PASTELS IN PROSE


Pastels
en
Prose

FROM THE FRENCH

Pastels in Prose

Translated by STUART MERRILL, *with illustrations by* HENRY W. MCVICKAR, *and an introduction by* WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS

FROM THE FRENCH

Pastels in Prose

Translated by STUART MERRILL, *with illustrations by* HENRY W. MCVICKAR, *and an introduction by* WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS

NEW YORK
HARPER & BROTHERS, FRANKLIN SQUARE

THE literary form known as a Prose Poem is, like the Song without Words in music, a peculiarly modern invention; I believe it is even more recent, and it is even more subtly suggestive. I do not mean that poetical prose has not always been written; it has not been so much written as prosaic poetry; but our language abounds in noble passages of it, and it will always be written as often as a lift of profound feeling gives thinking wings. Of course one recurs to the greatest Book of all when one speaks of this, and to the sublime passages scattered throughout both Testaments. In a measure the whole Bible is a prose poem in our version, and in the Bible Job and Ecclesiastes are notably prose poems, and in every prophet and every apostle there are passages of the noblest prose poetry. In fact, every strain of eloquence is a strain of

poetry; every impassioned plea or oration is a poem in prose. At times, at all times, deep emotion takes on movement and cadence, and the curious have often selected rhythmical passages from prose authors, and given them the typographical form of poetry, to show how men might be poets without knowing it. Indeed, some writers have intentionally imparted to their prose the flow of verse, as if one should modulate his walk to a dancing step, and have produced a vicious kind in literature, which is as different as possible from the Poem in Prose as the French have cultivated it.

I do not know whether Tourguénief, in his Prose Poems, which sound depths and reach heights untouched by the form before or since, received or gave an impulse in this irregular species of composition; perhaps he did both; but I am sure that the reader of the exquisite pieces in this book will be sensible of qualities and cognizant of traits common to them all, which they have in common with the kindred work of that very great artist. It seems to me that first of everything the reader will notice the beautiful reticence which characterizes them, as if the very freedom which the poets had found in their emancipation from the artificial tram-

mels of verse had put them on their honor, as it were, and bound them to brevity, to simplicity; as if they felt the responsibility they were under to be even more laconic, more delicate, more refined than they might have been in openly confessing the laws of prosody. What struck me most was that apparently none of them had abused his opportunity to saddle his reader with a moral. He had expressed his idea, his emotion, and then left it to take its chance, in a way very uncommon in English verse, at least, and equalled only, so far as I know, in some of the subtile felicities of Heinrich Heine. One would have thought it must fall out in just the other way; that the poet, having all the liberties of prose in his right, could not fail to explain and expound himself, and to make the application. But no; he fashions his pretty fancy on his lovely inspiration; sets it well on the ground, poises it, goes and leaves it. The thing cannot have been easy to learn, and it must always be most difficult to do, for it implies the most courageous faith in art, the finest respect for others, the wisest self-denial.

I do not know the history of the French Poem in Prose, but I am sure that, as we say in our graphic slang, it has come to stay.

It is a form which other languages must naturalize; and we can only hope that criticism will carefully guard the process, and see that it is not vulgarized or coarsened in it. The very life of the form is its aerial delicacy, its soul is that perfume of thought, of emotion, which these masters here have never suffered to become an argument. Its wonderful refinement, which is almost fragility, is happily expressed in the notion of "Pastels;" and more than once, forgetting that modern invention has found a way of fixing the chalks, I have felt, in going over these little pieces, that the slightest rudeness of touch might shake the bloom, the color, from them. As it is, I am certain they must be approached with sympathy by whoever would get all their lovely grace, their charm that comes and goes like the light in beautiful eyes.

W. D. HOWELLS.

NEW YORK, *April*, 1890.

SPECIAL acknowledgments are due to MM. Ephraïm Mikhaël, Pierre Quillard, and Achille Delaroche for the prose poems entitled, respectively, "Solitude," "The Brothers-at-Arms," and "The Conquering Dream," which were written for this volume; to Mme. Émile Hennequin for the six prose poems, by her late husband, selected by her for the translator from among hitherto unpublished manuscripts; and to MM. Catulle Mendès and Stéphane Mallarmé for their courtesy in enabling the translator to include in this collection versions of prose poems from the final proof-sheets of their new volumes.

S. M.

LOUIS BERTRAND.

PAUL LECLERCQ.


LOVIS
BERTRAND


THE STUDENT OF LEYDEN.

MASTER BLASIUS sits in his arm-chair lined with Utrecht velvet, his chin resting on a ruff of fine lace, like a roasted fowl on a faience platter.

He sits before his bank to count the change of half a florin; while I, poor student of Leyden, with my cap and breeches full of holes, wait on one leg, like a crane on a pole.

There is the trebucket that starts from the lacquer box with its bizarre Chinese figures, like a spider that has folded its long legs and sought refuge in a tulip shaded with a thousand tints.

Would you not imagine, seeing the lengthened mien of the master and his wasted fingers trembling while counting the gold-

pieces, that he was a robber caught in the act and constrained, pistol on throat, to render to God what he has won with the devil?

My florin, which thou examinest with distrust through thy magnifying glass, is less equivocal and squinting than thy little gray eye, which smokes like an ill-extinguished lantern.

The trebucket has returned to the lacquer box with its brilliant Chinese figures, Master Blasius has half arisen from his arm-chair lined with Utrecht velvet, and I, bowing to the ground, leave with backward steps; I, poor student of Leyden, whose hose and smallclothes are full of holes.

MY GREAT-GRANDFATHER.

THE venerable personages of the Gothic tapestry, moved by the wind, bowed to one another, and my great-grandfather entered the chamber—my great-grandfather dead wellnigh eighty years ago.

There — it was there before that prie-Dieu that he knelt, my great-grandfather the counsellor, pressing to his beard that yellow missal, opened at the place marked by the ribbon.

He muttered orisons while the night lasted, without once uncrossing his arms from his *camail* of violet silk, without even glancing towards me, his posterity, lying in his bed, his dusty, canopied bed.

And I observed with fear that his eyes were empty, although he seemed to read; that his lips were motionless, although I

heard him pray; that his fingers were fleshless, although they sparkled with precious stones!

And I asked myself whether I was awake or asleep—whether it was the pallor of the moon or of Lucifer—whether it was midnight or the break of day.

THE ROUND UNDER THE BELL.

WELVE sorcerers were dancing a round under the big bell of Saint John's. They invoked the storm one after the other, and from the depths of my bed I counted with terror twelve voices that fell processionally through the darkness.

Immediately the moon hid herself behind the clouds, and rain, mingled with lightning and whirlwinds, lashed my window, while the vanes screeched, like watching cranes when a shower bursts upon them in the woods.

The string of my lute, hanging against a panel, broke; my goldfinch fluttered his wings in the cage; some curious sprite turned over a leaf of the "Romaunce of the Rose" that was sleeping on my desk.

But suddenly the thunder crashed at the top of Saint John's; the sorcerers disappeared, struck to death; and I saw from far their books of magic burning like a torch in the black belfry.

The frightful conflagration painted the walls of the Gothic church with the red flames of purgatory and hell, and prolonged upon the neighboring houses the shadow of the gigantic statue of Saint John.

The vanes became rusty; the moon melted the pearly clouds; the rain only fell drop by drop from the edge of the roof, and the breeze, opening my ill-closed window, threw upon my pillow the flowers of my jasmine bush shaken by the storm.

EVENING ON THE WATER.

THE black gondola glided by the palaces of marble, like a bravo running to some nocturnal adventure, with stiletto and lantern under his cloak.

A cavalier and a lady were conversing of love. "The orange-trees so perfumed, and you so indifferent! Ah, Signora, you are as a statue in a garden!"

"Is this the kiss of a statue, my Georgio? Why do you sulk? You love me, then?" "There is not a star in the heavens that does not know it, and thou knowest it not?"

"What is that noise?" "Nothing; doubtless the splash of the water up and down a step in the stair-way of the Giudecca."

"Help! help!" "Ah, Mother of the Saviour! somebody drowning!" "Step aside; he has been confessed," said a monk, who appeared on the terrace.

And the black gondola strained its oars and glided by the palaces of marble, like a bravo returning from some nocturnal adventure, with stiletto and lantern under his cloak.

MOONLIGHT.

At the hour that separates one day from another, when the city sleeps in silence, I awoke with a start upon a winter's night, as I heard my name pronounced by my side.

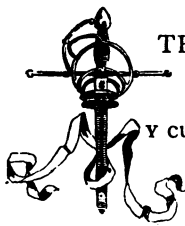
My room was half dark; the moon, clad in a vaporous robe, like a white fairy, was gazing upon my sleep and smiling at me through the windows.

A nocturnal patrol was passing in the street; a homeless dog howled in a deserted cross-way, and the cricket sang in my hearth.

Soon the noises grew fainter by degrees. The nocturnal patrol had departed, a door had been opened to the poor abandoned dog, and the cricket, weary of singing, had fallen asleep; and to me, barely rid of a dream, with eyes yet dazzled by the mar-

vels of another world, all that surrounded me seemed a dream.

Ah, how sweet it is to awaken in the middle of the night, when the moon, that glides mysteriously to your couch, awakens you with a melancholy kiss!



THE GALLANT.

My curled mustaches resemble the tail of the *tarask*, my linen is as white as the table-cloth of an inn, and my doublet is not older than the tapestries of the crown.

Would one imagine, seeing my smart bearing, that hunger, lodged in my belly, is pulling—the torturer!—a rope that strangles me as though I were being hanged?

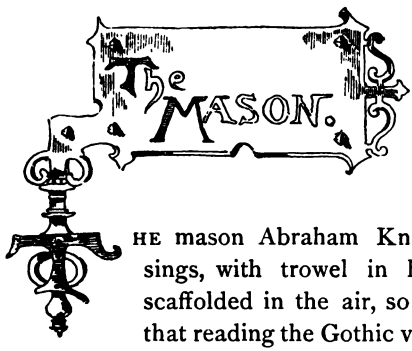
Ah, if from that window, where dances a shrivelling light, a roasted lark had only fallen in the cock of my hat, instead of that faded flower!

The Place Royale, to-night under the links, is as clear as a chapel; look out for the letter! Fresh lemonade! Macaroons of Naples! Here, little one, let me dip a finger

in your *truite à la sauce!* Rascal!—there lacks spice to your April-fool!

Do I not see yonder Marion Delorme on the arm of the Duc de Longueville? Three lapdogs follow her yapping. She has fine diamonds in her ears, the young courtesan! He has fine rubies on his nose, the old courtier!

And the gallant struts about, fist on hip, elbowing the men and smiling on the women. He did not have enough to dine on; he bought himself a bouquet of violets.



THE mason Abraham Knupfer sings, with trowel in hand, scaffolded in the air, so high that reading the Gothic verses on the great bell, he levels under his feet the church with its thirty buttresses and the town with its thirty churches.

He sees the stone gargoyles disgorge the water of the slates into the confused abysm of galleries, of windows, of pendentives, of spires, of towers, of roofs, and of frames which the dented and motionless wing of a tiercelet dashes with a spot of gray.

He sees the fortifications cut in the shape of a star, the citadel that swells out like a hen in a dove-cot, the courts of the palaces where the sun dries, and the fountains and

the cloisters of the monasteries where the shade revolves around the pillars.

The imperial troops are quartered in the faubourg. And now a horseman is drumming yonder. Abraham Knupfer distinguishes his three-horned chapeau, his aiguillettes of red wool, his cockade shot with gold thread, and his queue tied with a ribbon.

And beyond he sees soldiers who, in the park plumed with gigantic branches, upon large lawns of emerald, riddle with their arquebuses a wooden bird, stuck on the top of a May-pole.

And in the evening, when the harmonious nave of the cathedral fell asleep, with its arms extended in the shape of a cross, he perceived, from his ladder, towards the horizon, a village fired by the men-at-arms that flamed like a comet through the azure.

THE SALAMANDER.

"CRICKET, my friend, art thou dead, that thou remainest deaf to the sound of my whistle, and blind to the light of the fire?"

And the cricket, notwithstanding the affectionate words of the salamander, did not answer, either because he was sleeping a magic sleep, or because his whim was to sulk.

"Oh, sing me thy song of every evening, in thy home of cinders and soot, behind the plate of iron escutcheoned with three heraldic flowers-de-luce."

But still the cricket did not answer, and the tearful salamander at times listened for its voice, and at others hummed with the flame of changing colors, pink, blue, red, yellow, white, and violet.

"He is dead, he is dead, the cricket my friend!" And I thought I heard sighs and sobs, while the flame, livid now, grew fainter in the saddened hearth.

"He is dead, and since he is dead, I wish to die!" The vine-knots were consumed, the flame dragged itself on the embers and threw its farewell to the pot-hook, and the salamander died of inanition.

HENRIQUEZ.

"FOR a year I have commanded you," said the captain; "now another must succeed me. I marry a rich widow of Cordova, and I give up the stiletto of the brigand for the staff of the corregidor."

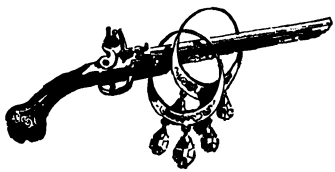
He opened the coffer where lay the treasure to be divided: sacred vases pall mall, quadruple jewels, a rain of pearls, and a string of diamonds.

"For you, Henriquez, the ear-rings and the ring of the Marquis of Aroea; for you killed him in his post-chaise with a carbine-shot!"

Henriquez slipped upon his finger the bleeding topaz, and hung on his ears the amethysts cut in the shape of drops of blood.

Such was the fate of those ear-rings with which the Duchess of Medina-Coela had adorned herself, and which Henriquez, a month later, gave in exchange for a kiss to the jailer's daughter.

Such was the fate of that ring which a hidalgo had bought from an emir for the price of a white mare, and with which Henriquez paid for a glass of brandy a few minutes before he was hanged.



THE TULIP VENDOR.

No noise unless it be the rustling of the vellum leaves between the fingers of Doctor Huylten, who only detached his eyes from his Bible strewn with Gothic illuminations to admire the gold and purple of two fishes captive within the hunted sphere of a globe.

The door rolled on its hinges. It was a flower merchant who, with several pots of tulips in his arms, made excuse for interrupting the studies of so learned a personage.

"Master," said he, "here is the treasure of treasures among tulips, the marvel of marvels, a bulb such as only flowers once a century in the seraglio of the Emperor of Constantinople."

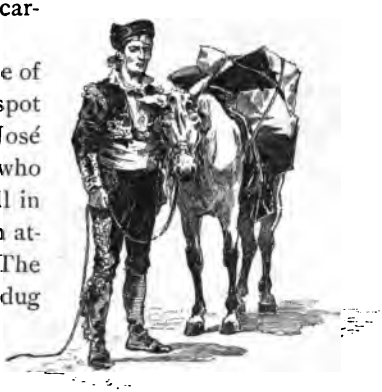
"A tulip!" exclaimed the irate old man, "a tulip! that symbol of pride and luxury, that has engendered in the stricken town of Wittenberg the detestable heresy of Luther and Melancthon!"

Master Huylten fastened the clasps of his Bible, slipped his spectacles back in their case, and drew the curtain from the window, through which could be seen in the sun a passion-flower, with its crown of thorns, its sponge, its scourge, its nails, and the five wounds of Our Saviour.

The tulip vendor bowed respectfully and in silence, disconcerted by an inquisitive glance from the Duke of Alva, whose portrait, a masterpiece by Holbein, was hanging on the wall.

THE MULETEERS.

THEY are counting their rosaries or plaiting their hair, the dark Andalusians, indolently swaying with the gait of their mules; some of the arrieros are singing the canticle of the pilgrims of Saint Jacques, re-echoed by the hundred caverns of the sierra; others are firing their carbines at the sun.



"Here," says one of the guides, "is the spot where we buried José Mateos last week, who was killed by a ball in the nape, during an attack of brigands. The grave has been dug open, and the body is gone."

"The body is not far," says a muleteer; "I see it floating, swollen like a water-bag, at the bottom of the ravine."

"Our Lady of Atocha, watch over us!" cried the dark Andalusians, indolently swaying with the gait of their mules.

"Whose is the hut on that point of rock?" asked a hidalgo through the door of his chaise. "Is it the cabin of the wood-cutters who have thrown those gigantic trunks into the foaming gulf of the torrent, or that of the herdsmen who lead their weary goats upon these barren slopes?"

A muleteer answered: "It is the cell of an old hermit who was found dead this autumn on his bed of leaves. A rope was knotted around his neck, and his tongue hung out of his mouth."

"Our Lady of Atocha, watch over us!" cried the dark Andalusians, indolently swaying with the gait of their mules.

"Those three horsemen wrapped in their cloaks, who observed us so closely as they passed, are not of our band. Who are they?" asked a monk with dusty beard and robe.

"If they are not alguazils from Cienfuegos

on their rounds," answered a muleteer, "they are robbers sent out as scouts by their captain, the infernal Gil Pueblo."

"Our Lady of Atocha, watch over us!" cried the dark Andalusians, indolently swaying with the gait of their mules.

"Did you hear that carbine-shot among the bushes?" asked an ink merchant with bare feet. "See! the smoke is curling in the air."

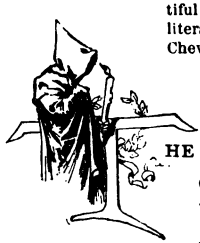
A muleteer answered: "They are our people beating the bushes and burning cartridges to distract the brigands. Señors and Señorinas, courage, and forward with both spurs!"

"Our Lady of Atocha, watch over us!" cried the dark Andalusians, indolently swaying with the gait of their mules.

And all the travellers started on a gallop, in the midst of a cloud of dust flaming under the sun; the mules defiled between enormous blocks of granite, the torrent roared in seething eddies, the immense forests bent, cracking, and confusedly, from those profound solitudes moved by the wind, arose menacing voices, which sounded nearer, then farther, as though a band of robbers were lurking in the neighborhood.

MADAME DE MONTBAZON.

Madame de Montbazon was a most beautiful being, who died of love — and that literally — in the other century, for the Chevalier de la Rue, who loved her not.
—*Mémoires de Saint-Simon.*



THE maid-in-waiting placed a vase of flowers upon the lacquer table, and arranged the wax-tapers, whose reflections watered with red and yellow the blue silk curtains hanging over the bed of the suffering lady.

"Thinkest thou, Mariette, that he will come?"

"Oh, sleep, sleep a little, Madame!"

"Yes, I shall soon sleep, to dream of him throughout eternity!"

Some one was now heard ascending the stairs.

"Ah, if that were he!" murmured the dying

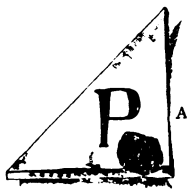
lady, smiling, with the butterfly of the tombs already upon her lips.

It was a little page whom the Queen had sent to Madame la Duchesse with sweetmeats, biscuits, and elixirs on a silver tray.

"Ah, he does not come!" she said, in failing tones; "he will not come! Mariette, give me one of those flowers, that I may breathe it and kiss it for the love of him!"

Then Madame de Montbazon, closing her eyes, remained motionless. She had died of love, giving up her soul in the perfume of a hyacinth.

PADRE PUGNACCIO.



ADRE PUGNACCIO, his cranium out of his hood, was ascending the steps in the dome of Saint Peter between two penitents wrapped in mantillas; bells could be heard quarrelling in the clouds.

One of the penitents—it was the aunt—counted an *Ave* for each bead of her rosary; and the other—it was the niece—ogled from out the corner of her eyes a handsome officer of the Pope's guards.

The monk muttered to the old woman, "Make a donation to my convent;" and the officer slipped a perfumed *billet-doux* into the young girl's hands.

The sinner wiped a few tears from her

eyes; the maiden blushed with pleasure; the monk was calculating the interest of a thousand piastres at twelve per cent., and the officer was gazing at himself in a hand-mirror and curling the tips of his mustachios.

And the devil, squatting in the capacious sleeve of Padre Pugnaccio, chuckled like Pulcinello.


Paul Leclercq

A STORY IN WHITE.

I.
CHRISTMAS.

WHITE PIERROT, in his white bed, dreams of sombre things.

He dreams of Columbine, who is asleep near him; he dreams of her little slipper, no bigger than a rose-leaf, which seems, before the extinguished hearth, to be waiting sadly for Santa Claus.

The pink slipper seems to be waiting before the extinguished hearth, but poor Pierrot has no other money than the great white flakes gathering slowly on the roofs—money that does not pass current, even with the good God.

Pierrot thinks, indeed, of borrowing a few golden rays from the moon, who is looking

at him through the casement, but she dwells so far, that money-lender of lovers and of Pierrots!

The little pink slipper is still waiting; Columbine is asleep.

"Arise, friend Pierrot, take thy guitar, that old companion, and seek thy fortune on the roofs. The air and the snow will refresh thy thoughts; they are now as crooked as a crescent moon."

And off Pierrot goes, skipping from roof to roof.

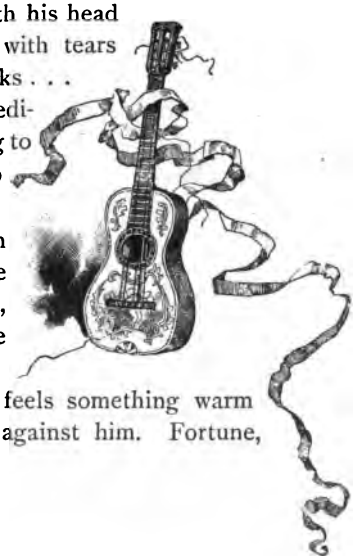
By the light of the moon Pierrot skips in the snow; the chimney-pots look like great ghosts, but Pierrot is not afraid, by the light of the moon.

"What are chimney-pots for, unless it be to give refuge to frozen sparrows, and to offer peep-holes to curious Pierrots?" thinks he, lifting himself up on tiptoe in order to see better.

Do you know what Pierrot sees? He sees a little slipper, almost like Columbine's, filled with roses and lilacs.

Ah, if thy arm were longer, friend Pierrot!

Weary, discouraged, Pierrot rests against a chimney-pot. With his head on his hands, and with tears in his eyes, he thinks . . . he thinks. . . . But meditation brings nothing to the unhappy. Who knows if music . . . .



White Pierrot, on the white roof, by the light of the moon, twangs sadly on the guitar.

Of a sudden, he feels something warm and soft brushing against him. Fortune, perhaps.

It was not Fortune, but a big gutter-cat, all black.

"Oh, the pretty Christmas present for Columbine! A cat—almost a child!"

Pierrot slings his guitar on his shoulder, and carrying the cat in his arms, betakes himself homeward.

He reaches the garret fagged out, chilled through, black with soot; he runs to the hearth, but, alas! Columbine's slipper is no longer there. The little slipper, no bigger than a rose-leaf, has blown away—Columbine has gone!

And, forgotten in a corner, where a few hours before his love was sleeping, do you know what he found?

A black hat, blacker than his cat, a hat such as is worn neither by Pierrots nor poets.

II.
A Kiss.

Poor Pierrot, all that thou hast left is a cat, a guitar, and a heart, and thou hast not paid thy rent to that terrible Dame Pipelet.

Fly, Pierrot, fly far from that great Paris

where thou hast so much loved, so much suffered; fly towards the silent forests, where thou canst wander like a butterfly.

Pierrot, followed by his cat, walks across the country. Where is he going to? He knows not; he goes straight before him; his stomach is empty, and his white coat is whipped into tatters by the north wind. But Pierrot feels nothing; he meditates.

The hours go by. Pierrot walks, walks on.

The sunset falls upon the plains of snow. Over there, far away, Paris scintillates like the firmament. Pierrot contemplates, in the silence of solitudes, the city whose lamps are being lighted. It seems to him that the little lights studding its sombre mass reach to the stars to weave him a shroud.

The moon arises from behind the clouds; mistress of ceremonies, she also looks at Paris, with her great red face, but she does not weep.

He stands there, scrutinizing the darkened horizon; over there lies all that he loves; behind that veil is Columbine.

Pierrot, in tears, throws a last look at Paris which disappears with his memories, and with one hand he wafts it a kiss; then he resumes his crazy wanderings, escorted by his cat.

No, thou shalt never be loved, Pierrot; love is not captured by dreams; thy poet's nature is of less use than the pocket-book of the poorest bourgeois.

Pierrot walks, walks on.

Towards morning he entered a wood where the songs of the birds, his brothers, attracted him, and he lay down under a bush.

While he was sleeping a tomtit perched on his mouth and pecked at it.

"Thou art loved at last, Pierrot!" thought he, on awaking; "the tomtit kisses thee; she loves thee!"

"She took thy mouth for a cherry," murmured a sly woodpecker.

III.
By the Light o' the Moon.

Years have gone by; Pierrot is very ill; white Pierrot is on the point of death.

At the foot of a willow-tree, among the

grasses and the corn-flowers, two little tombs lie side by side.

On one a few white roses are in flower; it is Columbine's. On the other run wild weeds; it is the Muse's.

Pierrot gazes upon both tombs and remembers — remembers that he has always been ungrateful. He has placed roses upon the tomb of a faithless one who has broken his heart; he has wept for a hypocrite who had always mocked him, while he had allowed the weeds to mould upon the tomb of the Muse, who alone in the world had never abandoned him.

Ah, how he remembered all! He saw his past life in a dream, and regretted that he had lived.

Pierrot is very ill; white Pierrot is going to die.

He lies down among the high grasses on the neglected tomb of the Muse, and waits.

He waits, before dying, for the moon to light him a last time with her rays; he waits for the pale twinkling of the friendly stars to guide his soul to heaven.

The angelus tolls afar, the birds sing, the

night falls. Lying among the high grasses on the neglected tomb, white Pierrot blows a last kiss to Columbine, and falls into everlasting sleep, shrouded in a ray of the moon.


Théodore
de
Banville.

A GREAT corbel of Roses and a great corbel of Lilies both burst into flower at the same time in the garden of the poet. The Lilies and the Roses are intoxicated with joy. The soft summer wind caresses them and the sun kisses them, and makes the clear colors of their corals sparkle like the fires of precious stones. With a voice that makes no sound, and yet that can be heard, with the mysterious voice that emanates from things believed to be inanimate, they say, swaying in the light:

"We, the Flowers, are happy, because we live in the garden of the good poet, where we perform our proper functions, and where we exist purely and simply as Flowers, without fear of furnishing a pretext for classical tropes and of being used as terms of com-

parison. And as no philistine and no sayer of commonplaces will enter the garden, nobody will pretend that we have any relations with the winged butterflies—which is as absurd as to suppose any love between doves and crocodiles. And we, the Lilies with the straight petals and green chalices —we will gloriously uplift our golden pistils; and we, the blushing Roses with ecstatic hearts—we will bloom for no reason at all, for the simple pleasure of it, without being constrained to affirm the pretended whiteness of red or green women, and without the humiliation of being compared to any young lady."

THE ANGELS.

GREATER and taller than our minds can figure them, through the immense ether where swarm the Infinites, and where the groups of worlds seem but specks of a vague dust, three silent Angels, intrusted with important messages, hasten their vertiginous flight. They are mounted on white horses of light, and clad in armor of scarlet diamond, to fight, if necessary, the monsters and hydras. They rush forward, causing the comets to flee, striking the frightened constellations, and, as they pass, brushing aside with their imperious fingers the manes of the suns. They are Malushiel of the fiery locks, who was the teacher of the prophet Elijah; Saramiel, the Shield of God; and Metator, the greatest of the Cherubim, he whose dazzling white beard floats to his

knees; and in their midst rides the young Angel Uriel. While his horse is at full gallop the child Angel, clutching its mane and bending down, picks up on the road an insignificant little ball, and in sport is about to fling it, with his yet feeble hands, over millions of Infinites; but the wise Metator arrests his arm.

"Drop it," he says.

"Ah!" says Uriel, lifting his innocent eyes, which mirror the deep skies, "is it of any use, this little ball?"

"No," answers the Messenger, "it is not of much use, but drop it, nevertheless. It is the Earth!"

REMEMBRANCE.

SHE and He, the two Souls, the two Lights, the two blissful Spirits, Thero and Celmis, transfigured by a gigantic grace, united, leaning against each other in close embrace, advance with rhythmic steps through the clear Paradises. They have crossed the cities of diamond, whose spires press together, and the high forest of violets, and the calm river as wide as twenty oceans, and the bank with a single rose-tree, whose branches laden with flowers cast their shade upon the great waters. Softly ravished by the resonance of subtle perfumes and by the strains of silent music, they enter a large glade, whence they can perceive in the infinite ether all the flocks of the stars and the constellations.

"See," said Celmis, "gaze afar upon that small and fugitive spark. It is the Earth.

Dost thou still remember that we once dwelt there? Yes, many thousands and thousands of centuries before the sacred and triumphal hour, overflowing with bliss, when at last we saw, in the ecstasy of the light flaming with gladness, what cannot be expressed even in celestial words; before we, ever renovated, rejuvenated, and strengthened, had inhabited so many planets and stars; before the long persistence of a mutual love had made us exactly alike, so that my form reflects thine like a mirror, and the angels cannot distinguish our thoughts and the flames of our hair; yes, long before that, we inhabited that vague and distant point; and we even knew something there that was called suffering; but I can no longer remember what it was!"

HARLEQUIN.

He has stolen from the cat his agile grace, and from the pug-dog his black and whiskered face. He has taken from the king a piece of his purple robe, from the Jew a piece of his yellow robe, from the spring a piece of its green robe, and with these rags he has made for himself a monkey's dress, that fits closely to his lithe and graceful form. He has slipped through his belt of red leather a lath covered with fair white skin, which, before striking, tickles and caresses; his red shoes, in which there is quicksilver, trace without repose the figure of a lawless dance, and out of a cloud he has cut his hat that forever changes its shape.

Thus, waited upon like a king, skilful as a Jew, ever young like the immortal April in bloom, he flies through the cities and the fields, amorously followed by white Columbas and Columbines, who, seeing that he has wherewith to stun, to dazzle, and to beat them, adore the horrible and charming monster. And he, fluttering like the hideous butterfly with brilliant wings, embraces them in his flexible arms. He amuses, courts, caresses, and beats them; and dragging them after him in his vertiginous dance through enchanted and conquered Nature, he forces them to kiss his ugly dog's mug —and that is Harlequin!

THE GODDESS.

SHE has opened an immense hole in the soft ground, which she quickly digs up with her skeleton fingers, and bending her ribs and inclining her white smooth skull, she heaps together in the abysm old men and youths, women and children, cold, pale and stiff, whose lids she silently closes.

"Ah!" sighs the dreamer, who sadly and with heavy heart sees her accomplish her work, "accursed, accursed be thou, destroyer of beings, detestable and cruel Death, and mayest thou be dominated and desolated by the ever-renewed floods of immortal Life!"

The grave-digger has arisen. She turns her face; she is now made of pink and charming flesh; her friendly brow is crowned

with rosy corals. She bears in her arms fair naked children, who laugh to the sky, and she says softly to the dreamer, while gazing at him with eyes full of joy:

"I am she who accomplishes without cease and without end the transformation of all. Beneath my fingers the flowers that have become cinders bloom once more, and I am both She whom thou namest Death, and She whom thou namest Life!"

THE INEFFABLE.

"WHAT!" murmur the humiliated souls, gazing at one another with horror; "we, heavy with sins and hatred, and defiled with black stains, we are welcomed, O pity! in the refreshing light of Truth, and in the ravishment which is never to end!"

"Oh, dear Souls!" says the sweet Child clad in whiteness amid the light, calm, and lifting his victorious hands as when he spake before the doctors, "do you not understand that my pity is an ever-flowing river? Ah, do not thrill with terror, but fly with sure wings towards the candor of the pure lilies, and towards the immortal glory of the roses! For He who fashioned you with His hands can also wash and efface your crimes in the flood of His immense love."

And while the walls of iron, the sad frozen

lakes, the citadels of brass, the red smoking braziers, and the fearful circles of Night, devoured by the ecstatic light, grow dim and vanish, the arches, the stair-ways, and the pillars of Paradise mount, one upon another, far up into the azure, rising towards the palaces and the gardens of bliss—open, quivering, ravished, filling the diamonded day of the innumerable Infinites; and, under the whitening lightning of myriads of stars, the Souls, like a swarming flight of blue butterflies, ascend, charmed by the rhythm of the triumphal ode, up to the flaming whiteness, where shudders and begins already the vague reflection of what cannot be expressed in human words.


ALPHONSE DAUDET.

THE DEATH OF THE DAUPHIN.

THE little Dauphin is ill; the little Dauphin is dying. In all the churches of the kingdom the Holy Sacrament remains exposed night and day, and great tapers burn, for the recovery of the royal child. The streets of the old capital are sad and silent, the bells ring no more, the carriages slacken their pace. In the neighborhood of the palace the curious towns-people gaze through the railings upon the beadles with gilded paunches, who converse in the courts and put on important airs.

All the castle is in a flutter. Chamberlains and major-domos run up and down the marble stair-ways. The galleries are full of pages and of courtiers in silken apparel, who hurry from one group to another, beg-

ging in low tones for news. Upon the wide perrons the maids of honor, in tears, exchange low courtesies and wipe their eyes with daintily embroidered handkerchiefs.

A large assemblage of robed physicians has gathered in the Orangery. They can be seen through the panes waving their long black sleeves and inclining their periwigs with professional gestures. The governor and the equerry of the little Dauphin walk up and down before the door awaiting the decision of the Faculty. Scullions pass by without saluting them. The equerry swears like a pagan; the governor quotes verses from Horace.

And meanwhile, over there, in the direction of the stables, is heard a long and plaintive neighing; it is the little Dauphin's sorrel, forgotten by the hostlers, and calling sadly before his empty manger.

And the King? Where is his Highness the King? The King has locked himself up in a room at the other end of the castle. Majesties do not like to be seen weeping. For the Queen it is different. Sitting by the bedside of the little Dauphin, she bows her

fair face, bathed in tears, and sobs very loudly before everybody, like a mere draper's wife.

On the bed embroidered with lace the little Dauphin, whiter than the pillows on which he is extended, lies with closed eyes. They think that he is asleep; but no, the little Dauphin is not asleep. He turns towards his mother, and seeing her tears, he asks:

"Madame la Reine, why do you weep? Do you really believe that I am going to die?"

The Queen tries to answer. Sobs prevent her from speaking.

"Do not weep, Madame la Reine. You forget that I am the Dauphin, and that Dauphins cannot die thus."

The Queen sobs more violently, and the little Dauphin begins to feel frightened.

"Holloa!" says he, "I do not want Death to come and take me away, and I know how to prevent him from coming here. Order up on the spot forty of the strongest lansquenets to keep guard around our bed! Have a hundred big cannons watch day and

night, with lighted fuses, under our windows! And woe to Death if he dares to come near us!"

In order to humor the royal child, the Queen makes a sign. On the spot the great cannons are heard rolling in the courts, and forty tall lansquenets, with halberds in their fists, draw up around the room. They are all veterans, with grizzly mustaches. The little Dauphin claps his hands on seeing them. He recognizes one, and calls,

"Lorrain! Lorrain!"

The veteran makes a step towards the bed.

"I love you well, my old Lorrain. Let me see your big sword. If Death wants to fetch me, you will kill him, won't you?"

Lorrain answers:

"Yes, Monseigneur."

And two great tears roll down his tanned cheeks.

At that moment the chaplain approaches the little Dauphin, and pointing to the crucifix, talks to him in low tones. The little Dauphin listens with astonished air; then, suddenly interrupting him,

"I understand well what you are saying, Monsieur l'Abbé; but still, couldn't my little friend Beppo die in my place, if I gave him plenty of money?"

The chaplain continues to talk to him in low tones, and the little Dauphin looks more and more astonished.

When the chaplain has finished, the little Dauphin resumes, with a heavy sigh:

"What you have said is all very sad, Monsieur l'Abbé; but one thing consoles me, and that is that up there, in the Paradise of the stars, I shall still be the Dauphin. I know that the good God is my cousin, and cannot fail to treat me according to my rank."

Then he adds, turning towards his mother:

"Bring me my fairest clothes, my doublet of white ermine, and my pumps of velvet! I wish to look brave to the angels, and to enter Paradise in the dress of a Dauphin."

A third time the chaplain bends over the little Dauphin, and talks to him in low tones. In the midst of his discourse the royal child interrupts him angrily.

"Why, then," he cries, "to be Dauphin is nothing at all!"

And refusing to listen to anything more, the little Dauphin turns towards the wall and weeps bitterly.

THE SOUS-PRÉFET AFIELD.

MONSIEUR the sous-Préfet is on his rounds. With coachman before and lackey behind, the barouche of the sous-préfecture carries him majestically to the agricultural fair of the Combe-aux-Fées. For that memorable day Monsieur the sous-Préfet has put on his best embroidered coat, his little cocked hat, his tight-fitting breeches with silver bands, and his gala sword with hilt of mother-of-pearl. Upon his lap lies a great portfolio of embossed shagreen, upon which he gazes sadly.

Monsieur the sous-Préfet gazes sadly on his portfolio of embossed shagreen; he is thinking of the famous speech which he will have to make presently before the citizens of the Combe-aux-Fées. But although he twists the blond silk of his whiskers, and re-

peats, twenty times over, "*Messieurs et chers administrés*," the rest of the speech does not come.

The rest of the speech does not come. It is so hot in the barouche! As far as the eye can reach, the road of the Combe-aux-Fées powders under the sun of the South. The air is scorching, and in the elms that border the road, all covered with white dust, thousands of cicadas answer one another from tree to tree. Suddenly Monsieur the sous-Préfet gives a start. Over there, at the foot of a slope, he has just perceived a little wood of green oaks that beckons to him.

The little wood of green oaks seems to beckon to him.

"Come this way, Monsieur the sous-Préfet; to compose your speech, you will be much more comfortable under my trees."

Monsieur the sous-Préfet is tempted. He jumps from his barouche, and tells his servants to wait for him; that he is going to compose his speech in the little wood of green oaks.

In the little wood of green oaks there are

birds, violets, and springs under the tender grass. As soon as they saw Monsieur the sous-Préfet, with his fine breeches and his portfolio of embossed shagreen, the birds felt frightened and stopped singing, the springs no longer dared to make any noise, and the violets hid themselves in the sward. That little world had never seen a sous-préfet, and asks itself, in low tones, who that fine seigneur was who walked about in silver breeches.

In low tones, under the leafage, they ask themselves who that fine seigneur is in silver breeches. Meanwhile Monsieur the sous-Préfet, delighted with the silence and the coolness of the wood, lifts his coat-tails, deposits his cocked hat on the grass, and sits in the moss at the foot of a young oak. Then he opens on his knees his great portfolio of embossed shagreen, and takes from it a large sheet of official foolscap.

"He is an artist," says a warbler.

"No," says a bullfinch, "he is not an artist, since he wears silver breeches; he is rather a prince."

"He is rather a prince," says the bull-finch.

"Neither an artist nor a prince," interrupts an old nightingale, who has sung for a whole season in the gardens of the sous-préfecture; "I know what he is; he is a sous-préfet."

And all the little wood goes whispering:

"He is a sous-préfet! He is a sous-préfet!"

"How bald he is!" remarks a lark with a great tuft on his head.

The violets ask:

"Is it dangerous?"

"Is it dangerous?" ask the violets.

The old nightingale answers:

"Not at all!"

And upon that assurance the birds recommence to sing, the springs to run, the violets to shed their perfume, as though the gentleman were not there. Unconscious amid all the merry din, Monsieur the sous-Préfet invokes in his heart the Muse of agricultural fairs, and with lifted pencil begins to declaim in ceremonial tones:

"*Messieurs et chers administrés*—"

"*Messieurs et chers administrés*," says the sous-Préfet, in ceremonial tones.

A burst of laughter interrupts him; he turns around and sees nothing but a fat woodpecker perched upon his cocked hat, who looks at him and laughs. The sous-Préfet shrugs his shoulders and tries to continue his speech; but the woodpecker interrupts him anew, and calls out from afar:

"What is the use?"

"How, what is the use!" says the sous-Préfet, who gets quite red; and chasing away the impudent bird with a gesture, he begins afresh:

"*Messieurs et chers Administrés*—"

"*Messieurs et chers Administrés*," begins the sous-Préfet afresh.

But lo! the little violets lift themselves up towards him on the tips of their stems, and softly say:

"Monsieur le sous-Préfet, do you perceive how good we smell?"

And the springs make a divine music under the moss, and in the branches over his head many warblers come and sing him their pretty tunes; and all the little wood conspires to prevent him from composing his speech.

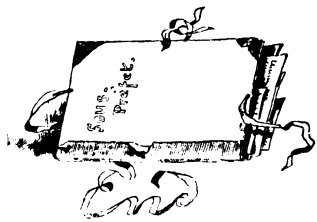
All the little wood conspires to prevent

him from composing his speech. Monsieur the sous-Préfet, drunk with perfumes, dazed by music, attempts vainly to resist the new charm that invades his being. He leans on his elbows in the grass, unbuttons his fine coat, stammers again twice or thrice:

"*Messieurs et chers Administrés . . . . Messieurs et chers Admi . . . . Messieurs et chers . . . .*"

Then he sends the *administrés* to the devil, and the Muse of agricultural fairs has now but to veil her face.

Veil thy face, O Muse of agricultural fairs! When, at the end of one hour, the servants of the sous-préfecture, anxious about their master, entered the little wood, they saw a sight that made them recoil with horror. Monsieur the sous-Préfet was lying on his stomach in the grass, as untidy as a bohemian. He had taken off his coat; and while chewing violets, Monsieur the sous-Préfet was composing verses.




Comte de Villiers
de l'Isle-Adam.

VOX POPULI.

GRAND review at the Champs-Elysées that day!

Twelve years have been suffered since that vision. A summer sun shattered its long arrows of gold against the roofs and domes of the ancient capital. Thousands of panes reflected its dazzling rays; the people, bathed in a powdery light, thronged the streets to gaze at the army.

Sitting upon a high wooden stool before the railing of the parvis of Notre Dame, his knees folded under black rags, his hands joined under the placard that legally sanctioned his blindness, the centenarian beggar, patriarch of the Misery of Paris — a mournful face of ashen tint, with skin furrowed by wrinkles of the color of earth—

lent his shadowy presence to the *Te Deum* of the surrounding festival.

All these people, were they not his brethren? The joyous passers-by, were they not his kin? Were they not human, like him? Besides, that guest of the sovereign portal was not entirely destitute: the State had recognized his right to be blind.

Clothed with the title and respectability implied in the official right to receive alms, enjoying, moreover, a voter's privilege, he was our equal—except in light.

And that man, forgotten, as it were, among the living, articulated from time to time a monotonous plaint—evident syllabification of the profound sighs of his whole lifetime:

"Have pity on the blind, if you please!"

Around him, beneath the powerful vibrations fallen from the belfry—outside, yonder, beyond the wall of his eyes—the trampling of cavalry, the intermittent braying of trumpets, acclamations mingled with salvoes of artillery from the *Invalides* with the proud

shouts of command, the rattle of steel, and the thunder of drums scanning the interminable march of the passing infantry, a rumor of glory reached him! His trained hearing caught even the rustle of the floating standards whose heavy fringes brushed against the cuirasses. In the mind of the old captive of obscurity a thousand flashes of sensation evoked visions foreknown yet indistinct. A sort of divination informed him of what fevered the hearts and thoughts of the city.

And the people, fascinated, as always, by the prestige that comes from strokes of boldness and fortune, clamored its prayer of the moment:

"Long live the Emperor!"

But during the lulls of the triumphal tempest a lost voice arose in the direction of the mystic railing. The old man, his neck thrown back against the pillory of bars, rolling his dead eyeballs towards the sky, forgotten by that people of which he seemed alone to express the genuine prayer, the prayer hidden under the hurrahs, the secret and personal prayer, droned, like

an augural interceder, his now mysterious phrase:

"Have pity on the blind, if you please!"

Grand review at the Champs-Elysées that day!

Now ten years have flown since the sun of that festival—same sounds, same voices, same smoke. A sordine, however, tempered the tumult of the public rejoicings. A shadow weighed on the eyes of all. The ceremonial salvoes from the platform of the Prytaneum were crossed this time by the distant growls of the batteries in our forts; and straining their ears, the people sought already to distinguish in the echoes the answer of the enemy's approaching cannon.

The Governor, borne by the ambling trot of his thorough-bred, passed, smiling upon all. The people, reassured by the confidence which an irreproachable demeanor always inspires, alternated with patriotic songs the military applause with which they honored the presence of the soldier.

But the syllables of the furious cheer of

yore had been modified; the distracted people preferred the prayer of the moment:

"Long live the Republic!"

And yonder, in the direction of the sublime threshold, could still be distinguished the solitary voice of Lazarus. The sayer of the hidden thought of the people did not modify the rigidity of his fixed plaint. Sincere soul of the festival, uplifting his extinguished eyes to the sky, he cried out, during the silences, with the accent of one making a statement:

"Have pity on the blind, if you please!"

Grand review at the Champs-Elysées that day!

Now nine months have been endured since that troubled sun. Oh! same rumors, same clashing of arms, same neighing of horses, more muffled, however, than the previous year, but yet noisy.

"Long live the Commune!" shouted the people to the passing wind.

And the voice of the secular Elect of Misfortune still repeated, yonder upon the

sacred threshold, his refrain that connected the unique thought of the people. Raising his trembling head to the sky, he moaned in the shadow:

"Have pity on the blind, if you please!"

And two moons later, when, to the last vibrations of the tocsin, the generalissimo of the regular forces of the State reviewed his two hundred thousand guns, still smoking, alas! from the sad civil war, the terrified people shouted, while gazing upon the edifices flaming afar:

"Long live the Marshal!"

Yonder, in the direction of the pure enclosure, the immutable voice of the veteran of human misery mechanically repeated his dolorous and piteous observation:

"Have pity on the blind, if you please!"

And since then, from year to year, from review to review, from vociferations to vociferations, whatever might be the name thrown to the hazards of space by the cheer-

ing people, those who listen attentively to the sounds of the earth have always distinguished, above the revolutionary clamors and the warlike festivals that followed, the far-away Voice, the true Voice, the intimate Voice of the terrible symbolical beggar, of the incorruptible sentinel of the citizens' conscience, of him who restores integrally the occult prayer of the Crowd and expresses its sighs.

Inflexible Pontiff of fraternity, that authorized titulary of physical blindness, has never ceased, like an unconscious mediator, to invoke the divine charity upon his brethren in intelligence.

And when, intoxicated with fanfares, with peals of bells and with artillery, the people, dazed by the flattering uproar, endeavors vainly, under whatever syllables falsely enthusiastic, to hide from itself its veritable prayer, the beggar, groping through the sky, his arms uplifted, his face towards the heavy darkness, arises on the eternal threshold of the church, and

seem, however, to carry beyond the stars, in tones more and more lamentable, which continues to cry his prophetic rectification:

"Have pity on the blind, if you please!"


George Auriol.

THE HARPSICHORD OF YEDDO.

UPON an old harpsichord of the time of Marie Antoinette—that has found its way, no one knows how, to the country of the Mikados—the frivolous Lou-Laou-Ti plays a love-song. Perched upon the unsteady stool, like a doll upon a stand, with head thrown back, the young girl sings softly. Her white and delicate fingers

dance madly upon the yellowed ivory, then sweep very gravely over the keys of ebony, and recommence to flutter distractedly hither and thither. The harpsichord, with its clear and caressing voice, seems, under the witchery of the little fairy, to find in its old heart shudders, murmurs, and vibrations long forgotten. And that puffed dress of blue, flowered with roses, is it not of a marquise?

Oh, how their songs marvellously harmonize! Dost thou speak Japanese, centenarian clavichord? Or thou, graceful Japanese maid, dost thou know, perchance, the pretty speech of France? The pot-bellied images, dozing on their pedestals of porcelain, open astonished eyes at the unaccustomed concert, and from their stelas of bronze the familiar gods wonder what it all means.

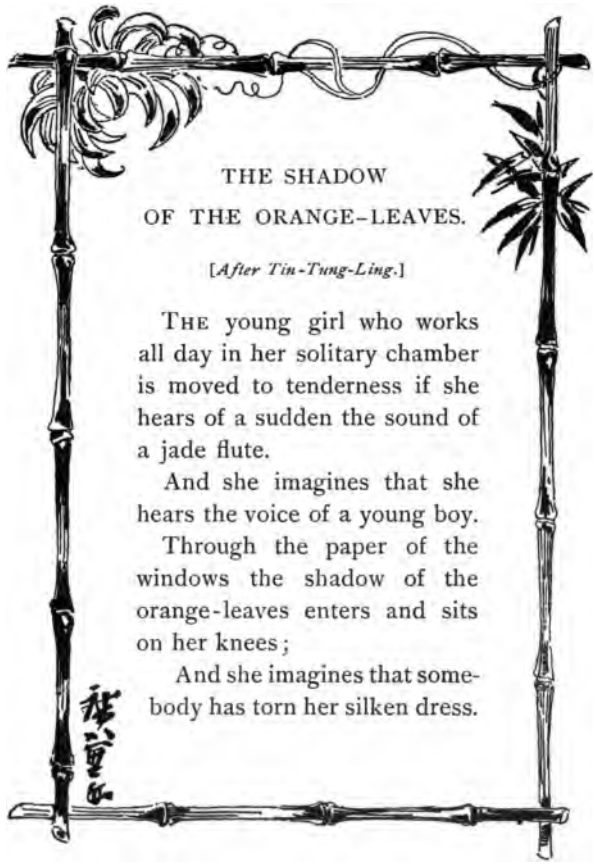
And suddenly all the statuettes change into graceful groups of pale Saxe, and the bands of monkeys embroidered upon the silk screens become groups of rosy cupids that might have been painted by Boucher himself. And the black hair of Lou-Laou-Ti seems covered with a vapory snow.

Eh, but forgive me; it is truly a marquise that is playing there on the harpsichord; it is a marquise, for she is singing,

"Il pleut, il pleut, bergère—"

Then the heart of the old instrument warms; its tremulous chords vibrate in a supreme harmony, happy at having transformed, by their sole charm, the interior of a Japanese apartment, and at having procured to a young woman, who can neither say *papa* nor *maman*, the great honor of singing a couplet of poor Fabre d'Eglantine, as though she had just returned from Versailles.


Judith Gautier



THE SHADOW OF THE ORANGE-LEAVES.

[*After Tin-Tung-Ling.*]

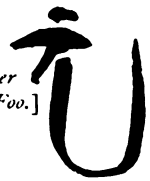
THE young girl who works all day in her solitary chamber is moved to tenderness if she hears of a sudden the sound of a jade flute.

And she imagines that she hears the voice of a young boy.

Through the paper of the windows the shadow of the orange-leaves enters and sits on her knees;

And she imagines that somebody has torn her silken dress.

THE EMPEROR.



[*After Thoo-Foo.*]

UPON a throne of new gold, the Son of Heaven, sparkling with precious stones, is sitting among the Mandarins; he seems a sun environed by stars.

The Mandarins speak gravely of grave things; but the thought of the Emperor has flown through the open window.

In her pavilion of porcelain, like a resplendent flower, surrounded by leaves, the Empress is sitting among her women.

She thinks that her beloved tarries too long at the council, and wearily she waves her fan.

A knot of perfumes caresses the Emperor's face.

"My beloved, with a wave of her fan, sends me the perfume of her mouth." And the Emperor, radiant with precious stones, walks towards the pavilion of porcelain, leaving the astonished Mandarins to stare at one another in silence.

A POET GAZES ON THE MOON.

[After Tang-Jo-Su.]

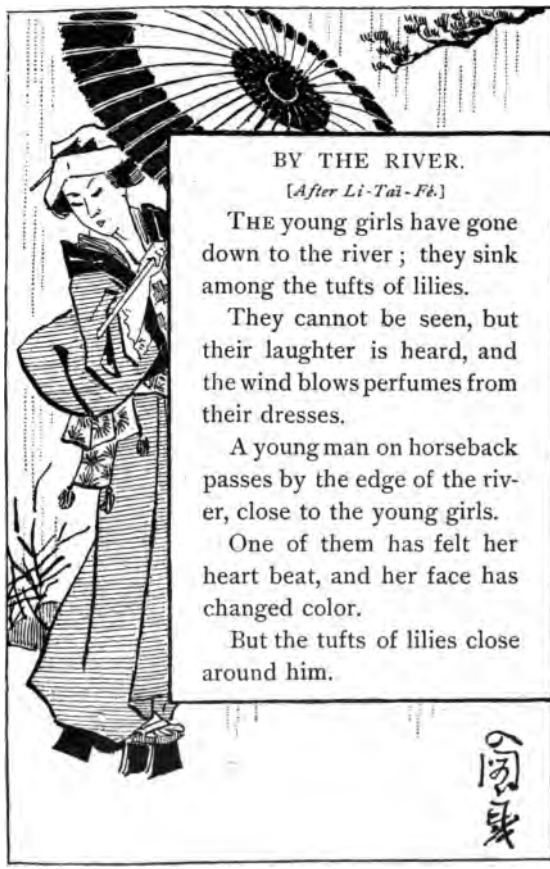
FROM my garden I hear a woman singing, but in spite of her I gaze on the moon.

I have never thought of meeting the woman who sings in the neighboring garden; my gaze ever follows the moon in the heavens.

I believe that the moon looks at me too, for a long silver ray penetrates to my eyes.

The bats cross it ever and anon, and oblige me suddenly to lower my lids; but when I lift them again, I still see the silver gleam darted upon me.

The Moon mirrors herself in the eyes of poets as in the brilliant scales of the dragons, those poets of the sea.



BY THE RIVER.

[After Li-Taï-Pé.]

THE young girls have gone down to the river; they sink among the tufts of lilies.

They cannot be seen, but their laughter is heard, and the wind blows perfumes from their dresses.

A young man on horseback passes by the edge of the river, close to the young girls.

One of them has felt her heart beat, and her face has changed color.

But the tufts of lilies close around him.

THE SADNESS OF THE HUSBANDMAN.

[*After Soo-Tong-Po.*]

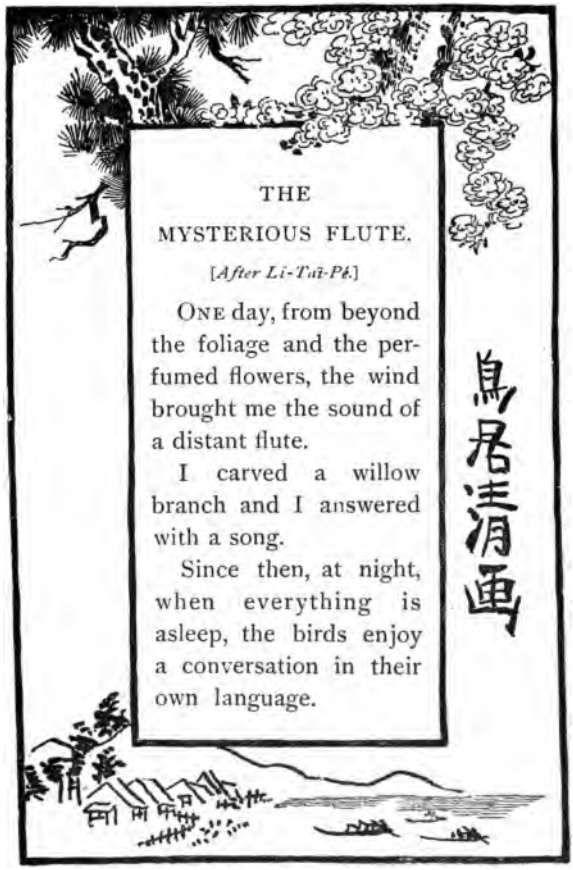
THE snow has fallen lightly on the earth, like a mist of butterflies.

The husbandman has dropped his spade, and it seems to him as though invisible threads were tightening around his heart.

He is sad, for the earth was his friend; and when he bent over her to intrust her with the seeds of hope, he confided to her also his secret thoughts.

And later, when the seeds had germinated, he found his thoughts in full bloom.

And now the earth hides herself under a veil of snow.



THE MYSTERIOUS FLUTE.

[*After Li-Taï-Pé.*]

ONE day, from beyond the foliage and the perfumed flowers, the wind brought me the sound of a distant flute.

I carved a willow branch and I answered with a song.

Since then, at night, when everything is asleep, the birds enjoy a conversation in their own language.

鳥居清画

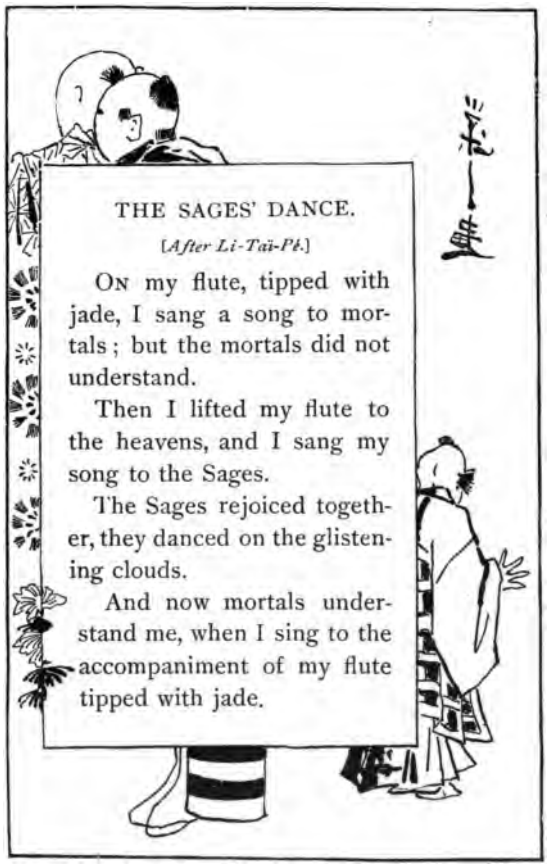
[*After Li-Tai-Pé.*] THE earth has drunk the snow, and now are seen once more the blossoms of the plum-tree.

The leaves of the willow are like new gold, and the lake seems a lake of silver.

Now is the time when the butterflies powdered with sulphur rest their velvety heads upon the hearts of the flowers.

The fisherman, from his motionless boat, casts forth his nets, breaking the surface of the water.

He thinks of her who stays at home like the swallow in her nest, of her whom he will soon see again, when he brings her food, like the swallow's mate.



THE SAGES' DANCE.

[After Li-Taï-Pé.]

On my flute, tipped with jade, I sang a song to mortals; but the mortals did not understand.

Then I lifted my flute to the heavens, and I sang my song to the Sages.

The Sages rejoiced together, they danced on the glistening clouds.

And now mortals understand me, when I sing to the accompaniment of my flute tipped with jade.

THE RED FLOWER.

[*After Li-Tai-Pé.*]

WHILE working sadly by my window, I pricked my finger, and the white flower that I was embroidering became a red flower.

Then I thought suddenly of him who has gone from me to fight the rebels; I imagined that his blood was flowing also, and tears fell from my eyes.

But methought that I heard the sound of his horse's steps, and I arose joyously. It was my heart, which, beating too fast, imitated the sound of his horse's steps.

And I resumed my work by the window, and my tears embroidered with pearls the stuff stretched on the frame.

THE MOONLIGHT IN THE SEA.

[*After Li-Su-Tchong.*]

THE full moon has just risen from the water.

The sea is like a great platter of silver.

On a boat, a few friends are drinking cups of wine.

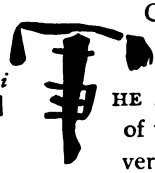
And as they look at the little clouds that balance themselves on the mountain lighted by the moon :—

Some say that they are the wives of the Emperor that are wandering above, clad in white,

And others pretend that they see a cloud of swans.

NEAR THE MOUTH OF THE RIVER.

[*After Li Taï-Pé.*]



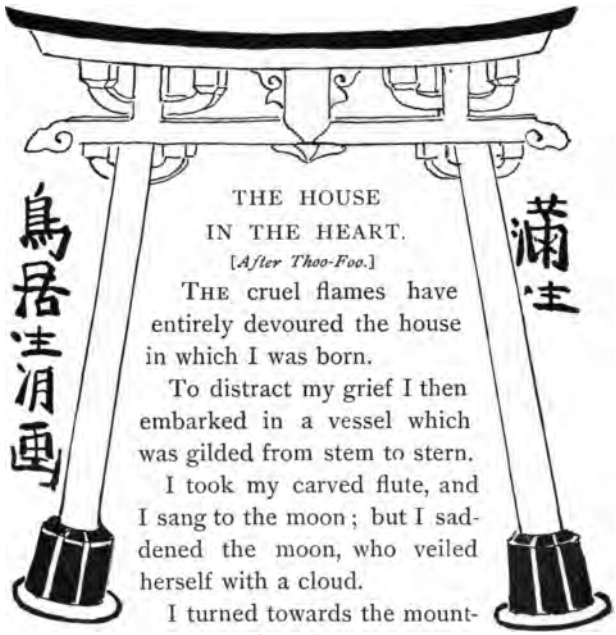
THE little waves shine in the light of the moon, that changes into silver the limpid green of the water; one would take them for a thousand fishes swimming towards the sea.

I am alone in my boat and it glides along the shore; sometimes I skim the water with my oars; night and solitude fill my heart with sadness.

But here is a tuft of water-lilies with its flowers that look like great pearls; I caress them softly with my oars.

The leaves rustle and murmur with tenderness, and the flowers, inclining their little white heads, look as though they were talking to me.

The water-lilies wish to console me; but on seeing them, I had already forgotten my sadness.



THE HOUSE IN THE HEART.

[*After Thoo-Foo.*]

THE cruel flames have entirely devoured the house in which I was born.

To distract my grief I then embarked in a vessel which was gilded from stem to stern.

I took my carved flute, and I sang to the moon; but I saddened the moon, who veiled herself with a cloud.

I turned towards the mountain, but it inspired in me no thoughts.

It seemed to me that all the joys of my childhood had burned with my house.

I yearned for death, and I leaned over the sea. At that moment a woman was passing in a boat. I took her for the moon reflecting herself in the water.

If she would only consent, I would build myself a house in her heart.

A Young Girl's Cares.

[*After Hang-Oo.*]

THE moon lights the interior court; I put my head out of the window, and I look at the steps of the stair-way.

I see the reflection of the foliage and the agitation of the shadows of the swing rocked by the wind.

I retire and lie down on my trellised bed; the coolness of the night has seized me; I tremble in my solitary chamber.

And now I hear the rain falling in the lake! To-morrow my little boat will be wet; how shall I be able to cull the water-lilies?

INDIFFERENCE TO THE LURES OF SPRING.

[*After Tang-Jo-Su.*]

THE peach-blossoms flutter like pink butterflies; the willow sees itself smiling in the water.

Yet my weariness persists, and I cannot write poetry.

The breeze from the coast, bringing me the perfume of the plum-trees, finds me indifferent.

Ah! when will night come and make me forget my sadness in sleep.


Joris-Karl
Huÿsmans.

Camaïeu in Red.

THE room was hung with pink satin embossed with crimson sprays; the curtains fell amply from the windows, breaking their great folds of garnet velvet upon a purple-flowered carpet. On the walls were suspended *sanguines* by Boucher, and platters of brass gemmed and inlaid with niello by some artist of the Renaissance.

The divan, the arm-chairs, the chairs, were covered with stuffs similar to the hangings, with carnation fringes; and upon the mantle, surmounted by a glass that revealed an autumnal sky all empurpled by the setting sun and forests with leaves as red as wine, bloomed, in a vast stand, an enormous bouquet of carmine azaleas, of sage, of digitalis, and of amaranth.

The all-powerful goddess was buried in the cushions of the divan, rubbing her tawny tresses against the cherry-red satin, displaying her pink skirts, twirling her little morocco slipper at the end of her foot. She sighed affectedly, arose, stretched her arms, seized a large-bellied bottle, and poured out in a small glass, with slender stem and wrought in the shape of a vise, a thread of reddish-brown port.

At that moment the sun inundated the boudoir with its red gleams, struck scintillating flashes from the spirals of the glass, caused the ambrosial liquor to sparkle like molten topazes, and, shattering its rays against the brass of the platters, lighted in it fulgurating fires. It was a rutilant confusion of flames against which stood out the features of the drinker, like those of the virgins of Cimabue and Angelico, whose heads are encircled with a nimbus of gold.

That fanfare of red stunned me; that gamut of furious intensity, of impossible violence, blinded me. I closed my eyes, and when I opened them once more, the dazzling tint had vanished, the sun had set!

Since that time the red boudoir and the drinker have disappeared; the magic blaze is extinguished.

In summer, however, when the nostalgia

of red weighs more heavily upon me, I raise my head to the sun, and there, under its hot stings, impassible, with eyes obstinately closed, I see under the veil of my lids a red vapor; I recall my thoughts, and I see once more, for a minute, for a second, the disquieting fascination, the unforgotten enchantment.


Ephraïm Mikhaël

THE CAPTIVE.

I DO not know for what superb and inexpiable sin the cold Princess is held captive in the hall with the walls of brass. Motionless, and seemingly conscious of the gaze of invisible crowds, sitting upon a throne between two golden chimeras, she languidly contemplates her insolent beauty in the mirror of the walls.

But lo! she arises; and her eyes, yet ardent with dreams that her vigils have not driven away, she walks towards the metallic walls. In their transparency she sees, as in a luminous haze of dawn, a vague form, the voluptuous form of a woman with hair dishevelled. Shuddering with supernatural love, murmuring words of welcome, she runs with open arms towards the royal vision.

But she has recognized her own splendor, and her nostrils breathe in the hall the perfume of her own flesh. Then, sad and weary, unclasping her robes of purple, she returns to sit and weep between the ironical chimeras. "I," says she, "ever I." Around her the hall uplifts its implacable polished walls. No friendly flowers, no ancient armor. Everywhere reflected by the brass, the captive alone adorns her prison.

For many hours has she wearied and suffered, the cold Princess guarded by her image. And now she hates herself, now would she fain cover with veils the great mirrors that make of herself her own eternal jailer. Yet a window is open. If from that window she could see the vintagers moving among the vines, or the harvest-girls plunging their arms in the sea of corn, or only—and that alone would be divine — the grave ocean ploughing black furrows in the crepuscular fields, how she would lean out distractedly from her window, and how she would blow long and friendly kisses towards the country in travail!

Alas! the road that passes at the foot of

the tower is forever deserted. It has no beginning and no end, and the black trees that border it make the solemn noise of waters flowing towards the ocean. In her sorrow the Princess tears off her vesture; her necklaces, plucked asunder, fall, gem after gem, with a mocking noise; and under the shreds of her torn purple she appears entire in the mirrors that exalt the useless glory of her rich nubility.

At last, however, the door is about to open. If the hour of forgiveness were to sound! If the fair conqueror, armored in light, were to enter! If some lover's voice were to cry: "I come to deliver thee from thyself!"

No, it is a slave who offers rare fruits and precious wines in cups of emerald. And the slave also wears robes of purple; she also allows the heavy gold of her hair to flow on the floor, and even more than a sister she resembles

the Princess in body and visage. Moreover, she is good and gentle, and speaks a guttural language of the Orient, in which friendly words sound like the cooing of doves.

But in the beauty of the envoy the captive sees only her own beauty, and her words of consolation remind her only of her own voice. And that is why the sorrowful Princess drives away the beautiful loving slave, more cruel even than the mirrors.

THE TOYSHOP.

I DO not remember at present either the time, or the place, or whether it was in a dream. Men and women were walking to and fro on a long promenade, and I was walking to and fro with the crowd, a rich crowd, whence arose feminine perfumes. And notwithstanding the soft splendor of the furs and velvets that brushed against me, notwithstanding the red smiles of lips half seen under delicate veils, I was seized with a vague weariness thus to see on my right and on my left the slow procession of monotonous promenaders.

Now, on a bench, a man was gazing upon the crowd with strange eyes, and as I approached him I heard him sob. I asked him why he thus lamented; and, uplifting his great feverish eyes, he who wept said:

"I am sad, you see, because for many days I have been shut up in this toyshop. For many days and many years I have seen none but puppets, and I am weary of being alone alive. They are of wood, but so marvellously fashioned that they move and speak like me. And yet I know they can only make forever the same movements and say forever the same words.

"These beautiful dolls, dressed in velvets and furs, who trail in the air a love-inspiring odor of iris, they are even better articulated. Their springs are much more delicate than the others, and when you know how to make them work you have the illusion of life."

He was silent for a moment; then, with the solemn voice of those who remember:

"Of yore I had chosen one, deliciously frail, and often in the evenings I held her in my arms. I had told her so many sweet things, that I finally believed she understood them; and I had tried so often to warm her with kisses that I thought she was alive. But I have since perceived that

she too, like the others, was a doll stuffed with bran.

"Long have I hoped that some puppet might make a new movement, say a word that the others had not said. Now I am tired of breathing my dreams into them. I am weary, and I wish to leave this toyshop where they have shut me up. I implore you, if you can, lead me outside—outside, where there are living beings."

UPON the jasper of the lake, a junk of ebony with black sails, moving without oars, opens a long wake of snow. It is towards the setting sun that it slowly goes.—Oh! so slowly that one hardly hears the rustling of its sad wings. And yet, in the calm languor of evening, I distinguish at present an immaterial sound, that is the cry exhaled by the Soul of the Junk.

The Soul of the Junk sighs, and in that strange sigh my spirit recognizes—as the senses separate two mingled odors—lassitude and dismay. For the Junk is weary of eternally seeing behind it that wake of the color of shrouds. It would fain run from it, to rest yonder near the magic palaces of red copper built by the setting sun; or else to stop silently so that the lake

might spread around it like a plain of green marble.

But an imperious wind swells, without cease, its sails; and with its heavy prow the Junk itself furrows the wake that wearies and dismays it.

Then a voice, so mysterious and so personal that I cannot tell whether it comes from the Junk or from my soul, murmurs in the violet air of the evening: "Ah! to see behind me no longer, on the lake of Eternity, the implacable Wake of Time!"

KINGSHIP.

THEN in his hand they had placed the sword, and on his head the crown with ten flowers of gold, when the herald, clad in red tabards, had proclaimed his name to the people, the Prince began to sorrow. Beneath the pride of his new kingship lurked the thought that innumerable generations of kings had long before him received the sword and the crown. While yet a child he had dreamed of unknown joys, of inviolate glories, and now they had thrown upon his shoulders the common mantle of Sovereigns.

He reigned over the nations. Armies barded with iron won battles for him, and he knew that the memory of his glory would blaze through the future like the light of a great fire. Yet he grieved because his

thoughts were like the thoughts of other men, and they only abided in his soul like the strange doves that haunt all the dovecots. And as he had heard monks proclaim the vanity of joys, he thought unto himself: "Sorrow alone is infinite. I will have a sorrow greater than the sorrows of men, a sorrow that no one has known."

Then he commanded his men-at-arms to blow their trumpets through the town; and on the public square was built a scaffold, hung with black velvet. When the people were assembled, the executioner's attendants, with bloody tunics, led upon the scaffold the King's little sweetheart, his friend, his best beloved. She was weeping and calling upon her lord, and she was so fair in her divine despair that she felt herself for an instant adored by thousands of men. But the King appeared upon the public square and ascended the steps of the scaffold in his sky-blue mantle, embroidered with a flight of heraldic eagles in gold. Implacable and silent, he forced the dear

victim to kneel upon the velvet, and seizing in his royal hands the axe of punishment, he cut off the beloved head at one blow.

For days and nights in the oratory of the palace, with his forehead prone on the steps of the altar, he implored the Queen of Angels: "Our Lady of the Afflicted, allow that my sorrow may be made visible as the heart, pierced with the seven mystic glaves, is visible in your images. And therein will be the sign of expiation." Now the Virgin hearkened unto him.

He wandered over the countries of the earth, and everywhere, as he passed, the trees took on the tints of the trees of autumn. The church-bells began to toll of themselves, and the walls of the cities veiled themselves in mortuary draperies. And it was not all a vain pageantry of funerals; but with every sound of the bells, with every mournful color, corresponded in the soul of the King a thought of sadness. His sorrow had been made visible according to his prayer, and now, having become material, it filled the universe.

But he was proud as a god of suffering

what no one had suffered before, and he walked in the glory of his grief, mournful and splendid as a black sun.

And as he went thus, causing night and winter wherever he passed, he reached a great plain bordered by rigid trees. There twelve elders were sitting in a circle, motionless, upon their seats of stone, and mute as the statues that guard the tombs. The King advanced towards them and cried, in haughty tones: "Behold me, elders, that before dying, ye may see him that has known a new sorrow."

But the elders arose together with loud cries, and one of them answered the King: "Man, do not boast before us of feeling what no one has felt, for we are the Months of the Year, and the Master has established us to chasten those who have disclaimed the happiness of the crowds. Since thou hast sinned from pride, thou shall not be liberated from life; but, tortured by the ineffable shame of ignoring the Unknown, thou shalt remain to the end of time our prisoner—the prisoner of the Months of the Year."

Then, as in the distant heavens rang the trump of archangels, the King felt his crown fall and his will expire, and he entered the circle of the twelve eternal Jailers.

MIRACLES.

It is in a rich and ancient city, on the shores of a cerulean ocean, in a strange city where, among obelisks and pylons, machines of war press and thunder. From a high terrace of marble, the poet Azahel contemplates the swarming of ambitious sails in the harbor. In the peaceful twilight, under the sky vibrant with the flight of swallows, he meditates upon the uselessness of the hours.

For he knows that in that city, where live wise men and sages and doctors of the law, he alone has recognized the infirmity of Reason, and he thinks of those who bear through the ages their ridiculous common-sense like a precious and heavy reliquary; and because he has disclaimed it, he glorifies himself in his heart.

And lo! among the crowd by the harbor, appears a stranger clad in a woollen mantle of noble folds and of ancient pattern. His eyes, like antique gems, seem to preserve the memory of primordial visions, and under his feet the stones quake as with dread.

When the poet Azahel had descended among the crowd, the stranger lifted his arms to heaven; and now he cries out, in tones that resound like the trumpets of the temples: "Men, I am a prophet of God. I have come to proclaim the Word, and those that will follow me I will lead, walking on the waves of the sea, towards the veritable Land of Promise." Then from the crowd arises a murmur of disappointment. Young men glance from the prophet to the sky where the vesper mist is thickening, and they pass on with negligent steps. The wise men watch in silence; and the merchants, having cast a last look at their good ships anchored in the peaceful harbor, shrug their shoulders and depart. A doctor of the law, however, has said with a smile: "Master, if thou art the envoy of God, show us some sign. Veri-

ly, couldst thou not, after the rite of the prophets, heal the dumb and blind!"

Near the harbor were two men—the one blind, the other dumb. The prophet laid his hands upon their foreheads, and the blind man opened his eyes, and the dumb man spake in a loud voice. The prophet asked: "Is the sign sufficient, and do you wish to follow me?" But the crowd remains motionless, the blind man shakes his head, and the dumb man cries out with his newly-found voice: "I do not believe thee!"

The stranger therefore extends his confident hand towards the horizon which is now full of night, and repeats the sacred words of Genesis: "Let there be light!" and lo! in the Orient bursts a summer dawn.

Disconcerted, the doctors of the law consult with the wise men. But no one advances towards the sea.

Then, with the sadness of a vanquished angel, the great stranger goes and sits dreamily on the steps of an ancient temple, before the doors that have been closed for thousands of years. The crowd scatters little by little, the wise men and the doctors aban-

don the harbor, and as they return home they feel less troubled, because the natural night has returned. Azahel alone has remained near the closed temple, and he gazes upon the man come from yonder. If he were truly the Envoy! Oh, to recognize him, to bow before him, to follow him towards the chosen land!—But the spirit of Azahel is obscured by earthly ideas, and he can only think that the man is very fair because of his high stature and of his godly looks.

Suddenly the elder arises and walks towards the poet: "Azahel, thou hast loved a virgin who is dead. I will give her back to thee." Immediately, wrapped in funereal robes and coming forth blushing from death as from the coolness of a morning sea, a young woman appears. Smiling and forgetful of the divine secrets of the tomb, she opens her arms to her lover.

But he flies in terror through the silent streets; among the pylons and the obelisks and the images of the forgotten gods he flies, blinded by the miracle like a night-bird frightened by torches. And it is only

when he finds himself once more on the peaceful terrace of marble that he dares direct his gaze towards the harbor haunted by prodigies.

At that moment a mysterious light shines towards the Orient. Upon the pacified ocean the great biblical elder passes calmly, and the reflection of stars in the water borders his way with a double row of diamonds. Now Azahel would fain arise and walk forth also on the miraculous waves. But he feels himself so heavy with reason that he cannot even lift his shameful hands towards the Envoy who returns.

THE EVOCATOR.

As the army of the Conqueror issued from the forest, the barbaric archers riding in the van cried out that they saw in the distance an immense and bizarre city. Yonder, in the ruddy haze of the Occident, arose high towers of marble, and the blood of the dying day flowed as in sacred patens upon terraces paved with gold.

But when the army had come nearer they saw that the city—since centuries, doubtless—was silent and deserted. Then the soldiers, lowering their pikes, entered peaceably, and they marched long, by grass-grown walls and closed doors, through the solemn streets. At last, upon a square, before a colossal temple, an old man came forth to meet them. "Strangers," said he, "you have come to an austere spot. If you are

impure and covetous, go hence towards the proud cities of Asia. You will find here no treasures to rifle nor virgins to violate. Go hence, for this is the city of the gods. Yet if you still preserve, O warriors from happy lands, some care for the distant heaven, come towards the lamps that no earthly wind can extinguish, in the sanctuary, where, like an august lion made captive, the Divinity offers itself to the gaze of men."

The soldiers murmured, weary and surprised; yet, on account of the long march accomplished, they resolved to pass the night by the fires lighted in the supernatural city. But they could not sleep, because the thought of the neighboring god troubled them.

And thus, little by little, the temple was filled with an insolent crowd awaiting the divine vision. Within stood men of all conditions: imperious soldiers, timid army varlets, ironical scribes, a sage from the shores of the Ganges, emaciated by fearful fasts, clad by everlasting alms, whom

out of vanity the Conqueror dragged in his train.

When the day appeared, all these men came out from the temple, trembling with meditations; and on the square they questioned one another anxiously. Some had seen strange figures, grimacing and cruel, half veiled in bloody mists; others announced grotesque gods, with enormous bellies, with stupid and joyous faces. A few also spoke of a smiling god who pointed with his hand to the world, and then moved his arms, as though to excuse himself.

But the silent sage re-entered the temple and questioned the old man: "Why, O revealer of gods, hast thou not granted to all these men the same vision? I have watched throughout the night with them, and amid a music of paradise, I saw an ineffable dawn of splendor and charity burst forth and spread over the world. Why, then, hast thou lied to them, why have not my brethren of the army known the dream of God?"

"Stranger, you have all seen the God. Dost thou not know that the heavens, dreamed of and perhaps unreal, are but a vast

mirror where every one sees himself invested with immortality? They have seen themselves in the heavens and they blaspheme. Listen to what they say."

Then, by a window, the sage looked out. Irritated by the ridiculous and blood-guilty gods, the mob was preparing torches with which to fire the temple, and was leaping forward with laughter and insults. And now to the hearing of the sage the proffered syllables yielded a new meaning; and in a marvellous language of primitive times, become suddenly intelligible, he heard the blasphemous confess their sins and their crimes, and proclaim before the holy doors their own inanity.

SOLITUDE.

[ANYWHERE OUT OF THE WORLD.]

IN order to fulfil the behest of some distant king, the servants exposed the child in a place of rocks and forests. The waif was laid upon a stone among monstrous grasses. Cruel flowers around him opened their red and hostile chalices like the maws of savage beasts. But upon that very night began the year of Jubilee, and the priests, having assembled in the forest, discovered the child. One of the hierophants, leaning over the stone, prophesied. "This child," said he, "is of noble origin. He shall be delivered from all evil approach." The priests chanted the accustomed hymns, and they went together to confide the child to some shepherds. Men blowing into conchs preceded the train; they wore vestments of mourn-

ing, and turning towards the plains, they made the air resound with tumultuous, despairing calls. But from the depths of the thickets the trumpeters, in white robes, answered with rich fanfares, and their straight slender trumpets arose in the dawn like great lilies of gold.

In the shepherds' village the child was named Stellus. He grew up wild and disdainful, yet within him lurked a desultory tenderness. He opened his arms to the children, he ran towards the mothers and embraced them like a son. But of a sudden he would stop, as though wounded by some unknown sorrow; he would bow his head and fly to shadowy retreats by the long, deserted roads. The other children cast stones at him, beat him with branches. The old men said, "They are right; thou shouldst play with thy brothers." Docile, he would then try to follow those of his own age when they roamed through the gardens, stealing fruits or plundering hives; and in the sunny fields he would suddenly feel like weeping and running to some hiding-place, he knew not why.

Often did he escape from the roads, away from the villages, into the forest where of yore they had found him. A great peace would then descend upon him: the friendly branches caressed him with their sweet freshness; it seemed to him that healing hands were laid upon his brow. Silently he would sit in a sunny glade by the edge of a lake so deeply impregnated with ancient light that it seemed to hold between its shores marvellous waters of cinnabar and gold. Stellus would remain there, without dreams, without desires, content with listening to the wind. At first he could only hear a monotonous and confused noise, spreading over the whole country. But soon he learned to distinguish the rustling of each tree, of each branch. Then he discerned wondrous and supernatural sounds, like songs of fairy spinners, like sighs of celestial flutes. And those rumors of the wind exerted a miraculous power over him. As he listened, Stellus felt new thoughts surging within him. He understood, he knew; he saw that the forest was alive; he felt the ineffable soul of the trees, the grasses,

and the waters; and sounds fallen from the stars taught him divine things. Yet he felt no wonder. That revelation seemed to him but an awakened memory, and every thought that entered his brain was like a returning exile. He listened peacefully, and it seemed to him quite simple that those teachings should thus be brought to him from heaven by the winds, like flowers blown from the gardens of the night.

But when, at last, the breezes were silent, an immense sadness arose in the soul of the child. After the revealing words which the wind had blown him, he felt himself still more estranged from men. An imperious desire sometimes came over him to repeat to others what he had learned from the forest. But he felt that he would speak in vain, and he remained painfully silent. When he returned among his companions he was seized with a strange uneasiness. Every day he tarried longer in the forest; during a whole summer he lived among the trees. He remained there, wild and loving, regretting his companions, yet not daring to return among them.

Mists began to tarnish the crepuscules; a long thrill of sadness agitated the branches; the trees leaned backward, startled and trembling, as though recoiling with terror before the approaching winter; the flocks, left to browse in the spare grass, grew lean and bleated lamentably.

A man came from the village to seek news of the tarrying shepherd. Stellus confided to him his sorrow; he besought him to leave him in the forest. The man listened with the look of one who understands. "I see what thou yearnest after," he said; "the priests have said that thou wert of noble origin. That means, no doubt, that thou wert not made to be a shepherd. Go forth into the world in quest of glorious adventures. Be a warrior."

Stellus believed in the man. "Yes," he thought, "perhaps I might be happy among the warriors." Having climbed upon a rock, he saw afar in the night the restless fires of a camp. He left his flocks and went forth through rough paths towards the field of battle. The calls of the sentinels upon the mountains guided his steps; trumpets

sounded yonder, as though to give him welcome.

Beneath a casque surmounted by a golden eagle, under his armor bristling with spikes, Stellus fought with the battle-axe and the sword. He served a conquering king whose army triumphantly advanced, odious to the nations. Such hatred muttered behind the invaders that they despatched their own wounded to save them from the expiatory tortures which the enemy would doubtless have inflicted upon them. And that no one might be captured alive, the soldiers, when in battle, fastened themselves to one another with chains.

But a mysterious force impelled Stellus to fight alone. In vain did he wish to come nearer to his brethren at-arms; an invisible power drove him away. During the nights of alarm he galloped alone towards the posts of peril. He was the solitary torch-bearer who explored the barbaric woods; he was the sole defender of the rear-guards, he who was abandoned, during the flight of kings and captains, as a martial offering to

the gods of war. Yet how he yearned to mingle with his companions, to drain with them, in the stolen cups, the wine of conquest! How he envied those who, on the eve of massacres, slept together like brothers under the flapping canvas of the tents! But he never had a companion.

He had thought, in the days of the first battles: "Doubtless, being of noble origin, I cannot be happy among that rabble of soldiers. I shall only be happy when I walk among the chiefs." He accomplished such exploits that the kings greeted him as their equal. He received the banner and the lance of gold, and his place was among the princes of the army. But in the eager procession of young sovereigns, the old sorrow surprised him anew; in the squares of the conquered capitals which he received as his appanage, he felt himself, as in the shepherds' village, a passing stranger.

As he was sorrowing, an old captain who admired him said: "I know what thou desirest. What thou missest, Stellus, is love. Go forth into the world and seek for some

fair princess. Be a lover." Stellus believed in the captain. He strewed the pommel of his saddle with thick sprays of lilac; he wound full-leaved vine branches around his lance, and he departed in quest of love. Birds from fairy-land, dazzling the air with their burnished wings, flew in front of the horseman. Over the rivers and the fields floated nuptial perfumes.

In a land of sunlight and of gushing waters Stellus found the fair princess. She was standing by a fountain, drawing water with a silver jug. Her pale and supple arms were upon the margin. She began to laugh, the young girl, because some doves that had suddenly alighted before her splashed her face with drops of liquid light when they folded their wings. When Stellus came near she took to flight. She ran over the plain, and laughed as she ran. Now and then she stopped, hastily plucked red roses and white roses, and threw them ironically to the horseman. Her tawny hair had become undone, and flowed broadly upon her shoulders like a huntress's mantle cut out of the skin of a young tigress.

At last Stellus overtook her, wound his arms around her, lifted her on his horse. She was laughing still. "Drop the reins," she said. Softly, with caressing words, she guided the tamed charger. By an alley sanded with blue powder she led Stellus to her palace, and that night the timbrels and the sistrums announced princely betrothals.

The nuptial garlands had not yet faded on the balconies of the palace before Stellus came and sat dolorously in the gardens. He lifted his plaintive hands to heaven and he murmured: "Who will come to assist me? Who will give me counsel?" Then he saw under a tree a venerable man of sacerdotal aspect, who was listening to him. "Father," said Stellus, "if thou be the savior sent to me, if thou knowest the hidden things, tell me why I am forever solitary. Tell me why, as a child, I could not play with children; why I could not reveal to young men the words of the wind, nor laugh with soldiers, nor sleep blissfully by the side of my bride?"

In a dreamy voice, the aged man answer-

ed: "Stellus, Stellus, because the enchantment of kisses has not overcome thee, because thy heart, unalterably noble, can find no solace in ordinary joys, I will speak. Thou sufferest, Stellus, because thou art unlike other men, because thou canst know neither their sorrows nor their hopes. But learn now: all men are like thee—solitary monsters. Thou rememberest, Stellus, when thou wert a little child among the shepherds, thou couldst not tell the bucks from the rams, nor the lambs from the kids; and when thou heardst afar a sound of bleating, thou didst say: 'The beasts yonder are crying.' As the buck differs from the ram, so does one man differ from another man; and over the plains of the earth there is but a disorderly flock of mutually unknown and hostile beings. Stellus, the far-seeing eyes of the Initiated perceive mysterious differences where the eyes of the vulgar can only see evident similitudes. But mankind ignores the horrible, the divine truth. They think themselves alike one to the other. They talk together, the fools! as though speech could fly from soul to soul. They

gaze at one another as though they were not divided by insuperable walls of darkness.

"Thou, Stellus, hast dimly understood that thou wert alone of thy race, and for that reason thou hast suffered. Thou didst appear to thyself different from other men, and thou couldst not resign thyself to thy nobility. Thou soughtest refuge in the forests because thy companions were strangers to thee, and thou didst weep there because thou hadst lost thy companions. Thou hast loved solitude in the wilds because thou sufferedst from being solitary in the crowds. And thou hast not sought the deliverance promised by the prophecies. Yea, the priests have well said: thou art of noble origin. But, mad, like the others, thou hast sought those of thy race among soldiers and kings, and thought that thou hadst met with an equal in thy bride. I have told thee, Stellus, the magical secrets.

"Meditate, now, that the oracle may be accomplished, that thou mayest be delivered from all evil approach—from the evil ap-

proach of those whom thou canst no longer look upon as thy brothers."

From the gardens and from the palace where sleeps his bride, Stellus sets forth. He walks in stony plains; he climbs up arid heights; he follows shores of funereal flowers, and now he has reached a land overshadowed by rugged mountains with steep and slippery sides. The inhabitants were in great affliction; for, from the heights of the mountain a monstrous winged horse, belching forth flames, had alighted upon their harvests. The hippogriff shook, with his diamond hoofs and clangorous wings, the walls of the ancient houses. He tore up the soil, destroyed the seeds, struck dead with a glance the laboring oxen. He ravished the virgins, bore them beyond the clouds. They were then seen falling to earth, like red and white flowers fluttering from the open skies. A great clamor, upon the advent of the monster, had arisen, imperious and loud as a herald's voice, and prophetic words had been distinguished. The victorious hippogriff would devastate the land till a man could be found who would voluntarily bestride the

monster between his flashing wings and fly with him towards the stars.

Stellus came among these terror-stricken men, and a hope arose in his breast. Radiant, he sought the elders of the village, and announced that he would bestride the hippogriff. The men greeted Stellus with long cries of admiration; the women clasped his knees, and poured upon his feet scented oil and balms; the sages harangued the people. "See," said they, "him who is about to sacrifice himself for you. He is young and famous; he might have lived through the royal years of his life. Yet he is willing to leave the beloved dust where we walk with joy; he is willing to quit the natal mud where we find our pleasure; he is about to depart for strange stars, towards those skies that prudent men do not dare to contemplate. Glory to the hero! Gaze upon him who loves you enough to abandon the earth, upon him who is about to sacrifice himself for his brethren!"

While they were speaking, Stellus, seizing in his fists the luminous mane of the monster, intoned a song of triumph: "Hippo-

griff! liberating hippogriff! bear me higher than the skies. To obey the divine elder, we will cross the portals of the horizon. I shall rush over the fields and the cities where of yore I have suffered. Hippogriff! liberating hippogriff! if no one awaits us above the worlds, let us roam forever in the desert of the constellations. Thou shalt cause gleeful sparks to fly towards the earth. I shall be delivered; I shall no longer have to endure mankind; I shall no longer have to love mankind. I shall at last, among the silent stars, learn the bliss of having been born solitary.

"Hippogriff! liberating hippogriff! if I have deserved to meet those of my race, carry me towards them. Winged horse, charger worthy of a noble horseman, carry me at last towards those who are really my brethren. As a king returning from battle, I shall arise from the lands of life towards my sidereal dwelling."

Stellus was caressing with his hand the neck of the hippogriff. The astral ways opened peaceably to their flight; the breezes of heaven murmured words of welcome;

white and transparent forms leaned upon the clouds, and through the fainting mists of a strange dawn the Solitary saw at last, shining in the farthest heavens, the light so long sought for, the light of fraternal eyes.


ierre
uillard.

THE BROTHERS-AT-ARMS.

CALLED forth by a dawn, foreboder of glory, the juvenile heroes had buckled on their swords, and from under helmets their tawny manes gushed like springs of light from tenebrous rocks.

They set forth. The scarlet sails of their ship flowered the seas, and its brazen prow irisated the scattered foam of the waves. For years they overran the world. Their bloody renown, spreading throughout the night, haunted the dreams of cities.

They advanced in battle side by side, godlike; and like falconers unhooding their birds of prey, they sprang the resplendent wings of their swords from their leathern sheaths upon the plains.

In the hold, heavy with their victorious piracies, they heaped armor of gold with precious stones; the carbuncles and rubies on the rare fabrics recalled the eyes of priestesses and the wounds of warriors.

They imagined themselves weary of fighting, and returned to their fatherland. Upon the ruins of their birth-house they reared a palace; its walls of fragrant wood shed upon the country unknown perfumes.

The wildness of summer emanated from the friezes of sandal-wood; the stones of the Orient survived the vain corals of flowers. And at evening, on the terraces, the Heroes, clad in purple, seemed in their splendor the children of the vanished Sun.

But the weariness of ever-same hours slowly gnawed at their hearts. Of seeking beyond the seas new battles, what was the good? The glaves would break upon their shields. The certainty of being invincible saddened their haughty souls.

Upon a morning of glory like the one on which they had set sail, being alone worthy of struggling one against the other, they seized once more the idle swords hanging

among the panoplies, and giving vent to shouts of joy, the savage warriors leaped forth.

Crazed by their supreme play, they cut and thrust at one another. They fought till night, and when the shadows came, struck by a double blow, with eyes towards the stars, they fell, each vanquished in his brother's victory.


Rodolphe
Darzens.

THE SAD SEASON.

HERE is winter.

The season of rapid dusks, the season when, in the streets glistening with rain, the glimmer of day struggles early with the light of the lamps, while through the humid air is diffused the fresh and acid perfume of December fruits. Already, to-night, I have seen gliding along the sidewalk the narrow handcart, upon which the dark gold of the mandarins is piled up, so regularly, alongside the paler gold of the oranges; and the little handcart passes by vacillating while the huckstress utters her prolonged cry.

But I walk fast to warm myself.

Here is winter.

The season of sudden deaths, the season when, in the streets glacial with wind, the heat of life succumbs fast to the mortal cold, while in one's morose soul spreads the alarming thrill of unknown maladies. And to-night, upon a deserted bench, a little old woman has fallen, dressed all in black. Hollow, her eyes; thin, her lips; and so pinched her nostrils! Wasted away, very pale, yet almost pretty! Once more she has humbly coughed, and all is over. The crowd surges around her, curious and full of counsel.

But I walk fast to warm myself.

ON THE PROMENADES.

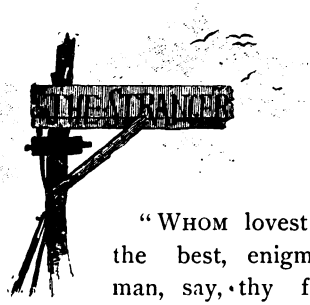
BEFORE the agony of day, during the hours that are its old age, while wandering on the long and empty boulevards, have I not often met these little old men and women whom the magical years have so metamorphosed that they have left nothing in them of what they once were?

No trace of the radiant past is visible on their transformed faces, and when they come, every Sunday — as soon as that calm day has grown old, like themselves — to sit on the benches yet warm with the sun, and remain motionless till dusk, attentive to the last harmonies of the tremulous light, I feel as weary as they are, and more than once I have stopped to gaze at them.

Dear creatures, ugly and ridiculous! They

are, and have no eyes; speak, and have no tongue; try to live yet, and hum in feeble tones, hum of the good old times gone by, moved by the flying light and by the soft heat that leaves them by degrees. Charming and superannuated, I remember them now and recognize them; for were they not you, my old hopes and my old thoughts, were they not?


CHARLES
BAUDELAIRE



"WHOM lovest thou the best, enigmatical man, say, thy father, thy mother, thy sister, or thy brother?"

"I have neither father, nor mother, nor sister, nor brother."

"Thy friends?"

"You use there a word whose sense has to this day remained unknown to me."

"Thy fatherland?"

"I know not in what latitude it is situated."

"Beauty?"

"I would fain love it, godlike and immortal."

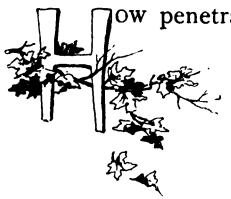
"Gold?"

"I hate it as you hate God."

"Eh? What lovest thou, then, extraordinary stranger?"

"I love the clouds .... the clouds that pass .... over there .... the marvellous clouds!"

THE CONFITEOR OF THE ARTIST.



How penetrating are the dying days of autumn! Ah! penetrating unto pain! For there are certain delicious sensations whose vagueness does not prevent their intensity, and there is no point sharper than that of the Infinite.

Great delight, that of drowning one's gaze in the immensity of sky and sea! Solitude, silence, incomparable chastity of the azure; a remote sail that trembles on the horizon, and imitates, by its remoteness and isolation, my irremediable existence; the monotonous melody of the tide—all these things think through me, or I think through them (for in the grandeur of revery the Ego soon

loses itself); they think, I say, but musically and picturesquely, without arguments, without syllogisms, without deductions.

But these thoughts, whether they come from me or spring from things, become soon too intense. Energy in pleasure creates uneasiness and positive suffering. My nerves, too tightly strung, give out only discordant and painful vibrations.

And now the depth of the sky dismays me, its limpidity exasperates me. The insensibility of the sea, the immutability of the spectacle revolt me. . . . . Ah! must I eternally suffer, or fly eternally from the beautiful? Nature, enchantress without pity, rival ever victorious, leave me! Cease from tempting my desires and my pride! The study of the beautiful is a duel in which the artist cries out with terror before he is vanquished.

EVERY ONE HIS OWN CHIMERA.

NDER a great gray sky, in a great powdery plain without roads, without grass, without a thistle, without a nettle, I met several men who were walking with heads bowed down.

Each one bore upon his back an enormous Chimera, as heavy as a bag of flour or of coal, or the accoutrements of a Roman soldier.

But the monstrous beast was not an inert weight; on the contrary, it enveloped and oppressed the man with its elastic and mighty muscles; it fastened with its two vast claws to the breast of its bearer, and its fabulous head surmounted the brow of the man, like one of those horrible helmets by which the ancient warriors hoped to increase the terror of the enemy.

I questioned one of these men, and I

asked him whither they were bound thus. He answered that he knew not, neither he nor the others; but that evidently they were bound somewhere, since they were impelled by an irresistible desire to go forward.

It is curious to note that not one of these travellers looked irritated at the ferocious beast suspended from his neck and glued against his back; it seemed as though he considered it as making part of himself. None of these weary and serious faces bore witness to any despair; under the sullen cupola of the sky, their feet plunging into the dust of a soil as desolate as that sky, they went their way with the resigned countenances of those who have condemned themselves to hope forever.

And the procession passed by me and sank into the horizon's atmosphere, where the rounded surface of the planet slips from the curiosity of human sight.

And for a few moments I obstinately persisted in wishing to fathom the mystery; but soon an irresistible indifference fell upon me, and I felt more heavily oppressed by it than even they were by their crushing Chimeras.

THE BUFFOON AND THE VENUS.

WHAT an admirable afternoon! The vast park swoons under the burning eye of the sun, like youth under the domination of Love.

The universal ecstasy of things expresses itself in no sound; the waters themselves seem asleep. Different from human festivals, this is a silent orgy.

It seems as though an ever-increasing light makes things sparkle more and more; as though the excited flowers burn with the desire to cope with the azure of the sky by the violence of their colors, and as though the heat, mak-

ing perfumes visible, causes them to rise towards the sun like vapors.

Yet amid that universal enjoyment I perceived an afflicted being.

At the feet of a colossal Venus, one of those artificial fools, one of those voluntary buffoons whose task it is to make kings laugh when remorse or weariness oppresses them, decked out in a loud and ridiculous costume, capped with horns and bells, crouching against the pedestal, lifts his eyes, filled with tears, towards the immortal goddess.

And his eyes say: "I am the last and the most solitary of mortals, weaned from love and friendship, and thus inferior to the most imperfect of animals. Yet I am made, I too, to understand and feel immortal Beauty! Ah! Goddess, have pity on my sorrow and my madness!"

But the implacable Venus gazes afar upon I know not what with her eyes of marble.

CROWDS.

It is not given to every one to take a bath of multitude: the enjoyment of crowds is an art; and he alone can have a bout of vitality at the expense of humanity to whom a fairy has inspired, in his cradle, a taste for travesties and masquerades, the hatred of home and the passion for travel.

Multitude, solitude: terms equal and convertible by the active and fruitful poet. He who knows not how to people his solitude knows not how to be alone in a busy crowd.

The poet enjoys that imcomparable privilege of being himself or some one else at will. Like those wandering souls that seek a body, he enters when he wishes the personality of every one. For him alone everything is vacant; and if certain places

seem closed to him, it is because to him they do not seem to be worth a visit.

The solitary and thoughtful wayfarer finds a singular intoxication in this universal communion. He who easily espouses the crowd knows feverish enjoyments of which the egotist, closed like a coffer, and the slothful one, imprisoned like a mollusk, will be eternally deprived. He adopts as his own all the professions, all the joys, and all the miseries that circumstance may present.

What men call love is very small, very restricted, and very faint compared to that ineffable orgy, to that holy surrender of the soul that gives itself wholly, poetry and charity, to the unexpected that arises, to the unknown that passes.

It is sometimes good to teach the happy ones of this world, if only to humiliate for a while their foolish pride, that there is a happiness superior to theirs, more vast and more refined. The founders of colonies, the pastors of peoples, the missionaries exiled to the uttermost parts of the world, doubtless know something of those mysterious transports; and in the midst of the vast

family that their genius has created they must laugh sometimes at those who pity them for the agitation of their fortunes and the temperance of their lives.

THE WINDOWS.

He who looks from the outside into an open window never sees as many things as he who looks at a closed window. There is no object more deep, more mysterious, more dreamful, more tenebrous, more dazzling, than a window lighted by a candle. What one can see in full sunlight is always less interesting than what passes behind a pane. In that black and luminous hole life lives, life dreams, life suffers.

Beyond the billowy roofs I see a woman of middle age, already wrinkled, poor, always leaning over something, and never going out. From her features, from her dress, from her gestures, from a mere nothing, I have imagined the story of that woman, or rather her legend, and sometimes I recite it to myself and weep.

If it had been a poor old man, I would have imagined his legend quite as easily.

And I retire, proud of having lived and suffered in others than myself.

Perhaps you will tell me: "Art thou sure that thy legend is the true one?" What matters the reality outside of me, if it has helped me to live, to feel that I am and what I am!

THE BLESSINGS OF THE MOON.

THE Moon, that is caprice itself, looked through the windows as thou wert sleeping in thy cradle, and said to herself, "That child pleases me."

And she softly descended her stair-way of clouds and passed noiselessly through the panes. She then stretched herself upon thee with the supple tenderness of a mother, and she laid her colors on thy face. Thy pupils have since remained green, and thy cheeks extraordinarily pale. It was while contemplating that visitant that thine eyes so oddly widened; and so tenderly did she clasp thee by the throat that thou hast felt, ever since, the desire to weep.

Yet in the expansion of her joy the Moon filled all the chamber like a phosphoric atmosphere, like a luminous poison; and all

that living light thought and said: "Thou shalt eternally suffer the influence of my kiss. Thou shalt be beautiful after my manner. Thou shalt love what I love and what loves me: the water, the clouds, silence and night, the sea immense and green —the waters uniform and multiform; the place where thou wilt not be; the lover whom thou wilt not know; the monstrous flowers, the perfumes that madden; the cats that swoon on pianos and wail like women, with voices raucous and sweet!

"And thou shalt be loved by my lovers, courted by my courtiers. Thou shalt be the queen of the men with green eyes, whose throats I have also clasped in my nocturnal caresses; of those who love the sea, the immense, tumultuous, green sea, the waters uniform and multiform, the place where they are not, the women whom they do not know, the sinister flowers that resemble the censers of an unknown

religion, the perfumes that obscure the will, and the savage and voluptuous animals that are emblematical of their madness."

And it is for that, accursed and beloved child whom I spoil, that I am now lying at thy feet, seeking in all thy being the reflection of the redoubtable divinity, of the prophetic godmother, of the poisoning nurse of all the lunatics.

ANYWHERE OUT OF THE WORLD.

THIS life is a hospital where every patient is possessed with the desire to change his bed. This one would prefer to suffer before the stove, and that other thinks that he would recover by the window.

It always seems to me that I will be better where I am not, and that question of removal is one that I discuss incessantly with my soul.

"Tell me, my soul, poor chilled soul, what wouldst thou think of dwelling in Lisbon? It must be warm there, and thou wouldst grow as lusty as a lizard. The city is on the sea shore; they say that it is built of marble, and that the inhabitants have such a dislike for anything green that they

uproot all the trees. There is a landscape after thy taste, a landscape composed of light and minerals, and water to reflect them."

My soul makes no answer.

"Since thou lovest repose so well, combined with the sight of movement, wilt thou come and dwell in Holland, that beatifying land? Mayhaps thou wouldst find distraction in that country, whose image thou hast so often admired in the museums. What wouldst think of Rotterdam, thou who lovest forests of masts, and ships anchored before the steps of houses?"

My soul remains dumb.

"Thou wouldst smile, perhaps, on Batavia? We would find there the mind of Europe joined to the beauty of the tropics."

Not a word.—Is my soul dead?

"Hast thou, then, attained such a state of numbness that thou findest pleasure only in thy sorrow? If so, let us fly to the lands that are the analogues of Death. — I have it, poor soul! I will pack my trunk for Torneo. Let us go yet farther, to the extremity of the Baltic; yet farther from life, if

possible; let us settle at the Pole. There the sun slants upon the earth, and the slow alternations of light and night suppress variety and increase monotony, that half of Nothingness. There we shall be able to take long baths of darkness, while, to divert us, the aurora borealis will send us from time to time its rosy rays, like the reflection of the fireworks of Hell!"

At last my soul bursts forth, and wisely cries to me: "Anywhere! anywhere! as long as it be out of the world!"

ACHILLE.

DELAROCHE:

THE CONQUERING DREAM.

THE sinister thunder of war-horns crashes in the bloody West.

Under the livid West the lawless dances circle around the swords rusted with ruddy clots.

The thatched huts, the granite ramparts, the white tents of the nomads smoke in anguish towards the indifferent stars.

The horde of the males rolling in a wind of panic!

Mothers in tears, heavy with the hope of childbirth, lifting their palms, with prayers or imprecations, towards the dumb hostility of heaven!

The red pride of the Barbarians is about to trample under the steel

of their horses' hoofs the prostrate and panting flesh of the vanquished.

The war-horns sound the supreme knell.

But thou! while the white robes redden in the purple of the bloody West,

While the helmets and battle-axes glisten in the seething fight,

Who art thou, ascetic and solitary, who heardest not the cry of thy brethren?

Who? The Dreamer! with thy hand upon thy Vedic staff, deaf to the vain tumult of the cities, scrutinizing the algebra of the cosmic arcana!

Lifting thy purified will towards the new God, conqueror of gods, thou listenest to the sublime rhythm of the spheres echoing in thy bosom.

And thou causest to spring for the future, from the mystic symbol, the divination of a peaceful strife of ideas.

At thy feet the tribes will lay down the sacrilege of their homicidal swords, O Seer!

O Magician whose brow is aureoled with the new dawn which will force the steel and purples to pale before thy triumphant Eureka!


STEPHANE
MALLARMÉ

IN AUTUMN.

SINCE Maria has left me for another star —which one, Orion, Altaïr, or is it thou, green Venus ?—I have always cherished solitude. How many long days have I passed alone with my cat! By *alone*, I mean with no material being; and my cat is a mystic companion, a spirit. I can therefore say that I have passed long days with my cat, and alone, with one of the last authors of the Latin decadence. For since the white creature is no more, strangely and singularly have I loved all that is summed up in that word: fall. Thus, of the year, my favorite season is the last languishing days of summer, that immediately precede autumn; and of the day, the hour that I choose for going forth is when the sun rests before sinking, with rays of yellow brass upon the gray walls,

and of red brass upon the window-panes. In the same way the literature from which my spirit seeks a sad voluptuousness will be the agonizing poetry of the last moments of Rome, so long, however, as it in nowise betrays the rejuvenating approach of the Barbarians, and does not lisp the infantile Latin of the first Christian prose.

I was therefore reading one of those dear poems (whose scaling enamel has more charm for me than the carnation of youth), and had plunged a hand in the fur of the pure animal, when a barrel-organ began to sing languishingly and mournfully under my window. It played in the long walk of poplars, whose leaves seem to me yellow, even in summer, since Maria has passed there with tapers for the last time. The instrument of those that are sad, yes, truly: the piano scintillates, the violin opens light to the torn soul, but the barrel-organ, in the dusk of memory, has made me despairingly dream. Now that it was murmuring a joyously vulgar tune, that made the heart of the faubourgs grow merry, a superannuated and hackneyed tune, whence came it that its

flourishes lured me to dreams and made me weep like a romantic ballad? I imbibed it slowly, and I refrained from throwing a penny out of the window, for fear of making a movement and of finding that the instrument was not singing of itself.

THAT timepiece of Saxony, that delays and rings thirteen hours among its flowers and its gods, to whom has it belonged? Methinks that it came from Saxony by the slow stage-coaches, of yore.

(Singular shadows hang from the tarnished panes.)

And thy Venetian mirror, deep as a cool fountain in its frame of ungilt chimeras, whom has it reflected? I am sure that more than one woman has bathed in its water the sin of her beauty; and perchance I might see a naked ghost if I looked long enough.

"Mischievous one, thou often sayest wicked things." . . .

(I see spider-webs high up on the great windows.)

Our coffer is very old: behold how the fire reddens its sad wood-work; the deadened curtains are as old as it, and the tapestry of the arm-chairs whose colors have grown dim, and the ancient engravings on the walls, and all our olden furniture. Seemeth it not to thee, indeed, that the bengalis and the bluebird have lost their tints with time?

(Do not think of the spider-webs that tremble high up on the great windows.)

Thou lovest all those things, and that is why I can live near thee. Hast thou not desired, O my sister whose eyes look out from the past, that in one of my poems should appear these words, "the grace of faded things?" New objects displease thee; thee also do they frighten with their shrieking boldness, and thou wouldst feel the need of using them—a difficult task for those who do not relish action.

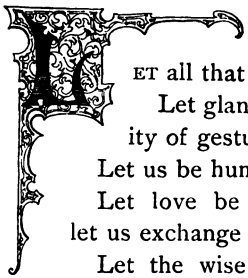
Come, close thine old German almanac, which thou readest with attention, although it appeared more than a hundred years ago, and the kings that it announces are all dead; and throwing myself on the ancient carpet, my head cradled between thy charitable knees on thy dress of dim colors, O tranquil child, I will talk to thee for hours; there are no more fields, and the streets are empty, and I will talk to thee of our furniture. Thou art absent-minded?

(Those spider-webs shake high on the great windows.)

Émile

Hennequin.

MINORATION.



ET all that is be no more.

Let glances fade and the vivacity of gestures fall.

Let us be humble, soft, and slow.

Let love be without passion, and let us exchange weary caresses.

Let the wise man speak smilingly of his wisdom, let the poet be indulgent to his art.

Let there be some who forgive and many who forget.

Let us sleep, and let us live in all ways more like the dead.

And perhaps existence will lose some of its harshness; perhaps in a tideless calm some souls will find repose; there will be half-opened lips and wandering eyes, and groping hands happy to meet.

THE QUEST.

I GO seeking in the eyes of women mute promises of bliss.

And my glances cross, and my glances arrest eyes that are either void or distant, or turned aside,

In which I perceive solely the incuriosity of all and of myself.

I became thus indifferent to others.

And my eyes also decline appeals for compassion, and, void themselves, know how to plunge into emptiness, and touch with a passing glance the vaguest passers-by.

For I have learned to keep their softness for my own wounds, and I pour out liberally for myself the consolations denied to others and by others.

Let every one be his own lover, said He.

A DREAM.

IN a church, whose pillars are gray with age, under the lifted hands of the blessing priest, little girls are kneeling.

They wear black frocks, and upon their black ringlets, over their clear eyes and their pink brows, they bear round wreaths of white roses.

When they have arisen, they depart by the low arches; and following them, I am joined by the palest of them all, in her black frock and with her white wreath.

And fixing upon me her humble eyes full of sorrow, lifting her head up to mine, she says, very slowly, "Are there far-away lands of delight, satisfied, satisfying?"

"Alas!" said I, "they are all the same, neither evil nor good, and gray is life, and gray is death."

She had left, but came back palely smiling; around my neck she locked her arms, and touched my cheek with her lips, cold lips. . . .

"Alas!" said I, "they are all the same, all the kisses, mine and thine, and dim is life and dim is death."

THE IRREMEDIABLE.

OFTEN say to my sad heart: "If this trouble were taken away from me I would smile again, I would have cheerful eyes that please. If this trouble were taken away from me, who knows if I would not be happy?"

But the inner voice, perspicacious and undeceivable, makes answer: "If that trouble were taken away from thee; thou wouldst bow beneath this other weight or that; and if, free from suffering, thou didst attempt to redress thy wounded soul, thou wouldst feel it irremediably bent, like those flexible masts that a perpetual storm has inflected."

And I remain thus, dreaming, listening to that interminable dialogue between the heart that desires and the reason that reprehends, going from hypothesis to hypothesis, like a

blind bird casting itself incessantly against the four walls of its cage.

And when I have made a thousand times the circuit of my inextricable dilemma, I load my back once more with my changeful yet identical destiny; then staggering under the familiar weight, resuming the ancient and rugged road with my fellow-men condemned like me to death, I obstinately repeat to my sad heart: "If this trouble were taken away from me, who knows if I would not be happy?"

In our crazed brains words are visions, visions ecstatic, visions chimerical, are visions without models and without object, ideals rather than images, desires rather than reminiscences; and how distant these ideals, how painful these desires!

There is no woman who gives us the radiant dream that lurks beneath the word Woman; there is no wine that realizes the intoxication imagined by the word Wine; there is no gold, pale gold or dusky gold, that gives out the tawny fulguration of the word Gold; there is no perfume that our deceived nostrils find equal to the word Perfume; no blue, no red that figures the tints with which our imaginations are colored; all is too little for the word All; and no

nothingness is an empty enough vacuity as to be that arch-terrorist word, Nothing.

What is to be done, then, in this world where everything is beneath our expectations? What is to be done, O my mind, with these diminished realities, reduced and dim images of our thoughts, sticks of which we have made thyrses, banjos of which we have made citherns, aquarelles that we have anilinized, dreams opiated by us. In truth, incapable of lowering itself, incapable also of raising things, let my spirit continue to suffer the shrill dissonance, to see the repugnant contrast, to feel the disproportion, till the inferior has won and till matter has taken back to its bosom what scorned it for having too much loved it.

THE EARTH.

EDDYING through the blue or black heavens of nights and of days, full in her deep hollows of the tumultuous water of the seas, turgid and flat, the earth curves, sinuates, and rises, dry under the fresh air, firm and mobile, jutting forth in mountains, falling away in plains, brown and all woven with the silver woof of rivers and lakes, green and all bristling with trees, with plants, with grass.

The sea lashes the shores, glaucous, troubled, assailing, and broken, or fair and full of slow volutes; she encircles the continents with mists, with storms, with shimmering waters, languishingly dying; the earth emerges massive and stable, sleeping in shadow or striated with red, yellow, and

green, according to the rise and fall of day; aired by the winds, swept by the rains, bearing upon its huge members the swarming agitation of beings, the growth of plants, and the song of insects, the gallop of beasts, and the dumb trepidation of cities. Continuous murmur of life eternally threatened by the sea, monstrous in the thunder of its awful floods.

And there are heavens of hope, there are heavens of light, summits lifting to the clouds the tender strength of sprouts; there are white splashes of water wetting with brine the rapid flight of sea-gulls, high-standing forests circling in shadow the velvet of the green pastures, aromatic and soft; the mountains lift and swell their heavy shrouds of immaculate snows, and the sharp peaks point the extreme pinnacles of their rocks towards the unknown and magnificently vaulted abysms, vermeil and tenebrous, whence spread the imperious splendor of the sun, the playful sweetness of the moon, and the peace of the mysteriously palpitating stars.


Adrien
Remacle

THE CITY.

THE Poet goes forth on the road, refusing to mingle with the crowds, ages ahead and ages behind the other wayfarers. He is child, youth, and man, but ever young and fair. He goes before him, thinking that he discerns, every hour, through the mists of the morning, beyond the suns of the day, above the vapors of the evening, emerging from opaque nights, blue beneath the serene moons, the sparkling domes of the City of Dreams.

And he sings of that City as he walks.

He sees, above the blue and pink mountains, heavens of purple, gold riven with long flashes, aureoled with confused cities scintillating in sombre distances; behind those mountains, under the heavens, opens the vast portico of the City.

And he sings of that City as he walks.

The rivers and the seas reveal to him green deepnesses, blue abysms, unknown reflections of the grandeurs of the past, mirages prophetic of future monuments: mere approaches and presages of the magnificence of the City.

And he sings of that City as he walks by the waters.

War is howling in the plains, around the mountains. He stops and he watches; he hearkens to the clashing of swords, to the thunder of iron. He shudders; those men must fight for the City.

And he sings of that City as he walks with the men.

When the warlike bands are silent, he passes through peaceful gardens; the young women admire and follow him; he bears a golden nimbus, his words exhale an unknown perfume, the breeze in his locks makes melody. He stops: here are deserters from the City.

He asks them the way, and sings of them as he walks.

When the Poet has walked long he is

weary of the road. He meets a woman in white: he recognizes her. She comes towards him: it is she who will lead me into the City.

And he sings of the City, and he falls asleep in dreams.


PAUL
MARGUERITTE.

THE DEATH OF PIERROT.

[PANTOMIME.]

IT is in a lunar garden, where colorless roses sleep amid the shadowy leafage. A cold Moon mirrors herself in a blue pond. A nightingale's song weeps upon the earth. And in a ray of the moon, entwined in one another's arms, Pierrot all white and Columbine all pink in her outblown gauze skirt, sit motionless on a stone bench—amorous couple whose mingled lips palpitate in a long embrace. They love one another distractedly. Long looks, vows, raptures, beneath that nocturnal sky, that moon, those flowers, those songs of birds, they bear witness, they swear to their tenderness. And then they are entwined anew in one another's arms and faint with love.

But a mysterious suffering contracts Col-

umbine's features; she springs to her feet, and one hand upon her wounded heart, she gasps like a dying bird. She suffers. A sudden damp empearls her pale forehead.

Oh, the terrifying anguish of Pierrot! The nightingale is silent.

A heavy, an awful silence weighs on all things. And the thought of death insinuates itself in the minds of Columbine and Pierrot. Death! yes. The invisible spectre, the watcher that walks in the shadow of the living. Columbine sees him, and with out-stretched finger, in unutterable dread, she points to him. Pierrot, armed with a spade that he has picked up in the grass, leaps forward against the enemy that cannot be seized. Columbine smiles, already frozen and cold as marble, and disarms Pierrot, who resigns himself. But indignation seizes him.

"To die? Ah! can that be? The eyes of Columbine, so beautiful,—what!—will be

closed? Her sweet beauty will fall into horrible dust. The awful worms! But before that! The anguish of burial, of prayers, all the horror of mortuary ceremonies. No!" And he shakes his fist to heaven, curses God, wants to die.

But Columbine dances, and her light shadow dances with her on the blue water. She dances, and her arms repel and banish; her feet fly from the earth; she melts little by little, diaphanous and light, like a butterfly of gauze. "Ah! return!" cries Pierrot. And he stretches out his hands despairingly. Touched by his appeal, she runs back, she nestles against him. But already he feels that she is no longer living; and she throws herself back, her eyes wide open, her gauze skirt agitated by long spasms, like the wings of a butterfly.

"Columbine!" implores Pierrot; but she falls dead.

He shakes the poor little listless being,

that is no more than a rag. Ah! where has she gone to? He calls her. For she is no more in that sad body. Ah! but where then? In the golden moon, the blue sky, the roses, the pond? Where can he rejoin her, and how? Die also? Come, poor inanimate body. Pierrot leans over Columbine, clasps around his neck the dead arms of the child, and stepping on the stone balustrade of the pond—plouf!—he throws himself in the water, after a long shudder of horror.

The nightingale sings their requiem. The roses, in the lunar garden, have not awakened. They sleep amid the shadowy leafage. The cold moon is mirrored in the blue pond. And the stone bench of the departed lovers glistens, white and empty, in the nocturnal light.


Maurice
de
Guérin

I HAD my birth in the caverns of these mountains. Like the stream of this valley whose first drops trickle from some rock that weeps in a deep grotto, the first moment of my life fell in the darkness of a remote abode and without troubling the silence. When our mothers draw near to the time of their delivery, they withdraw to the caverns, and in the depth of the wildest of them, in the thickest of its gloom, they bring forth, without uttering a plaint, fruits silent as themselves. Their mighty milk makes us surmount without languor or dubious struggle the first difficulties of life ; yet we leave our caverns later than you your cradles. For the belief is current among us that the

first days of existence should be hidden and enshrouded, as days filled with the presence of the gods. My growth was almost entirely accomplished in the darkness where I was born. The recesses of my dwelling penetrated so far into the thickness of the mountain that I would not have known on what side was the entrance, had not the winds, when they sometimes found their way through the opening, sent freshness in, and a sudden trouble. Sometimes, too, my mother came back to me, having about her the perfumes of the valleys; or streaming from the waters which she frequented. Her returning thus, without speaking of the valleys or the rivers, but with their emanations about her, troubled my spirit, and I wandered restlessly in the darkness. "What is it," I thought, "that outside world whither my mother goes, and what reigns in it so potent as to call her to it so often? And what is felt in it so conflicting that she returns each day with different emotions?" My mother came back to me sometimes animated with a profound joy, sometimes sorrowful and lagging and as though wounded. The joy

that she brought back betrayed itself from afar in some peculiarities of her walk and in her looks. It found response in my breast. But her despondency affected me far more, and carried me far deeper into those conjectures to which my spirit was prone. At such moments I was troubled by my own strength; I recognized in it a power that could not remain solitary; and betaking myself either to toss my arms or to multiply my gallopings in the spacious shadows of the cavern, I endeavored to discover, from the blows that I dealt in space, and from the transports of my course through it, in what direction my arms were to stretch and my feet to bear me. Since then I have wound my arms around the busts of Centaurs, and the bodies of heroes, and the trunks of oaks; my hands have tried the rocks, the waters, the innumerable plants, and the subtlest impressions of the air; for I uplift them in the dark and calm nights, that they may catch the winds and show signs whereby I may divine my road. My feet—see, O Melampus, how worn they are! And yet, all benumbed as I am in this ex-

tremity of age, there are days when, in the full sunlight, upon the summits, I repeat these gallopings of my youth in the cavern, with the same purpose, brandishing my arms and employing all that is left of my fleetness.

These disturbances alternated with long absences of any anxious movement. Thenceforth I possessed in my whole being no other sentiment than that of the growth and degrees of life rising in my breast. Having lost the love of wild transports and retired into absolute rest, I tasted without alteration the kindly influence of the gods diffused within me. Peace and shade preside over the secret charm of the sentiment of life. Shades that dwell among the caves of these mountains! I owe to your silent care the hidden education which has so powerfully nurtured me, and that I have, under your protection, tasted life in its purity and as it came to me flowing from the bosom of the gods. When I emerged from your retreat into the light of day, I tottered and hailed it not, for it took possession of me with violence, making me drunk as would have done

a fatal liquor suddenly poured into my breast, and I felt that my being, until then so firm and so simple, was unsettled and was losing much of itself, as though it would have scattered to the winds.

O Melampus! thou who wouldst know the life of the Centaurs, by what will of the gods hast thou been guided towards me, the oldest and most forlorn of them all? It is long since I have ceased to practise any part of their life. I no longer leave this mountain summit to which age has confined me. The points of my arrows now serve me only to uproot tenacious plants; the tranquil lakes know me still, but the rivers have forgotten me. I will tell thee something of my youth; but these recollections, issuing from a worn memory, flow slowly, like the drops of an ungenerous libation falling from a damaged urn. I easily told thee of my first years, as they were peaceful and perfect; it was life single and simple that satiated me; all of it is easily recalled and recited. A god besought to relate his life would give it in two words, O Melampus!

The course of my youth was rapid and full of agitation. I lived on movement and knew no limit to my steps. In the pride of my free strength I roamed, pushing in all directions over these deserts. One day, when I was following a valley through which the Centaurs seldom venture, I discovered a man making his way along the river on the opposite bank. He was the first who had offered himself to my sight; I despised him. "Behold," I said to myself; "at the utmost but the half of my being! How short are his steps! and how awkward is his gait! His eyes seem to measure space with sadness. Doubtless he is a Centaur overthrown by the gods, and reduced by them thus to drag himself along."

I often rested from the wanderings of these days in the bed of rivers. One half of myself, hidden below the waters, strove in movement to keep above them, while the other half arose tranquil, and I lifted my idle arms high above the flood. I would thus forget myself in the midst of the waters, yielding to the impulse of their course, which carried me afar and led their wild guest to

all the charms of their banks. How often, surprised by the night, have I followed the currents beneath the spreading shadows that cast to the depths of the valleys the nocturnal influence of the gods! My impetuous life would then calm down till it left nothing but a faint consciousness of my existence, diffused in equal measure throughout my whole being, like the gleams in the waters where I swam, of the night-roaming goddess. Melampus, my old age regrets the rivers; peaceful for the most part and monotonous they follow their destiny with more calm than the Centaurs, and a wisdom more beneficent than that of men. When I left their bosom I was followed by their gifts, which accompanied me for whole days and retired slowly, in the manner of perfumes.

A wild and blind inconstancy disposed of my footsteps. In the midst of the most violent races it happened that I would suddenly break my gallop, as if a chasm had opened at my feet, or else a god had stood before me. These sudden immobilities allowed me to feel my life agitated by the transports in which I found myself. Of yore, in the

forest, I used to cut boughs which, while running, I lifted above my head; the swiftness of the run suspended the mobility of the foliage, which gave out but a faint rustling; but at the least pause the wind and its agitation would return to the bough, which resumed the course of its murmurings. So my life, at the sudden interruption of the impetuous careers to which I abandoned myself through these valleys, pulsated through my whole breast. I heard it run boiling and rolling with the fire which it had gathered in the space so ardently cleared. My impassioned flanks fought against the floods with which they were inwardly pressed, and felt in their storms the voluptuousness that is known only to the shores of the sea, that of enclosing without loss a life risen to its greatest height and supreme wrath. Meanwhile, with head inclined to the wind that brought me coolness, I considered the mountain peaks which had in a few moments melted in the distance, the trees of the banks and the waters of the rivers, the latter carried by a sluggish current, the former bound to the bosom of the earth and mobile only through

their branches, subject to the breaths of the air that make them moan. "I alone," said I to myself, "enjoy free movement, and I carry my life, at will, from one end to the other of these valleys. I am happier than the torrents that fall from the mountains to return no more. The rolling of my footsteps is grander than the complaints of the woods and the sounds of the water; it is the thunder of the wandering Centaur who guides his own steps." So, while my agitated flanks were filled with the intoxication of racing, higher did I feel the pride thereof, and turning back my head, I would pause a while to gaze upon my steaming back.

Youth is like the verdant forests tormented by the winds: it tosses on all sides the rich gifts of life and always some deep murmur sways its foliage. Living with the freedom of rivers, breathing without cease the presence of Cybele, whether in the bed of the valleys or on the height of the mountains, I bounded whither I would, like a blind and chainless life. But when Night, filled with the calm of the gods, overtook me on the slopes of the mountains, she guided me

to the mouth of the caverns, and there appeased me as she appeases the billows of the sea, letting survive within me faint undulations, which kept away sleep without disturbing my repose. Stretched across the threshold of my retreat, my flanks hidden within the cave, and my head under the open sky, I watched the spectacle of the dark. Then the life which had penetrated me from the outside during the day fell away from me drop by drop, returning to the peaceful bosom of Cybele, as after a storm the drops of rain clinging to the foliage fall and rejoin the waters. It is said that the sea-gods during the darkness leave their palaces under the deep, and sitting on the promontories, let their eyes wander over the floods. Even so I kept watch, having at my feet an expanse of life like the hushed sea.

Brought back to a distinct and full existence, it seemed as though I had just issued from birth, and as though deep waters which had conceived me in their womb had just left me on the mountain-top, like a dolphin forgotten among the sands by the waves of Amphitrite.

My looks had free range, and reached to the most distant points. Like shores ever wet, the line of mountains to the west retained the imprint of gleams imperfectly wiped out by the shadows. Yonder still survived in pale clearness summits naked and pure. There I beheld at one time the god Pan descend, ever solitary; at another, the choir of the secret divinities; or I saw pass some mountain nymph entranced by the night. Sometimes the eagles of Mount Olympus traversed the upper sky, and melted away among the far-off constellations or in the shades of the inspired forests. The spirit of the gods, happening to awaken, suddenly troubled the calm of the ancient oaks.

Thou pursuest wisdom, O Melampus, which is the science of the will of the gods; and thou roamest among the peoples like a mortal misled by the destinies. There is in this vicinity a stone which, as soon as it is touched, gives out a sound like that of the breaking strings of an instrument; and men say that Apollo, who was tending his flock in these deserts, having laid his lyre upon it, left there the sound of that melody. O

Melampus the roaming gods have laid their lyres upon the stones; but none, none has forgotten his melody upon them. In the days when I kept my night-watches before the caverns, I have sometimes believed that I was about to surprise the thought of the sleeping Cybele, and that the mother of the gods, betrayed by her dreams, would let fall some of her secrets; but I have never made out more than sounds which faded away in the winds of the night, or words inarticulate as the bubbling of the rivers.

"O Macareus!" one day said the great Chiron to me, whose old age I followed, "we are both of us Centaurs of the mountain; but how different are our lives! Thou seest it; all the care of my days is the search for plants; while thou, thou art like those mortals who have picked up on the waters or in the woods, and carried to their lips, some fragments of the reed-pipe broken by the god Pan. Thenceforth these mortals, having breathed from their relics of the god a savage spirit, or perhaps caught some secret madness, enter into the wilderness, plunge into the forests, follow the waters, wander

among the mountains, restless, and impelled by an unknown purpose. The mares beloved by the winds in the farthest Scythia are not wilder than thou, nor sadder at nightfall, when the North Wind has departed. Seekest thou the gods, O Macareus, and from what origin men, animals, and the elements of the universal fire have sprung? But the aged Ocean, father of all things, keeps locked within his own breast these secrets; and the nymphs who surround him sing, as they weave their eternal chorus before him, to cover any sound which might escape from his lips half-opened by slumber. The mortals, who have touched the heart of the gods by their virtue, have received from their hands lyres to charm the nations, or new seeds to make them rich; but from their inexorable lips, nothing!

"In my youth Apollo attracted me towards plants, and taught me to extract from their veins the beneficent juices. Since then I have faithfully guarded this great home of the mountains, unquiet, but always turning away in quest of simples, and communicating the virtues which I discover. Beholdest thou from here the bald summit of Mount Oeta? Alcides has stripped it to build his pyre. O Macareus! the demi-gods, children of the gods, spread the skin of lions upon the pyres, and are consumed on the summit of mountains! The poisons of earth corrupt the blood received from the Immortals. And we, Centaurs begotten by an audacious mortal in the womb of a cloud that bore the semblance of a goddess, what succor could we expect from Jupiter who has smitten with his thunder-bolts the father of our race? The vulture of the gods everlastingly preys on the entrails of the worker who fashioned the first man, O Macareus! Men and Centaurs recognize as begetters of their life the infractors of the privilege of the Immortals; and perhaps all that moves outside of them is but stolen from them, a

small part of their nature carried afar, like the flying seed, by the all-powerful breath of destiny. It is said that Egeus, father of Theseus, has concealed under the weight of a rock, by the sea-side, memorials and marks whereby his son might one day learn of his birth. The jealous gods have buried somewhere the proofs of the descent of things; but by the shores of what ocean have they rolled the stone that covers them, O Macareus?"

Such was the wisdom towards which the great Chiron led me. Reduced to the extremity of age, the Centaur yet nourished in his spirit the most lofty discourse. His yet vigorous bust had settled but little upon his flanks, from which it rose with a slight inclination, like an oak saddened by the winds, and the force of his steps hardly suffered from the loss of years. One would have thought that he still retained the remains of the immortality received of yore from Apollo, but which he had returned to that god.

For me, O Melampus! I decline into old age, calm as the setting of the constellations.

I still retain hardihood enough to climb to the top of the rocks, and there I linger late, either to gaze on the wild and restless clouds, or to see come up from the horizon the rainy Hyades, the Pleiades, or the great Orion; but I am conscious that I am wasting and passing quickly away like snow floating on the waters, and that shortly I shall go and mingle with the rivers that flow in the vast bosom of the earth.


PAUL·MASY·

A FANTASY.

UPON the lake of languid waters, impurpled by the last rays of the sun, glides the junk garlanded with flowers. At the prow, in pink and mauve simars embroidered with heraldic chrysanthemums, young girls sing vague and amorous songs, whose echo dies among the bloom of the peach-trees. The young girls pass with smiles and shudders, as though, in the breeze, invisible hands caressed them. They smile and laugh, while their indolent fingers cull the lunar water-rose and the snowy lotus.

Yonder, against the orange horizon, stand the already darkened forests, towards which fly the flaffing cranes.

On the left a terrace of pale green marble, where peacocks shriek to the moon. On the right, in an orchard, a strange being with squinting eyes unrolls a long papyrus where, in heteroclitic characters, is written the fate of the fainting day and of the singing girls.


Hector Chainaye.

THE GUESTS.

A FINE and luminous rain falls softly on the hot and white dust of the roads. The dust, which dares not absorb it, is irisated with sparkles. The wind, too quiet, too feeble to disturb the grasses of the plain, sings among the rustling leaves, that move of themselves, not daring to resist the weakness of the wind. The trees quiver with harmonies. The last rays, sad and weary, filter through the thick hangings of the windows, that dare not prevent them, so sad and weary are they. And the drawing-room, full of silken dreams, where I sit alone, lights itself up with sleeping gleams, like an altar under its high oriels.

The tufted carpet finds the floor very smooth, and gives it silent kisses with its

fringes. The heavy chairs, the heavier arm-chairs of severe shapes, do not dare to press too hard, for fear of hurting the carpet and the floor. The light, which during the day-time has penetrated into the great vases of the étagères and slipped into the flowers of the bouquets, does not dare to come forth, now that the day is extinguished; the shadows vaguely frighten it, and moreover, the vases are such fair resting-places, the chalices such soft nests. And through the prismatic crystal, and through the fiery corals, the light looks at the night spreading over the tufted carpet and the polished floor. The clock has stopped, not daring to make a sound, and wishing to forget the flight of time.

And I dare not move. Yet I should leave, my place is not here. Have I been bidden? And as the day retires, a shadowy personage enters mysteriously and takes a seat after having made his bow; then the invited guests sit in a circle and talk to one another in low tones. The carpet understands, the clock listens. Ah! why am I human? I cannot even suspect their conversation, I am

too brutal to understand their infinitely tender souls. If I were to speak they would flee, if even I were to say to them in my most caressing tones: "Stay, I pray you, stay," they would depart, so gross would my voice sound to them. And I feel it; my presence disturbs them—and yet I do not move, I dare not.


Catulle
Mendès

MELICERTE.

BECAUSE of the prettiest of little mouths and of two eyes like blue star-flowers, I bear a strangely sorrowful heart.

It is not that she is cruel that I suffer so bitterly because of the prettiest of little mouths.

She refuses me neither her perfumes nor her smiles! but because she gives them also to others I bear a strangely sorrowful heart.

I one day saw Melicerte, my little shepherdess, in a dress of pink lawn; the butterflies followed her, as also the bees, because of the prettiest of little mouths.

"Little blooming mouth, what is thy name?" I said. "Constant vow! faithful kiss!" It was lying, alas! I bear a strangely sorrowful heart.

Melicerte welcomes all the tender and magnificent suitors who offer her their vows and jewels from the good jeweller because of the prettiest of little mouths.

Unfaithful kiss and frivolous vow, such are, shepherdess Melicerte, the true names for thy lips! Wherefore I bear a strangely sorrowful heart.

I curse the eglantines of the lanes and the strawberries of the green woods, and all that resembles it, because of the prettiest of little mouths!

In vain does the sun make happy the heavens and the plains, bewitch the couples that go hand in hand through the paths that are never narrow enough! I bear a strangely sorrowful heart.

This morning one of my uncles died leaving me four houses free of mortgage; I hardly smiled! Because of the prettiest of little mouths, I bear a strangely sorrowful heart.

THE SWANS.

UNDER the pale October sun I was wandering by the Lake of Enghien. The swans floated slowly, in white and mysterious bands, upon the great surface of the lake, amid the autumnal landscape, grave, pompous, and solitary.

The trees, from which the dry leaves had not yet fallen, looked like trees of gold, such as are seen in the pantomimes of the Châtelet theatre; the wind moaned melodiously in the branches; under the pale October sun I was wandering by the Lake of Enghien.

I wandered till evening, and when the pale gloom had fallen I saw the little stars appear, the little stars that are compassion-

ate to nocturnal melancholy ; and the swans floated slowly, in white and mysterious bands.

But soon they swam away, and in the vague darkness they seemed a sheet of snow rapidly melting. One only, motionless and ecstatic, remained on the great surface of the lake amid the autumnal sunset.

And in spite of myself I thought of my soul, which so many dreams and so many loves haunted of yore. Where are the roses of the faded April? In my soul, which night oppresses, a single love has remained, grave, pompous, and solitary,

Under the pale October sun.

QUEEN COELIA.

COELIA is queen of a chimerical kingdom, perhaps on the borders of the Forest of Arden, perhaps on the shores of the Isle of Avalon. In one of the hundred boudoirs of her palace, where climbing roses flower the silk of the hangings—while the birds of the garden fly through the open windows to quarrel with those held captive behind the light wires of golden cages—she speaks to her ladies-in-waiting, who are playing draughts, or pouring pearl and beryl necklaces in open coffers. "It is true," says Queen Coelia, "that the young student allowed

himself to die of hunger, last year, in the capital of my kingdom; but you have not been told the whole story. For a long time he had been sad, because of a dream, and often he was seen in melancholy attitudes under the window of the oratory where, of evenings, I play on the clavichord. Then his fellow-students saw him no more. Nobody knew in what solitude, in what silence, he had concealed his languor. One day some people who entered his lodging found him extended upon his disordered bed, very pale, and yet with a smile on his lips. He was dead, but none the less fair. A leech having been summoned, ascertained that the poor youth had died for want of food."

"That is all the more strange," said one of the ladies-in-waiting, "that they found on the bed, on the table, on the carpet, a number of gold coins bearing the effigy of Your Majesty, and of which one alone would have sufficed to pay for the most costly feast."

"That is true," said Coelia. "But," she added, as a tear fell from her eyelids and

rolled down her cheek till it moistened her smile, "the poor student had died in preference to parting from a single one of the beautiful gold coins."

THE TRIAL OF THE ROSES.

In the garden of the hospital, where flutters in the sun the winged snow of the butterflies, the young lunatic wanders alone. He is pale, with an air of softness. And what sadness in his vague eyes! He stops before a sweetbrier, culls a brier-rose; stops between two rose-bushes, culls from one a tea-rose, from the other a moss-rose.

On a wooden bench at the turn of the path he places the three flowers that he has culled.

He says to the brier-rose:

"Brier-rose, answer! You are accused of having abandoned without pity, when you were a young girl, a poor and sorrowful child who adored you, in favor of an old man who was rich. What have you to say in your defence?"

He awaits the answer.

He continues:

"The cause is heard. I condemn you."

He says to the tea-rose:

"Tea-rose, answer! You are accused of having, when you were a worldly young woman, driven to despair, and tortured by the infamous play of your deceitful smiles and of your retracted consents, a miserable young man whose heart, alas! beat only for you ardently. What have you to say in your defence?"

He awaits the answer.

He continues:

"The cause is heard. I condemn you."

He says to the moss-rose:

"Moss-rose, answer! Thou art accused of having, when thou wert a fair girl selling thy smiles and thy kisses, crazed by thy caresses, ruined and dishonored an unfortunate man who sought in thy love the oblivion of his ancient despair? What hast thou to say in thy defence?"

He awaits the answer.

He continues:

"The cause is heard. I condemn thee."

Having pronounced these sentences, he pulls from his pocket a pretty, complicated instrument made of aromatic woods and of shining steel; it is a little guillotine, which he has fashioned while dreaming during his hours of leisure.

One after the other, upon the tiny bascule, he places the eglantine, the tea-rose, the moss-rose. One after the other, beneath the blade that slides and cuts, the flowers, separated from their stems, fall in the gravel of the path.

He picks them up and gazes at them long.

He walks towards the shadowy part of the garden, where nobody passes, digs with his fingers a little grave in the earth, lays in it together the three executed flowers, covers them with gravel and with acacia-leaves.

Then he kneels down and weeps till evening over the grave of the guilty roses.


Charles Eudes Bonin

GLORIES.

I. THE immense circus is deserted.

Alone, in the imperial box, under the hangings of purple, a golden Figure looks on:

In the sanded arena, unpolluted yet, fair women in resplendent armor struggle, with a joyous clashing steel.

Their light curls gush from under the helmets smitten by the indefatigable swords, and their white and naked arms are clasped in mortal fury.

From their broken corselets burst the wounded breasts, and blood now flows among their locks.

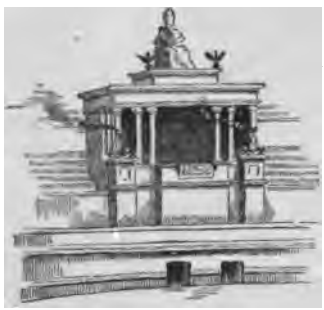
And when one of the Amazons falls vanquished upon the sand, red at last, she lifts her dying eyes towards the imperial box, whence mercy is to descend.

And the Emperor, the young Cæsar, with smiling lips slowly reverses his thumb, encircled with a ring of gold, and makes the gesture that condemns.

II. It is a night of panic and of sorrow, when under the starless sky the City stifles between its walls of bronze.

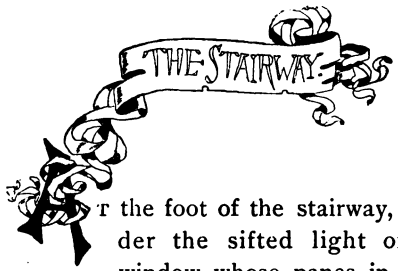
And along the streets and the porticos, before the temples, at the feet of the gods, the agonizing crowd listens in silence to the distant voice of the great sea.

And lo! among the winds of the high-sea and the silence of the crowd, a superhuman voice arises and cries out a name,—while in the dark heavens invisible trumpets proclaim a victory.



And on the threshold of a temple a Man is standing, who, before the sea and before the crowd, under the heavens and in the night, lifts a great sign of Light.


HENRI
de
REGNIER



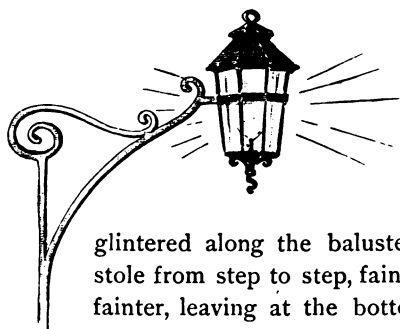
AT the foot of the stairway, under the sifted light of a window whose panes, in the shape of lozenges, are enchased in a network of lead, a fantastic beast, Dragon or Chimera, twists the coils of its tail and unclasps its sharp claws. With open jaws it seems to yawn with weariness or roar with rage. From its sinuous back, imbricated with scales, springs a sheaf of rare flowers that fall back to mirror themselves in the polished and swollen flanks of the monster. Reflections caress the carved wood, lustrously black and rigid as metal.

The stairway mounts, and plunges into warm shadow the torsion of its wrought balusters, which at every turn shine with a glossy sheen. Along the wall tapestries, in

the softness of their deadened tints, unroll dreamy landscapes. They are bright and joyous hangings, but time has changed their colors. The pinks have whitened; the whites have become more eburnean and more creamy; the greens have been transmuted into blues, blues melting into shades more tender. And they offer sites of peace and repose a nature calm and artificial, a little chimerical, where one would fain lead one's vagrant thoughts through those scenes of joy and of happy siestas; parks whose alleys encircle lawns where the grass is represented by designs in arabesque; sheets of water bordered by vases and mythological statues, losing themselves under the blue shadow of the trees; basins into which drip over-full fountains. Cupids are at work gardening, wheeling flowers, digging parterres, letting harvests of roses overflow and fall from their childish arms. At the end of bluish avenues tranquil palaces rise in the fair horizontality of their lines; among the trees flutter multicolor paroquets. And I ascend, with my eyes full of the attenuated charm of these old things, discolored and

soft as love—a love already ancient—that makes my heart beat as I push open the high door where run, underlining the woodwork, threads of gold. And in the room lightened by the shimmer of blue silks embroidered with light sprays, where fine curtains fall from the windows, indolently she is lying, stretched out on the divan, and lifts towards me the ineffable and languishing look of her eyes.

In the hollow of the stairway a round lantern hung from a silver chain. The light



glintered along the balusters, and stole from step to step, fainter and fainter, leaving at the bottom the vagueness and mystery of a hole of shadows. And I descended slowly,