kissing of hands, and we go up to our respective bedrooms. Goncourt's is above ours and of exactly the same size and shape, with a window looking on the orchard and the little church, another on the park, and two, in a large dressing-room, on the courtyard. As he walks about I can hear his footstep, the only thing which shows his age, because it does not realize that we are listening to it. I have told him that we can hear nothing. It is a heavy, tired step, as of one who has completed a hard day's work.

Sunday, July 12.

AT my study table an hour when Goncourt comes down from his room and takes me out for a turn in the garden. He has slept well enough for the first night in a strange bed, but complains of the heat, of a constant thirst which he attributes to the stormy weather, to this infernal month of July which brings on his liver complaint. The odor of the two tall silver lindens by the poultry-yard makes his head ache. We take another path, talking of the book on which I am at work and in which he seems interested.

"Ah! my boy, you are fortunate to be able to invent still."

"What keeps you from doing the same, Goncourt?"

"Age," he says in a grave tone; "a man's imagination ceases to work when he 's as old as I am."

I remind him of Royer-Collard's remark: "M. de Talleyrand no longer invents, he describes his own sensations." But he seems not to hear me and looks about with a preoccupied air.

"What are you looking for, Goncourt?"

"The bench; you know, the bench where we used to sit to listen to your friend Mistral's verses. I noticed that there was always a breath of air there on the most suffocating days."

I lead him to the bench, and we do find there what Mistral would call a *breezelet*, which ascends from the river and stirs the leaves of a grove of young plane-trees on the slope in front of us.

On the two or three occasions when Mistral has visited us at Champrosay, we have always chosen this spot to listen to him, and I recognize the trunk, smooth and straight as a mast, of the tree against which he leaned his tall form as he repeated the ballad of Queen Jeanne's galley-slaves:

> Lau lire lau laire
> Et vogue la galère!

I fancy that Goncourt does not detect, as I do, an echo of the exquisite Provençal refrain in the cool breeze, but he enjoys it none the less and drinks it in with a delight that seems strange enough in a shivering creature who wraps himself up and protects himself in July as in mid-winter. After a moment, he sighs:

"Yes, M. de Talleyrand describes his own feelings, and I would have liked to follow his example and continue to describe mine in my journal; but really people are throwing too much mud at my head. Why, think of the anonymous letters I receive, to say nothing of the others! Even to—yes, like your own experience, my boy, at the time of the *Evangéliste.* I open *billets-doux* all smeared with — What have I done to draw down all this hatred on myself? Tried to illuminate universal falsehood with a ray of truth! And for that I am considered a defamer of character, I am accused of having broken the social pact and am threatened with prosecution. No, I have had enough of my journal, most decidedly, and I am done."

Madame Daudet, coming to sit with us, says to Goncourt, as she turns into the path:

"For my part, I am glad to hear you say so. I don't care for your journal any more; it made you too many enemies."

Criticism of the *Journal des Goncourt* comes with bad grace from me; my own novels, all written after nature, have aroused so much wrath! Nevertheless, I tell our friend frankly that, for several years past, I have felt less free with him. I have seemed to be unable to trust him so fully, to give free expression to my feelings as before. The thought that my every word might appear in the journal embarrassed me, made me ill at ease; I seemed to be talking to the public. He must have thought I was failing; that was the reason.

Goncourt lays his hand gently on mine.

"Be yourself again, little one; the *Journal des Goncourt* is closed."

We sit for a long while on our bench, in the boundless silence of a Sunday in the country. A bell rings in the distance; a bicycler's horn, the cry of a bird pierce the air. I go upstairs to work; he strolls along the lower path, which he calls the curé's path, or makes a few shots at billiards all by himself. He used to love to play with me; but for two years I have been unable to play.

We meet again at breakfast. Goncourt has lost his fine appetite of last evening; he is too thirsty. A burning sensation in two places, the

palm of his hands and his stomach, warns him that the dreaded attack is not far away. Doctor Barié prescribes a glass of Vichy Hauterive in the morning, under such circumstances. That suggests a drive for the afternoon; we will all go to Corbeil for the Vichy and return by Tigéry, where the crops are in splendid condition just now. There is one field in particular, a field of potatoes in bloom; a waving sea of light purple flowers, a league in extent — a marvel of beauty. During the latter part of the breakfast, and in the salon while we drink our coffee, we talk of nothing but the festival originated by Montesquiou in honor of Marceline Desbordes-Valmore, to take place to-morrow at Douai. Lucien is anxious to take his mother, who is dismayed at the thought of the fatigue of the journey, the banquet, the platform, the public exhibition. But Marceline is an old friend of the family; my wife remembers going with her mother to see her, as a mere child. Although he has only a vague sort of admiration for the author of *Fleurs et Pleurs*, and often confuses Desbordes-Valmore with Mélanie Waldor, Goncourt intercedes in Lucien's behalf, and the mother decides to start to-morrow morning at six o'clock and return by a night train. But the trip to Corbeil must be made without her, and when Edmond comes down after his siesta he finds only his god-daughter and myself waiting in the landau at the door.

We drive for half an hour along the cliff road between the forest of Sénart and the river, the

road which runs through most of my books. A discussion of very long standing between us is taken up at a corner of the forest and accompanies us almost as far as Corbeil. Goncourt firmly believes in posterity; he has worked for posterity all his life; for my part, I never think about it, never imagine what it is like, have no clear idea what it is.

GONCOURT. — What do you write for, anyway? I know you well enough to know that money is not your motive.

I. — Nor renown. To be sure, success has always pleased me, although always dearly bought. But at no time of my life have I been tempted by the laurel wreath. To be a master, the leader of a school, an academician, president of anything under heaven, are things entirely without meaning in my eyes. I write simply for the pleasure of writing, because I feel that I must express my thoughts, because I am a man of keen sensibilities and a chatterbox.

GONCOURT. — Jules was a little like that.

I. — Do you remember one evening at Charpentier's, in the little salon — a dispute on this subject with Flaubert and Zola? I was alone in my opinion against you three, although at heart old Flaubert —

GONCOURT. — Oh! it 's a very ancient subject of dispute among artists. There 's a long correspondence thereon between Falconnet the sculptor and Diderot.

While we talk, Mademoiselle Edmée sits oppo-

site us, in a white butterfly hat, white dress and with a little white parasol, contending with the sun which has designs on her hawthorn-like complexion. At every bend in the road the sun changes its position, and however she seats herself the child always has a sunbeam in her eye or on the end of her little nose. Goncourt, with an umbrella twice as large, which he shifts impatiently from one shoulder to the other every moment, succeeds no better than his god-daughter in sheltering himself; he knows no more about the points of the compass than the child, and I reflect upon the large admixture of ingenuousness, of innocence in the character of this observer of men and things, this subtle mortal whom so many people accuse of cynicism and inhumanity. Ah! how little there is of the Goncourt of the popular imagination in the excellent man whom I watch as he feels in his pockets for sous to give the poor at Corbeil, as he goes into the pastry-cook's and into the bazaar on Rue Saint-Spire to buy a purse, a basket which Mademoiselle Edmée desires to present to her governess. The landau jolts noisily over the stones in the narrow streets which seem wider and wear a melancholy aspect on Sundays; the noise attracts people to windows and door-steps. We stop in front of the druggist's to buy the Vichy; and at a café on the square for Goncourt, who is dying of thirst. And while we are being served in the landau, he glances at the sleeping houses, the silent square, and mutters in dismay:

"Fancy being obliged to live here! It would be the death of me!"

I. — Of you, perhaps, because you 're a Parisian; but I was born in the provinces. With a home of my own, with love around my table, I should do very well.

GONCOURT. — How could you muster courage to write?

I. — Such work as yours would be impossible certainly; too many of the tools would be lacking. But Kant or Descartes might very well have written their books at Corbeil.

Recrossed the bridge, the Seine on fire; turned to the right through the fields of Tigéry, which slope down in gentle undulations to the forest, in the bright red light of the setting sun. The scene is even more bewitchingly beautiful than I had promised; but I feel that Goncourt admires without conviction, solely to be agreeable to me. This refined product of civilization prefers gardens to the country; and he admits as much to me as we go down from Étiolles, through that exquisite landscape in which his dear Madame de Pompadour lived, those sloping vineyards, of a pale green hue, and the old church-tower rising in the midst.

We return at twilight, just in time to hear the second dinner bell. Much animation around the table. Lucien is triumphant, thinking of the journey and the celebration of the next day. His mother, more and more alarmed at the prospect, tries to take back her word; but she has promised, sworn; she must celebrate.

"Ah! you like poetry, Madame Daudet," exclaims Goncourt with a hearty laugh; "very good! you 'll hear plenty of it."

She does not repine, but the idea of leaving her guest a whole day distresses her.

"Don't be afraid, I will take care of him and so will Edmée," says the grandmother.

For my part, I propose to give him my whole day. Ah! what hard things we will say to each other about the poor women! Goncourt looks forward to it as a holiday. Meanwhile, I notice that he does not eat; barely a little soup and a few strawberries. We shall not avoid the attack. Indeed, he has been like this every summer since he first had trouble with his liver. We have our usual evening session in the salon, cut a little short because of Madame Daudet's early start. Goncourt asks me for a book to take with him to his room. I suggest *Moscou en Flammes*, a passable Russian novel, full of typical details, which, with *War and Peace*, Stendhal's *Letters* and Castellane's *Journal*, completes the picture of that extraordinary episode of the imperial epic of which I am dreaming as the subject of a play for the Châtelet.

"How can one take any interest in countries so far away!" says the mistress of the house, with the little revolutionary air which she dissembles beneath a tranquil exterior. "It seems to me that those things must have happened two thousand years ago."

"Madame Daudet confuses duration and distance. Oh! these poets!" says Goncourt.

"She is right so far as to-morrow's celebration is concerned," adds her husband. "It 's a long way off and it will last a long while."

Upon that cruel jibe we rose and left the salon.

Monday, July 13.

THIS morning when I come downstairs, I am informed that Goncourt has slept poorly; he has taken his glass of Hauterive and requests that I do not go to his room. He will not come down until breakfast.

As he is not seriously ill, I think only of myself and my little disappointment. I had looked forward to a genuine debauch of strolling about on my *Grand's* arm and chattering. It is a fine day. A warm, pink mist rises from the terraces and lawns. It would be very pleasant in the little wood. Luckily the newspapers arrive, those devourers, those slaughterers of time; instead of pushing them aside, as I do on my working-days, I plunge into them bodily; my eyes and my brain are filled with their gray dust. Suddenly the door opens, Goncourt's tall form appears, reaching the lintel. He cannot sleep, so preferred to dress and come downstairs. I watch him as he reads the newspapers, sitting on the divan on the other side of my table; his features are drawn and his eyes yellow. Usually when he has read a sheet, *swept it with his eye*, as he says, he throws it on the floor or on the couch by his side, all unfolded. To-day I am impressed by the care with which he folds each

paper and lays it on the table. I mention the subject.

"I saw that it annoyed you, my boy," he says, with a kindly smile which covers me with confusion.

Ah! pitiful creatures that we are, how cunning is stupidity, how it worms itself into the closest, most affectionate relations! It is true that all that paper scattered on the floor, around my table, grated on my nerves; but to think that I could not conceal my impatience from him!

"Shall we take a walk? There 's nothing in the papers this morning."

He has risen, put his arm through mine, and instantly, from his gait, from the tone of his voice, I understand that *there is something in the papers.* Doubtless a line, a sentence on the subject of the Academy.

GONCOURT. — Do you know when the election to fill Dumas's chair is to be?

"October, I have been told, or November. Perhaps even later."

After a few steps he resumes with an effort:

"Are — are you to be a candidate, my boy?"

"If I were to be a candidate, Goncourt, you would be the first to know it."

"What pleasure you give me!" he says, pressing my arm.

We arrive at his bench, the one he prefers this year, and, having seated himself, he continues:

"What can you expect? After a while these newspaper scandal-mongers make an impression

on one. You cannot help it. They insist upon it that you have written your letter to the Academy, with a request that it be kept secret until the election."

"And you were not angry with me?"

Goncourt, seeking a breath of air in which to hold his burning hands, turns affectionately to me.

"Remember what I said to you ten or twelve years ago, when there was some talk of your being chosen. You were already a member of my Academy, even then; but I urged you, and with perfect sincerity, to follow your own inclinations. I still adhere to that. When I was assured that you would come forward as a candidate for Dumas's chair, I was deeply hurt, but I remained your friend, indeed I realized more than ever how dear you were to me."

"And yet you must have known that, when you had made me the executor of your will and entrusted to me the foundation of your Academy, I would not abandon my post without advising you?"

The fact is that one day, some four or five years ago, when Goncourt was not feeling well, he sent for me to come to Auteuil and inflicted upon me the cruel emotion of reading to him, aloud, a testament in which I was named as executor, jointly with Henri Céard. Subsequently the bungling of a reporter having banished Céard from the house at Auteuil, my son Léon had been substituted for him as executor of our friend's last wishes. In that document, whose contents were

known to none but the notary and myself, I first saw the statutes and regulations of the Académie des Goncourts. Is it because of the criticisms I made concerning this Academy, the title of which seemed to me a very grave mistake, that he does not care to say much to me about it? I myself am not particularly anxious to discuss it, feeling certain that I shall never be called upon to take any steps with regard to it, as I shall die long before Goncourt. That is evidently his conviction too, as he has associated with me in the undertaking, in the first place Henri Céard, then my son Léon, and quite lately — so I am told — Léon Hennique in my son's place. Why this constant changing? I have no idea. He has always manifested the liveliest affection for Léon, and the last volume of his journal testifies to his appreciation of the boy's talent. He told me two years ago that Léon was one of the Ten. What is the explanation of this change? I shall know one day or another. This is almost exactly what he said to me to-day concerning his Academy. When I asked him if he still clung to the same title, he answered earnestly:

"Yes, my boy; no doubt the word is too solemn for us and is hardly suitable for independent writers, some of whom indeed are soldiers of the vanguard, carrying their weapons as they choose and their tunics over the shoulder. I have thought about changing our title, as you wished me to do, in the direction of simplicity, of good fellowship; I have thought of the *Table des Gon-*

court, the *Prix des Goncourt;* but a scruple has always held me back. My brother and I evolved this idea together; we both worked at the foundation of the Académie des Goncourt; and I do not consider that I alone have the right to change the decisions at which we two arrived. Ah! if Jules were still living, we should have to modify many articles. The course of the other Academy has changed of late years; it has tended more toward youth, toward LITERATURE, as Flaubert used to say; the proof of what I say is that Bourget, Loti and many others were on the list of our foundation before they joined the other, some of them without their own knowledge. For all that, the greater part of the prizes distributed at the Palais Mazarin have no justification. Their Academy either does n't know how to discover talent or does n't take the trouble; often, indeed, it cannot; and our prize of five thousand francs will render noteworthy service. There! Now, let us walk a little."

We walk down the curé's path, and return through the little wood, and all the time he talks about his brother: —

"It 's a strange thing: Jules died in 1870, and for fifteen years, down to 1885, I, who am a great dreamer, never had a dream in which he did not figure. Suddenly he disappeared from my dreams. During the day I thought of him constantly, his memory haunted me as persistently as before, but in my dreams, in my night life, he no longer existed. And that lasted ten years. One night

last year my brother returned. I dreamed some silly thing or other, but Jules was in it, and since then he has never failed to appear. Last night again he was with me in my dream."

He said no more. Our steps grated on the gravel, hot with the noon-day sun. In front of the house, in the tall sycamore which rises above the roof on his side of the house and mine, a finch or linnet sang in a whisper, as if half asleep.

"What is that bird?" he asked. "I hear him against my window in the morning. He wakes me, puffing out his little throat, in which the air seems to be mingled with fresh water."

"In the morning about four o'clock. I hear him, too, in my curtains."

And I tell him the story of the blacksmith at the Bellechasse barracks, whom my neighbor Doctor Charcot and I used to hear every morning, each in his study, and whose forge hammer, like a medium of transmission between our brains, beat time for our twofold task, and made us think of each other. "'Which of us will be the last to hear the smith's hammer?' Charcot often said to me, with his stern eye and sweet smile."

"He believed that it would be he," replies Goncourt, to whom I must have told this little anecdote many times; but he makes no sign.

When two persons are and have long been in the habit of seeing each other often, it is hard to avoid such repetitions. And he, dear old fellow, always begins his stories with: "You will accuse me of repeating myself."

At breakfast that morning there was no repetition of old stories. A small party, but very lively. We talked of the travellers who left Champrosay at daybreak. Where are they now? Taking refreshment in some sub-prefecture to the strains of the local band. Madame Desbordes-Valmore's name led us to Verlaine's, and to the influence which the gentle Marceline's genius exerted upon that refined imp of Satan. Madame A., who has known them both but not at the same time, evokes for us poor Lélian's figure, still a mere boy, when he recited in Madame la Générale de Ricard's salons his pretty Saturnian verses: —

"*Et nous n'aurons jamais de Béatrice.*"

She who was destined to be his posthumous Béatrice died long ago.

I, *abruptly.* — Goncourt, what 's the matter with you? You are not eating.

GONCOURT. — I am not hungry, my boy. If I am very good may I not have a little milk from the cow my god-daughter says is so naughty? Not boiled, but with the chill just taken off?

A large bowl is placed before him, but he finds it too hot, and eventually leaves it and the table, wondering what would taste good. After his nap he comes down, much rested, with less yellow in his eyes. I suggest that we order the horses for a long drive in the forest or in the open country. We can go by the rose-fields of Mandres to bid Coppée *bonjour*, or to taste the delicious Mennecy biscuit beyond the plains of Lisses and Cour

couronne. But neither suggestion tempts him. It would keep him too long in the carriage; he can no longer endure drives four or five hours long as on the day when Madame Daudet, a copy of the *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe* under her arm, drove us through the streets of Savigny, looking for Henri IV.'s road and the house of Madame de Beaumont, Chateaubriand's friend.

"Suppose we just go and sit by the river? What do you say to that, master?"

At Champrosay he frequently calls me "master" (*patron*), everywhere else "Daudet" or "little one" (*mon petit*), sometimes "Alphonse," but only when he speaks of me.

"The river it is."

But a forgotten gate-key prevents our going to the Seine, and we remain in the curé's path, which the setting sun, intersected by dense lindens, spatters with patches of light.

I. — Then it is true that you don't propose to work any more, Goncourt? Do you think that will be possible?

GONCOURT. — I intend to finish my history of the Camargo, and then to make a very minute catalogue of the collections not included in the *Maison d'un Artiste.* If Antoine produces *La Faustin* for me, I shall revise a few scenes. And then — and then, that 's all. There is nothing but my journal that I should have taken any pleasure in doing. That noting down the events of life, so varied yet so simple, interests me more than novel-writing. It 's not so with you; I know it.

I. — I am too much of a Latin, I like things with more construction. For instance, take the majority of Dostoiewski's books, even the *Karamazoff Brothers* and the *House of the Dead.* I was hardly able to finish them; they are not *arranged* enough. It 's not my fault, my dear fellow. When I was a boy, I played morris under the gate of Augustus, and marbles in the Arenas or on the steps of the Temple of Diana.

At this point a load of hay passes along the communal road between the second park and the path where we are walking. An old peasant, bare-headed — a round head covered with white hair — who is driving the wagon, salutes me through the fence, and I shout to him: —

"*Bonjour,* Père Jean!"

When Eugène Delacroix lived at Champrosay, this man was in his service. You should hear him say, proudly: "I used to fix *Monsieur Lacroué's* palette." And Goncourt begins to discourse upon Eugène Delacroix's palette, with such learning and energy. To what a unique and rare conference upon romantic art I have the privilege of listening! how I bless Père Jean, to whose chance passing I owe this windfall! Remain in the park talking delightfully of coloring and light and shade until the dinner-hour. Return through the little wood and the kitchen-garden, where the flowers are panting in the scorching, perfume-laden twilight.

Dinner decidedly depressing. Mademoiselle Edmée is not accustomed to passing a whole day

apart from her mother. For my own part, it seems to me that three empty places at the table are a good many. We remain a moment on the veranda. The sky is black; a last trace of light lingers on the gravelled paths. From the direction of Versailles, through what is called the Gap of Savigny, come tempestuous puffs, muffled rumblings. I am in a most melancholy mood.

"Well, little one," says Goncourt, taking his place by the fireplace, "I have often felt just as you feel now, when walking in my garden at Auteuil. But you are not alone here and it 's only for a single evening, while I have only my collections for company, from one end of the year to the other. They are cold, I tell you, and they don't speak to one every day."

The sincere and heart-broken tone in which he confides to me his unhappiness as a bachelor gives me much pain. I am angry with myself for giving way to this attack of depression, and I pass the evening leading him to talk about his brother, about Jeand'heurs' periwinkles, the evenings at Saint-Gratien in the old days, with Théophile Gautier and the Girauds, and also about our insanely merry parties in Provence, at the Parrocels'. At ten o'clock, when we leave the salon, we are no longer melancholy; I have warmed myself by rubbing him.

Before going upstairs, Goncourt, candle in hand, comes and leans on my table, at which I have settled myself to work and await the return of our travellers by the night train.

"I hate to leave you alone," he says, with his kindly, big brother's smile. "I would have liked to sit up with you; but I feel so tired!"

He goes away, dragging his feet, and I hear him ascending the stairs slowly.

Tuesday, July 14.

"I SAY, little one — "

It is he calling me, in a whisper, as I leave my bedroom, and leaning over the rail at the top of that terrible second flight, which I can only master now with great difficulty.

"I have slept poorly, little one. I am going to pass my day in bed, trying a milk cure. Then a bath on top of it, to-morrow morning, and I shall be quite on my feet again, I am sure."

I am not so sure of it as he is. Milk would be good for him if taken persistently and for a long time; but what troubles my wife and myself above all else is this bath that he asks us to give him to-morrow morning. Goncourt has no bath-room in his own house at Auteuil; or, if he has, it is overrun, like the whole house, by curios and glass-cases. They place a tub in the kitchen and empty it out of the window, so that it disarranges and tires the whole household. And of what would not this Goncourt of the haughty bearing, who is reputed to be an egotist, and who goes down to the door in mid-winter, hardly dressed, to get his newspaper, rather than wake anybody — of what, I say, would he not deprive himself, in face of the thought that his servants might be put to some extra trouble?

Every summer, when he comes to Champrosay, the bath-room is his great delight. He goes into raptures over everything, the hot water, the shower-bath. Unluckily he had a chill there one day, two or three years ago; an attack of fever followed, and ever since we have been very much afraid. But what are we to do? Last year we offended him by postponing the wretched bath. But, who knows? Perhaps he will change his mind between now and to-morrow, perhaps he will feel better. My wife and Lucien, who have been up to see him, found him in good spirits; he made them tell him about the celebration at Douai, the fête of the *Gayants*, the polished addresses of Montesquiou and Anatole France. Several times during the day he sent messages to me.

At dinner we have a guest, a Parisian who has fled from the national holiday. Pass the evening on the terrace. Lowering weather, with a high wind. On the horizon in every direction distant music and fireworks. Goncourt, lying in his bed upstairs, must hear them, brought to his ears by this storm-boding wind, which he abhors.

Wednesday, July 15.

EBNER, my secretary, whose time is so fully occupied on the *Officiel* that he can give me only one day in each week, has come to work with me. We put our shoulders to the wheel in good season. The weather is as it threatened to be: low-hanging, stormy clouds, leaves whirling about as

in autumn. Bad weather for Goncourt's bath. This thought suddenly passes through my mind. The servant, when I question him, assures me that everything has been prepared with the greatest care, under Madame's superintendence; moderate temperature, his linen in the thoroughly warmed drying-box. Monsieur Goncourt came down to the bath-room about twenty minutes ago, after passing a very good night. He intends to remain in the water an hour. An hour is too much. I go to the bath-room door.

"Is that you, little one?"

He answers my knock from his bath-tub.

"How are you? I mean to come down and see you when I have had my bath."

"No, my Goncourt, don't come down. You would risk taking a chill in the halls. Do you hear how the wind blows? Go up and bury yourself in the bed-clothes for a while. I will come right up and bid you good-morning. I have Ebner's arm to-day, so I 'm not afraid of the stairs."

"Faith, nothing would suit me better than to go back to bed for a few moments. I feel so weak. I have n't spunk enough even to look at my watch, which is here on a chair by my side. What time is it, Ebner? I will stay here another quarter of an hour. You think it 's too much? Very good. Perhaps you are right. Send your man to me and I will go upstairs."

Half an hour later I knocked at his bedroom door.

"Come in!" it was his voice, but so changed, with such a far-away sound.

We found him stretched, thrown rather, across his bed, half-dressed, as if he had not had strength to go back to bed when he came up from his bath. The curtains were raised at both windows, admitting the daylight unsoftened, a sort of light that he detests. He complained of a pain in his right side, accompanied by a terrible shivering and cold feet. It was the expected attack of his liver trouble. Oh! he recognized it. And in order that I might not be alarmed, he exerted himself to smile, his teeth chattering all the while. Ebner assisted him to crawl under the bed-clothes. He asked for a glass of Hauterive, and two or three times he failed to find the word he wanted: he said "Fasquelle" for "bottle"; but he noticed it at once, and was the first to laugh at his blunders. We observed that "Fasquelle" resembled *fiasque, fiasquette,* the name of the bottle in a wicker case used in the south. Once in bed, under the heavy coverlet, with his curtains tightly drawn, he felt better; the shivering subsided, and his hands were not so hot.

"And the pain in your side, Goncourt?"

"Very bearable. If it increases, I will ask you to give me a prick."

Two years ago, during a very painful attack, one or two injections of morphine had relieved him greatly, but he had never had it injected since and had never done it himself.

"What hard luck, little one," he said, taking

my hand affectionately, "what hard luck always to bring sickness to your house, as if your own suffering were not enough! However, you must take me with all my drawbacks, for I have no one but you, you are my family, my real family."

"Dear friend!"

We talk a moment beside his bed; then he asks us to let him sleep. He did not believe that he could come down to breakfast, but would certainly dine with us.

About one o'clock or half-past one, as I was about returning to my work, Goncourt sent to ask me to come up, saying that he needed me. When he saw me, he began to laugh.

"The dentist's reception-room. When the time comes for me to have my tooth out, the pain stops. I thought I must have a little prick, but the mere sight of you — "

"I will wait, my dear fellow, I am in no hurry."

I sit down on the couch, facing his bed, in the light half-shadow in which his room is bathed as at the hour for the afternoon siesta, and we talk about the fête at Douai, of which Lucien has given him all the details, also about our dinner-party on the next day, Thursday. These Thursdays at Champrosay, the open house, the dinners at which there are sometimes twenty-five people around a leg of mutton and a chowder, the unexpected arrivals, and the terrified excitement of the servants, contrasted with the coolness and ingenious expedients of the mistress of the house, amuse him beyond measure. It is his delight to

remain in the salon in the evening, when all the Parisians have gone, and to sip a petit-verre of neat brandy as he recalls words, attitudes, a curl of the lip — so many notes for his journal.

"What a pity that your journal is closed, my Goncourt. There will be crowds here to-morrow, and you would have had copy galore."

"At all events, master, I promise to be here, and to do you credit. I feel better now; I shall not even need a prick."

Those were the last words he ever said to me.

An hour later Madame Daudet knocked at his door. Alarmed by his silence, she entered the room. He seemed to be dozing, but his hands and fingers were moving restlessly as was customary with him in animated conversation, a discussion concerning art.

She speaks to him: —

"How are you, Monsieur de Goncourt?"

"Better, better."

His words come jerkily, his glance is far away. My wife, in dismay, goes to fetch her mother and returns with her to our friend, whose eyes are now closed, his face a deep purple, his breathing labored and stertorous.

For a long time I refuse to believe that it is anything serious.

"It 's his liver," I say. "He knows what it is, he just told us."

Ebner, who has been upstairs again at my request, confirms me in my illusion.

"The ladies are mistaken, monsieur, I assure

you. M. de Goncourt is just as we saw him a little while ago, no worse."

But my wife insists, she waxes warm on the subject: —

"I tell you that your friend is very ill. You did n't see him as we just saw him, or you would be as frightened as we are. Send a telegram for Doctor Barié at once, Ebner, I beg you."

Among the numerous physicians who have attended Edmond de Goncourt of late years, Doctors Millard, Rendu, Martin, Vaquez, Barié, he has always had most confidence in the last-named; he has often told us so, and has written it in his journal. And so, when the carriage arrived, about six o'clock, with Lucien and the doctor, we experienced a feeling of genuine relief.

. . . .

"Well, Monsieur Barié?"

"Congestion of the lungs. At his age it 's a very serious matter."

Even in face of this positive statement, this certainty, I was not afraid. It did not seem possible to me. For that shivering which he recognized —

"Was a shiver of fever — a hundred and twenty pulsations a minute. But the fever does n't come from the liver, it 's the lung that is attacked."

"Did he take cold coming out of the bath?"

"Yes, perhaps it was the bath — or perhaps a disease that was lying hidden. You say that he was feverish every day. He coughed a good deal last month and complained laughingly of having

a wardrobe on his chest and a litter of kittens miaouwing in his bronchial tubes. He must have been ill some time."

All the same there is in this explosion of danger a suddenness which passes my comprehension. To think that only a moment ago he was talking and laughing with me! Now his eyes look without seeing, and when, by applying mustard plasters all over his body and by injecting ether, caffeine, all the most powerful reagents, they succeed in restoring him partially to life, his voice is no more than a distant stammering, painful to hear. Barié raises him for a moment to a sitting posture.

"Come, Monsieur de Goncourt," says the good doctor, shaking him gently, "talk to us a little. Do you know where you are? At Champrosay, with your friends the Daudets; do you know them?"

The poor fellow smiled for the last time, with a movement of the head which seemed to say: "I should think I do know them." Almost immediately he fell back exhausted on the pillow, muttering: —

"Very tired, very tired."

What happened then? There is a dark hole in my memory, dark with that depressing darkness which invades a house with grief, and which no light can dissipate. On such evenings the lamps give no light. We talk low and grope our way about. Should we send for Pélagie, who is accustomed to take care of him? No. He has

forbidden her to leave the house at Auteuil, he trusts no one else to look after his papers and collections. Especially at this time, when the roof is off, and the house full of workmen. How excited he would be to see her here when he recovers consciousness; for not one of us, not even the doctor, has dreamed of disaster. Barié, observing our grief, encourages us:

"We will pull him through — surely if there 's no congestion of the brain."

But Madame Daudet is right in suggesting that as a measure of precaution we should notify the family.

Where is the family to be found? We know nothing about it; he mentioned the subject so seldom. His cousins the Ratiers at the Château de Jeand'heurs, Lefebvre de Béhaine, brother-in-law of our friend Frédéric Masson, are the only ones whose names and addresses we have at hand. We send telegrams to them and a messenger to Doctor Fort, the physician at Draveil, an excellent man and careful practitioner, who is to come to receive Barié's instructions and relieve him until to-morrow morning.

In the silence and darkness of the country there is a constant going and coming and rumbling of wheels as on the liveliest Thursdays at Champrosay. At eleven o'clock the doctor from Paris goes away, promising to return to-morrow as soon as he has made his visit to the hospital. He has installed his colleague upstairs beside the patient, whom my wife has just seen — still

drowsy and feverish, but calm. He has drunk twice, trying to smile to reassure us and muttering that he is better, much better. Nothing to do now but go to bed, while the doctor keeps vigil overhead, ready to call us at the slightest cause for alarm. I go out on the terrace for a moment. The wind is blowing, sweeping a cloudy sky saturated with storm. The trees in the park stand out a velvety mass as in the *eaux-fortes* of Seymour Haden whom Goncourt taught me to love. Poor fellow! Is this the beginning of a long illness? Are we to be subjected to more weeks of trembling anxiety and suspense, when we have hardly recovered from our intense suffering on account of our child? What a year, what trials! However, let us not cry out, let us not complain, so that *no one may know how we suffer.* That is the best way of cheating evil destiny.

Thursday, July 16.

THE clock on the little church at Champrosay has struck twelve times. Everybody in the house is asleep except the physician and myself. Like Macbeth, I have murdered sleep for several years past, and I take a dose of chloral every night. To-night I delay taking it, not that I have any evil presentiments, but the doctor's footsteps over my head engross my thoughts; I follow him to and fro, I see him approach the bed, lean over the sick man, return to the couch, where he stretches himself out and which he suddenly leaves again.

What is the matter? No, it is nothing. And yet, if — Some one is coming downstairs. Oh! the agony of that stealthy step, which comes nearer and nearer. Some one knocks and says in a low tone:

"The doctor wishes Madame to come upstairs at once."

The voice whispers again, still lower:

"Monsieur had better come too. Monsieur de Goncourt is very ill."

What mysterious nervous strength placed me on my feet, dressed in a twinkling, and carried me to the top of that flight of stairs which ordinarily it is almost impossible for me to ascend? His door is ajar, and his breath, a loud breath horrible to hear — of a sort that I have heard on other nights, alas! — reaches my ears in the hall. Is it possible? Can it really be he that I hear? It was he. He was in the death agony, his features motionless, his face bloated and as it were magnified, his beautiful white hair lying like damp silk on the pillow. A moment of frantic grief and terror. I question the doctor. What in heaven's name has happened? Nothing. The night did not begin badly, but suddenly the pulse quickened, the flesh became hotter, the face even more inflamed. Thus far they had been able to make him drink, but now it was impossible, nothing would pass his lips. This is the end. The doctor tries another injection of ether to satisfy us. No, any sort of effort is useless, almost a profanation; the agony has begun. All about

us, in this bedroom of his where everything is usually so clean and so orderly, the confusion of death is perceptible already. This doctor, who unconsciously talks aloud, these open drawers, these phials and cups on the table, where sheets of paper covered with his fine, even writing are still lying about. And still that stertorous breathing, interrupted at intervals, then resumed, but shorter and more distant after each break, as that noble mind, that enlightened soul recedes into the darkness. My wife kneels at the foot of the bed, praying and weeping; I, knowing no prayers, have taken his hand in mine — poor hand! all moist, yet burning hot — and, leaning over him, my tears mingling with his death-sweat, I speak to him, very low, close to his ear:

"Goncourt, my dear fellow, it is I. I am here, close to you."

I do not know if he can hear me, but at times I fancy that he can, when the loud breathing stops and his beautiful face with its heavy, drooping eyelids seems to listen to what I say of his brother, his brother Jules, whom he loves above all else. Suddenly his hand, the scorching heat of which has sensibly abated within a few moments — his hand is withdrawn from mine, hastily, almost roughly. The death agony, it seems, is marked by such spasmodic movements. To me it was like a hurried departure, when a friend is pressed for time and abruptly tears himself away from your farewells. Ah! Goncourt, faithful and loyal comrade!

How long did we sit beside that death-bed? What time was it when, the tapers being lighted and a rosary placed by his loving friend, my wife, in his beautiful lifeless hands, we returned to our own room, crushed and stupefied with grief? I cannot tell. I know that a ray of dawn was whitening the windows, that I pounced on my chloral like a coward, and that, as I fell asleep, I heard Lucien sobbing in his room below. Two hours later I was awakened by the little bird in the tree near by, Goncourt's bird with his throat swollen with fresh water, whose innocent trills arose joyously in the sunlight. I lay for a moment without thinking, without understanding; and feeling came back to me with memory, cruel memory, when I heard my wife, in a voice broken with tears, ordering the gardener to "cut tall green palms and roses, armfuls of roses, all the roses in the garden."

CHAMPROSAY, Wednesday, August 5, the day of the burial.

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