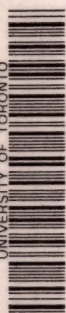


LETTERS FROM
THE HOLY LAND
ERNEST RENAN

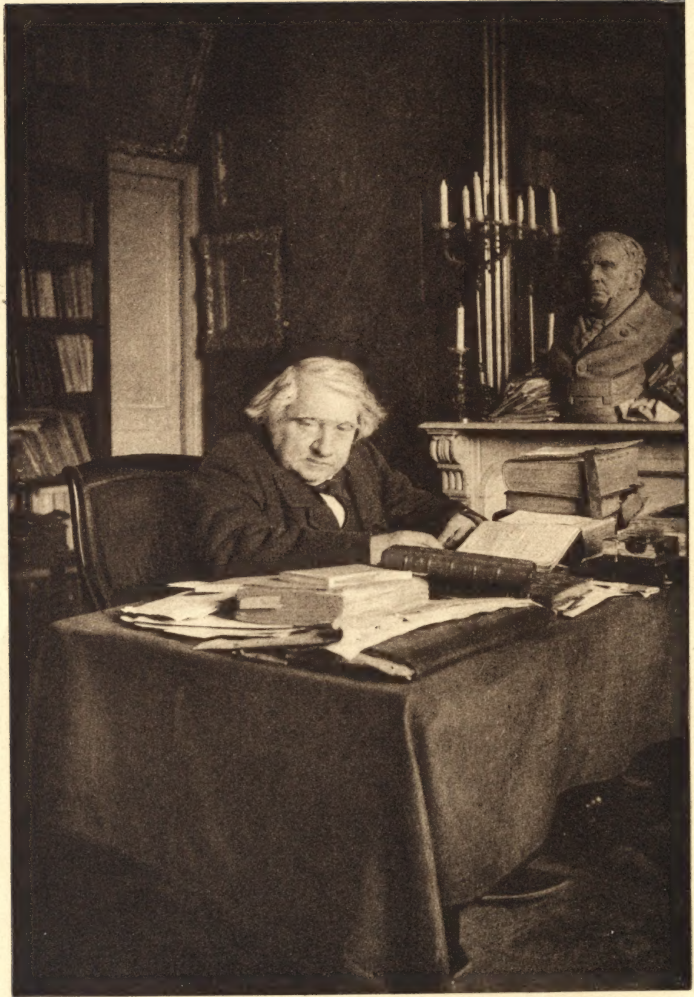
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Letters from the Holy Land



*Ernest Renan
in his study in the College of France.*

RENAN'S LETTERS FROM THE HOLY LAND

The Correspondence of Ernest Renan with
M. Berthelot while gathering material in
Italy and the Orient for "The Life of Jesus"

Translated by Lorenzo O'Rourke

With Portrait



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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

IN the letters addressed to Marcellin Berthelot during a sojourn in Italy and the East, the incomparable style of M. Renan is revealed in an attitude of abandon not to be found in his more celebrated writings. In these intimate communings, inspired by his first contact with the "mistress of the world and goddess of the arts," and the East, there is a freshness and charm that will appeal strongly to those who have already made acquaintance with the writings of this master of French prose.

Renan, in a certain sense, represents the flower of the modern French intellect, the highest development of the evolutionary philosophy and culture with which the marvellous discoveries of recent science have enriched the world. What invests his writings with a peculiar fascination is their essential modernity which does not exclude deep reverence for the past, and a charming

toleration and humanity in striking contrast with the usual attitude of those who have broken with the ancient faith. No writer of his age, perhaps of any age, entered the difficult regions of religious history more thoroughly and brilliantly endowed.

Three years after the spirit of the modern Cæsar had taken flight from St. Helena, there was born on the bleak coasts of Brittany, of a family as obscure as the Corsican's own, a child who was destined to win for France another empire in the world of intellect, the frontiers of which were to be pushed to the remotest boundaries of earth. It is interesting to think that, about the time the imperial glory of France, incarnate in Napoleon, was upon its deathbed, there was being cradled among lowly Bretons an intelligence which in the fulness of time, by its originality, versatility, and indomitable energy, would attain a rival sovereignty in the realm of ideas—illimitable like the French Alexander's, and sighing for new worlds to conquer.

When we examine the brilliant group of Frenchmen whose writings have contributed permanent

renown to contemporary literature, we perceive that, in that galaxy of lights of the first magnitude, there shines one bright particular star.

Ernest Renan was probably the greatest literary creative artist and one of the most original and brilliant thinkers of the latter half of the nineteenth century. The literary wizardry of his pages, the originality of his pictures, the refinement and artistic beauty of his conceptions—have gained for him a lonely eminence among modern historians. His prose bears the stamp of classic simplicity relieved by a Breton warmth and glow, and endued with that creative originality which is the recognised birthmark of genius. His vast philological studies have thrown a white light upon the Hebrew and Christian histories, and the mighty figures of sacred story, which have moulded the ideas of the race for ages, stand out on his canvas like creatures of flesh and blood. The rare gift of recreating the remote past, the magic which reincarnates the brooding shadows of antiquity, enabling us to touch hands, almost, with the demi-gods of history—the sorcery which makes dead ages live again, and evokes the buried

glories of five thousand years—all this was the endowment of Renan.

Perhaps in literature there is no more striking example of a life entirely consecrated to science and truth. From earliest youth he fell in love with noble ideals, and never throughout his long career did he swerve from the hard and narrow path of duty. When faith deserted him, and he beheld the magnificent edifice of Christianity dissolving before his scientific vision like the shadow of a dream, he did not lose heart. Of his philosophy, perhaps the following two passages from his writings explain more than all that has been written by his critics:

“Gods pass away like men, and it would be ill for us if they were eternal. The faith which we have once had should never be a chain. We have paid our debt to it when we have reverently wrapt it in the shroud of purple where the dead gods sleep.”

“The reasoning of Kant remains as true as ever is was: moral affirmation creates its object. Religions, like philosophies, are all of them vain, but religion is no more vain than is philosophy. Without the hope of any recompense, man devotes

himself to duty even unto death. A victim of the injustice of his fellow men, he lifts his eyes to heaven. A generous cause in which his interests are in no way concerned often makes his heart beat. The *Elohim* are not hidden aloft in the eternal snows; they are not to be met with as in the time of Moses in the mountain defiles; they dwell in the heart of man. You will never drive them thence. Justice, truth and goodness are willed by a higher power. The progress of reason was fatal only to the false gods. The true God of the universe, the one God, He whom men adore when they do a good deed, or when they seek the truth, or when they advise their fellow men aright, is established for all eternity. It is the certain knowledge of having served after my own fashion, despite all manner of defects, this good cause, which inspires me with absolute confidence in the divine goodness. . . . Moreover, supposing that I have conjectured wrongly upon certain points, I am certain that I have rightly understood, as a whole, the unique work which the Spirit of God, that is to say, the soul of the world, has realised through Israel."

The cold generalisations of material science which brushes aside the spiritual and enthrones matter in the place of Deity had no attraction for

him. His Olympian intellect revolted at the doctrine of Büchner, which exalted matter and sentenced the spirit. The divine aspirations and emotions, the heroisms and poetry of the ages were not to be explained by cellular alchemy. Something mightier was at work in the obscure womb of fate. This amazing universe whose frontiers had been so wonderfully enlarged by modern discovery was not to be explained by an appeal to the crucible only. Science, in revealing to man unknown and unsuspected worlds, far from solving, had only complicated the divine enigma—the eternal riddle of existence. The antique gods of Olympus were, indeed, driven from their thrones, but the ideal Iaveh had not abdicated. He had only retired farther off from the ken of creatures. He had vanished into infinitude, but His thunders and His glories maintained their empire still.

Thus, when that mirage of naïve faith and miracle which had charmed Renan's youth in the cloister had been annihilated by the lightnings of modern science, there arose before the eyes of the disenchanted dreamer a mightier vision, an

illimitable vista, more sublime, more poetic, and endowed with a nobler charm than the faded dream of his young idolatry.

At this early period of his life his imagination was dominated by a glorious dream of philosophy based on pure science, which bursts forth like a modern apocalypse in that strikingly original work, "The Future of Science," written in youth, but published in his old age. This book could have been written only by a prodigy. It contains some of the most daring conceptions to be found within the whole range of imaginative philosophical speculation. The young writer boldly essays the riddle of the Sphinx: What mortal has the right to declare that religion and philosophy have said their last word? Is it not possible that we are still groping in the dim vestibule of the temple of knowledge, and that we have not yet found the portals that lead to the glorious temple itself? Are we certain that only death can open these portals? May not the day dawn when the mighty genius of some Copernicus of the moral world will reveal to mankind truths that will shatter the beliefs of

ages, and establish a new philosophy whose foundations shall be eternal?

The possibilities of the modern intelligence fascinated the emancipated thinker in love with great ideas, and he longed to tear aside the veil which for ages has shrouded the mysteries of human destiny. He who had been destined for a priest of the Christian church would not relinquish his sublime vocation, but would become a priest of science. Thus was born in that passionate soul, widowed of the Christian ideals, a new ideal which was to be the unique inspiration of a long and fruitful life. That life was passed within the silent cloisters of science.

This daring voyager into the dangerous realms of the Infinite, this charming gleaner of the ripest harvests of modern culture, this classicist who worshipped afar the ideals of Greece, was endowed with the scientific and critical faculty in so keen a degree as to challenge the admiration of the great German scholars of his time. Strauss and Wellhausen have paid him tribute. His works, "The Origins of Christianity" and the "History of the People of Israel," are monuments of exact

research and brilliant scholarship such as it would be difficult to rival throughout the whole domain of modern historical achievement.

To prepare himself for these labours he mastered Hebrew, and made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. His impressions of the scenes of biblical history are set forth in the letters contained in the present volume: wherein we catch a glimpse of the dawn of those ideas afterward to be elaborated in the great series of religious histories which are without a parallel in literature. These scenes from the religious drama of Israel, often dull and uninteresting in their original form, leave the hands of Renan embroidered with pearl and gold and instinct with human interest. Whole vistas of the remote past emerge from the gloom of ages. Obedient to this creative intellect, oblivion gives up its dead, and the hosts of the past, summoned from their graves, loom for an instant against the background of the night of time.

Since Renan is the embodiment of the brilliant scepticism of his time, he has been compared with Voltaire. Attempts have been made to

trace a resemblance between the great infidel of the eighteenth century and the modern author of the "Life of Jesus." Such attempts are abortive. There is no real resemblance. The brilliant scoffer, whose sneer embraced the religions of humanity, had nothing in common with the reverent biographer of the Saviour of men.

When, at the proper distance of time, some genius inspired by the glories of the past shall worthily interpret the intellectual history of the nineteenth century, the figure of Renan will probably occupy a striking place in his wonderful picture. In that brilliant constellation which illustrated the annals of an epoch that must always be regarded with wonder, he will probably occupy a rôle of unique and interesting splendour. For it will be recognised that this intellect, so many-sided, so multi-coloured, that it seemed capable of reflecting the ideas of the infinite universe, was the perfect type and exemplar of a period which mankind will hold in eternal reverence and affection. It will be seen that in the brain of this Breton peasant, rescued from the priesthood, was contained the germ of the ideas destined to re-mould

the future. Scholars in love with intellectual greatness will find unceasing delight in losing themselves in the enchanting mazes of his brilliant paradox. Orthodox religion will owe much of its historical glory to the fact that he loved its history. Sincere souls, enamoured of the Divine Saviour's doctrines, will find their vague dreams crystallised in the matchless pages of his religious epics, and his name, execrated by devout Christians of his time, will be advanced to exalted honour by the Christianity of the future which will worship God "in spirit and in truth."

LORENZO O'ROURKE.

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SKETCH OF RENAN

BY

M. BERTHELOT

It was in the month of November, 1845, that I first saw Renan. He was four years older than I, but had perhaps less experience of life—if one may use the word, experience, in the case of two youths. He had come from the seminary, and had just renounced the sacerdotal vocation, not, however, without some vague desire to return to it. His gentle and serious air, his taste for the things of the intellectual and moral life, greatly pleased me; and we formed one of those friendships which the passing years and the revolutions of life served to strengthen, even to the moment of final separation. Renan has spoken in his books, on various occasions, of this constant affection which has never been troubled by the conflicts of passion, interest, ambition, or self-love, or by

radical differences in our manner of comprehending private or public life.

Notwithstanding this, our fundamental conceptions differed considerably. If we were both equally devoted to science and free-thought, Renan, by reason of his Breton origin and his ecclesiastical and contemplative education, with its face set to the past, had less taste for democracy, for the French Revolution, and, above all, for that transformation, at once rational, industrial and socialistic, in which modern civilisation is engaged. The old fashion of considering science, the arts and letters, under the protection of a superior and autocratic power, had the greatest attraction for him, and he never made a secret of it.

On the contrary, my Parisian descent on my mother's side, my childhood, surrounded from its earliest days by medical traditions and by the example of my father's incessant activity, urged me to an instinctive sympathy for the new conception of collective reason,—that is to say, the scientific evolution of human society.

But a sentiment of deep regard for each other

drew us together from the first day. We were animated—this is saying too little—we were inflamed by a common and disinterested enthusiasm, which made us love above and beyond all other good—art and truth; it is this taste for things in themselves which has constantly maintained our friendship while our careers were developing in parallel lines, tracing distinct paths which each followed according to his own direction and personal character.

Our marriages—which took place a few years apart—so far from breaking the old bonds of affection by the exclusive jealousy of a new love, as sometimes happens, only drew us closer together. Our wives, devoted each to the career and moral life of him whose name she had accepted, were not long in becoming friends.

The sole regret of all four was that we were not able to associate in this friendship dear Henriette Renan, who lavished on her youthful brother so ardent and enlightened an affection. Renan has written, somewhere, that she is the person who has had the greatest influence upon his life. It was she, in fact, who guided him in his first

and capital crisis, at a time when his natural indecision and temperamental tastes would not, perhaps, have led him to completely divest himself of the all-powerful suggestions of a clerical discipline. Those who have read Henriette's letters to her brother can appreciate the wonderful superiority and strength of her moral nature.

It was only at the end of this crisis, and after the essential bond was broken, that I became acquainted with Renan. I had no part in it; but the relations that we then established, and the proper philosophical spirit that each communicated to his companion, could not but confirm him in his resolutions by adding to the glimpses which he had already obtained of the sciences, language and history those vaster and more precise perspectives—the certitudes of physical and natural science.

At this time, I was eighteen years of age, and Renan was twenty-two. At my age there can be no vanity in recalling the memories of my school days. I was one of the brightest pupils of the College of Henri IV., where, in 1846, I carried off the crown and the prize of honour

in philosophy at the general competition. I lived in a narrow, quiet and well-lighted room in the upper part of a house in the *Rue de l'Abbé de l'Épée*, which served as a boarding-house for those who were attending the College. With an equal talent, at this age, for the sciences and letters, I inclined to the former, influenced by family impressions received since the time of my birth.

My father was a doctor of medicine, a simple practitioner living in a poor quarter, to-day extinct, at the foot of the tower, *Saint-Jacques-la-Boucherie*. Himself the son of a peasant on the banks of the Loire, full of tenderness for the wretched, he was too devoted to his patients and to his family ever to have been able to gain, I will not say a fortune, but even a modest competency.

Under these conditions, Renan and I entered upon the struggle of life without other support than a father in my case and a sister in his. We had our careers to carve out, with those uncertain resources which depended upon the existence of our families, whom sickness, already hovering

over those beloved heads, might any day deprive us of.

However, if the necessity of a career preoccupied us, it was by no means our dominating and besetting concern. We had confidence in our strength and capacity for work. We had even both resolved not to enter any of those great schools so dear to the French youth, and which our studies and qualifications would doubtless have opened to us without too much difficulty. This was due to the fact that we were inspired by a sentiment of personal independence and by a principle to which we remained steadfast, even to the hour fixed by destiny when honours and official functions came to woo us.

Thus, we were both young and ignorant of life, serious, industrious, and inspired by a curiosity hardly less than universal. We were lodged next door to each other; our actual communication, and, as a result, our intellectual and moral association, were inevitable. The charm of our relations was the greater in proportion as all egotism and private interest were entirely absent. Urged to sound everything to its depths,

we exchanged ideas on all things, but were not without our illusions regarding the limits of human knowledge. With the naïve confidence of youth, I had undertaken, at this period, to complete my studies in the principles of all the sciences, and I had distributed the hours of my labour by days and weeks, counting on my great aptitude for work and on the facility with which I could transpose my mind almost instantly from one order of ideas to another. It is unnecessary to say that it was not long before I was disabused of this idea, and understood the vanity of my attempt.

In the dedication of the "Philosophical Dialogues," Renan has described the incessant fermentation common to our minds. His youthful work, "The Future of Science," was composed at this period; but he published it only in his latter years as part of his reminiscences, for this volume represents the first unripe product of the bubbling of both our young heads—a mixture of the current views of the philosophers and savants of this period with our personal conceptions, then raw and confused, but the develop-

ment of which is perceived later on. For a long time, as Renan has also recalled, we had given up making any distinction regarding the reciprocal influence which each exercised on the development of the other.

Assuredly I have had in my youth and in my ripe age other friends than Renan, very dear friends who were associated with my scientific, political and philosophical aspirations; we have all reacted upon one another in a certain measure. But, to-day, when nearly all of my contemporaries have disappeared, I may declare that no other was united to me by such strong bonds, no other in descending into the tomb has left behind such deep sorrow, or so great a void in my moral individuality. Each one of those who leave us carries with him a portion of our opinions and convictions—that is to say, a portion of our personality; there are, henceforth, in the mind and heart of him who survives, vacant places that nothing can fill, sentiments that cannot be exchanged with any one.

Perhaps there is another condition of my

moral life which has contributed still more to seal the unalterable friendship which united us.

I have never placed full confidence in life; it contains too many uncertainties and irreparable eventualities. Hence, an impression of sadness and unrest that I have never ceased to carry with me in all conditions of my life, and which was strongest in my youth, because I had not then acquired that serenity which comes when one perceives approaching nearer and nearer the final goal of all joy and sorrow. I have known the tenderness of a mother, the devoted love of a father, and, withal, I have not preserved the memory of this infantile paradise which so many regret when the golden gates are closed. My early and somewhat sickly childhood has left me the remembrance of painful, rather than happy, days. In proportion as my personal consciousness developed, my uncertainty increased. Early, perhaps from the age of ten years, I was tormented by the insecurity of the future. Ever since, I have never fully enjoyed the present, being constantly accustomed to look ahead and to strain my faculties in order to foresee and antici-

pate the obstacles to be encountered. Doubtless, this unquiet prevision is derived at bottom from the same faculties which direct the experimenter in his scientific discoveries; in the same way he is impelled to divine the spontaneous action of natural forces, in order to cause them to act in the special direction in which he proposes to trace them; in the same way, he is appealed to by a continual sense of prevision and combination applied to the acts and sentiments of current life. This constant tension is at times singularly painful. Even to-day, when my life, strengthened and consolidated by the years, hardly leaves room for cares like these, it is too late to return to the joyousness of youth.

The sorrow for lost children and parents, and for friends passed away, the disgust caused by treasons, deceptions and desertions, the radical impossibility of attaining an absolute aim, which is found at the heart of all human existence—all these reasons, united, do not permit me at my age to abandon myself to the full enjoyment of the present. Besides, it is no longer my own destiny which now disturbs me; it is the destiny of those

I love. In all cases the memory of the past, even when happy, is always mixed with too much bitterness for one to yield to it without reserve. That is why I have always taken refuge in action; it helps to fight against this despair. This is also why I have always felt the need of sustaining myself by dear and pure affections; that of Renan has been one of the strongest and deepest.

During the years subsequent to our meeting, both our lives were determined in different directions; one in the material, the other in the intellectual. At first, each took his university degrees; the baccalaureate, the licentiate's degree in the different orders, and the doctorates in letters and the sciences. Renan became a Doctor of Philosophy, and was preparing for his entrance into the Lycée of Versailles. He was finally entered as an employé in the National Library. After some years of medical studies, I became *preparateur* in chemistry at the College of France. Such were the beginnings of our *cursus honorum*.

They were long and painful. Without abandoning our modest rôle of beginners, respectful toward those who instructed us, and without

presuming to claim the rank of masters, we, nevertheless, avoided placing ourselves under any patron:

Nullius addicti jurare in verba magistri.

Thus we remained for a long time in the modest condition of beginners. Renan was employed in the National Library in the department of manuscripts, where he composed that masterly history of the Semitic languages which established his reputation as a savant; this work obtained one of the great prizes of the Academy of Inscriptions, and the authority which it conferred on its author realised for him, a few years after, his dream, when he was received as a member of this Academy. His work, henceforth, was a prelude to those studies in religious history which he had assigned as the fundamental aim of his scientific life, and which he has consecrated by the "Life of Jesus" and "The History of the Origins of Christianity."

As for the author of the present notice, he lived for ten years as a simple *preparateur* at the College of France, where, moreover, he was treated with the greatest kindness by the incumbent, Balard.

I was absorbed by the discoveries which, for almost the last forty years, have established organic chemistry on a new foundation, that of synthesis.

During all this period, our relations were continuous, and maintained in all their intensity. But since our life has been public and the few incidents that we have figured in are known, at least in the particular world in which we have lived, it does not seem profitable to me to report them in detail.

I would have loved, however, to describe here the second great moral crisis, which decided the life of Renan, and which transformed the learned author of the history of Semitic languages into the poetic and genial writer of the "Life of Jesus." This change was the origin of his great reputation and of his universal influence, both on account of the nature of the religious problems at the heart of which he boldly placed himself, and of the admirable literary form of his new writings. One may perceive the beginnings of this evolution of his mind in the letters from Italy. But it was chiefly determined and hastened by the entrance

of Renan into the bosom of the artistic circle which surrounded Ary Scheffer, and by his marriage with Cornélie Scheffer. Renan himself, in the sketch consecrated to his sister Henriette, has in a few words referred to this whole crisis, as well as to some of the most delicate revolutions in his thought.

It does not concern me to say more of this. The two exceptional women who shared the heart of Renan were of too high a nature not to achieve harmony in their desire to make him happy. Perhaps the confidence that both vouchsafed to grant me drew still tighter the bonds of my friendship with him whom they loved.

Paris, 1898.

MARCELLIN BERTHELOT.

Letters from the Holy Land

LETTERS FROM THE HOLY LAND

LETTER I

*SAINT MALO, August 28, 1847.

IT is now a week since I arrived at the goal of my journey, and I have found very few moments of possible freedom to devote to you. The first days succeeding one's arrival are, in my eyes, the most disagreeable of the vacation, encumbered as they are by the obligation to make and receive visits. Life here would very soon become a source of ennui to me, were it not that it is passed in my beloved family circle, which has so many charms for me who am habitually deprived of it. It is certain that there is to be found here a well-spring of joys possessed of great power to comfort and solace. The family in its various aspects is the natural *milieu* of human life, and only serious reasons can warrant us

* This letter and the following are dated from Renan's native province, Brittany.

in sequestering ourselves from it. But as we know, these reasons may be decisive, and may even constitute a duty.

The country that I am living in is actually fermenting from lack of ideas. All men here are cast in the same mould, and represent a remarkable type of good sense, of positive and conservative opinion. Every bold excursion into the region of ideas passes here for folly or nonsense. The ultra of any sort are not welcome here. Seriousness and probity, mediocrity in all, except in common sense and practical wisdom, form the habitual *milieu* of life. Hence, as regards religious beliefs, you have an orthodoxy that is reasonable, but at heart ignorant and narrow, such as we are acquainted with—and in politics, eminently conservative instincts.

This is like a little world apart, and I am very careful not to compare it with others, either to prefer or depreciate it. Let each one live in his sphere and allow others to live in theirs; for if each one believes that his own is the best, who knows which is right? At bottom, tolerance—or that which amounts to the same thing, liberty—

is the daughter of critical scepticism. Dogmatism, which regards as outside the pale of reason those who do not think like it, must be intolerant; one only arrives at the idea of pure intellectual independence when, while holding to his own conclusions, it is possible for him to believe that some other who sees altogether differently may be right. This is our state. This is the cause of our liberalism, and of the holy rage which we feel against whoever wishes to impose on others his system or his ideas. We willingly forgive the past ages for this. But when we see men of modern times, and imbued with modern ideas—men who have been able to contribute their share to their promulgation, adopt the folly of the past, and desire in their turn to impose as absolute an idea, the essence of which is to judge others as relative and to believe itself absolute—then I say we can no longer contain ourselves; and I avow to you that for some days past this consideration has affected me with an access of bad humour that has caused me much suffering.

These absolutist repressions of a power which has constituted itself liberal in so much, this

greedy personality which annihilates every idea in the presence of the instinct of conservatism, exasperate me and affect me with a sad sense of defeat at the sight of my impotence. I could wish to denounce before all the world the absurdity and the contradiction of such a system. I would pillory it in the sight of all in characters as large as truth. Let us be silent, however; we are still children, and only walls hear us.

We have here a pretty little scandal,* have we not? The idea which has preoccupied me in the midst of this delicate drama is, what has this assassin done to become a peer of France!—now that all recognise him as a worthless and brutal man. He had a great name; this is all. It is, above all, from this point of view that the result of this crime may be useful; it will serve slightly to bend this disdainful aristocracy, which has used immorality as a mechanical term and applied it to the lower classes.

I think a great deal about you and the happiness that we have enjoyed in each other's company. Isolated as we are, obliged to create

* The Praslin affair.

our whole environment, how weakened our sources of strength would become if they were not multiplied by being united! We owe each other too much to be henceforth separated, at least in soul and thought; the more so as the conclusions that we have arrived at are so intermingled that it would be impossible, by examining the network, to discern the property of each. Moreover, there is no such thing as property between us, and I do not conceive how it would be possible for us to disagree on any point; at the end of five minutes we would understand each other and be in accord.

The grave difficulty that we foresaw concerning religious dissent between me and my family has not come to pass. My mother has shown a largeness of mind and liberality, and has concurred entirely in the plan of action which propriety prescribes for me in this country: to say nothing and do nothing that would testify affection or antipathy for the beliefs of which I formerly made profession. My mother and I have had the most piquant conversations on this subject; I have very easily brought her to say that it is

necessary to permit people to believe what they wish. . . . The confusion of positive and moral religion, which in the common idea is so completely irremediable, has also its good result. If, on one hand, it teaches that the man who does not believe in Christianity cannot be moral; on the other, it leads indulgent people to the conclusion that a moral person is as religious as it is needful to be; but it is necessary to pay but slight attention to the vague and superficial ideas on this subject. Let a person publish his incredulity and no one will believe in the possibility of his morality; but let him show himself grave and moral, and every one will come to the downright conclusion that he is orthodox: thus things go. For the rest, it is unnecessary to tell you that my opinions in this regard remain always the same. Henceforth for me it is as evident as daylight that Christianity is dead, and completely dead, and that nothing can be done for it—at least until it is transformed. This will be but an effect of the intellectual depression with which we are menaced, and which will dominate the masses; but I could see the whole world

become Christian again, without my believing the more.

The more I advance, the more distinctly I perceive the influence on the present of the elements of a new religion. Is not the Revolution, for example, already the personification of an entirely new order of ideas, which has become sacred and an object of veneration for us? I see it advance further and further toward religionification (excuse the barbarism that I do not at all wish to have adopted). Already he who insults it passes for a fool, and the time will come when it will be only spoken of as our *holy Revolution*.

For my part, however, I do not make modern religion consist solely in faith in the French Revolution. It is certain that in modern ideas there is an ensemble of views to which we are forced to conform, and of which the united result constitutes a kind of religion. These views, which have triumphed little by little during the last four centuries, have a wonderful relation subsisting between them. They have been produced in isolated fashion, often exclusively, and always

as a reaction against the past. The Reformation, popular emancipation, the emancipation of science, the emancipation of philosophy, the advent of criticism, the amelioration of public morals, etc.—all these form an ensemble which is the spirit of modern times; and what confirms me in this view and inspires me with a full hope in the permanence of these ideas is the persecution to which they have been exposed. There is not a single one of these elements whose first promulgators have not been a target for the attacks of the men of the past. Let there be cited a single liberal thinker, a single modern man in science, philosophy or politics, who before the end of the eighteenth century (and since!) has not been the object of open persecution or vexatious annoyances on the part of the retrogressionists. These are the martyrs of modern religion, exactly analogous to those who suffered for the establishment of Christianity. It would be easy to trace in the advent of these ideas all the phenomena which accompany the slow and gradual appearance of religions. The heavy, massive, blind and obstinate coalition of the men of the past against science is without

doubt the most characteristic symptom. Herein, also, is the guarantee of triumph. The ideas which the men of the past suppress by force remain immovable and ever present, while those opposed to them only flutter about, ever changing the fashion of their dialectics; the doctrines, condemned to a certain secrecy by the maladroit constraint which their persecutors impose upon them, are destined to reign. Behold them overflowing on all sides and even carrying away the dikes. Can we hope for this? At any rate, there is nothing serious to fear. There, or nowhere, are the guarantees of the future. Above all, I am convinced of the impossibility of any definitive retrogression in the march of the human mind. The most advanced idea is the truest and the most likely to live. Honour to whoever shall have put his shoulder to the wheel and contributed his share to the advancement of that which must come.

I am actively engaged in the heavy labour of my theses. In my next letter I shall explain to you an important modification that I count on introducing in my plan of studies for the coming

year, and I shall ask your advice on this point. In the libraries of this country, and especially in that of Avranches, I have found manuscripts of great value which are directly in line with my work. All the individual libraries of this country are formed of the débris of the learned abbeys of la Basse-Normandie, those of le Mont-Saint-Michel, etc.; a fact which gives them great value.

I expect a letter from you within a few days; believe that nothing could be more welcome to me, and that I shall await it as an event.

September 16, 1847.

Thanks for your good letter; it is a means of intimate converse to which I constantly return. It supplies for me the place of our pleasant talks, the loss of which I feel very much. It is, indeed, pleasant to discuss together ideas of capital importance, when, after long habit, we have learned to understand each other so well. This is, moreover, a necessary condition, and in my opinion nothing is more insipid and dangerous

than to speak of the higher things with those with whom we have not had a long acquaintance; there is danger of not being able to speak the same language, and, while employing the same words, of occasioning the most singular misunderstandings.

For some days since, I have been in quite a painful mental state. The inevitable imperfection, the relativity of all that concerns politics and the practical organisation of things, disgusts me with this kind of speculation. We believe that we are more advanced than a certain other party, and probably we are, and in virtue of our conviction we would like to see the realisation of what we regard as for the best. But, seriously, how will this improve things? Do you believe that on the morrow of this revolution people will be happy? The law of politics is to advance forever. Public opinion cannot remain stationary for an instant. It triumphs from time to time, and expresses itself on the day of its triumph by a form of government which is the expression of its actual want. At this moment public opinion and the established government

are in accord. But public opinion always progressing, and the government being, necessarily, stationary and conservative, on the morrow of the revolution harmony is destroyed and a new revolution becomes necessary. This does not occur, and very happily, because the opposition has not yet the strength; it will occur later on when the dissatisfaction becomes too crying: then comes a new revolution, and all must be begun over again. In a word, I imagine public opinion as advancing in a continuous movement, and the governing power advancing by somersaults, so that it is only for an instant that they find themselves abreast.

Is this a misfortune at bottom? Yes and no. Yes, because we must consider what is most perfect and most durable as the best thing that it is possible to achieve. No, because the opposition is foolish and juvenile. If it is allowed its own way, it will beat about the bush, and the framework of society will not be characterised by the requisite breadth and strength. It will be like a ship without ballast, buffeted by every blast of wind. In fine, if the government has not

a certain weight of its own, if it only obeys the attraction of instant and capricious opinion, there will be continual tackings without law and without reason. Public opinion is then necessary; generally it is right; it is necessary that it shall triumph; but it is fortunate that it has behind it a heavy and inert mass to tow. Do you not then believe that, if our ideas triumphed, we should become conservatives, and seek to maintain the form of government that we considered essentially the best? Now, moreover, it is very certain that a very advanced opposition party will be immediately formed against this new system; I do not speak of a retrograde opposition, which, being radically impotent, does not deserve to be spoken of. I thus figure to myself all parties as of a certain necessary and mechanical fashion, which does not permit my taking any of them to heart. I conceive them as occupying a certain place in a certain machine, and following the movements of the machine, conforming to the necessity of their situation. O God! Shall we ever consent to be a mechanical plaything? Nothing that I can imagine fills me with more horror. Those

in high place appear to me like mountebanks who abandon themselves to pranks and practise open jugglery. More than ever, the present government gives me the impression of a heavy and disgusting play. A harlequin, a clown, a moralist who wants morality for others, but does not make use of it himself—what an odious type!

The opposition suggests to me a capricious and unbalanced young man, only dreaming of better things, the dream of to-day overthrown by that of to-morrow. One party or another is necessarily what it is by virtue of the type it represents. This puts me in bad humour with all the world; all parties irritate me, and I do not know which to pledge myself to; and what complicates the inextricable difficulty is that we must belong to one party. Solitude startles us, and we have an extreme desire to content ourselves merely from the critical point of view. Moreover, can we seriously take any other? It will need a good dose of *bonhomie* to enter into another cause with heart and head. It seems to me that every man of action before becoming dogmatic and hoisting a banner, must sacrifice something from the point

of view of criticism. Also, all practical politicians have the same effect on me as blockheads or peasants, or as the dogmatists of religion and politics. What, then, is there in human life? Where can we find anything that we may fully take to heart? The critic needs courage to hold himself aloof from all, even from affection, and to remain cold at the moment when his enthusiasm is about to flame up before this or that cause. It is on that account that I refrain from announcing to any one (*exceptis excipiendis*) any political opinion; for the moment, I place myself at the opposite point of view; I perceive that my opinion, or, at least, my expression of it, has been one-sided, and I have regrets. I do not believe that I shall ever fight with enthusiasm in this field.

I have just poured out before you all my bad humour; you will correct me; I know well, in fact, that I am not in my normal state: my physical condition contributes to this, no doubt. I feel ill at ease in general, and this illness fills me with dark thoughts and sad presentiments, I do not know why; but, perhaps, this amounts to nothing. I am eager to be in Paris, so that I may be enlight-

ened, for I do not wish to commune with any one here. I am suffering from very severe and continuous pains from a soreness in my side, caused by an abscess when I was seven or eight years old. Up to now, I never felt any pain. But we will leave this subject.

A few moments ago I left the lecture hall where I just heard the wonderful news from Italy; decidedly the movement is begun. I entirely share your opinions on the rôle of the Pope. It is one of the most remarkable events of our century. Do you know that it is the first act of denial of the past in the bosom of orthodoxy? This is true, not only with regard to dogma, but with regard to policy and practice. I do not know whether you have read a curious article which the *Gazette de France* has published in the course of its battle with *l' Ami de Religion* on the question whether the new pope's conduct was opposed to that of his predecessor. The above-mentioned gazette produced, as convincing proof of the affirmative, an encyclical of Gregory XVI., in which the freedom of the press and all modern ideas are expressly treated as follies and almost

heresies. No one can understand or arrest this unexpected movement. By virtue of the connection of ideas, and seeing that the ensemble of modern ideas is inseparable from the negation of orthodoxy, it follows that the Pope will be led to abandon the old system. What a miracle!

What you tell me of the new meaning of the word "sectary" is very striking; we must preserve this word and use it as a weapon against our retrogressionist adversaries; it is the only way to turn their own arms against them. At bottom we are dogmatists, as far as it is, henceforth, possible for us to be so; that is to say, that we do not embrace such and such a thing as true, but as most advanced. Considering all this, how can we take hold on a healthy enthusiasm? In faith, I know not how, unless by a sort of abstraction of which I still conceive the possibility. For the sake of action, we represent to ourselves that a certain thing has the qualities of goodness and absolute truth, reserving the right to criticise it in private. For it is clear that the man that held to the critical point of view would never act with courage. For this it is necessary to be

roundly dogmatic, and to believe that what one is working for is the absolute good, that his adversaries are absolutely wrong; then one fights with all his heart. I conceive very well, that if I were launched into active life, I should become dogmatic for the sake of action; however, I should preserve my *a parte* of criticism.

I am not of your opinion relative to the observations that you present on the "religionification" of the French Revolution. You oppose its horrors which for all time will cause it to be detested from one point of view. Consider, however, that this side will soon be forgotten. One point of view will efface the other. During the years which immediately followed it, only its horrors were thought of, and only the atrocity of the Revolution was dwelt upon. Now we only think of its sublime features and its results, and forget its horrors. Criticism reckons with both, but religions will never be critical. Look at Christianity. I assume, in fact, that there was in new-born Christianity as large a proportion of superstition and pettiness as there was of cruelty and madness in the French Revolution. If

dawning Christianity had been brought to the attention of a nationalist of that time, Horace, for example, the only impression that would have remained to him would be one of narrowness and ridiculous superstition. He would not have seen the sublime qualities. We no longer see the pettiness; we think only of the sublimity which effaces all else. Criticism sees both. If the sublime in Christianity has effaced its pettiness, why should not the sublime in the Revolution efface its horrors?

I am forced to conclude for a singular reason: I have no paper. I had, however, much to tell you of my plan of *religiogénie*, which I now call *religionomie*, for the sake of being more exact. This will be reserved for my next letter. Now this letter will reach you at the end of the coming week, almost at the same time as myself, for I am to be in Paris Tuesday, September 28. I shall not, however, call at M. Crouzet's. My next will explain all that, and will give you the address at which you may find me on my arrival. I hope for a letter from you during the course of the week.

LETTER II

SAINT MALO, August 31, 1849.

HERE I am, for some days now, in the bosom of my family, and in a very different atmosphere from our accustomed one. I could almost believe that I had passed from one planet to another, when I found myself transported in a few hours from the exciting scenes of Parisian life to this forgotten corner of the world, which is still the spot in Brittany where life is most active.

You can never imagine the state of this country, and I could never paint it for you, for the categories here are radically different from those which we have habitually before our eyes. Are the people legitimists? No. The portion of the population which is attached to the elder branch forms only a quarter or a fifth. Are they Orleanists? No, again. Louis Philippe is regretted, that is all. Are they Bonapartists? They never

even think in this direction. And with all this, the Legitimist candidates have been elected by fifty thousand majority.

The bishop with his district curés makes out the list which is advocated from the pulpit, the bourgeoisie accept it, and it goes through without opposition. Alas! This is too well explained, and I have never better understood that the intellectual and administrative nullity of the provinces is the greatest obstacle to the progress of modern ideas. Take St. Malo for an example. The mass of the population, the people still more than the bourgeoisie, have but one aim: to make money, and to live in ease and peace. These people are indifferent to everything, provided that business goes on. In addition to this great mass of public opinion, there are imperceptible minorities (twenty or thirty, for example, in the city in which I am living) of the bourgeois, almost as worthless as the others, often less honest, who are called "reds." But be careful not to think that this classification represents a difference of political opinion. By no means. The "reds" have no more principle than the others. They are the

disturbing element of the country who adopt this title from habit, and to give themselves tone.

As regards socialism—would you believe it?—it excites neither love nor hate, for it is absolutely unknown. Even the name conveys no idea, and as far as the people are concerned, I do not know whether there is to be found among them even a vague aspiration for better conditions. It is true that this country is perhaps the part of France where there is the the least misery; but the position of the people would be a hundred times worse, if they accepted their present fate, without dreaming of improvement. Well, do you believe, after all this, that the country is perfectly reactionary, that republican institutions are hated, that there may be fear of a royalist movement? By no means. The present state of affairs is liked well enough and found tolerable. People are interested in Ledru-Rollin and above all in Louis Blanc (without understanding one of his ideas); they idolise Lamartine who alone is understood by a kind of instinct; they by no means oppose social reform, dearly love M. Dufaure and M. Passy, and are indignant at the antagonism shown

them by the "whites," an antagonism that these good people cannot understand. What is radically wanting in this country (and I have assured myself that this movement applies to the whole West), is initiative and an awakening. Life is passed in somnolence, and the people are indignant at those who come to trouble this nonchalant repose. "Indignant" is too strong a word: they are impatient merely; this is all these consciences, hardly awake, are capable of. I can affirm to you that decentralisation will be a powerful instrument in the hands of democracy. Wherever there are established centres resembling Paris, the modern movement will be reproduced in analogous phases.

September 4, 1849.

A thousand causes independent of my will have interrupted my letter; I am not sorry, for in the interval I received your good letter which gave me great pleasure. This voice from another world has delighted my soul, and has given me

new life in the realm of truth. Life here is so narrow, so artificial. Still I greatly love this life of the peasant, of the simple man absorbed in his little cares, of the woman, for example, absorbed in her child, having her universe here, looking for nothing beyond it.

But this bourgeois existence appears to me a wasting of human life; one thing also strikes me with force: it is the physical feebleness of this race. It has not yet had a century of civilisation, and it is used up. Among all the people that I see here, I can hardly count two or three who are really strong and vigorous. All the children before my eyes (my little nephews are happily an exception) are feeble, sickly, and only live by the use of medicines and cauteries. This saddens me and makes me fear for the future of civilisation; for if all civilisation is to wind up thus, barbarism would be preferable. This life is frivolous and has nothing of the beautiful, and I cannot help recognising in it some resemblance to that of the worn-out generation at the end of five hundred years of civilisation, which saw the end of the Roman republic and flung itself into

slavery. I find a striking similarity in time between your ideas concerning decadence and those to which I have been a prey for some days since. I console myself for the moment by such considerations as these:

To begin with, up to what point has this occurred in the past? Do you believe that our peasants were more liberal in 1789? Do you believe that they have *developed* into egoists? Alas! no. Our peasants are to-day what they were in the sixteenth century. All their memories date from that period. This sixteenth century has been a wonderful century of revolution. And, withal, what an abominable epoch! What maledictions were launched by contemporaries against this age of iron! Besides, even supposing that the European nations, France among the others, were destined to undergo a period of what is called decadence, there would be no need of being frightened, for humanity has reserves of living strength. If Slavism, for example, invaded western Europe, it is certain that the change of climate, the influence of our civilisation, and the fated march of the human intellect would lead

it to ideas analogous to ours, and these without doubt would be grasped with the greater originality and vigour. What matters it by whom the good is wrought? We are now for the barbarians against the Romans. From the point of view of humanity there is no such thing as *decadence*.

This word, moreover, needs explanation. The classic pedagogues make a strong use of it. If we trust them, Lamartine would be a decadent in comparison with J.-B. Rousseau, and St. Augustine would be a decadent compared with Cicero. Assuredly it is necessary to respect the principle of nationality; observe, however, that we do not invoke this principle except when the oppressed nation is superior to the nation which oppresses it. There is something very narrow in the exclusively national school; it is the negation of the point of view of humanity.

Like yourself, I have experienced lively sorrow at the Magyar catastrophe—less on account of the question of this little nationality, which, as it seems, can do nothing better than attach itself as a satellite to the Danubian confederation known as Austria, and for whose existence there

may be no reason—than for the trusty modern principles which fight on its side. This is profoundly to be deplored; but it is not yet time to fight in the open for these principles; for a long time to come they must fight under cover of nationality. What is most clear in all this is the utterly new position of Russia face to face with western Europe.

I am placed in a very ambiguous position with regard to this proposition of a trip to Italy which has been made to me. M. Genin, paying no attention to my repugnance which was equivalent to a refusal, has referred the affair to the Academy of Inscriptions, which regards it with great favour. A commission has been named to make a report; all the members appeared very favourable to the project; M. Leclerc, who had taken the warmest interest in the affair, is charged with the report. Judge of my embarrassment, for the trip radically upsets all my projects. I place my hope in events which, I pray, will render the realisation of the plan impossible, and also in the cholera; for M. Daremberg is the most timid man in the world, and he

has sworn not to go to Italy while there is cholera there.

With that exception and in a year or two from now, this trip, as you can believe, would delight me infinitely. I have not yet known what it is to have emotions, in this damp and cold climate; I have seen nothing but rugged and bristling coasts. I imagine that under this sky, which, as they say, reveals so many things, I shall experience more complete sensations, and that it will make an epoch in my physical and esthetic life. I cannot tell you how much the mere difference between Paris and this country influences my normal state. The sky here is gray and dull, the sun is never bright; the sea only is full of life; but you know that in the sensation which one experiences on the seacoast there is something hard and boisterous, and the opposite of *Mordet aqua taciturnus amnis*.

All this presents a physiognomy with which I have but little sympathy, precisely for the reason that it answers to my defect and to a state of mind often habitual with me. Here I am under an influence at once hard, narrow, and devoid of

ideas; I am like one listening to a piece of music of two or three notes, or to a voice marred by short breath irritating, atonic, and incapable of producing a volume of sound.

LETTER III

ROME, November 9, 1849.

HOW many things have passed before my eyes, how many emotions have mingled in my soul, dear and excellent friend, since the day when we said adieu to each other! I should be inexcusable for neglecting so long to communicate with you, if it were not that the crowd of impressions that besiege the stranger in this enchanted land deprive him, for the first few days, of every other faculty than that of feeling. With me this change has been as sudden as the lightning.

I have wandered about all the afternoon in the possession of full activity, and have experienced a very lively reaction against what I saw; I was still French and I indulged in reflection and criticism. During the journey I was full of enthusiasm and ideas; I passed long hours, talking to officers and travellers about the deplorable

country which we are visiting, and about the not less deplorable affairs of France.

The day of my delay in Civit -Vecchia was for me a day of anger; imagine crosses everywhere dominant, the papal arms, the white standard, the monks with their superior airs, the degraded Capuchin mendicants, the troops of priests, monsignors, clerics in semi-clerical habit, the pale population with a feverish and subdued air, and profoundly immoral, irritated me to a point that you will understand, when you recall the anger that you yourself experienced. My first hours in Rome were likewise very painful; but I had hardly passed a day there before the charm began to work.

This city is an enchantress; it slumbers and seems exhausted; there is in these ruins an undefinable charm; in these churches that one encounters at every step there is a tranquillity, a fascination almost supernatural. Would you believe it? I am completely changed: I am no longer French; I am no longer the critic; I am unworthy of the r le; I have no longer any opinions; I know not what to say about all this.

Oh, if I could only have you beside me on the heights of Saint Onufre, this humble cloister whither I go every day for a promenade; if I could but interrogate you concerning my own sentiments, and clarify my own sensations by comparing them with yours! You know that religious impressions are very potent with me, and that as a result of my education they mingle in an indefinable proportion with the most mysterious instincts of my nature. These impressions have awakened here with an energy that I cannot describe to you. I had not understood what popular religion is, when considered naïvely and outside the sphere of criticism. I had not understood a people creating unceasingly in the domain of religion, taking its dogmas after a fashion living and true. Let us not deceive ourselves; this people is as Catholic as the Arabs of the Mosque are Mohammedan. The religion is religion itself; to speak to them against their religion is to speak to them against their interests—interests which are as real as any of the other needs of nature. I came into this country strangely prejudiced against the religion of the

South; I had ready-made phrases to fit this trivial and subtle cult; Rome represented for me the perversion of the religious instinct; I expected to laugh at my ease at the foolery of the *Gesù* and the superstitions of this country. Well, old friend, the Madonnas have vanquished me; I have found in this people, in its faith, in its civilisation, a grandeur, poetry, ideality, which are incomparable.

How shall I explain all this to you? How shall I initiate you into this new life, into which I plunge so passionately? Our idealism is abstract, severe, devoid of images; that of this people is plastic, turned toward form, forced invincibly to translate and express itself. One cannot walk for a quarter of an hour in Rome without being struck by the prodigious wealth of images. Paintings, statues, churches, monasteries everywhere; nothing vulgar or *banal*; the ideal penetrating all things.

From the French point of view, this country is horrible. In comforts it is as backward as we were two centuries ago. The shops are vile stalls, the restaurants are veritable smoking-

rooms, the hotels with the exception of two or three, occupied by the French and English, are abominable taverns. No resources, no industry, no commerce, no occupation outside of the ecclesiastical, no agriculture.

We are living here among the French whom the expedition has brought to Rome; all conversation is but a perpetual exclaiming against this intolerable state of things. The question that all address to themselves, at sight of these horrible areas which constitute three-quarters of Rome, and of which the Faubourg Saint-Marcel can give you but a feeble idea, especially after having traversed the desert of the Campagna of Rome—is this: how and on what do they live in these horrible haunts of hunger and misery? Well, dear friend, there is in this judgment a good deal of the artificial. These people understand nothing of practical life, of the well-being of existence; this is quite plain. Here the *far niente* is more desirable than wealth; the Italian would rather remain squatted on the door-sill of his cabin, and live on a few handfuls of maize, than take the trouble to build a house and regu-

larly cultivate the soil. What shall we say of this? It is a matter of taste; he is quite the master. But how much this people lives in the ideal, how fine is their revery, how these semibarbarous creatures revel in the power of ideality!

Enter a church at the hour of prayer; you will always find it full of women. There they are, seated, veiled after the manner of the country, their lips closed. In their eyes, so easily attracted, there is a vague expression. What do they do? What they hear is for them but a vague sound, a given chant in which they join; they do not pray as the word is understood in our country; this word is an act, they think, they aspire. Such is the life of this country; the springs of action are worn out. One receives so much from without that he conceives a disgust for action. One does not think; for to think, to speculate is to act intellectually; one feels and gives rein to a thousand impressions that are the life of this beautiful country. The aspect of Rome is unique and reveals sensations wholly incommunicable. Why are you not with me! Oh, why are you not with me! Such is my thought every day. "What!"

I say to myself, "must it be said that you shall never feel what I feel? Shall not we who understand each other in all things (for we have trod the same soil in the land of the spiritual) be able to understand each other on this point?" I am confident that you will one day experience what I experience. Nothing vulgar, nothing profane, such is the note with which I sum up my most general impression.

Rise above Paris, and what is it that strikes you? The profane life everywhere; where is the ideal? I see, indeed, some statues and colonnades. But, *grand Dieu*, what a comedy! Why do these statues exist? No one knows! They appeal to no one; they have been placed there because it is agreed that there is need of this sort of thing in a great city.

Here, on the contrary, the ideal is seen at every step. In all the shops, without exception, and even in the inns and public places, may be seen the madonna with her *entourage* of pictures, sculptures and light. On all the houses are religious insignia, often of very beautiful character. In the streets are to be seen pictures often

of a very expressive and popular character. Now, enter the churches (they are to be found literally at every step—there are about four hundred), and you will find a painting by Raphael, Domenichino, Albani, a madonna by Peter of Cortona, a statue by Michael Angelo. Take, for example, this little convent that one sees up yonder; from afar, you would say that it was a group of cabins in ruins. The windows have no caps, the doors consist of a few boards badly joined together, the whole hardly held up by a few weak pillars which were formerly the columns of a pagan temple, and which threaten ruin to the whole. Under these columns, high in the air, protected solely by a few broken frames, you will find some admirable paintings of Domenichino—cenobites, virgins, ecstasies, Saint Jerome, Saint Eustachie. Summon the porter of the convent, an old monk in rags, and he will show you through the church; it is old and dusty, but that madonna is by Annibale Carraccio; this group of celestial heads is by Pinturricchio, and exhales the infinite charm of the paintings of the sixteenth century, before which one pauses for hours in prolonged,

undefinable admiration. Those tombs yonder are the tombs of famous poets of this country; that little square stone covers the bones of Tasso. Follow the monk; he will show you a cloister painted in fresco by the knight of Arpino.

Monastic life and all the poetry of the middle ages are forever revealing themselves by means of grandiose images.

In the interior of the monastery, at an angle of the corridor, you are arrested by a heavenly face. The monk will tell you that it is a madonna by Leonardo da Vinci. This chamber is the one that Tasso died in; the surrounding objects belonged to him; there are his papers, his desk, his chair. Yonder is a death mask of him.

From this room you can see the whole of Rome, and at its foot the beautiful cemetery of San-Spirito, which I shall describe to you another time; for nothing has touched me more deeply. Below this picture are the Apeninnes with their incomparable play of light-tints which cannot be described. He who dwells in these places, renouncing action, thought and criticism, opening his heart to the sweet impressions of his surround-

ings—is not such a one leading a noble life, and should he not be ranked among those who worship in spirit?

I know very well, and I care little, that the greater part of the emotions that I feel in this country are founded on a faulty knowledge of reality. I care little, I say, for the sentiment has its value, independent of the reality of the object which evokes it. I have recognised, on all occasions, that I had brought with me a very erroneous opinion concerning the religion of this country. I saw it only in the priests, the ecclesiastical chiefs, prelates, etc. (an odious caste that I abhor more than ever, and concerning which I shall give you some new information). I did not see the people; I saw this religion in the light of something artificially imposed and, consequently, odious. I considered the Council of Trent, Charles Borromeo, the Jesuits, as having buried this people. This was an error. The people have made their religion, or at least receive it very spontaneously. It is the people who have made a church out of the Temple of Remus, who have pasted a bad madonna in the Temple

of Vesta, who have placed two or three candles around it, and a beggar at the entrance asking alms. It is the people who have planted a cross in the middle of the Colosseum, and who have to kiss its foot every day in passing. These Capuchins who pace the streets with a bag on their shoulders, barefooted and clad in rags, are of the people; the people love them, chat with them, bring them into the public houses, give them a few pieces of wood, or a few bits of bread; and later the Capuchin in his turn shares with them. But this villainous black troop with proud mien and disdainful visage, these pupils of the Roman College, these future intriguers—do not speak to me of them; the people have nothing to do with them, and are beginning to learn to be insolent to them. There is a great distinction to be made in this country on the subject of religion, as you will learn. I was present, on All Saints' Day, at the services at the *Gesù*, the Jesuit church, and the one most characteristic of modern devotion. Two very opposing sentiments became imprinted on my mind; on the one side, sympathy for the people which accepts naively

and simply the religion which it finds at hand, and which fully satisfies its need of the ideal; on the other, anger and contempt for these *chorèges* throned aloft, these scholastic doctors who falsify all science and criticism for their absurd dogmas. In everything one is pursued by this antithesis.

The Pantheon of Agrippa, one of the most beautiful creations of humanity, officially transformed into a church—this incomparable portico inlaid with pictures and indulgences is revolting to me. But a capuchin preaching in the Colosseum, from a stage upon which he has climbed, his audience seated upon the ground, occupied with household duties, while the father makes up for eloquence by addressing them as, *fratelli miei*, at every sentence; mothers nursing their babes on the steps of the cross, other women imitating mechanically the gestures of the preacher—ah, here is true humanity, beautiful and lovable! Here is something of which the religious degradation of our country will never show the equal.

How much I regret my inability, at this time, to give you a more complete account of my impressions. I fear that these lines will have

little meaning for you; what follows will throw light upon them. Write to me very promptly, and recall France to my mind. My address is: *Hôtel Minerve, Place de la Minerve*. I perceive that I have not spoken a word on politics; I no longer think of it, I no longer read the paper; I have enough to do to place clearly before myself the emotions I feel in this country. Who is minister now? What do they say in the Chamber, or at Versailles? Tell me all this, and consider me a Carthusian who hears news from the world once a year. Believe, above all, in my eternal friendship. Never has it been more living than since I have been deprived of our dear intercourse, which now seems so sweet to me.

LETTER IV

ROME, December 4, 1849.

HOW much pleasure your letter has caused me ! I reply to it this very instant. Yes, I regretted to have to wait for your answer ; henceforth, I shall write to you immediately after the event, and I pray you to do the same as regards me. I should desire very much to have a letter from you every eight days. I shall try to send you a few words every week. Thanks to the medium of the military mail, the cost of letters is the same as in France. I shall tell you further on, how it is necessary to address your letters, in order that they may reach me under this privilege.

I fully believe with you, that what is killing Italy is the fact that she is too exclusively artistic and poetic, that she lives solely for the sentimental and the esthetic. No, you cannot imagine to what degree this people lives in the

imaginative world. In speaking of the moral, political and religious state of this people, it is always necessary to make three classes:

First, the clergy, under which head must be ranged a crowd of married functionaries (having real or fictitious functions; these latter are bought and are a means of income), but wearing the clerical habit and living after the manner of ecclesiastics.

Secondly, the people, forming the great mass, peasants, workmen, mendicants, merchants.

Thirdly, an elementary bourgeoisie—people of a certain amount of means, and a certain intelligence, great merchants, lawyers, physicians.

The institution of the clergy is easy to represent to one's self, and I have altered none of my ideas in this regard. The bourgeoisie is also easily understood. It is revolutionary and very decidedly launched into modern ideas, understanding things absolutely in the French manner. But it is infinitely less numerous than ours. There is no trace of it except in the great cities, and there it exists in an almost imperceptible

proportion. Besides, these people have bad manners, and the false air of malcontents and rougns which is the result of their condition. For these are the ones who suffer. No resources, no outlook, an intolerable administration, a totally arbitrary system of justice, the path to fortune utterly blocked, a humiliating subjection to detested authorities. You will understand this well enough, I think, but with regard to the people, how can you understand them?

I can affirm to you on my conscience, that in this whole mass there is not a single trace of modern ideas. How, then, you will say, has this people accomplished the revolution? How did it acclaim the republic and hold out against an opposing army? Alas! let us admit it between ourselves—there were very few Romans engaged in the enterprise. All the people that I see around me are very advanced in their opinions; all have affirmed to me that there were less than three hundred who saw active service in battle. It is very true that these people have allowed themselves to be carried away by this great wave, that

they have become real revolutionists in a moment, that they have been invaded in spite of themselves, and that at this moment they consider themselves oppressed. But do not be deceived; this view is very superficial. It is but a few inches deep. The moral and religious state of this people is exactly the same as it was before; now, what political movement proceeding from exterior impulse is possible which is not founded on a moral or religious change? Next in order, it should be said that the papal government has done all that it could to make itself detested. The financial measures above all, the depreciation of paper money to a third of its value, has fallen immediately upon the lower classes and produced an unimaginable effect.

I fully believe that the temporal power, in its ancient form, is ended; but what I maintain is that the revolution has no roots in this country. Will it ever strike root? A strange question, is it not? You will believe that I have lost *the faith*, that I have become wholly a sceptic. No, more than ever I believe in the future of humanity. But let us be careful not to shape the future too

exclusively in French moulds. Our French ideas are primarily founded upon the transmutation, let us say more frankly, upon the destruction of Catholicism. Now, Catholicism is the very soul of this country; Catholicism is as necessary to this country as liberty, or democracy (such as it exists in fact, whatever one may say or whatever one may do), is to us. This people is religious, I mean Catholic, just as it is inclined to the pleasures of imagination and sense. The day any one places a hand on the objects of even the grossest superstition, there will take place here a revolution more serious than the one that would occur on the day when all the constitutions in the world were violated.

You have no idea of all the legends there are concerning the supernatural punishment of such and such a Garibaldian without reverence for sacred things, of some madonna preserved miraculously from bombs which were turned from their path, etc. Does this mean that the religion of this people cannot change? This would be too great an absurdity for you to suppose that I could entertain it. At bottom all this cult is not

old. It is not yet three centuries old; it dates from the great devotional reaction which signalised the end of the sixteenth century and made itself felt in France at the beginning of the seventeenth century (the Council of Trent, Pius V., Charles Borromeo, the Jesuits, all the modern orders, Saint Francis de Sales—all modern devotion, in a word). It will change them, but the essential will remain; the sensuous, uncritical, voluptuous, effeminate element, becoming on the one hand art and poetry, on the other superstition and credulity.

The position of the French army in the midst of all this is a strange, and at times an amusing, spectacle. If there is an efficacious means of organising the French propaganda among this people, it is the one which has been adopted; it operates on an enormous scale. The officers are all Voltairians and democrats; many are out-and-out "reds." They make no secret of it, and seek the more to parade their liberalism in proportion as they are forced to serve a cause which vexes and humiliates them. They make common cause in all things with the bourgeoisie who detest the

papal government, and show a sort of ostentation in mocking the religion of the country, which in our eyes and in other circumstances would be in bad taste. I have seen on many occasions, especially in funerals, which take place here in the strangest fashion, the discontent of the people betray itself in a way that suggests danger to those strangers who come here to laugh at national customs.

This Voltairian sympathy between the army and the bourgeoisie is seen, above all, in the cafés and theatres. These two fields are the two great centres of the modern propaganda. The theatre, above all, produces a strange effect, on account of the contrast that it offers with the population that one has habitually before his eyes. There you behold another people—not one occasion for showing opposition to the old *régime* is allowed to pass. To judge from the theatre only, one would say that the patriotic fibre is still very strong among this people.

To sum up, the army and the people get on very well together; the conduct of the army is full of delicacy. The military feel that it is an

impossible rôle that they are made to play, and make it a point of honour to avoid anything resembling excess. This noble, proud and moderate conduct has had a great effect on the people, and it will help to give them what they lack above all things—order, dignity and seriousness. Yes, seriousness is what is most lacking in the Italian character. Their poetry is delightful in its colour and freshness, but it has nothing deep, and is the antipodes of that of Germany. In one we have idealism and the soul; in the other, the superficial, form, the sensible. It is as admirable as an Italian opera; a flow of harmony which intoxicates the least sensitive organisations. It is not, however, one of those serious, profound operas, which put us in touch with the infinite; one weeps while laughing, and laughs while weeping. The comedian does not walk across the stage as in Shakespeare and the German theatre; he embraces it, he never leaves it, he is close beside the one who weeps, he shares the attention of the spectator, he attracts more than the serious side of the play.

I amuse myself greatly in the evening by

reading the *Rimes* of Petrarch. There is something incomparable in his eternal variations of the same note, ever growing sweeter. But it is not serious, it is not profound; it is subtle. The churches have an ineffable effect upon me; I defy you to enter the Ara Coeli, the Santa Maria in Cosmedin, the Saint Cecilia, without feeling a desire to fall on your knees. And nevertheless, all this is not serious; it is in bad taste, overcharged, and subtle; there is a general impression of bad taste; all that is popular is in bad taste.

The next time I shall speak to you of ancient Rome, and of the new fashion of understanding antiquity, which results from a visit to this country.

LETTER V

ROME, December 12, 1849.

TO-DAY I shall speak to you of ancient Rome. At the first glance over this city, one is apt to class under four heads the memories and impressions which it awakens. There is pagan Rome; there is Proto-Christian Rome with its catacombs and Basilica of Constantine. There is the Rome of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, that of Julius II. and Leo X., Italian Rome, with its pope an Italian prince. There is the devotional Rome of the Council of Trent, Pius V., Charles Borromeo, etc. I shall explain to you how and why there is no Rome of the middle ages. There is not a single Gothic arch, rose window or *fenêtre à jour* in these four hundred churches, monasteries and fortresses. This is in agreement with the theory that I had arrived at before I saw this country—a theory that has

been completely confirmed in my mind: the middle ages did not exist for Italy.

The antique Rome which ends with Constantine is brought very close to us, and what is chiefly striking is the immense difference there is between the physiognomy of the antiquities of this country and those of our own. We have in the north of France no notable ruins that are truly expressive of antiquity; we have only scraps and insignificant débris. The antiquarian who becomes enamoured of things not for what they signify, not for what there is of beauty in them, but merely because they are old, is, in our opinion, a somewhat ridiculous being, and the taste for antiquity is a genuine folly. Here is an old wall, for instance; there is nothing more beautiful about it than a mass of material that the masons have demolished without scruple; it teaches nothing, it signifies nothing; no matter, it is sixteen or seventeen hundred years old; this is sufficient, and it is valuable in the eyes of the antiquarian. They encircle it with a fence and appoint a guard over it. This is ridiculous. What was my astonishment—I had not seen antiquity except in

worthless débris—when, on my arrival at Nîmes, I found complete monuments, as fresh as they were eighteen centuries ago—monuments having yet their meaning, their beauty; beautiful not because they are old, but because they are beautiful: La Maison Carrée, a genuine little jewel; the Arenas wonderfully preserved and of incomparable effect; the Temple of Diana with its niches, its hiding-places, its secret stair-cases; the Tour Magne, an old colossal ruin, either Greek or Phœnician, which dominates the whole region; the Pont du Gard. Here was Rome in anticipation, and it made a very great and very real impression on me.

But how much greater was that of real Rome! Still the same distinctive characteristic: famous and really beautiful ruins; while ours are only beautiful by the aid of imagination and the value which antiquity gives them. Permit me to make a comparison: you are acquainted with modern Christianity's singular custom of cutting up the bodies of its saints in order to make relics of them—who has ever experienced the least emotion before a piece of bone said to

have belonged to Saint Vincent da Pul, or Saint Theresa, even when the relic has been authentic? On the contrary, who could remain indifferent before the bodies which contained these great souls?

For the same reason, what do I care for your chunks of masonry, your fragments of statues, your pieces of broken vases? What one finds here at every step are true monuments, very real, possessing their native beauty. Behold, a few steps from where I stand, this great mass, the most famous relic of the age of Augustus—the Pantheon of Agrippa. It is not the site, not a ruin, nor a restoration, but the temple itself; there are the base and the columns and all.

Behold the pediment of the Thundering Jupiter, and that of the Temple of Peace, the pavement of the Temple of Concord. That is the column of Phocas, there are the remains of the Julian Basilica, yonder is the inclosure of the Temple of Antonine and Faustina, the Temple of Remus, the Græcostasis lower down, the arches of Titus and Septimius Severus, almost the same as they were the day they were built.

But what shall I say of the Colosseum? The Colosseum is the veritable Rome of the Emperors. There one touches and lives in it. You cannot believe how living and actual this impression of antiquity is. The fashion of treating the monuments of antiquity here has much to do with this. Among us, as soon as a relic of antiquity is discovered, it is carried to a museum. Here it is left in its place to be used. In a number of roads, it is still the Roman pavement that one walks on. In many quarters the walls and foundations are from the temples of Augustus and the Antonines; at every step one meets with antique structure serving modern uses. In fact, there are very few of the antique buildings which have not been accommodated to actual everyday life.

The Mausoleum of Augustus has become a riding-school; the Mausoleum of Hadrian is the Castle of St. Angelo. All the ancient temples without exception have been turned into churches. The Baths of Diocletian have become a monastery; the sewers of Tarquinius Priscus are still used; the aqueducts which were one of the magnificent

features of imperial Rome still supply the fountains of Rome, making it the city of fine water *par excellence*. These walls, which in the nineteenth century have served to defend this miserable people against a French army, are ruins of the time of Aurelian and Belisarius. Assuredly, I am aware of all the inconveniences of this system; as a consequence, the preservation of these monuments suffers very much. These beautiful antique statues, which still adorn the plaza of the Capitol, would not be blackened by the rain and abused by children and idlers if they were well guarded in a museum, and bore a warning that no one must approach them. But how false and artificial is this system of museums. Of what value are these statues, approached under constraint, in your galleries crowded together, and fenced in by ceremony? Leave them, then, in their right place. What is striking in this country is the utter absence of police surveillance. One may go everywhere; all gates are open. I traversed the Vatican one day from the Loggie of Raphael to the uppermost portion without finding a door

shut or a door-keeper to tell me where the library was.

I repeat that this has grave inconveniences; strangers profit by it to pillage and break off noses of statues, leaves of chaplets and pieces of marble intended for souvenirs. If there had been a policeman at the Columbaria, all of the funeral urns would not have been carried off, one after the other, and those beautiful antique paintings would not be a miserable heap of débris. If there had been a fence around the Temple of Venus, it would not have become a veritable public cesspool. But how I prefer this freedom, which leaves to the monument its honesty, leaves it for what it is, and does not turn it into an object of curiosity and official preservation! A monument has value only when it is true. As soon as you put it under a glass case it becomes nothing more than an object of vain curiosity.

The Fountain of the Innocents would certainly be better preserved if, instead of serving for the vegetable dealers as a place to wash their wares, it were transported, as some suggest, to the centre of a reserved space—in the court of the

Louvre, for example. Well, I assert for my part, that this fountain, thus deprived of its natural use, to become merely an object of show, would lose all its beauty. Likewise I prefer a ruin left for what it is, rather than one cared for, cleaned and safe-guarded—things which merely denote a curious and scientific mind, and which efface the real and native colour. Things are only beautiful in so far as they are true and correspond to the real wants of humanity, without any retrospective view of fiction or criticism. From this point of view the changing of the pagan temples into churches seems profoundly regrettable. But, no; we have here reality, an utter absence of fiction. These edifices have been discovered and taken, that is all. They still serve their original purpose. One can hardly believe to what extent modern Rome is composed of the débris of the ancient city. All the materials of the churches anterior to the sixteenth century have been taken from the temples; the columns are all ancient; hardly a piece of marble has entered Rome in modern times. All that you see at the marble-cutters'—all the furniture,

chimney-pieces, pier-tables, etc.—are taken, you may be sure, from old marbles found in the catacombs, cemeteries and temples. This heredity of materials is one of the most striking facts in this country. This curious church of the Ara Coeli is composed, to the very last stone, of the débris of the Temple of the Capitoline Jupiter. These columns are from the old temple, and were taken in their turn by the Romans themselves, from the Temple of the Olympian Jupiter. Here is religion, indeed, is it not? To build new combinations out of ancient materials; to pound and grind the old elements in order that they may appear in a new form. The next time I shall speak to you of Christian Rome.

LETTER VI

ROME, December 26, 1849.

THIS time I shall be very brief, as I leave to-morrow morning for Naples. It is midnight, and all my preparations are still to be made. But I do not wish to depart without saying a few words to you. All that you tell me about France interests me greatly. This people is making good progress, but I fear that the path it is now following will steadily lead it away from the ideal, and from religion.

Assuredly the society which I see around me is very inferior to ours. There is general idleness and indifference toward improvement, and a neglect of the people, in high quarters. Making light of life is carried to excess. The Italian is not sensible of his misery, which is the worst possible condition as regards progress; for misery conscious of itself is a powerful lever. And, withal, the part which the ideal plays in the life

of this people is very strong. Ah, if you had only been with me yesterday and to-day at the Ara Coeli, and seen that naïve crowd, in wonder and admiration before the *Madonna* and the *Bambino!* You will hardly believe me, but I assure you in all sincerity that I observed from certain indubitable signs that these good people took the waxen figures for real beings, and actually believed that they saw before their eyes the mystery of the nativity. I had already made this observation on the occasion of the representations in the cemeteries at the time of the feast of the sea. I shall never forget the tone of a woman who happened to be near me and asked me with the most self-possessed air, "Is this the Magdalen?" It is certain that among the people as well as the children the image and the real personality are not clearly distinguished. Hegel has collected some curious facts on this subject in his *Esthetics*, and I, myself, have made many analogous observations among children. However that may be, I have witnessed some ineffable scenes—scenes from the middle ages; the church as the place of popular assemblage; complete freedom,

entire absence of order and the police, mystery plays as in the middle ages, acted by children of six or seven years of age on stages erected in the church, in the midst of great cries of joy from the audience. It was popular religion that I appreciated in these scenes; such was the picture that filled and took possession of my mind. I do not admit that the ancient Romans differed from the modern Romans on the subject of superstition. The Roman armies were composed of the most superstitious of men (*Theosétheis deisidaimones*). To-day an intellectual Voltairian of this country, M. de Mattheis, with whom we sometimes converse, related to us that in his youth he had incurred the threats of the Holy office for having printed in his dissertation on the cult of the Roman goddess Febris, that this country had always been scourged by two great maladies, fever and superstition.

He added (and I believe that he was right, at least, regarding the second) that these two maladies had been fully as strong among the ancients as among the moderns.

LETTER VII

NAPLES, January 7, 1850.

IT is a long time since we have had a chat. I have received nothing since my arrival at Naples, and I have not yet been able to find a free evening to communicate to you some of the reflections with which this country has inspired me. Within the limits of a letter, and with the reticences imposed upon me, it is not possible to do this freely. Let it suffice me to say to you, that if there are in the world two atmospheres which inspire a contrasting judgment of things human and divine, it is assuredly those of Rome and Naples. Conceive almost the direct opposite of all that I have told you of my impressions of Rome, and you will have the truth concerning my impressions of Naples. I told you that Rome had made me understand, for the first time, the grandeur of a religion which was mistress of the spiritual life of a people, and

which monopolised it. I may say to you that Naples has made me understand, for the first time, the sovereign absurdity, the horribly bad taste of a religion debased and degraded by a degenerate race. You will never imagine what the religion of Naples is. God is as unknown in this country as among the savages of Oceanica, where religion is confined to faith in genii. For this people there is no God; there are only the saints. And what are the saints? They are not models of religion or morality; they are miracle-workers—a species of supernatural magicians, by whose aid one can escape from an embarrassing position. Even the robbers have saints, and I have seen with my own eyes *ex-votos*, in which the robber is represented as being delivered by a saint from the gendarmes. I can never express to you the profound disgust which I experienced the first time I entered a church in Naples. There is no longer art, no longer ideality. There is the grossest sensuality, the vilest instincts that can be named. The religion of Naples may be defined as a curious variety of the perversion of the sexual instinct. You are

psychologist enough to understand this by analogy; but you can never realise the subject in the intensity with which it appears in a visit to this indescribable city. Imagine a people totally deprived of the moral sense, religious withal, because religion is more essential to humanity in its inferior state, than morals—and think of what may occur.

Henceforth, for me, Italy is well classified. There are three Italys: First, Northern Italy, where the intellectual, rational and serious element dominates as in the rest of Europe. There, as in other civilised countries, are political activity, a practical spirit, common sense, a scientific spirit (Piedmont, Lombardy, the University of Padua, Venice, the philosophy of the sixteenth century, etc.); secondly, Central Italy, where the rational element and the sensuous element are combined in that lovely proportion that creates art and religion, but practically excludes philosophy and the critical and serious spirit, or, at least, does not allow it to dominate (Tuscany and, above all, Rome). These countries are intoxicating with the esthetic, but are unfitted for

political life or social progress. This is the country of the arts, a sort of Græculus, cultivated, but enfeebled; thirdly, Southern Italy, Naples, where the sensual element completely dominates, and chokes not only science and thought, but art. It is the country of pleasure; nothing more. At Naples they never have done, and never will do anything, but enjoy themselves. One cannot understand the strange contrast that this city forms in this regard with Rome. The first effect, the overmastering effect that Rome produces (and, I think, Florence likewise), is that of artistic intoxication. You are possessed, dominated, filled, inundated by this torrent of the plastic arts. Beautiful forms of the sensible strike the eyes and all the senses at every step through this sacred land. Art is in the atmosphere of the heavens, of the monuments, I will even say of the people. Here, on the contrary, there is no trace of art, nothing to which this word can be applied. There is not a religious manifestation in the slightest degree poetical. The churches make one burst out laughing. The worship is grotesque. The monuments are in

supremely bad taste. There is not a picture or statue which merits a glance. (Be it well understood that I except the Bourbon museum, the richest in the world in masterpieces of antiquity, and even superior to the Vatican; but these masterpieces are no part of Naples). Naples has not produced an artist or a poet; bad taste has always reigned here, sovereign, and, to speak the truth, it is only here that I have really understood what bad taste means. I repeat that all this is so because there has been no opportunity for the ideal; sensuality chokes everything. Priapus—such is the god, such is the art of this country. Go to Pompeii, to Baja, to Misena—you will find that Naples is the city of all the world, the most effeminate, the most Bœotian, because it is the city in which the instinct of pleasure is the most dominant. This instinct is essential to great artistic sensibility, but if it exceeds a just proportion, the higher formula is violated, there is no longer anything but matter, brutal joy, vileness, nullity. Such is Naples.

You can have no idea of the intoxication that **this** incomparable bay sheds over all the senses.

This corner of the earth is truly the temple of the antique Venus. Recall Ischia, Procida, Nisida, Caprea, Baja, Lake Averno, Cumæ, Pozzoli, Portici, Vesuvius, Castellamare, Sorrento, Somma, Pompeii, the most enchanting places in the world—all grouped within a space of six or seven leagues, around this beautiful horse-shoe formed by the sea.

And then the strangeness of the soil; at every step an extinct crater, a volcano of which the date is given, a lake with mysterious configurations, a natural furnace, a *solfatare*, an ancient and sibylline cave. All this imparts an astonishing physiognomy. One cannot believe to what extent this soil has been in ebullition even within historical times; it is still a veritable furnace. This Monte Nuovo which commands the bay of Baja has towered for centuries over Lake Lucrino; this Vesuvius which for some weeks past has roared and boiled in terrible fashion was formerly the Isle of Circe. The whole region literally smokes at every pore.

Lake Averno is wonderful; there alone I have fully understood the ancient ideas regarding

another life and the subterranean regions. Would you believe it—the people to-day have the same ideas. In the side of the hills that border this lake, occupying the crater of an extinct volcano, there are furnaces whence issue a kind of burning steam, while at the bottom there is a basin of almost boiling water. The guide has a custom of plunging into this place in the presence of the tourists and boiling an egg in the water, which he offers to them with these sacramental words: “Here is an egg boiled in Hell!”

It is evident from an examination of these places, that this volcanic aspect, these subterranean currents of water that are remarked in the Sibyl's Cave, of similar conformation, explain one of these infernal regions, so common in antiquity.

Yesterday and the day before we visited Salerno and Poestum. What was my astonishment to find myself in the region of perfect barbarism! I have traversed but little space, I am hardly six days' distance from Paris, and yet I have reached the limits of civilisation. We in Paris—in its very centre—imagine that its

limits are far off. We never cast our eyes beyond this horizon which seems infinitely distant. Alas! no, I have reached it. Salerno may be considered as the limit of the civilisation of the South; this city is already semisavage; beyond it, there is pure barbarism—real savages having almost no worship, hardly any clothes, no culture, no flocks, their only raiment the skins of bears; everywhere a horrible local jargon without moral ideas. I shall never be able to tell you what I felt on the ruins of this antique Pœstum. Represent to yourself a Dorian city of the seventh or eighth century before the Christian era, its temples and edifices perfectly preserved, a Greek city of the purest and most primitive type, an admirable site, on one side the mountain, on the other the sea, three temples still almost intact, and bizarre in style, exhaling the civilisation of ancient Greece; and consider that to-day, in this nineteenth century, savages living in a few huts inhabit this vast cyclopean region. I have seen the limits of civilisation, and I have been startled like a man who, believing the bounds infinite, strikes his foot against a wall. Yes, I have here

experienced the saddest emotion of my life. I have trembled for civilisation, seeing it so limited, so unsurely seated, reposing on so few individuals, even in the country where it is regnant. For how many men are there in Europe who are really men of the nineteenth century? And what are we, the enlighteners and advance guard before this inert mass, this herd of brutes who follow us? Ah, if one day they should refuse to follow us, and throw themselves upon us! It will be necessary for me to see Paris again before Pœstum shall be erased from my memory. And Pompeii? I cannot speak of it to you. We will talk of it some other time.

LETTER VIII

MONTE CASSINO, January 20, 1850.

YOUR faithfulness in keeping your word is charming; as for me, I am of an exacting nature that may seem unpardonable. But if you only knew what the tyranny of the external necessities is in travels of this kind! I avow to you that I looked upon the letters which I wrote you from Naples as lost, and it appeared but slightly probable that the letters I wrote you from this city would reach you. The simplest relations of life are in this country the object of an inquisition difficult to imagine. Your letters arrive irregularly, and sometimes all at once. Lacauchie has returned to Rome, so that you can address your letters in the old way. This letter, though written on the soil of Naples, will be mailed at Rome. There I may speak to you with full freedom, and without fear that the sincerity of our letters will interfere with their regularity.

What shall I talk about? Of the frightful degradation of this country? Of the infamous cult of Naples? Of the abominable tyranny which weighs on this country; of our misreckonings and our misadventures; of our interview with Pius the Ninth? No, for I have before my eyes too curious and strange a spectacle to permit me to speak of aught else than Monte Cassino. Of all the surprises that Italy has had in reserve for me, this has been, without fear of contradiction, the sweetest, because, this time, moral sentiment is added to the beauty of nature. If Sorrento and Pausilippa, Baja and Misena could not dissipate the cloud of melancholy that the horrible degradation of this country shed over my mind, I doubt if the vigorous beauties of the Apennines would have found me more indulgent, had I encountered only gross or ridiculous adepts of superannuated institutions. But here is the miraculous; here is that which at this hour makes Monte Cassino, one of the most curious places in the world, and without doubt the place where the Italian spirit can be best comprehended on its elevated and poetic side. Thanks to the

influence of a few distinguished men; thanks, above all, to the serious studies which have always characterised the Benedictines, Monte Cassino has become, in these latter years, the most active and most brilliant centre of modern ideas in this country. The doctrines which were latterly condemned and associated with the names of Rosmini, Gioberti and Ventura had invaded this whole school, and had one of their most brilliant spokesmen in Father Tosti, author of *The Lombard League*, *The Pilgrim's Psalter* and *The Seer of the Nineteenth Century*, a sort of Italian Lamennais having all the characteristics of ours, allowing for the difference between Italian and French ideas. Monte Cassino, throughout its long history, never enjoyed brighter days than during the first years of Pius the Ninth's reign, when Italy opened her arms with such naïveté to the mystic aspirations of patriotism and liberty. Rosmini, the spiritual father of the abbey, was about to set out for Rome to receive the insignia and office of Secretary of State. Tosti did not leave Pius the Ninth; Pius the Ninth, himself, after the assassination of Rossi, was thinking about con-

forming to the bull of Victor the Third, who gave to Monte Cassino the exclusive privilege of entertaining the pope when he retired to the south of Italy. But the King of Naples carried the day, the weak pontiff consented to come and cover with his white robe the infamies of this tyrant, and while the king of consciences occupied his leisure in seeing the blood of St. Januarius boil expressly for him, he allowed his best friends to be persecuted.

One day a squadron of cavalry was seen climbing the slope that leads to the abbey; Tosti received an order to depart within twenty-four hours. Rosmini was permitted to remain, but under a guard—a condition to which he was unwilling to submit. Seals were placed on the printing presses, which gave to the world the mystic aspirations of Tosti. The latter were treated as socialistic or revolutionary pamphlets. I saw the presses there still, except one that had been injured by the earthquake of November, which was quite a large affair. Since that time there is no indignity that these religious, guilty of noble sentiments and of rebuking the corrup-

tion of the country, have not been made to undergo. Father Papaletterre is in prison in Naples, guilty of rationalism and pantheism (we know what that means). Tosti is in Rome, where he is treated as a heretic; the others are threatened every moment with being driven from their beautiful abbey which is to be given to the Jesuits, their mortal enemies. Strange suspense! It was in the heart of the Apennines, far from all beaten tracks, that I was to find again the modern spirit, France, whose image I had not beheld for so long. The first book that I met with in the cell of Father Sebastiano, the librarian, was Strauss' *Life of Jesus!* In this place one hears only of Hegel, Kant, George Sand and Lamennais. Be it said between ourselves, the Fathers are as philosophical as you and I; study has led them forcibly to adopt modern ideas, rationalism, worship in spirit and in truth. As a result there is some anger felt against superstition, hypocrisy and *the priests* (this is the word used here), and above all the King of Naples! No epithet from Nero to the King of the Lazzaroni is spared upon him. In politics these monks are Reds of the

deepest dye; they are imbued with that naïve confidence, that absence of shades and temperaments, which marks the first steps in politics; Garibaldi is the hero of the convent; I have heard with my own ears an apology made for the assassination of the King, on the principle that when an enemy invades one's country he forfeits all rights, the state of war becomes permanent, and every means is justified. Imagine the most perfect realisation of *Spiridion* and you will have an exact idea of Monte Cassino. Ah, what beautiful types of moral resignation, of religious elevation, of disinterested intellectual culture, I have found among these monks! Especially among the young people, I found one or two truly rare natures of an admirable delicacy and refinement. Judge whether we were not well fitted to understand each other. The image of these beautiful souls shall never depart from my memory; and I hope mine will never be indifferent to them. I have done what I could as a Frenchman, and I believe that they have done what they could, being Italians. The salvation of Italy will come through the monks. They look on me with

envy and often speak of France, where probably some day they will seek an asylum. As for me, I told them that in all conditions it was possible to lead a noble life, but that to do great things in Italy one must be either a poet or a monk. They read to me and called forth my admiration for the *Œuni* of Manzoni, an admirable expression of that Christian morality which has captivated all the noble intellects of contemporary Italy, an abstraction from every dogmatic idea. They are monks, withal, true, enthusiastic, Italian monks, veritable energumens (God pardon me), still dreaming of Italy as queen of the world; believing very seriously that with the Italians of May, 1848, it is possible to conquer the world. We looked into each other's eyes, when the subprior declared to us that if they were driven from their abbey, they would set fire to it, after carrying off their archives, as did the monks of the middle ages with the hours of their saints. They are stern, inflexible, without that suppleness, that appreciation of shades of thought, which the secular life confers. In fine, my sojourn on this beautiful mountain will mark one of the most pleasant

epochs of my life. Our day is passed at *l'Archivio*, in the midst of these good monks, who cannot have enough of our society. Think of it—it is only once a year that they ever receive a newspaper or a foreign review. They who only live for such things! The monks have taught me what tyranny of the conscience means, and how hard is the martyrdom of those whom fate has given noble aspirations and placed in the midst of a degraded people. At *l'Archivio*, I found, among other things, a long and curious unedited fragment of Abelard. At Naples everything is under lock and key. The museum is locked up. There is a reign of terror.

Here alone I have understood what the Terror is. All the world seems in hiding. It is impossible to obtain an address. Of eight or ten persons to whom we had letters of introduction, we found all ill at the first visit, though perfectly well at the second. Thirty thousand political prisoners have been awaiting their trial for the past two years. Every one is living in the shadow of fear; every month there is a new list of suspects, and every one is kept in a state of terror. A

fanatical army, an infamous exploitation of religion, and infamies in broad daylight in the public places, which my pen refuses to relate—such is Naples. God guard us!

LETTER IX

ROME, January 26, 1850.

HERE I am, returned to Rome. We leave for Florence in three days. The situation at Rome is grave. The army is almost in revolt; the commander-in-chief threatens to drive out the cardinals. The acquittal of Czernowski, and the escape of Achilli, through the favour of the French authorities, caused a profound sensation. The trial of Czernowski took place in the house in which I live; there were some serious demonstrations in the square. It is probable that the pope will *never* return to Rome.

LETTER X

FLORENCE, February 5, 1850.

I HAVE only understood the Italian question since I have been in Florence. Rome is very far from being in a central position; the Roman question is complicated with such exceptional characteristics that it is impossible to reach any general conclusion from the spectacle which this strange city affords. Naples is simply the Terror; one does not live there. But Florence is really modern Italy, and the true criterion of the question. Tuscany, moreover, offers a wholly unique physiognomy and an activity and life which surprises the traveller from Rome or Naples. Tuscany suggests but a single ideal: the astonishing localisation of the life that perpetuates Italy. Among us, centralisation is natural, and the natural consequence of the complexity of the country. Here life is diffused everywhere, or at least grouped around five or six very distinct

centres. There still breathes the old Tuscan history—Florence, Siena, Pisa, Arezzo, Pistoia. At every step there is a reminder of that prodigiously active life of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries whence issued modern civilisation. What a state of society was that in which little cities of from twenty to fifty thousand souls, always at war for the pleasure of being enemies, created masterpieces unequalled in originality, and each having its literature, its art, its pleiads of genius! Think of Pisa, for example, a little city which makes a figure in the history of the world, and which created with the product of its textile arts the Duomo, the Baptistery, the Leaning Tower, the Chiesa della Spina, the Campo Santo, and all these without any models, the work of *Pisan artists*. And Florence—a city of fifty thousand souls, which produced more great men than all France at the same epoch: Dante, Giotto, Cellini, Cimabue, Michael Angelo, Brunelleschi, Vespucci, Machiavelli, Guicciardini, Boccaccio, Savonarola, the Medicis, Galileo, Angelico of Fiesole, Marsilio Ficino, Villani, Brunetto Latini, Orcagna, Pinturichio, Leonardo da Vinci,

Andrea del Sarto. And, *grand Dieu!* what a rich life is that which breathes from the Palazzo Vecchio, the palaces of the Strozzi, the Uberti, the Capponi, etc. ! All this within the narrow horizon of a city, the artist having no other idea than that of giving pleasure and doing honour to his fellow citizens—seeing naught but Florence in the world; the orator never dreaming of any other auditory, or any other field of action than Florence. I visited the convent of Savonarola yesterday and saw *his relics*, brands from his pyre, and his cell. I had seen, on the day before, the hall that he had built for the fifteen hundred deputies of his democratic constitution, and the place where he was burned to death, and which, on May 23 of last year, was covered with flowers. Behold this enthusiastic monk issuing from his lonely cell. What is his object, his measure of action, his ambition? Florence, and Florence only.

Hence immense exaltation of individual activity. What are we, lost among thirty-five millions? What will the stroke of our oar amount to in this ocean? I am struck with the frightful

Bœotian character of those cities of thirty or forty thousand provincial souls, which do not contain a single distinguished or learned man, or a work of indigenous art, but only frightful copies, modern horrors, without soul, without life, without character, produced because it was necessary to produce something for the city hall or the prefecture. Assuredly, I do not mean to say that France is inferior, that this great achievement that is called France is not an admirable and capital element in humanity; but I state a fact. Here life is active and creative while remaining wholly local and municipal. And what has been, still exists. You cannot imagine what an ardent rivalry exists between cities here. First of all, Tuscany has been and always will be a country apart; it is a fatherland. And in Tuscany, Leghorn and Siena detest Florence; Pisa detests Leghorn. Certainly the late revolution had for its principal motive the modern ideas which were agitating all Europe; but it is necessary to recognise that it was due in great part to, if not explained wholly by, the rivalry of Leghorn and Florence. This is not all; each

city is divided into wards with its banners, its privileges, its *carroccio*, as in the middle ages. These wards form institutions apart. Siena has forty thousand inhabitants, and seventeen quarters of which each bears the name of an animal; the Unicorn, the She-wolf, etc. These wards have their coats-of-arms, representing the animal whose name they bear, and perpetuating rivalries that date back to the Guelphs and Ghibellines. One of the wards, that of the goose, inhabited by dyers, leather-dressers, and small trades-people, is a republic apart, recognising no other authority than its own. All the inhabitants of this quarter support each other so well that it is impossible to make an arrest there. When the authorities wish to apprehend any one, it is necessary to lure him from his ward. They are totally ungovernable, and recognise no other authority than Saint Catherine of Siena, who was the child of a dyer of this quarter. During the whole year the people dream of the contests of the *Pallio*, which take place in the Palazzo del Campo, and are participated in by the seventeen wards. This is the great event in the life of the country.

All this is very ridiculous, is it not? There is very little of the rational in it all. But it proceeds from the internal constitution of this people which limits its horizon and narrows the sphere of its life in order the more strongly to concentrate it. This has had immense advantages, and, to speak truly, civilisations are born solely from these states, on these little theatres, neighbouring, distinct and antagonistic (Greece, Italy at the end of the middle ages, etc.). The modern spirit will undoubtedly interdict Italy from the follies which are the naïve consequence of this disposition of ideas, but it will not change the nature of the Italian genius. Centralisation will be the death of Italy. Imagine Rome, Naples, Florence, as departmental centres! This may be good for Dijon, Bordeaux, etc., which have never lived; but Florence has lived. Florence will never accept this rôle. Leave Italy free, and Florence will secede, Siena will secede, Genoa will secede, Sicily will secede, Venice will secede.

Nevertheless, the idea of Italian unity germinates everywhere. This fact must be understood:

the theorists imbued with French and cosmopolitan ideas will be the first dupes and victims, and the first to be undeceived, should Italy throw off the yoke of the foreigner. It is true, however, that there is throughout Italy a common feeling of hatred for the foreigner, and a vague sentiment of intellectual and moral unity. This would be strong enough to create a league against the foreigner. But would it be strong enough to create a compact state? No; a thousand times no! Would it be strong enough to produce a confederation of Italian republics? I do not think so. These cities would rend each other, and in a year would call in France or the emperor. This is to be said, however, only of the present. I shall not speak of the destinies that a remote future may have in reserve for this country.

LETTER XI

PISA, February 10, 1850.

WHAT a wonderful city is Pisa! I have spent my day at the Campo Santo, at the Duomo, the Baptistery, and the Leaning Tower! Nothing has ever made so vivid an impression upon me; nothing has enabled me to understand so well the prodigious plastic originality of this people. These admirable masterpieces are of the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and there is in them a delicacy, a sense of proportion and harmony, such as are to be found in the most beautiful works of antiquity. To speak truly, Italy has never lost the sense of the true proportions of the human body, the knowledge of which exercises so immediate an influence on all the plastic arts. Gothic art had not this sense of proportion, this natural compass, which Greece possessed so divinely. Italy has never lost it. The paintings and the sculptures of the

twelfth and thirteenth centuries, at Siena, Florence and Pisa, are as correct in taste (although less perfect in execution) as the most beautiful works of antiquity. Artistic eccentricity, the romantic, will never reveal themselves in Italy. This beautiful country naturally inspires respect for form, proportion, completeness. The Campo Santo is beyond all price. Imagine all the ideal life of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries traced upon these walls by the hand of Giotto, Orcagna, Gozzoli. All the life of the middle ages is there. The system of the world, the picture of actual life, its pains, its pleasures, the hereafter, paradise, hell (always represented according to the topography of Dante), the last judgment, history, such as it was then conceived, the serious, the burlesque, all life. And what original local colour there is in all this—a little republic, a state which has beside it, its city of the dead, containing all the old Pisan inhabitants! While beholding these beautiful galleries of the dead, people say to themselves: "I shall go there one day," and death becomes familiar and loses its emphasis. This concentration of a whole

state in a funeral monument appeared to me in the most vivid tints, which I transmit to you badly. If you could have only seen it with me!

LETTER XII

ROME, February 17, 1850.

HERE I am at Rome, for the third time, and always more and more delighted with it.

This city is like great poems: it makes new impressions at each reading, ever appearing under new phases. What you tell me of your condition fills me with great sadness; how much I regret that I have been forced to be irregular in my correspondence! Now that I am here alone, and in a fixed place, I shall be more particular; it is not to you, but to myself that I promise this. I think that the internal pains of which you speak are due to the special character of your studies, which are not precisely what you are fitted for. You know that I have always regretted that you did not take up as your official line of study what are called the moral, scientific and literary branches of knowledge; it is from these that you would obtain interior nourishment. I imagine that this

divorce between your interior and spiritual and your official life often deranges your system of life and produces this disrelish of existence. Perhaps, also, you condemn yourself to an excessive abstinence from esthetic pleasure. This pleasure is also individual; it is even egoistic, which I did not suspect heretofore; but it is noble, it elevates. You know how to admire the beautiful, but you do not seek for it enough. Here it is found at every step; but in our enlightened country slightly dowered with art, the beautiful is not found in the streets. In the streets you will only find the commonplace, the dull, the vulgar. If you were a Christian, the esthetic portion of Christianity, strongly grasped, would amply satisfy this want. For at bottom religion is nothing else than the ideal side of human life, a less pure but more original and popular method of adoration. I should desire, therefore, since you no longer go to mass or vespers (it would not, however, be a bad thing for you to go sometimes, as I do here), that you frequent the museums and the theatre, that you read good literature, not only the great philosophical works which are your nourishment,

but those works which are purely and simply beautiful in themselves. Poetry and ancient art realise this wonderfully. Our poetry and our art are only pretexts to discuss philosophy. Consider George Sand, Rousseau, etc.

Italy, in this connection, still occupies the same point of view as in ancient times—the beautiful for the sake of the beautiful, the unlaboured reproduction of beauty, pure and simple. You cannot imagine what astonishing placidity exhales from the whole physiognomy of this country. Yesterday, Sunday, I understood this wonderfully. The weather was admirable—a golden sun, a pale-blue sky, very pale, almost white, such as we never have in our climate. All the population was in the country—that is to say, in the deserted portion of Rome—the Forum, the Colosseum, Mount Palatine. There was a shrine of a saint in this quarter which all went to visit on this day. You cannot imagine what genuine contentment there was in the aspect of these people; let us understand ourselves—contentment. All had an air of poverty and suffering, and were in rags; but this did not matter; there is something in the Italian

people that one cannot imagine to exist elsewhere: it is their intimate enjoyment of life for its own sake, without any accessory happiness. The great pleasure of an Italian is to *live*. Thus, when he can, he will lie down in the sun at the foot of a ruin. All the time that is taken from this species of enjoyment of life is painful to him; provided that he does not have to work, and that he is not too hungry, he is happy. That is the great source of good which will never be taken from this people, and it renders them in a sense happier than we are, in spite of their humiliation. They are not tormented over the question, they are assured of what suffices to make them happy: the sky, the air, the pleasant climate; they are, besides, certain of not dying of hunger, for in one way or another, and in truth I do not know how, that never happens in this country. On this account poverty never bothers any one. Herein is the secret of this incredible carelessness which impresses foreigners so strongly, and which is the secret of the democracy of this country. The only right demanded by this people is the right

to a place in the sun; this right it enjoys, and will not yield up.

This is why Italian religion is so superficial, so graceful in its forms. It is a pleasure like any other, or at least an occasion of pleasure, for, as in our case before the Revolution, all life is chained to religion. The *Station* governs every Sunday's promenade; yesterday, people went to Mount Coelius because the station was that of Saint John and Saint Paul; Sunday they will go to the Quirinal, because it will be the station of La Certosa. To interfere with their religion would be to interfere with their pleasure. "What makes me happy in Rome," said Goethe, "is that I am living in the midst of a purely sensual people." This is not exactly true; it is in Naples that the people are purely sensual; with regard to those here, he should have said purely esthetic. For it is by art and religion, not by material enjoyment, that they are satisfied. Here is the world in which your life would be happy. You are too modern, too French. You have need of the relaxation of art; you have need of Italy, for Italy, compared to the rest of Europe, is the ancient world compared to

the modern. You love Proudhon, and I do not blame you. But what a spectacle is a man who lives only with his head, who cloisters himself, renders himself dull by dint of dialectics, and throws himself into the combat, striking blows of logic right and left. The Italians would burst out laughing at such a sight, and would say with the good man with whom I traversed the Maremma, and who spoke a good deal to me of socialism, "*Che pazzia! Che pazzia!*" "What folly!" I think that on the day you fall in love with a woman, you will part with much of this Proudhonian sourness, this absolute mental logic which is devouring you. I am going to take a promenade this afternoon on the Appian Way, and visit the tomb of Cecilia Metella for your intention.

LETTER XIII

ROME, March 1, 1850.

I MUST, at last, speak to you of our interview with Pius the Ninth. A thousand incidents have always prevented me, and this is, nevertheless, one of the most interesting episodes of our trip. Daremberg, who is now a Catholic of our shade of belief, and our third companion, a Protestant, were eager for it, and then we were not sorry to discuss with him certain affairs relative to our researches. At Portici we saw this little man who keeps the world in trouble, who has been and perhaps will again be the contributing cause of a great revolution. Our interview with Pius the Ninth (we talked with him about five minutes) entirely confirmed the opinion which people held regarding him during the first months of his pontificate. The sole impression that you have on issuing from an audience is this: he is a *good man* in all the meaning of these words.

His portraits, in which he is given a certain air of dignity and seriousness, do not convey a general idea of him.

Pius the Ninth is an Italian to a degree that you cannot imagine; he talks a great deal, and passes every moment from himself to various subjects; he habitually intermingles his words, after the manner of Italians, with a very characteristic little smile that we would call silly in France, betraying little seriousness and elevation, but an amiable and easy manner of taking things. There are moments when his face becomes animated, and the result is a certain naïveté, a freedom, good nature and simplicity, the most characteristic that I have ever seen. It is impossible to meet a more perfect type of the Roman who in his studies or his relations of life has never gone outside of the circle of Roman influence. In France such a man would be called weak, narrow and commonplace; but this species of provincial good nature redeems everything, and on leaving him you feel in a pleasant and amiable state of mind. I believe he perceived at the very start that he had not to deal with believers of the first order, and so he engaged

us on the most secular subjects. Accosting Dar-
enberg on the subject of his researches, he began,
with a precision which astonished us, to discourse
on the surgical instruments of the ancients, and
especially on the *syringa* found at Pompeii, and
identical with those which have been most recently
invented. I avow to you my simplicity; I believed
that *syringa* was to be translated by the French
word which resembled it most, and it seemed to
me a very curious spectacle to see a philosopher,
a Protestant and a heretical Catholic engaged in
a discussion with the successor of Gregory the
Seventh and of Innocent on the syringe of the
ancients! This appeared to me the height of
comedy. I soon perceived that *syringa* means a
probe, and that the special interest of the Holy
Father on this point was due to a malady with
which he is threatened. But what follows will
paint for you the man and the Italian—I mean,
the Roman of our day. In this relation he began
to discourse on the theme dearest to Italians, the
parallel furnished by ancient and modern civilisa-
tion, a parallel which is recalled to them at every
step by the monuments which cover their land.

Here is the innocent theory which he explained to us with an *aplomb* and vain ease wholly original: Modern civilisation seems to be superior to that of the ancients, by the fact of the communication which has been established between the various portions of humanity (I am not sure that he used this word) which, in antiquity, were isolated. Now this has been realised by two inventions which sum up all modern civilisation—printing and steam; printing for the communication of minds, steam for the intercommunication of bodies and merchandise (*sic*). You cannot appreciate how this, uttered with a half-jocund air, without significance, without seriousness, vividly represented to me all that I had before observed of the extreme superficiality of the easy banality of the Italian of our day when he ventures into the domain of thought.

I wish that you could hear what in this country serves as topics of conversation and as theses of the publicists. What is astonishing is not the liberal or illiberal manner in which they are handled, but the pettiness, the triviality

of the intellectual categories: "Religion should not be made subservient to politics."

"The sovereignty of the Pope," "The best government." Such are the old scholastic questions on which Italians with a little learning will discourse to you for hours, with a schoolboy's naïveté at times amusing. They take these questions seriously, like pupils in a rhetoric or philosophy class who have a thesis to prepare on them. In general, the intellectual development of the contemporaries of this country (I speak of northern Tuscany) is almost *nil*, and the grand esthetic sentiment is found no longer among the instincts of the people.

It is difficult to represent to what degree this people is artistic and comprehends art. Go to our expositions and notice the behaviour of our provincials before the paintings; they comprehend nothing; it is another language for them. Now, the poor people here are connoisseurs; they love these monuments; they belong to them. I shall speak to you later of some very curious traits. Suppose a peasant, a workman passing before the Tuileries: he will remain indifferent; he has had

no part in building it; it is no affair of his. Here it is very different. Pisa and Florence made war upon each other for the possession of that famous painting of Cimabue which was the event of his century. Here the people very often say: *bello* or *bellissimo*; the word *beautiful* rarely issues from the mouth of one of our people.

LETTER XIV

ROME, March 10, 1850.

I SHALL leave Rome in about ten days. I have decided to proceed to Venice by way of the Legation, stopping at Ravenna, Bologna, and Ferrara. I shall probably be in Paris toward the end of May. The complete deprivation of sympathetic society is beginning to be very painful, I assure you. The Pope made his entry on Friday, the twelfth, at four o'clock in the afternoon. The whole population was invited to show enthusiasm, but the result was mediocre. You can never understand to what degree the old *régime* is detested and impossible in this country. A strong party of the clergy holds advanced ideas, and perhaps among these is to be found the most Italian patriotism. The nobility and the bourgeoisie are naturally in favour of secularisation; as regards the people, they slumber, except at Rome. You can never imagine in what extreme

degree there are to be found among the lower classes here the primitive, the uncultured, the brutal and the naïve of human nature.

In a clime so fecund, this lack of culture has its beauty and its ideality. The result is a people endowed with religion and the instinct of beauty—a people wholly antique, creating their costumes with an inimitable grace, improvising a village decoration with admirably pure taste, knowing how to distinguish better than you or I, a painting, a statue or a church of defective style; but a people absolutely strange to every idea of politics or patriotism. Speak of the independence of Italy to the unfortunates! They do not know what the independence of Italy means. I have been told a great deal about Mazzini: he is a very curious man, a pure-blooded Italian, a Florentine of the fourteenth century, but an assassin and terrorist to a degree that you cannot conceive of. Besides, there is not a country in the world where a reign of terror is more easy of accomplishment than here, for the inhabitants are cowardly beyond all expression. The majority will always be an unimportant thing in this

country, for it does not represent real strength, and is merely a cipher. If there is an enigma in the world, it is certainly the future of this country,

LETTER XV

ROME, March 15, 1850.

I HAVE just spent a very agreeable evening, during which I have learned a great deal.

A certain M. Spada, a very intelligent man of purely critical tastes, has conceived the idea of collecting, day by day, all the incidents and official acts of the Roman revolution—that is to say, of the last four years. With the aid of his commentary, I have just perused this valuable collection, and have succeeded, I believe, in grasping the true physiognomy of this singular period. I avow to you that I am forced to abstain from theoretical judgments and to limit myself to grasping the original side of characters and events. The principal and most difficult feature for us to seize, as regards the method and operation of the curious movement, concerns its local and municipal details and the relation of man to man.

First, it is necessary to consider that Rome is a

very small city. Out of these hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants there are a good two-thirds whose only occupation is breathing the air, and warming themselves in the sun, who pay no attention to those who are working in their interest, and of whom, in fact, no more account is made than if they did not exist. Then there are the clergy and the religious bodies, who within certain limits do not count for much more; so that, everything taken into consideration, a movement of this nature includes between five and six thousand persons, composing the bourgeoisie of the country, knowing each other perfectly, calling each other by name, keeping up continual business relations, having lived together since their childhood. Rome from this point of view is perfectly represented by a prefecture of twenty to thirty thousand souls. There is, besides, a capital trait of Italian cities which must be carefully reckoned with, a trait which they have in common with the ancient cities. When you visit an ancient city—Pompeii, for example—you recognise that the ancients could not live at home (the houses are small to an unimaginal degree), nor in the streets (they are

narrower than the narrow streets of Paris, and there is only room for one vehicle to pass at a time); they lived in the Forum. When they had nothing to do, they went to this spacious place, which was a rendezvous for free men. Here there were porticos, seats, the court of justice, the bourse, the temples; in fine, all public life.

Well, it is exactly the same to this day in Italy. In the middling, or small cities, there is a *piazza* which exactly represents the forum of the ancients, surrounded by a *loggia*, a portico constructed exactly according to the rules of Vitruvius. There stands the communal palace, always a remarkable edifice, where there are a museum of local paintings, archives, the post-office, which in this country is always ornamental, and the great fountain with its architectural features. This *piazza* has no name; it is *the piazza*, or the *campo*. They speak of *going to the piazza* as in ancient times they spoke of *going to the forum*.

In the great cities like Rome, Naples, or Florence, instead of a *piazza*, there is a *Corso*—a long street, larger than the others, which traverses the city, contains all the stores of importance, and

where all rare and unique things are to be obtained. In Naples there is a street called Toledo which is a city within a city. They say, "I live in Toledo; I am going to Toledo." At Rome there is the *Corso*; at Florence there is a large artery which unites the *piazza* of Palazzo Vecchio and the Duomo. It is in this long and spacious street that all life is concentrated, as in the Porte in the East. When you have nothing to do, you go there to sit down; on Sunday you walk there for hours; whenever there is any news, you run there; whenever there is a demonstration to be made, this street is decorated with flags, illuminations and inscriptions. Everything takes place there. You cannot imagine how this fact gives a physiognomy of its own to the affairs, and especially to the revolutions, of this country.

This was exactly the manner of the ancient city, where everything occurred in a given place, among a small number of men, who were acquainted with each other. There is nothing on a large or universal scale, and but little question of principle—what has a decisive and continuous influence is *incident*. Rome has been governed

by incident for three years past; all this history is but a series of incidents. A certain one organises a demonstration, another tries to turn it to his own particular end and profit, a third tries to arrest it, a fourth causes to be distributed in the Corso printed bills (a method which has been continuously employed, and which explains perfectly this custom of influencing the individual man) to forestall a conspiracy; still another tries to inspire the pope with fear, and supplicates him to show himself in public; then Ciceruacchio appears on the scene with the purpose of stabbing him.

We find ancient history superficial and almost puerile, in the fact that it never presents aught but the actions of certain private individuals who play the chief rôle; so that history seems like a game of chess between a small number of players (a maxim of Machiavelli), and this is what it is in fact. It is still so in this country. Without doubt these men stand on a platform of principles, but their mode of action is wholly Italian and antique. I have been led to regard this revolutionary bourgeoisie, whence alone

will come the political salvation of this country, as being much stronger than it seemed to me at first. Many rich and influential professional men, the Corsini, the Campelli, etc., make common cause with it, and the antipathy which exists in our country between the bourgeoisie and the people does not exist here—at least, on the part of the bourgeoisie. The representative of this bourgeoisie, Mazzini, is, as you know, the purest type of the democratic socialist. As they are on the verge of a revolution, they do not examine each other too closely, and offer the hand of friendship whenever they see a revolutionary tendency. Later on, distinctions will be made. As regards a return, even for a little while, of the old order of things, that is absolutely impossible. Do not believe anything at all that is reported concerning the return of the pope until you hear from an official source that he is in the Vatican. And even then, wait until the news is confirmed.

I no longer read the French newspapers; they trouble me. Therefore, give me the most elementary news.

LETTER XVI

ROME, March 31.

I THINK that I shall undertake the trip to Lombardy and Venice. I have just received news of a supplementary sum of five hundred francs, which is granted me by the Minister, with the expectation of an indemnity, if that should not suffice. Who knows whether the opportunity will be offered later on? How can we defer anything to the future, when time goes by so quickly? And why should I leave to chance such an advantage as that of seeing Venice? I now understand well, I think, the three central and southern portions of Italy; I shall see Piedmont. How painful would it not have been to me to miss so original a topography as that of Venice and Lombardy! And, besides, I shall find there the seat of my Averroistic philosophy, of which I desire to write the history, and on which my ideas have been very much broadened

while in Italy. This will be the history of the incredulity of the middle ages.

Now, the two centres of incredulity in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were Florence and Venice. The undevotional and profane character of Florence is what is astonishing at the first glance. During this new journey I shall pass again through Florence, while taking the route of Perugia, Umbria and Arezzo. Thence I shall reach Venice *via* Bologna and Ferrara. From Venice I shall proceed to Padua, another important centre, where I shall devote some days to study. Thence I shall go to Verona and Milan, and from there to Turin and France. There are many railroads in Lombardy, and travelling is easy.

It is said that the pope will positively return on the twelfth or fifteenth. You know what is to be thought of this definitive return announced definitively so many times. Believe it when you hear the official news that he is installed in the Vatican, and then wait until it is confirmed before you trust it. What you tell me of the disorganisation of education gives me pain; however deserving of criticism our system may

have been, it was better than the *béotisme* which is growing and opening so vast a field to superstition and credulity. I do not dread the clerical system of education; it is rather adapted to form a liberal-minded generation by reaction, and by attracting attention to subjects which the wholly profane university education neglects. But what I do dread is that stupidity which will become so dense from the moment that all motive for study is removed. However, all this cannot fail to place our party in the more glorious light—our party which is destined to triumph sooner or later—for the modern spirit shall not die.

LETTER XVII

ROME, April 14, 1850.

I HAVE never regretted your absence so much as I did on the occasion of the strange scene which we witnessed the day before yesterday; I have never seen a spectacle more strange, more original or more full of instruction on human affairs in general, and the affairs of this country in particular. I expected that there would be a cold reception, accompanied by some official demonstration, arranged and paid for as in the case of the carnival. Judge of my surprise when, standing on the steps of the church of St. John Lateran, I found myself, at the moment of the pope's entry, in the midst of a perfect crowd of energumens uttering shouts, nay roarings of "Viva Pio Nono!" flinging themselves on the ground and crying, "Benedizione!"—a total prey to the most violent and savage enthusiasm. It was still worse in the poor and narrow

streets through which the cortège passed. I followed it for a distance in order to observe the various phases of the spectacle. Here the aspect of the populace was truly startling. Frenzied men of the people threw themselves under the horses in the streets, holding aloft their naked arms and crying, "Be our leader, Holy Father, be our leader!"

It was at this moment that I understood the scenes of Naples and the great popular massacres and epidemics of the middle ages. A word, a signal wrongly interpreted, and this crowd would rush to murder and incendiarism as to a holy work. The women, especially, groaned like bacchantes, and waving their rags, shouted: "Viva la Madonna!" "Viva Pio Nono!"—their eyes, meanwhile, starting from their heads, like wild beasts.

The strange disorganisation of the human being in these moments of fanaticism (for this is the technical term) is a frightful thing; you are familiar with those caricatures which the ancients, and after them the moderns, have made of the human type, for the purpose of certain relief

ornamentations; well, here they are. The officers who followed the pope were cold with fright, as one of them afterward told me with great naïveté. I did not indulge so much as a frown, for the slightest sign of irreverence would have caused a man to be disembowelled. The republicans, who know this people better than we, were aware of this, and were in complete eclipse on this day. At the Square of St. Peter's, the respectable and moderate papists had assembled, and the demonstration here was less savage; as all the foreigners were gathered here, this is probably the only feature that will be described and featured in the newspapers. What a people! I have never before understood so strongly the blind impulse and terrible brute force of the masses.

In a month hence, if Pius the Ninth, overthrown by a revolution (a happily impossible hypothesis), were condemned to die on the scaffold, these very people would gaze upon him, pass by and insult him. And a thousand armed men in red uniforms could terrorize them.

In the evening the scene was not less pictu-

resque. In all human things there is but an imperceptible shade which separates the ugly from the beautiful, the odious from the sublime.

The same instinct has inspired on one side Lamartine, on the other de Sade; on one side, Jesus and the gospels, on the other the Inquisition, massacres, crimes. This people who have appeared hideous to me in the manifestation of their enthusiasm, I have found gracious, full of verve, warmth and plastic energy in their fêtes. I have given careful attention to these exterior follies, illuminations *a giorno*, etc., only in so far as they illustrate a moral side. This people possesses to an incredible degree the talent of ornamentation; they display a variety of means, a grace of invention that you cannot conceive of, and everywhere and in everything a purity, an admirable simplicity of taste.

Purity of taste among the people! In our country peasant taste is synonymous with bad taste. Evidently these people have not merely sought in all this an occasion of unfurling their banners to the breeze, of draping their houses and their windows, of lighting their lamps. In this

country, above all others, the lamps seem to burn for all the world.

It is to be borne in mind that, as the reactionaries have told me, the Mazzini fêtes were more gorgeous still. Fêtes are one of the actual needs of this people (read the history of Florence and the curious institutions in this regard). They made it a study to surpass their neighbours in ingenious inventions, and had a manufactory of fabrics for these occasions. Fine uniforms, grand cortèges, etc.—all those things that would not turn our bourgeois rationalism aside one step, enrapture them. If Pius the Ninth had made his entrance without drum and trumpets, people would now feel very cold toward him. But how can you help adoring a man who shows you such fine things? Beside me at the Lateran were some Roman men and women who fell in a swoon at this sight, crying out, "*Non si puo descrivere!*" However this may have been, Mazzini was of no account for a quarter of an hour; but let him return some day with fine red uniforms, and give the people eight days of fêtes, and he will be the hero of the hour. One of the reasons for the

antipathy of the people toward the French in former times was their timid and reserved manner, their simplicity of style and lack of extravagance. This is always taken here for weakness and imbecility.

"*I Francesi sono troppi buoni!*" was the expression on the lips of all. The sombre colour of the uniforms of the *tirailleurs* of Vincennes, and their lack of extravagance, caused them to be regarded as poor lords. Such is this people, my friend; this is sad but curious. At this time it is said that our own nation does not look very benignly on its president. But let us wait. If he surrounded himself with the escort and prestige of the other Napoleon, things would, perhaps, be the same as at Rome.

LETTER XVIII

ROME, April 21, 1850.

MON DIEU! No letters from you yet! What is the matter? I leave to-morrow for Perugia, and for a long time hence I shall not be able to hear from you. How much all this disturbs me! Address your next letters, *poste restante*, Venice. Since the pope has come, Rome pleases me no more. This ruin founded on a ruin had an attractive look; but this small, trivial life, this gossip of the Roman prelacy, these vivid fooleries spoil the general effect; to sum up, I shall have seen Rome at an interesting period, sad, deserted, gloomy and without life. For the sake of artistic effect, it is not desirable that Rome should enter the current of modern life. Therein she will never play a capital part; she will never be more than a small centre like Turin and Florence; a fact that would be, esthetically, a great inconvenience. An assembly de-

liberating at the Capitol on the petty interests of Italian municipalism will always be ridiculous.

Papal Rome had the air of a sepulchre, with a very picturesque effect; but if papal life became too active, the physiognomy of the city would be much altered, and the damage very serious.

LETTER XIX

BOLOGNA, May 11, 1850.

BEHOLD me already well advanced on my long journey; the most difficult and the only dangerous portion is over. For the past eighteen days and more I have unceasingly travelled over these great roads, making eight or ten leagues a day, after the manner of this country—the most agreeable manner in the world in a country where one loves to pause at every step. You do not really know Italy unless you have travelled over this interesting route leading from Rome to Ancona and the Legations.

Again I must repeat to you what I have said a thousand times: the regions which I have just traversed do not at all resemble those of which I have already spoken to you, and I shall exaggerate nothing in telling you that in less than eight or ten days I have seen pass before me three topographies at least as distinct as France,

England, and Germany; or taking the Greek world as an example, Athens, Sparta, and Bœotia. If there is a striking contrast in the world, it is that of Umbria with the Marches; on the other hand, the Marches differ most radically from Romagna.

Umbria is too much neglected by travellers and by history. This country has its individuality, slightly approaching the Tuscan individuality, it is true (above all, that of Siena, which makes a figure apart in the Tuscan movement), but very distinct, nevertheless. Spoleto, Foligno, Spello, and, above all, Perugia and Assisi, are the characteristic points of this development. Umbria is still more esthetic than Tuscany. Since I have seen Perosa and Assisi, Florence and Pisa appear to me almost a Bœotia. All that had struck me regarding the artistic genius of Italy, appears to me now only childishness. It must be remembered that the great school of Italy, that which is wrongly called the Roman School, was born two generations ago at Perugia, and that it ought really to be called the Perugian School. Raphael himself is wholly Perugian, and can be understood only at Perugia. The misfortune of Umbria is that

it has been despoiled of its fruits, first by the popes and cardinals, who carried off its artists and its principal masterpieces to Rome; then more especially by the French, who, after the treaty of Tolentino, laid violent hands on all the paintings of the country, leaving behind them only the meanest trash. All these have since been returned, but they have been kept at Rome. What a singular method that was of making up for plastic impotence—loading up wagons with the masterpieces of the vanquished!

Assisi is an incomparable region, and I have been recompensed for the truly meritorious pains which were necessary in order to visit it. Imagine the grand popular legend of the middle ages complete in two churches built in close companionship by Giotto and Cimabue! The city is still more ancient than its monuments. It is of the middle ages absolutely; whole streets, perfectly empty, have remained, stone for stone, exactly what they were in the fourteenth century. Six or seven churches, almost as curious as Saint Francis, make this city a unique spot in the world. The profusion of art surpasses all that can be

imagined. The exterior, the interior, the doors, the windows, the girders, the chimneys—all are painted or sculptured. Street painting, frequent throughout Italy, is the characteristic trait of Umbria. The mystic and slightly rationalist character of the Umbrian genius (in which consists its inferiority compared to the intellectual Tuscan art) is especially perceptible in this city, still full of the spirit of the second Christ of the middle ages.

We shall speak of all this; the present condition of the country reminds one but too strongly of the middle ages. They rob and murder one another in broad daylight, and this is regarded as the simplest thing in the world. We have encountered bands of from ten to twelve brigands, happily in the hands of the *Tedeschi*; these unfortunates, captured a few leagues from here, looked at our carriage with ill-disguised appetite, a fact that did not prevent them from asking us for *la botteglia*. The women of the troop, who were allowed to wander here and there with incredible freedom, exhibited a foolish sort of gayety.

The repression of crime is certainly the most defective feature of the social organisation of this country. The State is not considered as exercising the functions of a public avenger of crime. When one has been robbed, it is necessary to institute a personal action, at one's own expense, and as the idleness and carelessness of the judicial authorities passes all belief, each one is content to be robbed once, without being ruined anew by pursuing the robber. As regards murder, it is as it was in the middle ages. The assassin disappears, and everything ends there. Besides, all the sympathy of the people is with him, because it is always supposed that he has only avenged himself; every one tries to aid his escape. The citizen who would arrest a criminal would actually expose himself to a penalty, for he has no right to interfere with the liberty of another; this is reserved to the authorities. You will see that it is the system of the middle ages—the individual man being constituted defender of his property and his life, and having no recourse for defence and revenge outside of his own family.

The Marches are the Bœotia of Italy. There

the legends are as heavy as the paving-stones; there art has produced nothing. Loretto is ridiculous; their Holy House will never be anything else than a great gilded falsehood. Ancona once passed, one finds another condition of things; art no longer appears in profusion as on the other side of the Apennines, but the population is active and industrious, and the social condition much better; distinguished and cultivated persons of the French type, very rare in Rome, are to be met with in the small cities. I had been truly informed that the Legations were infinitely more cultured than Rome. Here at Bologna I find myself in the midst of a society very analogous to ours, and the antipodes of Rome. It is only here that one can understand the absurdity of the subjection of this country to the pope, and of its dependence on Rome. The history of its subjection is not well understood; the fact is that it only dates back to 1815, and there is an incessant protest against it from the country. We shall speak of that and of Ravenna also—Ravenna, where I remained five days, and which was infinitely instructive to me.

LETTER XX

VENICE, May 23, 1850.

YOUR political affairs preoccupy me singularly. It is impossible for me, at such a distance, and limited to the news reproduced in such bizarre fashion by the journals of this country, to form an exact idea of the situation of affairs. You cannot imagine the truly burlesque inexactitude with which French affairs are presented in the foreign newspapers. The Tyrolese papers alone give me a few scraps with some reason in them. The others surpass all belief, and make it easy for us to understand what canards we swallow on our side, when we read of foreign affairs from second- and third-hand sources. It must be said that these laughable blunders are not intentional, or the result of a systematic animosity, but simply of ignorance and of the impossibility of understanding the machinery of a foreign system of government. What you told me, a few days ago, con-

cerning the repose and content to be found by trusting one's self to the immutable truth of nature, in the midst of the instability of human things, corresponded perfectly to a sentiment that I have experienced a thousand times myself. I never set my thoughts on special studies without arriving, in a quarter of an hour, at a painful and unphilosophical state of irritation. Then by a sort of "About, face!" an evolution takes place in my mind with a rare uniformity; I plunge into the peaceful ocean of illusion. History is for me what reason is for you. By history, you know, I do not understand political history in the ordinary sense of the word, but the human mind, its evolution, its accomplished phases. Here also are seen the immovable and absolute; here also are the beautiful and the true *acquired*.

One of the most charming features of the Italian character is something in the nature of what we are considering—a sort of alibi, which prevents despair from ever becoming extreme; a poetic imagination like that of Silvio. "Oh, after all, what remains to me is sufficiently beautiful—this sky, this sea, these verdurous isles, this unimagi-

able harmony of nature and art." With this kind of reasoning they console themselves for having to live under leaden roofs,* which, let me say in passing, would be the pleasantest apartments in Venice, if they were only to let.

The religious patriotism of the women, at once gentle, sad and resigned, has a special sweetness and charm. I could tell you some touching instances of this. It is by religion, above all, but by a noble religion of the heart, not the gross form of the South, that this people is distinguished. How charming the people of Venice are! How strong and how profoundly intelligent, how poetic and how active at the same time, what a superb combination of human nature! It is the same now as in former times. Venice is perhaps the city of all the world which has changed the least, physically and morally; on the other hand, all around it has changed, and it has fallen because the age was no longer adapted to it. Venice is the most striking example of the irremediable *décadence* of some of the fairest things in humanity; Venice is

* The prisons were called "*les plombs*" (the leads) because they were roofed with sheet-lead.

certainly one of the loveliest flowers which have bloomed in the garden of humanity.

Venice, withal, shall never rise again. She could live only on condition of being autonomous. Now, the tendency being toward agglomeration, the autonomy of a city, the city of antiquity and of the Italy of the middle ages, has become impossible. Besides, Venice had the alternative of becoming rich or of perishing. Now all the efforts to restore her splendour will be useless. Prosaic Trieste is much better off; and, indeed, it is not desirable for the general well-being of humanity that real advantages should be sacrificed to historical considerations. It is as if one, with the zeal of an antiquarian, resumed the use of the Roman streets, the traces of which are still to be found in grand and spacious avenues. Life has taken its character, and traced its path, in another direction — it must not be disturbed. These antique things thus remain with their poetry, their charm, their memories. What Venice reveals, above all, is the spirit of the city, the contact, course and solidarity of generations, and what is meant by the founding of institutions and man-

ners. The primitive constitutions of Venice equal in poetry and harmony all that is offered by the purest Greek origins. Venetian art, however, is less pure than Tuscan art. The source is not pure; there are reminders of Constantinople and the Arabian style. There are delightful fancy, and a caprice that is full of charm. But it is not beauty, pure and without method, as in Pisa or the Parthenon. The wholly patriotic religion of Saint Mark and the artistic religion of Tuscany are characterised at every step in an indescribable manner.

LETTER XXI

PADUA, June 6, 1850.

I AM no longer in Italy; this country has no longer a physiognomy; art has vanished; it is France again. The farther I depart from Venice the more strongly it appears to me like an isolated region, without analogy with what surrounds it. I believed in the existence of a Venetia—that is to say, in a country constituting a well-characterised whole, and having its highest expression in Venice. This does not exist. In order to live, Venice needed provinces on *terra firma* dependent upon her; but this does not mean that there existed between her and these provinces any tie of parentage. Venice is the lagoon. All that surrounds it, Mestre, Fucina, Chioggia, and those innumerable islands, Malamocco, Murano, etc., which encircle the islets forming the city—all this constitutes a world apart, and, let me say in passing, this world has

nothing in common with the Italian world. The series of the Doges and Dukes of Venice is also very curious. These clear-cut figures, revealing the man of force and action, without elevation or ideal, have nothing in common with that abandoned type of real Italy which is sometimes indolent, but more often grandiose. You would take them for Slavs or Hungarians. In fact, Venice, as you know, has numerous ties with Illyria, although its origin is certainly completely Gallic. And as regards institutions, what is there in common between this imperturbable people of Venice, and that wholly Athenian turbulence of Florence, which changes its forms of government at the proposition of the first newcomer, after half an hour's deliberation? And as regards art, how can we love this crude realism, these commonplace heads of Titian, these heavy heads of Tintoretto, after having contemplated the ravishing ideals of the Tuscan and Perugian schools?

The Venetians are, above all, sailors, but sailors of a rare kind. Instead of that pale and matter-of-fact type of the man of business found in Holland, you behold a man living under a beautiful sky, on

the most delightful site in the world, leading a life full of energy, grace and beauty. The result is that here is a little world which has nothing in common with its surroundings. It is an inhabited lagoon which has civilised itself in its own fashion. As for Padua and this country in general, it is exactly of the type of Bologna and the Legations with somewhat of inferiority—an inferiority striking and incontestable as regards art which is still so powerful and beautiful in this portion of the eastern declivity of the Apennines.

I had come to Padua on account of its ancient school of learning. After a careful examination, this has fallen much in my esteem; it is flatly scholastic, devoid of the modern spirit, holding to the old scholastic follies and the physics of 1600 and 1620, having chairs "*De Generatione et Corruptione*," "*De Coelo et Mundo*," etc., as in 1640 and 1650. Its condition is most deplorable; it is that of veritable intellectual cretinism. No encouragement, no progress, not a man of ability in evidence. At Bologna, on the contrary, I found distinguished men. As regards the condition of this country I say nothing, for I do not

want to write under the influence of anger. I confess that all that I have dreamed has been surpassed; can you believe it? Moreover, it is rather the stupidity and nullity of the government than its features of violence that exasperate me. Violence has a certain air of fatality to which one becomes resigned without anger, just as one is not irritated by sickness or death. But stupidity!
. . . This quite unhinges me.

LETTER XXII

MILAN, June 14, 1850.

ALL who have visited Milan use a single word to explain the impression produced by this great city. From Montaigne to our own time, all travellers without exception have been struck by the *French aspect* of the capital of Lombardy.

This physiognomy of the region is characteristic to an incredible degree. The language, the customs, are absolutely our own; the city is entirely new; there is in it absolutely nothing of the artistic; the appearance of the merchants' quarters is that of the *Rue Saint-Honoré*; the aristocratic quarter recalls, or rather identically reproduces, *la Chaussée - d'Antin*. The grand artistic palace of Rome, of Tuscany, of Venice, has disappeared; nothing remains except splendid mansions built in the notably characterless style of our large *hôtels*. The government edifices are like ours, great buildings of artificial architecture,

theatrical in style, decorated, rather than painted, containing sumptuous apartments. I have never yet thoroughly understood why the most trifling little palace of Rome, Florence, Bologna or Venice compels attention—is a monument, in a word, although we never lift our eyes to admire the most superb edifice of Paris. Certainly, there are a thousand buildings in Paris, grander, richer, more ornamental than these palaces. The latter are all dilapidated, uninhabited, even uninhabitable, windowless, having a few planks for floors—veritable shanties, in a word. But they are works of art, with an individual physiognomy, and this is what is revealed to whoever gazes upon them, though he does not know exactly why.

The contrast presented by Milan makes it opportune to analyse its causes. As regards the subject of art, the same must be said of its churches as of its buildings; art in Milan, in a word, is no longer anything more than theatrical and conventional decoration, as with us. But, you will say, does this city, which like Florence, Venice, etc., has had its originality, its history, possess no vestiges of this originality, and does it now present

merely the vague and general type known as the French type? This can be explained. First of all, there is not in Milan one stone left upon another which dates further back than Barbarossa, thanks to the conscientious manner in which this emperor carried out his oath in this regard. Again, the fury of building is pushed to its extreme limit here. Further, Milan has been an official city for half a century. You cannot realise how everything here bears the imprint of Napoleon and of the *Kingdom of Italy*. Napoleon rebuilt everything, palaces, triumphal arches, etc. But a little more, and Milan would have become another *Rue de Rivoli*, with accompanying columns in front of the monuments (an idea wholly French and entirely ignored by the ancient Italians). There is another objection which has long preoccupied me, and which is now explained: if Lombardy is scarcely Italian at all, and is without character or originality, how happens it that this country has become the centre of the Italian movement, the true representative of contemporary Italy—this country, which, together with Piedmont (still less Italian), has produced all the

great men who represent the modern spirit of Italy—Monti, Manzoni, Pellico, Beccaria, Rosmini, Gioberti, etc.? But it may be truly said that these men are not Italians; they are moderns; they are of our country, they are of us who have no other country than the Idea. They are moulded in the type of that Italian-French society that Napoleon conceived, and realised. For I repeat that the Kingdom of Italy has remained the type of this country. From the hour that Italy entered upon the period of literature and reflective art, she was to have her great representatives in this country; but in her grand naïve epoch she was obliged to submit to local influences.

The proper aim of our culture is to render practically insignificant these differences, thanks to a system which assigns a very feeble rôle to local influences. Take Canova, for example, the great reflective artist, who lived in a forgotten corner of Belluna, Trevisa, etc., and who counts for nothing in the naïve development of Italy. Certainly, a Canova, born in this country in the fifteenth century, remaining unattached to local tradition, is as true a representative of modern culture and the modern spirit as can be found throughout Italy.

LETTER XXIII

TURIN, May 21, 1850.

SUNDAY morning I crossed the frontiers of Briançon, and although I succumbed at Grenoble to the temptation of the Grande Chartreuse, I shall be in Paris again toward the end of May. Farewell, then; it will be hard for me to write to you on the eve of seeing you. Few pleasures in my life have been as real as that which this charming perspective causes me. How gratifying it will be to find myself again with you, when we have so much to say to each other.

LETTER XXIV

BEYROUTH, November 9, 1860.

IF you wish to see the strangest assemblage of charming and sordid things, natural beauties the charm of which it is impossible to describe, an incomparable sky, an admirable sea, the most beautiful mountains in the world, the dirtiest and most poverty-stricken cities that it is possible to dream of, a race sordid in its ensemble, but containing delightful types, a society arrived at the last degree of disorganisation which it is possible to attain without achieving the savage state—come here. I assure you that nothing more curious or more striking can be seen anywhere. The voyage is nothing, provided one is not too inclined to sea-sickness. The average of unpleasant days at sea in the worst season is from two to eight. Here there is absolute safety for us. The difficulty of horseback riding vanishes; you go on foot, or take a mule, and the poorest rider

runs no risk; this is the method that I have adopted. If, therefore, neither your work, nor your responsibilities, nor your duties bind you too firmly to Paris, come.

My mission is getting on perfectly; we are going to make excavations on a large scale, in company with the army. The naval authorities are also very obliging, and have, with great kindness, placed a steamer at my disposal. It was desired to make short sojourns during the winter, and to set up establishments all along the coast; the pretext for this has been found. Fuad is very well. Fuad and Ismail are men; the rest of the Turks are stupid or ignoble. This country is lost to Turkey without hope of redemption. But what will become of it? This is one of the most puzzling problems in the world when it is examined at close range. The strange rôle that one plays here is alone worth the voyage. You cannot imagine how many things of the past are explained when you have once seen this country.

Henriette endures the fatigue of the expedition very well. She will write to you by the next post. Excuse me this time for being so brief.

These days I am greatly worried in reaching a decision in regard to Cornélie and the child. She will tell you what we have decided upon. Try to come with her; this will be charming. Lebanon and the sea that stretches before our eyes will banish all cares and cure all ills.

Mount Lebanon is the most enchanting thing in the world. We climbed it the day before yesterday. The charming and the grandiose have never been so admirably united. Imagine the smiling Alps, redolent of perfumes, covered to the top (save some peaks) with charming villages, or at least what were once such, for all these are now only sections of walls. It is impossible to have any idea of the devastation of this country. All that has been said falls short of the truth. It is the paradise of God devastated by the frightful Tartar demon. Happily all the world now seems agreed to drive him out. England veered around some days ago; Lord Dufferin is now more resolved than the Christians, or than General de Beaufort himself, who, moreover, is the most anti-Turkish of the French representatives here.

Come and see us; you will be with us at Djebail

and Saida, whence we shall strike off into the mountain. Do not expect great luxury; though we now manage, since we have become acquainted with the resources of the country, to live comfortably and, from some points of view, delightfully. Bring an elastic saddle for the mule, a soft bed, strong and not sharp-pointed boots, a large rubber coat, made like a capuchin's cloak, a travelling blanket, a waterproof valise, flannel underclothing, and besides these, nothing different from your ordinary apparel. I believe that this voyage will do you much good. Journeys here in no manner resemble those in our country of railroads, carriages and hotels. Travelling here occupies and absorbs one most completely.

LETTER XXV

AMSCHID, January 25, 1861.

WE are all well, though Henriette's health during these latter days has not been altogether good. She is now recovered. It is a little colder here than usual, and the old men declare that in twenty years they have never seen snow so near the sea. The snows cover the summits of the second range above us, about a league distant. Thus are produced incomparable effects of light by the rays of the sun. In the sunlit, snowy hollows, sheltered from the wind, it is delightful. I saw a real marvel a few days ago, the village of Maschnaka, an admirable ruin of the remotest antiquity, whose grandiose character amazed me. Imagine a world of giants and heroes; Homer's Troy must have been like that. The surrounding country is also incomparable. This is the valley of the River Adonis, if one may apply the word "valley" to a precipice more than a thou-

sand feet deep, the ridge of which is but a few hundred feet wide. The permanent snows of winter begin there. On the horizon gleam the white domes of Aphaca. The contrast of the cold winds and the sun is something indescribable. This life in its most contrasting forms seizes and penetrates you. Two little glaciers in depressions where the sun never penetrates are another delightful feature. On the whole, the valley of the River Adonis is the most striking thing that I have seen thus far. One can imagine nothing more romantic and more melancholy. It is truly a country where we may weep for the dead gods. The sea vistas, westerly from the Wadi, have an extraordinary effect.

Semar-Gebail gave me the idea of an ancient fortress built in the primitive Saturnian style. These old piles of Kronos, embossed with great blocks of stones, are very numerous here. I am now very well informed about the old Gible style. The Tower of Byblos is truly one of the oldest buildings in the world, and the prototype of those of Solomon at Jerusalem. I shall establish this by decisive investigations. We must, however, resign

ourselves to the fact that this ancient architecture, like that of the Hebrews, was devoid of inscriptions, and I think that the custom of inscribing monuments at Byblos did not begin until the opening of the Greek epoch.

The tombs (the ancient ones are also devoid of inscriptions) are of a very grandiose character; some of them seem like the giants of a primitive world. Greek inscriptions are found in abundance, and some of these are of capital importance. We have a very curious Astarte, and a beautiful Greek Venus of the Greco-Roman epoch. Our fleuron is a lion in bas-relief, said to be a miniature copy of one from the palaces of Nineveh.

Our collection of Greek inscriptions may be usefully applied to the study of religious history. This excellent instrument of historical investigation has not been sufficiently employed, though in our day and with our principles of criticism it is the only infallible one. Saida will furnish me with more specimens for museum purposes, but I doubt that it will furnish as many historical solutions.

More and more I recognise the near ancestors of the Hebrews in the Giblites, a patriarchal people, little addicted to trading, sacerdotal, governed by senator priests (presbuteroi). God is named here, El Adonai, Schaddi, as among the Hebrews. In style the monuments bear a most striking analogy to those of Jerusalem (excluding lifelike sculpture, foliage, ornamentation and inscriptions). Byblos appears to me more and more like one Jerusalem which has been vanquished by another. Adonai has conquered Adonis. The combat between these two cults still goes on actively in Lebanon. The scrupulous and infinite care which the Christian zealots have taken to destroy the temples which crown these summits is really curious. Everything has been broken into little bits, but these fragments are still strewn over the soil.

The idolatry of Lebanon seems to be the type of idolatry conceived by the fathers of the church and the middle ages. I had considered this a puerile type until I saw it in this country. To conclude, the country has never recovered itself; it has been killed by Christianity; it was already

in ruins when the Moslems arrived; the Christians finished it.

A sad thing that must be said, and that I shall only say between us, is that this country cannot be *civilised* except by slavery. Free labour will never produce anything great, for the simple reason that no result of toil is worth as much to a man here as the pleasure of living and simply doing nothing. All things considered, even with us labour is enforced, because the man who will not work is condemned to death. It is not exactly the same here. The only slightly flourishing epoch in the history of this country was that of the Emir Bechir who overwhelmed it with taxes. It was necessary to work to be able to pay them, and to pay to be allowed to live; therefore, people worked.

It is only in the East that one can understand the pleasure of living for the sake of living. They live in a fuller sense than we, in the fact that they economise life, while we greedily squander it. Hence their utter indifference to the accessories of life, well-being, consideration of others, etc. Hence, also, an equality of which we can have no

idea. The millionaire who entertains us differs in nothing from the poor people of the village, or from his relations who are his servants and ours. The other day we received a visit from some ladies living on the mountain; their negro slaves entered with them, sat down beside them on the divan, and took their leave with them. Were it not for their colour we should have taken them for our visitors' daughters.

LETTER XXVI

AMSCHID, January 30, 1861.

I WRITE only a line, for I am despatching my report by this mail. But I do not desire that you should again accuse me of negligence and forgetfulness. Forget you, old friend! Is it possible that you can thus give rein to your uneasy imagination! My remembrance of you is the dearest and most actual of all. It would have been a treat to see you again. It is true, however, that up to now you would not have had very fine weather. Winter here is exceptional; it is exactly the weather of our April and May, not cold but terribly windy; for the last fifteen days we have had much rain. This hampers our labours considerably. I leave Am-schid on the seventh or eighth of next month, to concentrate all my efforts for a month on Saida.

I often think of your fine book, of the astonishment that it will cause and the misunderstandings

that it cannot fail to provoke. The objections which M. Chevreul and others raise seem to me to resemble much those which the Orientalists of the school raised against my *Semitic Languages*. Scholasticism is the necessary form of almost all minds. Fine minds which escape it are liable to scolding from all sides. But they are the only ones who in the end obtain the attention of the public, for they alone are able to give to their works an entirely human character.

I am delighted that you see Michelet. What I have just read of *La Mer* in the *Revue* has enchanted me. Have this volume sent to me by M. Darasse, Conti Way, No. 2. What profound truth there is in his naturalist as well as in his historical fancies. Tell him that he must come to Syria when he wishes to paint the real flower. The splendour of flowers is understood only here. No, Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. Above all, the cyclamen, both leaf and flower, is a masterpiece that almost throws one into ecstasies. Imagine the most exquisite black lace over charming green velvet—such is the leaf. The

flower has a naïveté that is adorable. The orange-trees and citron-trees in bud are also most delightful. The birds of this country are beautiful; the small ones are of the wag-tail species, full of prettiness and grace.

The other day on the mountains I saw some eagles in their eyrie, then soaring in circles over the abyss. The scene was of a calm and savage majesty, wholly biblical in character. The sea is a strange thing here. It would not please Michelet. It is completely inorganic. A rocky and sandy coast always washed in the same part; not a shred of seaweed, not a marine plant; very few shells, nothing of that multiple life of our ocean coasts. The traces of man's handiwork, borne everywhere by the rocks of the coast, produce a strange sensation in us, habituated as we are to the shores of Brittany. But the general effects of the landscape, the tints of evening, the storms, etc., have no equal anywhere.

LETTER XXVII

BEYROUT, February 11, 1861.

I DO not wish you to accuse me again of forgetting you, though the fatigues and cares of all kinds imposed upon me by this difficult affair would excuse me in the eyes of a friend less susceptible than you. I have left with a lively regret my kingdom of Byblos. During two months I have reigned supreme; I have seen a corner of the world wholly attentive to my service, eager to obtain my smile and anticipate my desires. Up to the end, I have not been arrested by any difficulty; I have done all that I wished, as if I were in a country where there was no other law than my will. I shall not find it thus in the future, and I cannot think without dismay of the time when it will be necessary to travel on foot, follow narrow pathways, and yield obedience without question, to a thousand exigences, a thousand rules.

One is only free here on condition that he is a stranger. On the whole, even the native is exceedingly free. There is not a single policeman, not a single preventive measure, no restriction of natural liberty, and withal, there are fewer crimes against the person and property than elsewhere. Nothing can equal the safety of this country, outside of periods of crisis. Professional robbery, that fruit of civilisation, does not exist here. A woman may cross the Lebanon without being molested for a moment.

The day before yesterday I saw the patriarch of the Maronites. He is a charming type, the masterpiece of the combination of Italian education and the fine and gentle spirit of this race. The bishops, with the exception of Tobias, bishop of Beyrout (an intriguer), are also good men. With regard to the Greeks, united or schismatic, I have a very poor opinion. What is lacking essentially in the Syrian is fixity and continuity of ideas and rectitude of judgment. Their facility for learning all things (especially languages) greatly surpasses ours. But they have not that persistence which produces great crea-

tions. And, moreover, ideas which are bizarre, subtle or even absurd are the very ones which chiefly recommend themselves to them. They do not understand what common sense is. All this has had a charm which has seduced the world.

In Tiberim Syrus defluxit Orontes.

You cannot see too much of this individuality of the Syrian mind—its persistence, its identity. Syria is not a nationality, but it is one of the capital individualities of humanity. Strangers will organise it politically, but it will always be a region *sui generis*.

I am falling from fatigue, and to-morrow I have to make a journey of eight hours on horse-back, with the ladies, as far as Saida. But the life-giving air of this country enables us to stand anything.

LETTER XXVIII

SOUR, March 8, 1861.

I DESIRED to write you my impressions of the new country, but the fatigues of this region of Tyre are such that in the evening I am almost incapable of work. This country resembles Lebanon in nothing. It is a desert; the country around Rome gives a certain idea of it. In no other place is Turkey so hated; elsewhere you see the good that she prevents, here you see the evil that she does. The Metualis are a very wicked race, fanatical and deceitful, a completely spoiled people. It is here, above all, that I am confirmed in my view of the essential trait of the Syrian character, and which I call false-mindedness. Here absurdity is the running water, the daily bread. It is necessary to examine the perversion of the details of life in order to believe this. This perversion is entirely of the head; the morals here are very pure, and have nothing

of the infamies of modern Egypt, for example. But the ideas of these people are completely perverted.

Tyre is considerably effaced. But the memories of this noble city sustain me in my researches, even when they are least attractive. Too little attention is given to the rôle which Tyre has played, and to its historic nobility. Two hundred years earlier than Greece, Tyre upheld the liberty of municipal republics—that is to say, ancient liberty against the great despotisms of the East; alone, she held in check for years the enormous Assyrian machine. Never without emotion do I traverse this isthmus which in its time has been the forum of liberty.

A very curious thing is that the remains of the Phœnician civilisation are almost wholly the remains of industrial monuments. The industrial monument, so fragile with us, was, in the time of the Phœnicians, grandiose and colossal. The whole country is strewn with the relics of this gigantic industry, hewn out of the rock. The wine-presses (a sort of gates built of three superposed blocks) resemble triumphal arches;

the old factories with their tubs and millstones are still there in the desert, perfectly intact. The wells near Tyre, said to be Solomon's, are something wonderful, and create a profound impression.

I am annoyed by the tardiness of the architect who was to come. Otherwise, all is well. A few days ago we found at Saida four magnificent sarcophagi, with large sculptured head-pieces and pedestals in the real Phœnician style.

LETTER XXIX

SOUR, March 12, 1861.

A FRIGHTFUL storm of which no words can give any idea has suspended our labours for the present. For more than a month we have had delightful weather, neither hot nor cold—weather that they might have in paradise.

Yesterday we lived in involuntary terror. Our dwelling is a veritable lighthouse; it has little stability, and is situated at the extremity of the island. The rage of nature on all sides, the whirlwind of roarings reminding one of the gods of another world, a shipwreck which took place before our very eyes, and kept us trembling for hours, left on us a terrible impression.

To-day the weather is still bad. Yesterday we had intended to set out for Oumm-el-Awamid, the most beautiful ruins in this country. I shall have to spend eight days there under the tent.

The country is a desert; there is not a dwelling for two leagues around.

Our departure is naturally delayed. The ladies wish to share this rude campaign; I could not dare to promise them.

Sidon has given us admirable results; we have now about ten magnificent sarcophagi of most original style. My Djebail expedition will not appeal to the public, but this one will be understood by all. I am now more than ever of the opinion that these monuments are ancient, and anterior to Alexandria. I have the proof here.

But Tyre has been so terribly overwhelmed that research here will never possess much interest. What is needed, above all, is a geologist to examine into the strange scenes of destruction on the coasts, and to determine whether a portion of the island has really subsided.

I am already on biblical ground; I can see Mount Carmel on the horizon; I have seen melancholy Sarepta, not a stone of which remains above the soil. The wonderful summit of Hermon, the highest point in all Syria, closes our horizon toward the east. After ascending one

or two hours, we are in the midst of the idolatrous cities of the tribe of Dan.

All this causes in me a strong desire that I hold in check; for I must first accomplish the Tortosa excavations. I leave for Tortosa on the twenty-third.

On the seventh or eighth of April I shall return here, and thence I shall depart for Jerusalem.

LETTER XXX

SOUR, April 19, 1861.

WHAT a life ours is! A restless journey from one end of Syria to the other!

In eight days I have mounted the region of Tortosa by real magic; yesterday I was at Tyre. Since my arrival I have organised our excavations of Oumm-el-Awamid, which already show fine results. At last I am somewhat free; I have profited by it to be a little sick; now that I am recovered I set out for my explorations in Galilee.

To-morrow we enter into an unknown country in the direction of Lake Huleh, which I know to be full of ancient monuments. In four days we shall reach Oumm-el-Awamid; from there we shall go to Carmel; thence to Nazareth, thence to the Sea of Tiberias; all this country is totally uninhabited, yet I confess that I prefer it to Tortosa or Ruad.

It is here that Mussulman fanaticism is carried to its limits.

A frenzied party established in the mosque and in the bazaar reigns by threats of fire and death. It has reduced to nothing the Turkish power, and maintains a ferocious hatred against everything that is not of the exalted spirit of Islam. It is here that one understands what a misfortune Islamism has been, what a leaven of hate and exclusiveness it has sown in the world, how exaggerated monotheism is opposed to all science, to all civil life, to every great idea. The effect which Islamism has had upon human life is something incredible; the asceticism of the middle ages is nothing in comparison. Spain has never invented a religious terror which approaches that.

But nature, here, is always delightful and splendid. Syria, from beginning to end, is a garden, of which the most extensive and best cared for of our public gardens can hardly give an idea. These flowers have a naturalness, a grace, a freshness which cannot be equalled. It is not yet hot, except when the unendurable *khamsin*

is blowing. We spent eight good days under the tent at Oumm-el-Awamid. Life under the tent is gay and agreeable, but it requires an equable temperature.

I am delighted that you have seen Brittany, and I see that you have understood it well. Our little islands of the Côtes-du-Nord would not have pleased you less. When I think of it, I am seized with such a desire to return that the duty which keeps me here becomes a heavy one. Never have these countries inspired me with such sentiments; you admire them, but they lack that deep and melancholy charm that we value so much.

LETTER XXXI

JERUSALEM, May 9, 1861.

JERUSALEM is, indeed, the most singular place in the world; its present is an unrivalled medley of the ludicrous and odious, while behind all this is the most extraordinary past, still translucent at every step. The topography is very precise. This legendary topography is certainly provoking; it supposes that some one has followed and marked with chalk every place that was remarkable in the lives of the prophets and of Jesus. But, chimeras apart, there cannot be a difference of more than a few feet, when all is considered.

Here, assuredly, are Bethphage, Bethany and the Mount of Olives, the places beloved of Jesus. Gethsemane is not far from this little region; according to some monks, it is near a group of very old olive-trees. Yonder is Bethsaida, Siloam and its fountain. Golgotha was not far

from where they now place it. This road cut in the rock, and descending from Galilee, has certainly borne the footprints of Jesus, and is certainly the place where he received from these poor bands of Galileans that triumph at the hands of the poor which cost him his life.

With regard to the temple, let the Mosque of Omar be replaced by a square edifice, built in that style which permits a good general view of the interior, and everything will be unchanged. Some of the smaller portions of the walls, and the subterranean portions of the Mosque El-Aska are true Hebrew monuments. As regards *Jewish* monuments, they are to be found everywhere; discriminating minds can see the past very perfectly. The tombs of the Valley of Jehoshaphat, the Golden Gate, far surpass their common reputation.

On the whole, I am delighted with my sojourn here, but I shall not conceal the fact that I am very much fatigued. The climate of Palestine, with its surpassing changes, does not agree with me. I shall close. Only excuse me for being

brief, and not writing often. You have been unjust toward me in not seeing that, in the confusion of my surroundings, it was almost impossible to write.

LETTER XXXII

BEYROUT, September 12, 1861.

IT is then decided that, since you are married, you are to write no more to us. You will make me hate Madame Berthelot, and if I dared I should write to her to complain. Our negligence does not excuse yours. Many allowances should be made for us; for, in the middle of the month of August, we have had to embark on the coast of Syria one hundred and fifty large blocks of stone, weighing from one to two tons each. At last all is finished. But what a difference there is between the army and the navy in expeditions of this kind. With the former everything is easy; with the latter all is thorny.

Add to this that the present disposition of the country has changed as from white to black. A year ago France was feared by the Moslems and worshipped by the Christians. At the present hour she is openly insulted by the former and

cursed by the latter. It is certain that our position has been made much more difficult. To come here with the intention of leaving again is a fault without parallel. Although we shall have a great deal of trouble in organising our expedition to Cyprus by reason of the carelessness of M. de La Rivière, who has taken conflicting measures, we shall accomplish it, and I shall return before the first of November. What a long absence this is! Would you believe it? We have been separated a year.

I have employed my long days at Ghazir in correcting my *Life of Jesus*, such as I have conceived it in Galilee and in the country of Sour: In eight days it will be finished; I have only yet to write the account of his last two days. I have succeeded in giving all these events an ordered sequence which is completely lacking in the gospels. I believe that this time one will have before his eyes living beings, and not these pale, lifeless phantoms—Jesus, Mary, Peter, etc., considered as abstract beings, and only typified. I have endeavoured to do the same as he who, by drawing a violin bow, arranges grains of

sand in natural waves on vibrating plates. Have I succeeded? You shall judge of this. But I ask you not to say a word of it to any one outside of our circle. It must not be divulged. It will come out in its own time. Now that it is finished, I have arrived at the point of caring very little for the College of France or all the world besides. Let me only be allowed to publish it (and who can refuse me this), and I shall be satisfied.

LETTER XXXIII

ALEXANDRIA, November 16, 1864.

HERE we are at Alexandria after an admirable passage; I have never seen so beautiful a sea. For one day only the water was slightly rough, and even then the fact that we were indisposed was due to the peculiar defect of screw-propellers which are incapable of withstanding the slightest shock. Stromboli, the Lipari Islands, Messina and the Straits have greatly interested me.

Stromboli is one of the strangest objects; a cone of ashes two or three hundred feet in height rising abruptly from the waves at an angle of 40 degrees, it looks as if it were composed entirely of damp ashes, and has a general appearance of rawness. The eruptions take place from a large opening on the side; in the daytime nothing is seen but smoke. A crumbling on one side has formed a habitable slope on which

a village has been built and farming established.

The coast of Calabria is of the most grandiose appearance, especially Aspromonte, which seems like a somber and terrible mountain lost in the clouds. I have seen Etna only from afar, like a sort of Olympian vision in the heavens; it is colossal.

As for Alexandria, I have found it such as I saw it three years ago—dirty, hideous, vulgar, disgusting by its baseness, sordidness and immorality. In vain have I been shown on the banks of the canal the most beautiful flowers in the world; despite my efforts (I had refused to enter), I have not been able to avoid meeting the proprietor M. B. It is true that, for the last two days, since I have heard of the acts of this personage explained, I am led to believe that he is less ignoble than he is said to be. His perfect naïveté in telling humorous stories which elsewhere are presented as very wicked ones has seemed to me an extenuating circumstance. He has done no more than all other Europeans in this country, in intriguing with the viceroy. Mariette, Gail-

lardot, all the French, are openly friendly to him.

I forgot all that while gazing from my window at this ancient port where Ammonius Saccas created the Alexandrian philosophy, while following his calling of porter; below lies the Jewish cemetery where sleep Philo and many other noble thinkers, brothers of Jesus.

To-morrow we leave by rail for Cairo; but do not deceive yourself. One starts at eight o'clock in the morning and arrives at his destination at five in the evening, making a journey that ought to take three hours; but this is fortunate after all, for, were it otherwise, serious accidents might occur.

I have found my excellent Doctor Gaillardot here. He has followed us from Cairo and will accompany us into Syria. Mariette awaits us at Cairo and will conduct us to the pyramids and to Sakkara.

You see that all is proceeding according to our desires, and that everything is well managed. Ah, if we had not left behind us so many things to worry about! Go and see poor, little Ary,

and take good care of him; he loves you very much, and is sad when you do not give him some sign of affection. Take my place with him.

Address your next letter to Beyrout, Syria, *poste restante*, via Marseilles.

If you see M. Egger, tell him that I shall write to him the next post, and ask him to hurry the publication of my book on the Mission at the Imperial Publisher's, and to call attention to the fact that the book goes up to page 200 inclusively. Remember me to Taine, Sainte-Beuve and all our friends.

On the whole, I do not repent that I started out by ascribing great importance to antiquity. This sentiment is no more than what my work deserves in compensation for all the sacrifices and regrets that it has cost me. Present my respects to Madame Berthelot, and believe in my firm friendship. My wife sends her best love to Madame Berthelot.

LETTER XXXIV

ON THE NILE NEAR SAKKARA, December 17, 1864.

THIS expedition to Egypt, which was to be a simple trip to Cairo and the pyramids, has become a regular journey of five hundred leagues, extending to the Cataract of Assouan. Mariette, desiring that I should see all Egypt, has dragged me hither. The viceroy, with rare good grace, has accorded me the facilities reserved for the most privileged personages. Mariette has been my guide at every step; in fine, I have accomplished this journey under the very best conditions; I have seen everything and seen it wonderfully well. Exposure in the sun and a cold caused me to be indisposed for a time at Thebes, but I now feel wonderfully fresh and well, and I am able to endure without trouble days of fatigue at least as bad as those of the Syrian journey.

I am now able to give you my general impression of this strange country. What is absolutely

unequaled is the sky. Nothing, either in Syria or Italy, had given me the least idea of that. The absolute dryness of the atmosphere produces tones of sweetness and delicacy that are without parallel. The mornings and evenings are enchanting; the simplest objects—a group of palm trees, a verdurous plain, a horizon of rocky hills—assume striking scenic perfections. Certain of the country regions are also charming; in general, however, the detail is painful. It is dusty, dirty, without verdure; the complete absence of pure water is a shock to us; the trees growing in a soil of ashes are wrinkled and thorny. What is really wonderful is the sky, the horizon, the Nile. Its average width is about a thousand feet; at times it forms immense sheets of water.

When you reach Assouan all is changed; the valley contracts, the channel is filled with rocks, the steep banks are covered with verdure as fine as the grass in our gardens.

There is nothing more strange than Assouan, seen from Philæ (the cataract is between them). The river flows through a labyrinth of granite blocks, while on both sides the desert approaches

to the very banks. All this taken in connection with the little wonder of Philæ, and the strange aspect of the people, all Nubians, and still wholly savage, forms a most striking ensemble. It was not without emotion that, standing on the last rock of Philæ, I bade farewell to the Nubian valley, stretched out before me like a green ribbon. It is probable that I shall never again approach so near the sun, and that I shall never more behold Ipsamboul, Gebel-Barkal and Khartoum.

As for old Egypt, it is truly a world apart. Denderah, Esneh, Edfou, Ombos, Philæ are of the Ptolemaic or Roman epoch. But the ensemble of Thebes is of the seventeenth to the tenth century before Jesus Christ. Of this there can be no doubt; it suffices to come in contact with it to see absolute evidence of this. Now Thebes is the Versailles or the Saint-Denys of an Egyptian monarchy, supposing the latter to be preceded by immense developments. The admirable tombs of Beni-Hassan, of exquisite style, covered with paintings which are a perfect picture of Egyptian life, date from 2500 B. C., the dates

being of indubitable authenticity by reason of the cartouches of the kings. In fine, Abydos or Thisis, Sakkara (Memphis) and the pyramids bring us back to a world still more ancient, and much more different from the world of Thebes than our modern world is from the Roman world. I have come to believe perfectly, with M. Mariette, that the date of 5000 B. C. given by Manethon for the foundation of the first Egyptian empire is a very moderate hypothesis.

Among the most striking things are the pyramids and the surrounding region, the Sphinx, the tombs, the temple discovered by M. Mariette, bare, without inscription or sculpture, and wholly of granite prisms without any ornamentation. This temple was built by Chephren, the constructor of the second pyramid, whose statue, discovered by M. Mariette, is now in the Museum of Boulak. The whole dates from 4500 B. C.

I do not return converted by such figures; but the chain of all this chronology has surprising strength. Up to 3000 B. C. there is absolute certainty; beyond that there are breaks and weak portions in the chain; some of the dynasties

given by Manethon as successive may be regarded as synchronous. But all these doubts are reduced to a very limited field, and it must be said that all the discoveries of M. Mariette lead to the adoption of surprising figures. These discoveries have led to the finding throughout the Egyptian soil of monuments of the dynasties which partisans of the synchronal system regarded as local or partial. On the whole, the work of M. Mariette is the greatest archaeological enterprise of this century. All this has been conducted with a courage, perseverance and scientific spirit which have been truly admirable.

Not a single concession has been made to frivolity; no account has been taken of the idler or man of the world; but one object has been kept in view: the exclusive pursuit of scientific results. The brilliant museum of Boulak has been formed of itself; not a single monument has been destroyed in building it up. And *grand Dieu!* what difficulties we had to encounter! You can imagine how little the purely scientific spirit is understood in this country, either by the governing classes or those who surround them.

The viceroy is a man of gentle character, well brought up and full of good intentions. But, my God, what a state of society. This worthy man passes his life in unfortunately but too well founded, his brother but slightly concealing his projects and intention to succeed him as soon as possible.

To conclude, this journey has delayed me considerably, but has interested me greatly. This contact with remote antiquity has given me a great deal of pleasure. Criticism ought to be made at a distance, but the danger is, in this case, that we deal with imagination instead of reality. This is what occurs in the case of our friend Michelet. I often imagine him seeing what I have seen. To speak truly, I believe him incapable of seeing anything else than that which his imagination suggests. But how much more true and more poetic is the immediate vision!

Early to-morrow we shall be in Cairo. I believe that we are to make a little trip to Suez by rail; I shall revisit the viceroy to thank him and give him certain intelligence that Mariette wishes

me to convey to him; then we shall set out as quickly as possible for Syria. Our hopes will be realised. Excavation has become well-nigh impossible.

LETTER XXXV

BEYROUT, January 12, 1865.

I HAVE at last gained the consolation for which I have so long yearned. I have seen the place where my beloved sister * rests; I have been able to render to her those last duties that an unheard-of fatality had obliged me to defer four years ago. There was a great weight upon my heart, and this sad and peaceful journey to Amschid has somewhat lightened it. We accomplished it by small stages during the beautiful April weather. The mountain was green and covered with flowers as in springtime. Each crevice of the rocks was a basket of anemones and cyclamens. It was a great joy for me to see for the second time this beautiful road that she loved so much, and where literally every step recalled some memory of her. These good people who recollect her sweetness, her goodness, have

* Henriette Renan.

shown me much sympathy. At Amschid, in particular, I was received with open arms by the people of the village, the clergy, and even the patriarch whom I met by chance. Some ridiculous chatter at Beyrout had made me fear for a moment that the Jesuits might inspire these good people with their fanaticism, and place some difficulties in my way. There has been nothing of the kind. These simple people doubtless have their share of fanaticism but their very simplicity lifts them above miserable disputes, and renders them capable of understanding every act of exalted religion.

The grave in which our dear one sleeps is situated on the slightly rounded ridge of one of the spurs of Lebanon, at the boundary line, or rather at the commencement of the two little valleys which, diverging, stretch to the sea. The sea can be seen on both sides; to the south lies the port of Byblos encumbered with ruins; to the north, the coast which stretches toward Botrys. All the surrounding country is richly cultivated, and plentifully supplied with vines, olive-trees, mulberry and palm-trees. Amschid

is the spot of all Syria where the palm grows the best. On the horizon are outlined high mountain peaks now covered with snow.

There sleeps your friend in the bosom of a graceful and strenuous sceneland. I found her where they had laid her in the tomb of the rich Maronite, Mikhad Tobia, whose present heir is Zakhia. My first desire was to have another grave opened near by, in which to lay her, and to erect a little memorial over it. But Zakhia besought me earnestly not to remove her from his family tomb; and I saw that the removal would be so painful to these good people that I believed I would conform to my sister's wish by renouncing it. I have, therefore, allowed her to rest in the Maronite tomb. I shall have a small memorial sent from Paris and erected beside it, which shall record that a woman of rare virtue reposes in this spot. Moreover, I desire that one day we shall be reunited. Of course, all this is provisional. But who knows where she will come to rejoin me, or whether I shall not be the one to come and find her?

A pretty chapel stands a few steps from the

tomb. I have had celebrated there a service according to the beautiful Maronite rite, one of the most ancient in the world and which dates back to the beginnings of Christianity. All the people of the village were present; the compassion which these good people showed for me, their grave and ancient style of singing, the crowds of women and children who filled the church, and gazed upon me with their large, sad eyes—all this made a touching picture, at once simple and profound, and worthy of her. My wife and I returned slowly, pausing at every stage of this journey so sorrowful and yet so dear. This is henceforth a holy land to which I shall return; for I have left there a portion of myself.

We had hardly returned to Beyrout when we were blockaded by the bad weather. To-day the weather has improved and we leave for Damascus. I think that I shall abridge my stay in Syria, and it is probable that I shall leave on the twenty-first for Alexandria in order to reach Antioch. I may return to Syria in April in order to attempt something at Oumm-el-Awamid. But this project is not at all decided upon.

LETTER XXXVI

ROADSTEAD OF TRIPOLI, January 21, 1865.

AT the moment of leaving Beyrout yesterday, we received your good letter of December 28th. Generally your letters have reached me by a belated mail, for you had written them a day too late. For the future, however, all will be changed, for your letters will now reach us by another line.

What you have told us of Madame Berthelot's sufferings has had a great effect upon us. You are being severely tried, but we must hope that all these difficulties will soon come to an end, and that your next letter will tell us of the complete recovery of Madame Berthelot. Believe me that from afar we share in your troubles. I thank you for having thought of Ary; the poor child loves so much to see you.

Since my last letter we have seen Damascus. The plain above Anti-Lebanon is admirable.

We have now no longer the scenery of Syria. This plain being eight hundred feet above the level of the sea, it is very cold there. Icy rivers traverse it in every direction. All the trees lose their leaves in winter; the ground is heaped with dead leaves; on all sides there are poplars and walnut trees—all the varieties found in our clime, or at least very similar ones.

Damascus is sad and somber. The ensemble is grandiose as seen from the heights of Salahié. The streets, if this word has any meaning in Damascus, are miserable. But the interiors of the dwellings are amazing. Some of the harem apartments that I have seen are masterpieces. The great mosque is a very important monument. It is the old Christian basilica slightly modified.

I have fixed my horizon of the scene of St. Paul's conversion. It took place in a vast, cultivated, and inhabited plain in the midst of gardens. It is certainly necessary to dispense with all exterior accidents; the phenomenon took place entirely in the soul of Paul.

LETTER XXXVII

ROADSTEAD OF ALEXANDRETTA,

January 22, 1865.

OUR journey continues with weather truly exceptional at this season. Yesterday and to-day we have had beautiful May weather. We shall land to-morrow morning, and straightway, I hope, we set out for Antioch. It is quite a difficult journey—the most difficult of all. But the principal condition of success, fine weather, has been granted us. The country hereabout is barren in an exceptional degree.

This encyclical* seems to me, in effect, of the *quos vult perdere Jupiter* order. To understand this act of folly, it is necessary to be acquainted with the theologian of the old school, and to know how ideas are formulated in the brains of these beings of another world. It is evident that a strong Gallican reaction, sustained by the State,

* An official utterance of Pius IX.

is about to be formed. But it will not succeed. A national church is impossible in France, and that is fortunate, for this church would be, in fact, heavier and narrower than the religious régime which has existed for fifty years. A schism is, then, inevitable. This will be profitable for us, for Catholicism has succeeded in becoming much too strong. By schism, observe that I mean an internal schism. In three or five years the Gallican party of Darboy, of the Council of State, of the Dupins, etc., will no longer exist. It will be found too wanting in logic for France. There will be two factions of Catholics inflamed with hatred for each other, one doting on reaction, the other desirous of change, and, in reality, Protestant. At least, the State will lose interest in these quarrels, and separation will result. But all this will bring about strange struggles which will fill the history of the latter part of this century.

LETTER XXXVIII

ATHENS, February 16, 1865.

WE have been in Athens three days. I write you only a line this time. We are very tired; I have taken only a general view of these wonders; I am literally dazzled.

My impression far surpasses all that I had imagined. This is the absolute, this is perfection; but it is charm as well—charm, infinite, profound, accompanied by a sweet and strenuous joy.

Oh, what a blessing that this light from another world should have come to us! And when one thinks that all this has hung by a thread! That during all these centuries the caprice of a Turkish *aga* might have deprived us of it!

What a long time it is since we have heard from you! Write to us immediately at the Hôtel de la Grande Bretagne, place de la Constitution (plateia tou Santagmatos), Athens. We are very well

situated here, and charmed to have before us a month of such noble repose. The modern city is very gay, very pretty, and the people are gentle and of a kindly disposition. We are overwhelmed with courtesies and attentions.

Tell Egger and our friends that I have arrived here, so that they may write to me if they wish. The mails come and go every eight days.

LETTER XXXIX

ATHENS, March 19, 1865.

OUR sojourn at Athens is being prolonged, to our great satisfaction. We do not leave until the twenty-eighth of this month. The winter this year has been very rainy in these latitudes, and the season is lasting. The plains of Asia Minor that we must revisit are still inundated. Now, as we have to wait, we should rather wait at Athens than at Smyrna. We shall then have spent six weeks in this incomparable city. The admiration and pleasure caused by its masterpieces keep on increasing in proportion as one studies them. The size of the Parthenon is not striking except upon reflection; the delightful elegance of the Erechtheum is perhaps what is most surprising at first; but it requires time for the thought to rebuild this charming little ensemble. It is impossible to get a good conception of the Erechtheum from a distance;

there is a taste and finesse about it of which nothing can give any idea.

The Propylæa has been dismantled in the most lamentable manner, but one understands, after an examination, that this was the work of Pericles, most admired of the ancients. The Temple of Theseus is the best preserved of all the ancient temples. Not a stone has been moved. The Temple of Victory and the choragic monument of Lysicrates are real jewels. Certain places recently discovered, such as the Pnyx, the Theatre of Bacchus, the Way of the Tombs, and the Ceramicus, have an immense historical value. The Pnyx, cut in the rock, is sustained by cyclopean blocks, and appears exactly the same as it did in the days of the Athenian democracy. The Tribune, or rather the two Tribunes, cut in the rock, are still there; nothing has been changed. The two stones of the Areopagus, where the plaintiff and the defendant were wont to stand, are also protuberances of the rock.

It is only here that one comprehends this civilisation, which was free as the air. The street of the Tombs is one of the most important discoveries

of recent times. Good fortune has preserved them to us. Sulla entered by this road; the débris from the siege formed an enbankment, a little hill by which an entire portion of the ancient city has been preserved, as Pompeii was by the lava. Objects have been found here exactly in the state described by the ancient texts, particularly the tomb of one of the five knights of Corinth, a sculpture of the same style as the frieze of the Parthenon, with an admirable inscription. There have been found important fragments of the tomb of Lysias, and, when further excavations are made, the beautiful tomb of Pericles will be found. But probably nothing equals the effect of the Theatre of Bacchus, with its seats of marble, each bearing the name of the dignitary for whom it was reserved; the scene is preserved in its perfection. It has lasted down to the Roman epoch, but as far as life and essentials are concerned it is the ancient theatre of Aristophanes and Sophocles.

The spirit of all this has been well expressed by Michelet. His Athens is perfect, and is as true as his Persia and Egypt are false and partially conceived. The incomparable superiority of the

Greek world, the true and simple grandeur of all that it has left behind, are truths which flame out on all sides. These are the real *great men*, and what strikes me most, in a certain preface, is not so much the lack of literary talent as the narrow horizon of the author, which prevents him from seeing beyond the Roman world. This, in fact, is a French trait. France cannot go farther back than Rome. What she has always accomplished under the name of Greek art is, in reality, nothing but Roman art.

Our journey will take up the months of April and May; I swear to you that we shall not go beyond that. I have given up Syria; circumstances would, in any case, have made that journey very difficult. After having accomplished our journey in Asia Minor (Smyrna, Ephesus, Laodicea, Philadelphia, Sardis), we shall visit Philippi, Constantinople and Thessalonica. Thence we shall go to Corinth, Tirynth, Argos and Mycena. We shall return by the Ionian Islands and Brindisi. We are assured that the railroad will be finished by that time.

LETTER XL

SMYRNA, May 6, 1865.

GOD be praised! At last, all our difficult and dangerous travels are ended. My wife must have described to Madame Berthelot our rough excursion into the interior of Asia Minor. Since then we made another, which was still more difficult. I wished to see Patmos. We embarked at Scala Nova. The vessels are so poor, the captains so stupid, and the weather was so contrary, that we were fifty-two hours at sea, without being able to enter the port of Patmos. Makarios, bishop of Caristo, will surely see in all this a great miracle. Finally, all is finished. The roads of this country are filled with cut-throats. Near Scala Nova, we saw some rocks on the route stained with the blood of an unfortunate who had been murdered a few days ago.

This season of the year is so strange that we have been obliged to change our plans slightly. It

is still almost freezing in Constantinople. In consequence, we leave to-day for Athens. We shall take our way to Argolis and Corinth during a charming season. Thence we shall go to Salonica (on the twenty-fifth of this month), and we shall wind up at Constantinople. Our return will hardly be delayed by this. In any case, the sole danger that we should have had to encounter—the journey to Argolis at the beginning of June—has been eliminated. We are perfectly well. All that remains to be done is nothing compared to what we have done.

LETTER XLI

ATHENS, May 4, 1865.

TO-MORROW we leave for Salonica by the Greek steamer which conveys us slowly, but very agreeably, through the Euripus and all along the coast, touching at each port.

We shall be in Salonica on Sunday, May 28th. If land travelling is easy in these regions, we shall go on horseback from Salonica to Cavalla, passing through Philippi. If land journeys are difficult or dangerous, we shall take to the sea (perhaps sailing in the same vessel—which would delay us for a few hours), we shall reach Cavalla, going thence to Philippi, where we shall take one of the numerous vessels that go to Constantinople. The land journey would occupy four days. In any case, we shall be in Sèvres before a month. We are to remain but a very few days in Constantinople, and shall return by the shortest route.

It is not yet very hot here, the season being very

backward. People who left Constantinople eight days ago departed during regular December weather. Salonica is noted for fevers, but we shall remain there a very short time. Be assured, then, we shall reach port safely.

We have made our journey to Argolis and Corinth. We are delighted. As regards beauty of scenery, this is equal to the most splendid I have seen in Syria. Tyrinth and Mycena are absolutely unique, isolated proofs of a high antiquity. This is the world of Homer. What Athens is to classic Hellenism, Mycena is for the epoch which is represented to us in the Iliad and Odyssey. Corinth is considerably effaced and is of secondary interest. Journeys here are pleasure excursions. Half of the time you go by carriage; the people are very amiable and hospitable. Brigandage exists, but you never run the risk of your life as in the detestable mountain passes of Asia Minor, where you are liable to be shot from a distance without seeing the aggressors. On the whole, we are leaving Greece well content with our sojourn. This race is very intelligent, and absolutely free from that species of ball and chain

which we drag at the leg. What is pitiable there is politics. The expulsion of Otho has proved a misfortune which will take half a century for the country to recover from.

The news that Madame Berthelot has given us concerning our family has been very welcome. Go and see Ary; you know how much the poor child loves you. Think of us from the beautiful woods of Sèvres, which have also their charm, and to which the scorched plains of Attica sometimes make us turn our thoughts.

LETTER XLII

CONSTANTINOPLE, June 13, 1865.

*F*INIS. We shall soon see each other, dearest of friends! We have been in Constantinople for the past five days; we shall resume our journey on June 21st, and shall be in Paris on the twenty-ninth or thirtieth. In case we return by the Danube, which is not impossible, we shall be in Paris about the same time.

Our journey to Macedonia was superb, and is, perhaps, the one which has given me the most pleasure. We have had very hot weather at Salonica and during the two days that we were travelling on horseback. The rest of the journey was spoiled; in order to gain a few hours we took an execrable Turkish boat in which we suffered very much.

Constantinople is certainly a marvel in its way. It is the city of painters and the picturesque. Its ensembles are without equal in the world. But

this is all. With the exception of Saint Sophia and one or two Byzantine remains, there is not a single beautiful building, nothing which bears analysing, bad taste carried to its extreme; everything is made to satisfy an ephemeral caprice and for show. Never have human baseness, shame, stupidity and self-satisfied nullity created so adequate an image. This Turkish society, with two or three exceptions, is entirely stupid and dishonest. The Greek populace is exceedingly debased, and in no way to be compared to that of the kingdom. But the saddest specimen of the human race to be found here is the Levantine population. Here the Frenchman and Italian become, in one or two generations, mere caricatures. This city appears to me like a city of monkeys, a sort of perpetual capital, founded by this worthy Constantine, for ignominy, intrigue and baseness. All this pleases me but little, but I observe it with care, for certainly if I ever again take up the traveller's staff it is not hither that I shall direct my steps.

LETTER XLIII

SÈVRES, November 1, 1869.

I HAVE not seen the Mosque *El Azhar* (The Flowering). It is, in fact, the institution which gives one the best idea of a Mohammedan University, or what the University of Paris was under Philip Augustus. You know that the Mosque *El Azhar* is the centre of the Mohammedan propaganda of all Africa; it is the headquarters of the missionaries; the degrees taken there have an extraordinary value throughout western Islam.

The situation here is becoming more and more tense; a schism has virtually taken place in the Left. Picard and Favre are in retreat; Simon is like one driving four horses, each going a different way. The party of action is gradually gaining the uppermost. Action cannot be otherwise than folly; but no matter, we are moving. This is the consequence of the elections. Gambetta and Ferry have had themselves nominated by promis-

ing violence and action at any cost. They have a choice between utter discomfiture and destruction; they are probably destined for the latter. Behold what it means to play with an election. The political conscience is too wide awake in Paris to make it possible for a deputy to neglect the promises made to his constituency. In the provinces, that is very easy for people of little honesty; in Paris, it brings ruin infallibly. When I say that the excited Left is approaching a revolution, I mean that it will attempt one; but my opinion is, as we said a month ago, that the people will not follow. The twenty-sixth of October was, in reality, a retreat: when revolution stops to calculate, weighs the chances and the dangers, it is no longer revolution. The law of revolution (and it is for this reason that I am becoming less and less revolutionary) is to go ahead without reflection and without looking back. There is no such thing as prudent revolutionists. Is it comprehensible that a party would give to paupers and charlatans the right to govern them?

The spectacle of the opening elections is a very strange one. Every one seems driven to the

impossible. It is a frightful *crescendo*. It is like two waves dashing against each other. There will be an explosion. The government could have, if it wished, valuable cards in its hand; but it has the air of always being asleep. *Dormira sempre*, unless it delivers itself over to foolish fanatics like Jérôme David, who would achieve a sort of new *coup d'état*, and a furious reaction. The openly avowed pretensions of the Socialists are very startling. The people are becoming more and more convinced that 1789 must be repeated—that is to say, that they must do with the bourgeoisie what the bourgeoisie did with the nobility. It is certain that the bourgeoisie were wrong in believing in the absolute character of their ideal; but it is also certain that these ideas pushed to their logical extreme would result in the disorganisation of society. I have given the *Revue des Deux Mondes* the article which I wrote this summer, and in which I have developed these ideas. I adopt the rôle of poor Cassandra: may I prove a bad prophet!

I almost reproach myself with conjuring up these images before you, who are enjoying the full light

of heaven. I suppose that you are to-day in the region of Ombos or Esnah, and I share in your dreams evoked by this surprising antiquity. The Orient has certainly its share of wisdom; this grand, resigned melancholy has its truthful side. Nevertheless, let us return from it, gay and youthful, and ready for noble action—that is to say, for research. This is the sole and eternal consolation. We shall leave Sèvres next Saturday. It has been quite cold recently, and one morning the trees were covered with snow; it was very beautiful. I go to Paris every day, and I am working furiously on my mission. I shall have completely finished the manuscript by January 1st. This debt weighs upon me, since all undertakings of this kind remain unfinished.

LETTER XLIV

FLORENCE, October 7, 1871.

OUR tour proceeds according to our desires. The Simplon, Lake Majeur, the Apennines toward Spezia, Lucca, Pistoia, have enchanted us. Florence and its feverish art, its prodigious originality, the lavish grandeur which characterises all its works, have produced in my wife the liveliest emotion, and have moved me no less than when I beheld them twenty-three years ago. We shall leave here about the thirteenth; write to me at Rome, *poste restante*, so that I may receive your letter on my arrival. I wish to receive word from you as soon as possible.

What I read of Gambetta's speech startles me. At Prangins (where I have found a very just appreciation of the situation, and as few illusions as it would be possible to have), I have obtained some very exact data on what has taken place at Berlin since the interview of the three emperors.

A sole agreement has been made—to crush the French democracy as soon as it lifts its head boldly. The three powers have not indulged in dissimulation regarding possible clashes in the future; but Prussia has asked her two adversaries not to make any alliance with the French democracy, to leave it to her alone to destroy it when the day shall arrive. Now, this day will come when she wishes, if the condition of France is changed in any particular. Prussia will then declare that, in view of the fact that the guarantees offered by M. Thiers no longer exist, she must take her own guarantees. She will act outrageously, seize Belfort, etc. A democracy ordinarily watchful will not endure this; a war party will be formed; an artificial movement will be set on foot by the journalists and street brawlers, as in July, 1870. Gambetta, or some other, in order not to yield up the situation to the war party, and under pretext of saving the country from the extreme parties and from communism, will do what Ollivier did in 1870. Then will follow frightful disasters compared with which those of 1870 and 1871 will seem trivial.

I have asked the Prince whether Prussia had arrived at a decision on the form of government to be given to France, after the second defeat. He thinks that Prussia will obstinately abstain from settling this question, that it will take new departments toward the east (a relatively small matter, however, seeing the difficulty of annexing these), will give Savoy and Nice to Italy, rejoin the northern portions to Belgium, and leave the rest to stew in its anarchy.

The essential thing is to remain *in statu quo* until the complete liquidation of the Prussian affair. Every political movement in France will be an opportunity for Prussia to seize, to crush us anew.

Here I find a true depth of sympathy for France. It is beginning to be seen that the danger of French intervention in favor of the pope is very slight. The radical party alone shows a ferocious hatred toward us, out of pure habit of declamation and unreflecting enmity.

Watch over the interests of the College; see Dumesnil regarding the routine. I have reflected since on this; pledge him to wait until December. There are two or three essential points on which

we must understand each other, notably the unfilled chairs and the nominations. If, at the November session, at which I may not be able to be present, there come up important questions, try to adjourn them until the opening of the courses. It is of capital importance to neglect nothing; the deluge is coming; let us calk the arch in all its joints.

Poor Ollivier is here, they say; he must be very miserable.

My wife will write from Rome to Madame Berthelot. This trip delights her and will do her much good. As for me, I also greatly enjoy revisiting the places which made so strong an impression upon me,

“Quand' era in parte altr' uomo
Da qual ch' i' sono.”

LETTER XLV

VENICE, October 23, 1871.

OUR journey continues happily and agreeably. We have been here three days; the weather is beautiful, the sun very pleasant. Cornélie is quite content, and enjoys herself greatly. *Carpe diem* has become a piece of wisdom for the time being. Provence has appeared to me more admirable, more Greek than ever, and very superior to Italy. Nice, Monaco, Menton, are a true terrestrial paradise. The journey from Corniche, made in a carriage, is interesting, but inferior to its reputation. Genoa, on the contrary, does not merit all the evil things that are spoken of it; the taste there is assuredly bad, but one sees beautiful things, and I have not known a more interesting city from an æsthetic point of view. The devouring worm of Italian art is to be seen there in striking evidence. It is Michael Angelo,

spoiled, grown old, pushed to excess, almost grotesque.

The Carthusian monastery of Pavia, very subject to criticism in the general idea which has presided at its decoration, has details truly exquisite. It is like a little ivory box, chiselled and finished with a delicate workmanship, of which it is impossible to form any idea. I have revisited, with pleasure, Milan, Verona, Padua and Venice. A few years ago there were discovered at Verona and Padua some third- and fourth-century paintings. These beautiful essays of an early art have impressed me more vividly than ever.

It is truly there that we feel the blooming forth of something analogous to that which had its birth in Greece, especially under the architectural and sculptural form. To-day we have seen with Arnold Scheffer, who is a passionate admirer of them, the masterpieces of Titian, Paul Veronese and Tintoretto, which are possessed by Venice. I feel myself confirmed in my old preferences for the Umbrian and Tuscan schools. This Venetian materialism, this lack of nobility and beauty give me a shock, particularly in the religious paintings.

The condition of the country is easy enough to characterise; we have the advent of the bourgeoisie, something like our period of 1830, but on a mean scale and in a fashion that one would have difficulty in calling progress. The old fortunes rapidly disappear; the ancient aristocratic classes retire from the game; a few great fortunes are created, but almost solely for the profit of the Jews, who invade every field, and profit by industrial incapacity and the lack of initiative in the country. The people are quite disinterested in what happens. In Lombardy, among the lower classes, there is a certain regret for Austria; the new bourgeoisie is avaricious, economical, and does nothing for the people; meanwhile the Germans spend lavishly. All this is isolated, and not raised to the dignity of a theory among the people as in France. Intellectual culture, feeble, though existing for the last ninety years, is becoming a startling nullity. The level of the universities and of high culture does not reach that of the feeblest of our provincial faculties and the most superficial of our reviews.

The sympathy for France is real. The instinct

of the country is against Germany; the racial sentiment develops strongly and quite intelligently. The idea that the great struggle of the future will be between Germany and the Latin peoples impresses all, and very few hesitate in the choice. The Roman question alone presents difficulty; suppress this question and the intimate alliance of the two nations could be accomplished. It is said that the army is the best thing there is; it is very probable, in fact, that, wisely commanded, it would be equal to the other contingents.

LETTER XLVI

VENICE, November 8, 1871.

YOUR kind letter has been a source of very dear consolation to us. What you tell us of your sciatica, however, has saddened us very much. How long this lasts! What you need is a winter in Egypt, Syria or Greece. You need a prolonged sun-bath and the tonic air of these warm and dry countries. My first regret, on reading your letter, was that you had not come with us. Nevertheless, the weather has now changed terribly. We swim in an unnamable humidity which is not disagreeable, but strangely enervating, and which has interfered with our projected trip on the lagoon. I believe that we shall go all the same to-morrow, to Torcello, but this requires some courage. Air, sky, earth, sea—all seem nothing but water.

I have been strongly impressed by what you have told me of the projects of M. Thiers. If

such are really his views, we must make the strongest opposition to them, in the name of an enlightened patriotism. Let us, in effect, analyse what may ensue:

First.—The inferiority of our army compared to the German army, the inferiority of the generals, armament, discipline, military science, courage, etc.

Secondly.—The numerical inferiority of our army compared to that of the invader.

Thirdly.—The moral inferiority of the country from the view-point of patriotism and the capacity for sacrifice.

Fourthly.—The political inferiority of our country—an inferiority proceeding from the internal division of the state—a division whose effect is that the government cannot be beaten here without falling, and must in case of defeat be led into the commission of grievous acts to avoid this fall.

On the first point I will admit that things may be greatly changed in three years, but still we must be sure that our generals, our army staff and our officers all along the line are devot-

ing themselves to serious study and repentance—a fact that I very much doubt.

On the second point—five or six hundred thousand men would always leave us in a condition of fatal inferiority. After the first shock, which I presume will be favourable to us, the mass of the German army hurrying to the rescue will crush us. If the Germans had had only five hundred thousand men, they would have been forced to yield in December, 1870.

Touching the third point—I grant some improvement; think, however, of Lyons and Marseilles.

In any case, regarding the fourth point, the situation is much worse than it has ever been. Be assured that if the war should break out under conditions analogous to those existing, what has passed will come to pass again. There would be parties culpable enough to push us into war for the purpose of overthrowing the government. If we met with a grave check, they would reproduce the fourth of September, and overthrow Thiers in face of the enemy, not out of opposition to him, but for the sake of making a

shameful peace for their advantage. You see the rest.

It is clear that this reasoning would be weakened, if it could be believed that the power of the German Empire will be diminished in three years; but the very real causes of dissolution which are bound up in this botched work will not operate for a long time to come. There is, therefore, but one programme: internal reform in France for the next fifteen or twenty years; then complete and certain *revanche*, if we know how to profit skilfully by the changes occurring in Germany and Europe at the present time.

But it is probable that for a second time we shall have made unavailing wishes and given useless counsel.

LETTER XLVII

VENICE, September 8, 1874.

I ASSUME that you have returned from Stockholm and that you are in good health. As regards myself, our little vacation trip continues very agreeably. Switzerland has given me great pleasure. Since my trip to Norway, I had never seen anything so grandiose and so fresh. What verdure, what water! These lakes at the bottom of deep valleys are certainly among the most beautiful things on our planet. Unfortunately, the hotels and boarding-houses do much to spoil all this. In twenty-five years the Alpine region of Switzerland will be nothing more than a huge furnished hotel, where all the idlers of Europe will establish their headquarters during the summer. The society resulting from these chance meetings is very insipid, and the scenery suffers much by being profaned by so many idlers.

The valley of the lofty Ticino, the lakes of Lugano and Como have infinitely delighted us; but this is not a summer resort; it is too hot. The place in which we have decided to spend two months of summer, on our leaving Sèvres, is a village on the Lake of Brienz, at the foot of the grand falls of Oberland. There are some cottages in one of which we think we shall be comfortable. We will share our confidences with you on this subject later.

Up to now, we have seen nothing new in Italy except Mantua, where we were almost ill from the heat. But we were well recompensed for our trouble. Mantua is of capital esthetic interest. It represents the *décadence* of the school of Raphael, but a *décadence* still full of charm. Julio Romano reigns here supreme, and at times, sustained by this Primaticcio, he equals the Vatican; however, the lack of genius is soon perceptible; the rage for novelty borders on the absurd. The Palace of Té is an essential portion of the history of art. Seen at an interval of one day, as we saw them, this singular edifice and the grand hall of the ducal palace in Venice are

the most instructive objects that it is possible to conceive of.

We have rested very well here; we have seen everything, and we are now strolling about at leisure, revisiting places of interest. We found that Scherer, Hébrard and Charles Edmond had arrived one day ahead of us, and we spent four very pleasant days with them. They left this morning for Florence and Rome. They will have hot weather. Here, on the contrary, we are having beautiful summer weather.

We shall not leave before Monday or Tuesday of next week. Write to me at this address in order that I may know how you are and how things are progressing. I shall be in Paris about the twenty-third. Immediately on my return, I shall call on you at Barbison, with Noémi. My wife will go through southern France to Arochon to fetch Ary.

The situation in Italy is as I have often described it to you; people are more interested than I had thought possible in the internationalist movement of the Romagna and the various provinces. The situation is worse than it was two years ago,

and if the king should die, Italy would run great danger. Soon, alas! we shall be able to say to nearly all nations: *Et tu vulneratus es sicut et nos.*

LETTER XLVIII

HOULGATE-BEUZIVAL, CALVADOS, July 27, 1875.

BEHOLD us established and satisfied with our habitat. Saturday and Sunday, I suffered somewhat with my knee. Since yesterday morning, the weather helping me, I am much better. We have had a delightful day, and I was enabled to take two good walks in the sun. Try to come; there are many fine promenades here, and charming places that invite one to sit down and talk. The surroundings are beautiful.

I have resumed an old work of mine, the *Philosophical Dialogues*, which I wrote in 1870 at Versailles. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to reread and put new touches to it. But God knows when it will be advisable to publish it.

What a state of paralysis the nation is in! It will soon come to an end if it remains long in this condition. And how much more discouraging still are all the means of escape! I spent Satur-

day evening and Sunday morning at Trouville, where I met a number of very mysterious and very official Russians, who bluntly declared their opinion that a president such as G—— would not be recognised, and that in such a case Prussia would be allowed to do what she wished. The future looks horrible. I have mentioned that during my hours of release from my rheumatism I read Monsieur Thiers' *History of the Revolution*. That was strange, grandiose, unheard of, but it will never be imitated. Such a thing occurs but once, like all facts that are unique and of the first order, such as the origins of Christianity or of Islam—things impossible to copy.

I have received a new letter from Amari which confirms me in my plans regarding Sicily. I wish to revisit these beautiful seas and luminous coasts before I die, and the occasion is favourable.

LETTER XLIX

HOULGATE, August 10, 1875.

WHAT foolish presumption was mine to believe myself cured! Since I wrote to you I have suffered much, and at the present hour, though I feel that the malady is wearing itself out and slowly receding, I still walk with difficulty. This leaves me in great perplexity as regards Palermo. It is with great difficulty that I resign myself to giving up an engagement that I have made, and a trip so dear to me. Now it will be necessary to leave here in eight days, and I do not know whether my health will be sufficiently re-established to warrant me in throwing myself into the exciting activity which precedes a journey. We are, therefore, as you see, in a very uncertain frame of mind regarding our immediate future.

With regard to the waters of Ischia, it is harder for me to give them up than Palermo. I wish,

before winter, to undergo energetic treatment in order to relieve myself of the germs of rheumatism, if it is possible to do so. Now, nearly everywhere, except in the south of Italy, the season will be greatly advanced. The mud-baths of Albano are also highly recommended to me. I believe that my constitution is adapted to this sort of treatment, and even if there were some danger, I would rather risk it than accept, at my age, any shortening of my life.

We are delighted to hear that you are enjoying good health at Pitoisières. Houlgate is also very pleasant, but I can hardly enjoy it. Hébrard arrived two days ago, but he had no great news to give me.

I have almost finished the revision of my *Dialogues*. I am going to have them printed in sheets and we will read them together. I think that these pages are of a nature to stimulate thought. But is our time one in which you can incite to this dangerous exercise without inconvenience? This is the question. Have we been appointed victims by Fate? The faults of the generation which has preceded us will pursue us and weigh upon us to the very end.

LETTER L

ISCHIA, September 18, 1875.

THIS is the first hour of rest that I have had during this abominable journey. On one hand Borighi has dragged us in a dizzy course through Sicily, and on the other a *camorre*, the enemy of my repose, has organised everywhere I turn my steps, ovations which it is impossible for me to escape. We are worn out. I do not believe that since Empedocles, that half Newton, half Cagliostro—a savant ever made such an entry into the cities of Sicily. I do not give way to any one except Garibaldi. Now that we have slept some hours in more tranquil surroundings, this journey appears to us like a wild dream. You must know that for years I have supplied the preachers of Sicily with a subject, and that ordinarily the sermon ended with a cry, “Evviva il Renan!” from those who had not understood well, or from mischievous persons who drew

from the curé's utterances very different conclusions from those which he had inferred; the fact is, that all the curés wanted to see me, some regarding me as a myth and wishing to establish my reality, in which they hardly believed. You know that I am not of those who find that: *Pulchrum est digito monstari et dicier: hic est.*

There was so much naïveté in all this that I yielded with good grace.

You cannot conceive of the strange combinations which the mixture of all races has produced on this singular soil. What dominates is passion and ardent proselytism. Now it is incontestable that Roman Catholicism is at an end in this country. At Selinonte, boats filled with people coming from ten to fifteen leagues around besieged our vessel with the cry "*Viva la scienza!*" This cry was the order of the day in all the villages. The clergy, who, with some few exceptions, are very fanatical, yielded with good grace to the demonstration, and were very polite toward me. Next to Hungary, this country is, without contradiction, the one nearest

to breaking its old bonds and entering upon the path of religious reform.

We have seen at Palermo, Montreal, Cefalù, the masterpieces of Arabian, Byzantine and Norman art, a combination which is unique in the world and very charming. At Segesta, Selinonte, Agrigentum, Syracuse and Taormina there are admirable remains of Greek and Roman art. All this only places Athens in high relief, and proves more and more that the Athenians have invented the perfection of execution, these infinite delicacies about which Greek art anterior to them, no more than Egyptian, concerned itself.

Everywhere this impression is strong and vivid, and in some places the scenery is enchantingly beautiful, resembling more that of Syria than of Greece or Italy. We are perched in a charming place in the midst of vines and fig-trees, midway up Mount Epomeus. How I wish that you were here. The landscape is charming, the sea admirable; on the horizon are Terracina and Gaeta; the temperature is delicious, neither hot nor cold. As regards my health, I cannot com-

plain of it, since it has not prevented me from accomplishing the most exhausting expedition that was ever undertaken. Though almost alone, I have not laid aside the harness until the end. Nevertheless, my right foot is not yet in its normal condition, being somewhat stiff and highly sensitive to changes of temperature. To-morrow I begin the baths in moderation, and the leg douches which will be vigorously applied. I hope, in any case, that I shall be content with an experience which has demonstrated to me that my sources of strength are not weakened. If you are not well, come here. We shall remain here until the sixth or eighth of October. Then we shall make a good *Ottobrata* at Rome.

LETTER LI

CASAMICCIOLA, August 6, 1877.

HERE we are at last settled, and most agreeably. I have found this old volcano greener and fresher than ever. In the middle of the day the heat is severe, but during the remainder of the time the weather is delightful. The sea voyage has been a rough one; which means that I must renounce another of my theories. The Mediterranean can be very rough in summer. Though there was no appreciable wind, great waves from the southwest, beating against the side of the ship, shook us up considerably. My wife suffered a little; Noémi* alone has been invulnerable; she was born a child of the sea; she weeps hot tears when she thinks of the *Said* and the pleasure which she had aboard her.

To-day I took my first bath; I conscientiously

*M. Renan's daughter.

swallow the water in its various doses. The fact is that I am quite well; the exercise afforded by the journeys to the south is what I needed. Noémi is going to take sea-baths. They have also been advised for Ary. They are here in certain inlets so warm (by digging in the sand a metre and a half one has sea-water of 30 degrees) that we are going to try them.

My wife also intends to take baths in waters from the purest springs. Noémi is wonderfully well; she is growing lively, as I thought she would. Imagine her as Henriette—Henriette risen from the dead, with her gentle modesty and her sweet abandon. She said, indeed, the poor child, during her last days: "This little one will take my place." Judge of my joy!

I imagine that Houlgate is as beneficial to you as these lovely shores are to us. The Drochon is also a very pretty place. If you do not like it, come here, but do not come by sea. We are staying in a country hotel where there is plenty of room.

It is necessary to fortify one's self for the struggle of life, such as the age and our country

have made it. The more I see at a distance what is taking place in our unfortunate France, the more heart-broken I become. It seems to me that the overthrow of this supid party of the sixteenth of May is more certain than ever. But the future disturbs me. I have little faith. The fatal and melancholy mistake of the conservative classes in falling into this trap will be their undoing. Now the conservative classes cannot be changed, and a country cannot live without them. The elements which have made France—the Capetian dynasty, the nobility, the clergy, the upper bourgeoisie—are acting as if their sole aim was to destroy their own work. Now a nation cannot survive such strife within its bosom. We are about to experience 1791 and 1792 over again, the traditional and conservative party emigrating, exasperating new France, and inviting and provoking persecution.

Persecution will come; we shall have 1793 again, and as Europe is no longer in a humour to allow our democrats to fight each other, this will be *Finis Franciæ*. The conditions of the

very existence of this people have been destroyed; but all that will come slowly, whereas the party of Albert de Broglie will come to an end within a year.

LETTER LII

LA CAVA, September 5, 1877.

SEMPRE bene. The month of August has been exceptionally warm this year on these shores. People are dying from the heat in Rome and Naples. At Ischia, thanks to the altitude of our situation, life was quite endurable, and the evenings were delightful. My cure is complete. The Italian physicians are right. It is necessary to take these baths during the hottest months. Ary, whom I have had half cured, feels very well. During our whole stay he has been able to indulge in the most violent exercises, such as lively races on horseback, without other than beneficial results. Noémi took her sea-bath every day, and, as a result, is enjoying very good health.

Previous to yesterday we had but few hot days in Naples. In the evening we come here to sleep, where the temperature is very agreeable.

I do not know whether you are familiar with La Cava. It is a high valley in a fork of the Apennines which constitutes the peninsula of Sorrento. It is truly charming, though no rain has fallen in five months.

To-day we go to Salerno, and to-morrow night we shall sleep at Amalfi. We shall return to Paris during the first days of October.

Seen from here, the spectacle of what is taking place in our unfortunate country is most sad! You cannot believe what contempt and pity it inspires. In the eyes of the foreigner it is a second Commune, in a sense less excusable than the first. It is incontestable that, since the last few years, the world has made great progress in politics; the unheard-of procedures of the prefects of M. de Fourtou and of M. de Broglie's magistracies seem like the acts of red-skins suddenly become masters of the politics of a civilised country. Never, not even in 1871, have I traversed a foreign land with a feeling of such humiliation for my country. The public here believes in the triumph of the republican party; but the government is worried (is it in league with

Germany?), and is taking great precautions. More than ever I believe that the success of this foolish enterprise, were it possible, would quickly bring on war. Oh, miserable people !

LETTER LIII

CONSTANCE, August 18, 1878.

WE are all very well, and up to the present all are well satisfied with the trip. That is a résumé of our first eight or ten days.

The Vosges have afforded me the greatest pleasure, although the weather has not been very favourable for us. The environs of Gerardmer are most restful, cool and pleasant. The trip across Ballon d'Alsace also gave us much pleasure. Basel has some curious features, and certainly, if one desires to make an earnest study of our European society, this is one of the points where it would be interesting to take some soundings. We have here absolute democracy succeeding an aristocratic republic, care devolving exclusively on the people, the complete sacrifice of the rich and enlightened classes with whom life is becoming more impossible every day, a govern-

ment worthy of a village; great cleanliness withal, and a finely arranged system of elementary instruction, and museums in which real treasures are mingled without discernment with the grotesque and apocryphal. Meanwhile this system lives, for it is not alone in the world, and is supplied from without with an atmosphere that has been well prepared. But the exclusive reign of this system would mean the abasement of humanity, and when one thinks that three hundred and fifty years ago, this city, by its bourgeoisie, played a rôle of the first order in the work of the Renaissance and the Reformation!

O what an enchanting thing is Lake Constance, and how wrong it is to prefer the chaos of Switzerland to this charming piece of nature, perfect in all its details! We have had some delightful sails; and we have found a very pretty room overlooking the lake, in the old convent of the Dominicans which has been transformed into a hotel, we shall prolong our stay here. We have been here two days now and shall remain over to-morrow. The day after, we shall go by way of the lake to Bregenz. There we shall decide upon what route

we shall take to reach Innsbruck. This is not an easy journey, as the railroad lines of Tyrol and Vorarlberg are still very incomplete.

The route by way of the Engadine is an interminable one, and we have some fear of the cold of these excessive altitudes.

LETTER LIV

FLORENCE, September 10, 1878.

I MUST indeed have had but poor control over my actions during this trip to excuse my neglect toward you. From Constance to Venice we have been in perpetual motion, and at Venice the heat was so oppressive that each evening saw us in a state of physical weariness which, though not disagreeable, was hardly conducive to any kind of activity. The Tyrol has enchanted us; it is much calmer and more restful than Switzerland, is even cooler, and above all it is more agreeable to the pedestrian and the foreigner.

Innsbruck has the most singular monument that I have ever seen, the tomb of Maximilian, an incredible collection of giants in bronze, veritable intermediate cretins between man and beast, representing the true or mythical ancestors of the house of Austria. The Lake of Garda is ad-

m'orable; it is the most beautiful of the Italo-Alpine lakes. This hollow among the enormous piled-up mountains is something altogether striking. Virgil is right—it is indeed a sea.

While at Venice, we made journeys to Torcello and Chioggia, where we saw the lagoon under its most beautiful aspects. This is one of the spectacles of which I never tire; here nature with the collaboration of man has prepared one of its most seducing attractions.

As for men, I see them becoming everywhere narrower, more selfish and more jealous. The national principle, the only admissible one withal, will lead to worse rivalries than the dynastic principle. All that I have seen of German Austria has proved that it is still more *deutsch* than northern Germany. The Tyrolese people preserves its allegiance to the house of Austria; this will give an opportunity for more Andrew Hofers in case of annexation. But the Austrian bourgeoisie who speak German would link themselves with pleasure to the German Empire, on condition, be it understood, that this be not too long delayed; *Omnia semper*

habent, as Ecclesiastes says. Patriotism as it is understood to-day is a fashion which lasts for fifty years. In a century, when it shall have drenched Europe with blood, it will be no more understood than we now understand the dynastic ideas of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. All is vanity, except science; art itself begins to appear a little empty to me. My impressions of twenty-five years ago appear to me to be stamped with some childishness. From the view-point at which we have arrived, no painting can teach us anything more. However, these things have lived, and that is sufficient.

What shall we do at the conclusion of the congress? Faith! We do not know at all. What is certain is that we shall be in Paris about October 10th. The trip has done much for my wife and Noémi. Our poor Ary is also very well. For myself, this strenuous exercise in the hot sun is my sovereign remedy.

LETTER LV

CASAMICCIOLA, ISLAND OF ISCHIA,
HOTEL BELLEVUE, August 17, 1879.

HERE we are, reinstalled in our house at Ischia; we have the same apartment, the same terrace, and could not be better situated. The heat is intense in Naples, but here the temperature is extremely agreeable; the sun is powerful, but there is an exquisite breeze; the mornings and evenings are delightful; I take my baths conscientiously, trusting, however, more to the air and the potent sunshine. I have been very well, moreover, since leaving Turin; decidedly, the greatest benefit is to be found in the neighbourhood of the immediate basin of the Mediterranean.

We have all come here by land, starting from Savoy when we met our friend Taine.

He has a country residence which is truly charming, on the shores of Lake Annecy. It would be impossible to find a more beautiful country. The

verdure of the soil is exquisite, the trees superb, while fresh and limpid waters ripple on all sides. Our friend is perhaps too absorbed in his surroundings. He is municipal councillor, has allied himself with the gentry of the country, and takes things seriously. This renders him incapable of judging the great things of the past, which have been accomplished more by enthusiasm and passion than by reason. He read to me a portion of his *Jacobins*. It is all true in detail, but it is only a quarter of the whole truth. He shows that all this epoch has been melancholy, horrible, and shameful; he ought to show at the same time that it was grandiose, heroic, and sublime.

Ah, what a history for the man who would know how to compose it—who would begin it at twenty-five years of age, and be at once critic, artist and philosopher! It would be necessary to dissemble nothing, to show the ridiculous and the absurd side by side with the admirable, in order that the picture might resemble the reality. Such a one would be sure of having produced the most amazing book ever written.

At Roujoux, while staying with the Buloz-

Paillerons, we made the acquaintance of the Lake of Bourget, which is superior, in a sense, to that of Annecy. Savoy is decidedly a wonder. It is perhaps the country which is the most restful and refreshing of all. We have arranged for three halting-places on our route. It is needless to say to you that it has been very warm on the railroad train; however, we passed some pleasant hours at Rome with friends. Here I rest and work in the most absolute peace. My retirement would be perfect if the newspapers of Naples had not done me the ill service of publishing my address, which each day brings me bundles of letters that I do not read.

In order to fill up my hours of work, I am writing philosophical sketches, and some dialogues which I group around Arnauld de Villeneuve and the discovery of the "water of life." I shall read them to you on my arrival.

At a distance, as well as at close range, Ferry's Article 7 appears to me to be an enormous mistake. I can see but two equally shameful alternatives: the victory of Ferry, which will mean the impotence of the government and the exaspera-

tion of the Catholics, or the defeat of Ferry and victory for the Jesuits, an hypothesis not less disheartening. Try, then, since you have influence, to correct, by your advice, the zeal which is well intentioned, but full of stupidity.

LETTER LVI

CASAMICCIOLA, September 12, 1879.

BEHOLD, the gates of our paradise of Ischia are about to be closed on us. We leave to-morrow afternoon, not without regrets.

The weather is always delightful; there has not been a drop of rain yet, but the air has been greatly refreshed by reason of the storms which passed over our heads and broke upon Gaeta and the harbour of Volturno. At sunset this evening, Capri and the Cape of Sorrento equalled in luminous splendour the most beautiful aspects of Greece. In fine, we are happy. I am well, I believe; the air and exercise have certainly done me good; the baths also, I imagine.

Do not work too hard; it generally results in something feverish; one should beware of it. It would be better to bring your work out a month later on, so as not to indispose yourself for the winter.

We are going to spend about twelve days in Naples, Castellamare, Sorrento and Capri. Then we journey toward the north. We shall be in Paris on the morning of the fourteenth.

I have finished my sequel to *Caliban*, which I have entitled *The Fountain of Youth*, instead of *The Water of Life*. I have fused with it the legend of Arnould de Villeneuve. It has served me as a frame for various philosophical suggestions. I shall read it to you on my arrival. In any case, it has given me considerable amusement.

Ary is extremely well; he paints a great deal and I am satisfied with him. Little Noémi is always very good, and accepts with great gentleness all our little fondnesses; the trip has developed her considerably. My wife has been a little tired by the great heat; but now she is very well. What a pretty country this is! You cannot imagine how smiling and animated it is.

It has performed a miracle, in making me rise every day at six in the morning, to work on our terrace. We sometimes fear that we shall not be so well pleased at Castellamare, Sorrento, etc. However, one must take his share of all.

LETTER LVII

NAPLES, September 28, 1879.

BEHOLD our journey approaching its end. All has been according to our hopes.

Ischia, to the very end, has appeared charming to us. Sorrento, in its own manner, equals Ischia. All this has had the effect of giving us a good rest. Ary is extremely well and very happy, especially since his friends the Paleologues are in these regions. Noémi is very good. My wife has been better since the great heat is over; and as for myself, I can walk very well.

I have done a great deal of work; my *Fountain of Youth* will, I believe, be suggestive of thought to the more and more reduced number of persons who like the exercise. I call it that, because it could not be entitled *The Water of Life*, the latter being too commonplace. I have, besides, written the half of a new article on *Souvenirs of Childhood*, which I hope to finish at Venice. I shall

also send to the *Débats* a little piece of dotage on the fête of Pompeii.

Yes, this tongue of soil, Sorrento, is truly a wonder; I believed Amalfi to be very much superior; now I hesitate.

To-morrow we shall reach the north, under full steam. We shall not stop until we arrive at Venice. Our return is definitely fixed for the morning of October 14th.

Here, progress is mediocre. There is always a certain number of amiable and distinguished men, equal, at least, to that in other countries, but the political machinery is the poorest in the world. The demoralisation of the people and the minor bourgeoisie is complete, robbery is organised, and violent brigandage and assassination are the order of the day. In the midst of all this, the monarchy imposes itself on the people as a necessity, and it will survive, even though in bankruptcy. As to this last, I do not see how it can be avoided. But the world may perhaps become bankrupt before that. How disheartened Taine will be on that day.

In the name of heaven, urge your friends to

peace at any price. We would be absolutely alone. Even here they would be against us. Let us learn how to maintain ten years of peace, and Bismarck's system in Germany is lost. On the other hand, in case of war they would regain all their advantages.

LETTER LVIII

OXFORD, April 11, 1880.

O H, what a curious city! You must see the place. It is the strangest relic of the past—the type of the dead, living. Each one of the colleges is a real, terrestrial paradise. You would think that all life had departed; yet the paradise is found to be cared for and weeded by those who no longer live in it. The results are trivial on the whole; the golden youth receive a purely classical and clerical education, and are required to attend service wearing surplices. There is an almost total absence of the scientific spirit. Such a college has at its disposal a million a year; but the fellows have succeeded in demonstrating that the preservation of the grass, which devolves upon them by the foundation charter, is irreconcilable with the presence of students. In fact, there is not a single pupil here. The grass plots are admirably cool; the fellows eat

up the revenue, while making excursions to the four quarters of England; a single one works—Max Müller, our very amiable host.

In fine, we are delighted with our day, and even with the sermon of an interminable evening service, which we had to attend. To-morrow we shall complete our visits to the colleges, and Tuesday we shall return to London. My rheumatism of the knee has disappeared with a suddenness that has surprised me. My lectures are succeeding very well. I find a great deal of sympathy here, for this is notably the country where religious questions are taken most seriously, and where the sentiments that I introduced are really loved.

Our plan is to reach Paris on the evening of Sunday, the eighteenth. Meanwhile, only one thing can delay our departure. Our friend, Grant Duff, is still in Scotland attending to his election affairs; if he returns toward the end of the week, perhaps we shall spend a day with him at Twickenham. In that case we shall not arrive until Tuesday. But I shall certainly give my lecture on Wednesday at the College of France. I hope to press your hand there.

The result of the recent elections is more complicated than was at first believed. According to the Tories, it is the beginning of the end of the world, the advent of a new social era. The attitude of Gambetta and the *République Française* are not understood. If the Republic has any friends here it is among the liberals; not one exists elsewhere. I have seen Sir Charles Dilke, the Republican of England (there are not two such); he is a curious type, and is half French. As regards the masses, their religious and political loyalty remains firm.

LETTER LIX

PLOMBIÈRES, August 12, 1880.

WE are now not badly established here, and I believe that the treatment will do me good. The country is charming, cool and green to an enchanting degree. On all sides there are springs of perfect clearness. Is this what is required for rheumatic patients? I hesitate, as yet, to pronounce on this; surely Caro and Janet ought to come here to see the results of their providential agreement. For if the remedy for rheumatism is to be found at Plombières, it must be avowed that Providence has placed here all that is necessary to win them over. The country is like an enormous sponge soaked with water; there is no heat, and it rains in torrents. The Pauline and Renard springs may be ranked among the prettiest places in which one would care to linger. To-morrow or the day after I am going to try the Roman baths, which, I think, will melt me.

I have been engaged in revising my *Fountain of Youth*, which pleases me fairly. I am about to publish it. I have only one blank to fill in, concerning which I want to ask you a question. How did the early Arabian chemists obtain spirits of wine? Can one conceive what it was that turned the attention of the first distillers to alcohol? What was the form of the first alembics? It is not necessary that this should be scientifically exact. It is merely a matter of embellishment with me; but still it is necessary not to be too absurd. Send me a dozen lines on this subject as soon as possible.

Our plan is to remain here until about the twenty-eighth. Then we shall go to Lausanne, and thence cross the mountains. Try to join us at Lausanne. It seems to me that there is an easy route from Annecy to Thonon. Thonon is opposite Lausanne.

LETTER LX

PLOMBIÈRES, August 18, 1880.

A PLAGUE upon your congress of Brieg which coincides so badly with our intinerary.

We should have been at Lausanne on the twenty-ninth, thirtieth or thirty-first of October. It is evidently too early to make it possible for you to kill two birds with one stone, and make the same journey with ten or twelve days intervening. But when your congress is over could you not cross the Simplon and rejoin us on the lakes or at Milan? We shall be in Milan toward the sixteenth or seventeenth of September. From there we shall go to Verona; next to Venice, where we shall spend eight days; and thence to Ravenna if possible, returning by way of Savoy. We wish to be in Paris, without fail, by October 10th. Try to join us at Milan; this will be delightful. Thanks to certain facilities that we enjoy, we can show you the lagoon and Torcello,

as they could not be shown under ordinary conditions.

Unless you inform us that it is possible for you to come to Lausanne toward the thirty-first, we shall not go there. We have more to gain by switching off from here to Basel, where we shall have the choice between St. Gothard and the Splügen. But assuredly, if you can join us at Lausanne, we shall go there. The pleasure of meeting you takes precedence of all other considerations. But try, rather, to come to Milan.

We are well in spite of the weather, which is only half-satisfying. The steam baths do me much good, and the douche baths have literally given Noémi new life. The *Times* has singularly embarrassed me by announcing my essay for Tuesday. I shall certainly not be ready by that date.

LETTER LXI

TALLOIRES, August 12, 1881.

WE are established here, dear friend, according to our desires. The country is charming, and the lake and sky adorable. Up to now we have rested as we had need to do. This month of July has tried me very much. I am very well, I believe. Resting at my table, or seated on the lawn on the shore of the lake, I am in a state of perfect contentment; but locomotion is disagreeable to me, at least during the day. I quite believe that the altitude is one of the causes of this condition of mine, which, moreover, is not wholly dissatisfying to me. Poor heavy machine that we drag about! However, we have accomplished the essential part of our task, so let us not complain.

Taine is very much fatigued. He cannot work, and his book has ceased to interest him. He would like to take to some other exercise, and

he feels that he must finish it. Perrot is very well and very active. We frequently go to Menthon to dine; the return on foot in the evening is not beyond my strength. Ary has a boat; he rows and paints all day. Noémi has a piano and plays for us. In fine, if I only had good legs to climb these beautiful mountain summits which tower over our heads, everything would be perfect.

I work a great deal. In this climate and under these conditions I can work almost indefinitely. I am finishing my *Ecclesiastes*, which gives me a great deal of amusement. My interminable Index overwhelms me, but it will be finished. I am not the man to pause at the roof after having built the walls.

I await with impatience the result of the twenty-first. This is a capital event, and it will not do to trifle with the situation. If this experiment fails, we shall see the most frightful reaction that France has witnessed since the sixteenth century. The newspapers are poor criterions, and election time is not the moment to judge a country. Let us wait; but meanwhile I

am worried. How little wisdom is shown! The instinct of the country is, from many points of view, just and in agreement with ours; but what complete ignorance concerning the state of the world, the conditions of human society, and the measures demanded by the country as a whole! Gambetta appears to me to have taken a false road. No, radicalism will never have a majority in the Assembly; but to how many mistakes may not one be led by weakness and complaisance toward it. *Caveant patres conscripti.*

LETTER LXII

TALLOIRES, September 2, 1881.

IT rains a great deal, but all goes well. I find myself almost as well as I was in my best days, eating little, having an aversion for walking, but capable of working almost indefinitely. I have finished my *Ecclesiastes*, which I have read to our friends and which amused them very much. My verses struck them as successful. My Index advances slowly; pushed to this degree of analysis it becomes colossal; it will almost make a volume. I am now setting to work at the last portion of my *Souvenirs*; I hope that this will be finished before my return.

The deplorable state of public opinion in Italy has sometimes made us hesitate to cross the mountains. We shall go, all the same, as we have made too many engagements, especially at Venice and Rome. Moreover, where can there be found October sunshine equal to that of the Campagna

of Rome? Now, to return directly to Paris at the end of September would seem like too short a visit.

I have decided on a journey to the East, extending from February to July. I desire to re-visit Jerusalem and the Lebanon for the purpose of making some sketches there on the very ground for my *History of the People of Israel*, as I did for my *Life of Jesus*. This will be a good thing for Ary, and for all of us. And, besides, it is a recompense in which I feel warranted in indulging. I have laboured well during these latter years; I have finished my *Origins*, and conscientious work deserves to be encouraged.

The general result of the elections does not seem bad to me. The relative check which Gambetta has received is an immense benefit for him and for the country. Never has a plan seemed more incoherent—that of desiring to found anything stable on Belleville, and of playing a rôle of first consul at a time which demands, above all things a regular development, without striking personalities. I presume that he has intelligence enough to understand this. He can

render great service, but only if he confine himself within ordinary limits, after the manner of Ferry. As for myself, I have much sympathy for him, but I would hesitate to intrust the affairs of the country to the hands of this eloquent Gascon, except in a very restricted way. This policy should at the present time be maintained even as regards personalities of the most distinguished order.

We shall remain here until September 20th, when we leave for Venice, where we are to stay for about eight days. Thence we shall go to Rome.

LETTER LXIII

ALBANO, October 20, 1881.

THIS pretty excursion, perhaps our last, into the beautiful land of Italy, has, on the whole, done me much good and given me great pleasure. Once or twice the repetition for the tenth time of ornament, ever the same, has made me somewhat impatient; later, the charm has reasserted itself, and all these little ornaments arranged in the same order begin to give me pleasure again. The Alban mountains are truly delightful. Oh, what beautiful trees! What exquisite coolness! Lake Nemi is truly the most astonishing fairyland in the world. How much our race is at home here, and how close to us were these Latins, whose language we speak.

The exasperated state of the Italians has been greatly exaggerated. All that is said of the popular excitement and of the unpleasant ex-

perience of tourists is not true now, if it has ever been true. Sensible men avoid speaking of politics; some, more susceptible than the rest, express their discontent, and make recriminations, but there is nothing serious in all this. It will have no bad consequences. Naturally, we shall never have Italy on our side, for the Tunis affair has not changed things. Italy will never be with anybody; she will always betray, up to the hour when, delivered from her politicians and journalists, she will resign herself to the rôle of a state of the second order, very successful in its way.

This whole affair of Tunis would have been ended here, without the pretended revelations of the *intransigents*. I have no need of telling you the effect that produced here. These calumnies were just what the Italians said. What a triumph! "You see that we were right." It is tiresome to listen to this, but it is without consequence. When the occupation is accomplished and Tunis is assimilated with Algeria all this will be quickly forgotten.

It will be quickly forgotten, especially, because

this poor world, ever turning, will bring new questions without cease, which will condemn old hatreds to oblivion. The question of the papacy will soon enter upon an acute stage, and then all Mediterranean questions will be forgotten—providing that nothing awkward is done on our part. The papacy is on the point of making the greatest mistake that it has ever made—that of leaving Rome. Let it do so. The Italian government will try to induce it to remain, but it can only succeed by making impossible concessions. One of the most singular crises is about to take place. France should do nothing, absolutely nothing, and should take no cognizance of the papal policy. All that she does will be turned against her. By leaving the papacy to itself, it will infallibly destroy itself.

LETTER LXIV

* ROSMAPAMON, October 3, 1888.

THIS poor year will, then, pass by without your coming to see our rockbound country.

We regret this heartily. We shall enjoy but few more happy hours in our little valley. We leave here on Saturday, October 20th, and shall be in Paris the following day. The assembly of the College will take place on November 4th. I have done a great deal of work; my second volume of *Israel* is almost finished; it may appear in a month. I have made, besides, a sort of little philosophical balance-sheet, as it is well to do from time to time; we shall discuss it. I fear that this lucky truce of the summer months will be followed by terrible storms. If our interior organism had a stronger and more enlightened conscience, it would surely have profited by the mistakes that our enemies are now making

* Renan's country seat in Brittany.

externally. These trips to Vienna and Rome seem to me most inconsiderate. I doubt the sanity of the brain which has conceived them. We shall see strange things. Conjure your friends to remain united and to make concessions. Boulangism is a terrible danger. Their country seems to be the least tainted with it, but very little will precipitate a crisis. This would be the most horrible event that has occurred for centuries.

LETTER LXV

ROSMAPAMON, July 7, 1889.

THESE first days of fresh air have had an excellent effect on all of us. Your old friend, in particular, finds himself in perfect health. Here I am feeling quite as well as I have been during my best years. Above all, my capacity for work is greater than it has ever been. I cover my two miles every day. Come as soon as possible; the weather is delightful. You know what pleasure you will give us.

My third volume of *Israel* is advancing nicely. As an interlude, I am giving the *Revue des Deux Mondes* a sort of examination of conscience, or philosophical balance-sheet, which I prepared here last year. I wish that you would read it, and revise the scientific portions, in order that you may tell me whether my technical terms are too old-fashioned. I have requested the *Revue* to send you the sheets as soon as they

are corrected; you will receive them in a few days.

The calm is absolute in these poor old countries. One does not suspect the dangers that our poor dear country risks. Nothing would be easier than to obtain from these good people a moderate expression of the ballot. But the government alone would be able to do this. In default of the government, which still enjoys its prestige here, clerical and legitimist *coteries* will probably triumph. And moreover, the season has been superb, a fact that always benefits the established government. Human affairs have been too lightly abandoned to falsehood and incompetency. The skilful will profit by it and, for the purpose of throttling us, lean upon the stupidity of the masses who wish us no evil. In fine, let us still hope. If we can prevent all these evils from coming to a head in a single one—Boulangism—we are saved again.

LETTER LXVI

PERROS-GUIREC, August 1, 1890.

MADAME BERTHELOT'S letters to my wife tell me that you are spending the summer season satisfactorily, and that you are giving full rein to your activity. My month of July has been very satisfactory as regards work, but only middling as to health. I have been hardly able to leave my room, by reason of my inability to walk. Now things are a little better in this regard. In any case, the great rest which I have had has done me good in a general way. I feel strong; I shall write my fourth volume. It will be finished about December, but with the care that I shall bestow upon it it will require two years more before its publication. My third volume will surely appear next October; my personal labour is almost finished.

What joy for us to think that before a

month we shall have the pleasure of seeing you! Our woods are singularly cool and green this year.

I fear that great illusions are being indulged in regard to the affair of the Universities, and that sane and established ideas will be compromised for the sake of doubtful advantages. Try to moderate your friends, who appear to me to be somewhat intoxicated on this point.

Our idea of provincial centres was totally different; it was not an *a priori* theory preceding facts. I am very glad that the question did not come before the last session of the Supreme Council. We shall, perhaps, have to defend the College against dangerous ideas which would compromise its independence. Above all, be vigilant in order that we may not be surprised.

LETTER LXVII

CAPE MARTIN, NEAR MENTON,

November 14, 1891.

HERE we are, quite well installed, though not without some initial trials. The hotel had not yet opened; the proprietor had written twice to us, both communications indicating that the hotel was open. British honour was saved, however; he made me admit that he had not said that the hotel was open. In fine, all is well that ends well. The site is so beautiful that we stayed. We have the advantage of being alone, though at the cost of some disorder.

The weather is superb and our surroundings are wonderfully attractive. We have passed the day in the pine woods near the sea. We could have believed ourselves in Syria. The resemblance is striking. This has reminded me of old sensations of thirty years ago, and I believe that this little

supplement of our vacation will do both of us good.

Will you not come to see us? As I told you, the hotel is making its toilet; this will be finished, they say, in six or eight days. In conclusion, we are quite well, and without too much regret we do without the English clientèle.

Come; we shall take some drives through this region. We made a twenty-two-hours' journey without once leaving the carriage. But what an incomparable country between here and Marseilles! Antibes has given me more pleasure than ever. Come.

LETTER LXVIII

PARIS, April 26, 1892.

*Very Dear Friend :**

THE climate of Holland has always seemed harsh to me. It has given me one of the most severe attacks of rheumatism that I have ever had since the inauguration of the Spinoza monument. Judging from this villainous spring, I am not astonished that it tried you.

My condition remains always the same; for the past three months there has been not a trace of improvement, nor, indeed, it must be said, of aggravation. Things are just as Potain told me they would be. Happily, for some years past, I have regarded the days that have been granted to me as a special grace—a surplus of favor. I hope to publish my two volumes which complete the *History of Israel*. I have re-read a part of my proofs at Marlotte. I am not dissatisfied with

*This letter was dictated to Ary Renan by his father.

it. A good proof-reader could publish the whole thing without me; although, to tell the truth, if, from my place in purgatory, I could look on at this labour of correction performed by another, I believe that I would show considerable impatience.

However, I am led to believe that in a few days I shall take up the thread of my life again, as usual.

Our Easter vacation has not been brilliant. We were very near having snow at Marlotte; seeing which, we immediately took the railroad train home. I regretted this, for my walks in the forest were doing me a great deal of good.

Let us not speak of the anarchists; this is too sad a subject. What I fear is that the people of Paris, though deprived of their chief magistrate by these acts of insanity, will see in the madmen victims of the government and perhaps *anti-signani*. The tendencies of both parties are beginning to be revealed. According to the paper that I have just read, the crowd opposed the police in an arrest. In another street-brawl the crowd almost tore the anarchists to pieces. Poor old Demos; what follies are still committed in his name!

LETTER LXIX

* PERROS-GUIREC (CÔTES DU NORD),

July 20, 1892.

HOW well for us, dear friend, it was to fix our philosophy of life when we were young and strong! It would be rather late now to consider these grave subjects, threatened as we are with the end. For myself, I have established my ideas in this regard by continual meditation, and the subject has no new aspects for me. To end is nothing; I have almost filled in the framework of my life, and although I could make good use of a few years, I am ready to go. What is cruel is the havoc that one causes in dear lives. This is where a reasonable euthanasia, guided by a sane philosophy, could do much. Like yourself, I frankly study my general physiological condition. The physician of Lannion, a very serious man, knows of cases analagous to mine that have

* The last letter in Renan's handwriting.

lasted eighteen months. The struggle will come after me. Let come what will. I shall utilize the remnant of life that is left to me. I am at this moment working at the correcting of the proofs of the fourth and fifth volumes of *Israel*. I would like to revise the whole thing. If another does this I shall be very impatient in the depths of purgatory. Outside of the Eternal and myself, no one has any idea of the changes that I would have cared to make. God's will be done. *In utrumque paratus.*

The most important act of our life is our death. We accomplish this act, in general, under detestable circumstances. Our school, the essence of whose doctrine is to be in need of no illusions, has, I believe, in this hour, advantages wholly unique.

We have not yet experienced the change from summer to autumn (comprising August and September). I am building a little on this change. The changes in my personal appearance are still very slight. I have sometimes experienced modifications which seem almost important enough to warrant my restoration to health. In any case I am content to breathe this good air. And,

besides, what a pleasure it is to think of one's good friends who are the half of our life, and in whom we live more than in ourselves. We shall speak together of all this; for in any case I do not think that there is any necessity for looking forward to a speedy end.

LETTER LXX

*PERROS GUIREC, Wednesday.

A STRANGE malady in truth; for seven months there has been no improvement, no aggravation. Up to now the improvement has been only apparent, although I believed, myself, that I was nearer to a possible cure than in the past. At present there is great weakness, and the nutritive organs are in a deplorable condition. I have told you my philosophy in this regard. O, how much more tranquilly one could die if one were alone—if one did not leave beloved beings behind!

What appears to me most probable is that in a month, at the end of the fine season in Brittany, I shall be, not rehabilitated, but well enough to continue the life of a convalescent. To return to Paris under such circumstances would, I believe,

* The last letter dictated to Ary Renan. A few days later Renan went home to Paris to die.

be very unwise. We are thinking of a sojourn in the South—in the southern part of the Pyrenees, Pau or Biarritz, or perhaps in southern Provence. Give us your advice on this point. What do you think of Pau in particular? It is well understood that if in a month I am worse instead of better we shall not go South. When one is in danger of death he should be at home. It is only in case of an intermediary state, relatively satisfying, that we consider this question. This sad condition has not completely prevented me from working. In my fourth volume there was an unsettled point that would have rendered publication difficult without my direct counsel; it is the reciprocal situation of Esdras and Nehemiah, one of the most singular of historical problems. I believe that I have almost succeeded in making this chapter clear. It may truly be called "*Benoni, filius doloris mei.*" Yes, I have endured sorrowful days; less sad they might have been had you been near me. My wife and children have shown me extreme goodness, which has consoled me. I hope that my next letter will tell you that my improvement continues.

LETTERS OF 1848*

LETTER I

PARIS, March 21, 1848.

I HAVE received your letter of March 12th, and it has been a great joy for me to know that our communications have not yet been broken. I admire your calm spirit and your courage, my dearest sister, but I think that after the despatch of this letter, your intentions regarding your return, and the necessity of hastening it, will change. I can only repeat to you to-day, and with still more pressing reasons, what I said to you two days ago. If it were a question of war regularly declared, one might anticipate the climax by eight days or thereabouts. But is it possible to escape the volcanic eruption if one waits for it to begin? The news from Vienna and Berlin which you have heard before us greatly worries

* These letters, descriptive of the Revolution of 1848, were written by Renan to his sister Henriette.

me, and makes me fear that it may already be too late. I sometimes hope that this letter will not find you at Warsaw. You understand, my dear, that what is needed in this instance is only the commonest prudence. The reasons for this are so easy to divine, and you must needs understand them so well, seeing things at such close range, that I abstain from developing them. Furthermore, the details that I should be obliged to enter upon might compromise the fate of the letter. I await with impatience the letter in which you will announce the date of your return and your intentions in this regard. It seems to me more than ever indispensable that you should not be alone.

Like yourself, dearest, I think that our country must pass through a period of confusion before acquiring a stable form. The acceleration in the onward march of humanity and the admirably logical character of the French people had inspired me with the hope that we would live to see the new society, which, I doubt not, will be more advanced than that which has passed away. But to arrive at this, it will be necessary to pass through days of trial. The division is already

perfectly defined, and is betrayed by the public demonstrations. There are Montagnards and Girondists, and they have their representatives in the provisional government.

The university is becoming disorganised. At a great meeting of all the branches of study which took place a few days ago at the Sorbonne, it gave up its rights as a body; all expressions that suggested the least idea of the corporation were repudiated and hissed by the people (headmasters, etc.), who, here as everywhere, form the majority. The authorities are driven to despair, and are in a state of consternation. Nowhere is democracy more complete. Several colleges are licensed; all will probably be licensed without delay. I withhold myself from all. As regards the measures of the ministry, my views are exactly yours.

My work for the Institute (a memoir on the study of Greek in the middle ages) is almost finished; I shall have no more delay than will be needed for a brief appendix. M. Burnouf still gathers at his home his studious auditory. There is no longer room for the different courses at the

College of France. All the halls are taken up by clubs and militia corps! But we shall always find the same things recurring. Adieu, best of friends. I expect a letter as soon as possible, and above all a speedy return.

On no account can I leave Paris. Even before the colleges are licensed I shall find occupation, for the patronage that has been taken from the public institutions will revert to private establishments and to those giving private lessons.

I dined at M. Garnier's a few days ago. Profound gloom reigned there. All the habitués of the salon were those who were satisfied with the past régime, and some were personally attached to the court. M. Garnier occupies himself very little with politics. M. Saint-Marc-Girardin, who was to join the Molé ministry, is in despair. M. Cousin already speaks of the fate of Socrates.

LETTER II

PARIS, June 6, 1848.

I WAS beginning to be worried by your silence, dearest sister. The letter which Mademoiselle Ulliac has just received has reassured me, however. The months pass by, but the events with which our destiny is linked are not definitely decided. I agree, my dear, that you should remain in your position during this period of unrest, but at the same time I do not doubt that the time will come, and perhaps soon, when you will be able to resign it. I implore you, then, not to delay a moment. The farther I advance, the more I am convinced that even without leaving Paris we shall be able to gain an honourable living, especially if I obtain my fellowship at the end of the year. Even if, armed with this degree, I am not able immediately to obtain an official position in Paris, the prestige which is attached to it—opportunities to substitute in the colleges,

preparing candidates for the baccalaureate degree and the *École Administrative*, and contributing articles to the periodical press from time to time—will, I assure you, save us from laying hands on our reserve fund for the first few years. We will keep this in case of emergency, and in order to assure ourselves in a position that will, otherwise, be necessarily precarious.

Certain places in the library have just been abolished; there is therefore little to hope for in this direction; the fact is that plurality of offices has been practically done away with, and this action will soon be declared legal. The point to which this plague of learned careers was carried under the régime of favouritism and purchase which has disappeared, is something that can scarcely be believed. Now they are going to the opposite extreme, and not content with establishing limits for the future, they are purging out with some brutality those who have shared in the favours of the old régime. I do not like these reactionary occurrences; but the evil was serious, and the principle, provided that it is not exaggerated, is an excellent one.

For some days our affairs have proceeded at a slow pace. The foolish attempt of May 15th has done much harm. I am beginning to loosen the bonds that bind me to the old Left which during the first days of the revolution gained my sympathies. Its members conduct themselves with a selfishness and narrow-mindedness truly singular in such cultivated minds. What is lacking for the establishment of a more advanced party is men. I confess that it is in this direction that I have hopes of the future.

A new Third Estate has been formed; the bourgeoisie would be as foolish to combat it as the nobility formerly were. Liberty and public order no longer suffice. What is needed is legality in all possible measure; there must be no more of the disinherited either in the order of intelligence or in the political order; if inequality of riches is a necessary evil, it is at least essential that the life of each one be guaranteed, and that opportunities be enlarged. This is just, and this will triumph, whatever the shop-keepers may say. The lack of intelligence of former liberals pains me; it resembles the voluntary blindness of the privileged

classes who are not willing to sacrifice anything that they possess, and who thus prepare the way for frightful catastrophes.

How happy we are, my dear, to be able to say with the ancient sage: "I carry all my possessions about with me." It is certain that at the present time this is the most portable and the safest species of wealth. Considerations regarding our brother's case give me much pain. The nature of his business is so intimately bound up with the present form of society that every blow aimed at present conditions afflicts me for his sake. After all, it may be that the present mode of transacting business will be prolonged beyond the period that he will be engaged in affairs; and, moreover, his experience and intelligence will make him equal to all contingencies.

How much I am in need of you, dear Henriette, of your voice and counsel in these trying times! How well I understand, now, the fatality of the revolution and the frightful force of attraction which this gulf possessed. Without at all modifying the general plan of my life, these events have exercised a prodigious influence upon me, and

have unfolded to my vision an entirely new world. I regret deeply, dear, that you are prevented from being present at the remarkable intellectual movement of which we are the witnesses. It is not, as in former times, a simple factional affair between people of the same party, or at least the same principles; it is a matter of belief.

Twenty years ago M. Jouffroy wrote an admirable essay on "How Dogmas End." It would be not less opportune to-day to write one on "How Dogmas Are Formed."

Adieu, dear sister; write to me soon, and continue to grant me that affection which constitutes the charm of my life. How often is it necessary for me to think of you, in order to hold firm the helm, and to prevent trusting all to the winds!

LETTER III

PARIS, June 25, 1848.

WHAT a frightful spectacle, my dear sister ! During the entire day we have heard nothing but the whistling of balls and the sound of the tocsin, and seen nothing but the dead and wounded pass by. Nevertheless, you may remain perfectly reassured. Less than ever am I disposed to take sides with either party. In truth, were I in a position to do so, my conscience would not permit it. Although our quarter, and especially the neighbourhood of the Panthéon and the Rue Saint-Jacques are the centre of the fighting, you need have no fear, dear Henriette. Private property is scrupulously respected—more so by the insurgents than by those who are opposing them. To conclude, at this moment all seems lulled to sleep, and there is no doubt that the advantage remains with the established government. One should desire this, and for my part, even when the

insurrection seemed triumphant, I have not wavered for an instant. The number of the dead and wounded is incalculable. I cannot tell you any more, dear sister; I profit by the opportunity of a clear road, to throw this letter into the mailbox, without, however, any hope that it will leave to-day. I shall write to you when we arrive at some determination. Yours wholly, my well-beloved sister. Ah, how needful it is for me to think of you during these sad hours!

LETTER IV

PARIS, June 26, 1848.

IT has been impossible, my dear sister, to get my letter to the post-office. I had hardly taken a few steps when I heard the fusillade recommence near by. After that all communication between this quarter and the rest of the city was stopped, and the post-offices remain idle. This evening and last night have been more terrible than ever. There was a massacre at the Saint-Jacques barricade, and also one at the barricade at Fontainebleau. I spare you the details. The Massacre of Saint Bartholomew offers nothing resembling it. It must be that there remains in the bottom of man's nature something of the cannibal which awakens at certain moments. As for myself, I would have willingly fought the national guard when they took upon themselves the office of murderers. Doubtless these poor fools who shed their blood without knowing what

they want, are culpable; but much more so in my eyes are those who have kept them in slavery, systematically crushed in them all human sentiment, and who to serve their selfish interests have created a class of men whose advantage is to be sought in pillage and disorder. Let us abandon these reflections, dear sister. How cruel it is to live suspended between two parties who force us to detest them equally! Nevertheless, I do not despair; even if I saw humanity torn in shreds and France expiring, I would still say that the destiny of mankind is divine, and that France is marching in the first rank toward its accomplishment.

To-day all seems over. People circulate in some of the streets, but they make use of the greatest precautions. I have at this moment a letter from Mlle. Ulliac. She charges me to tell you that they have run no danger, and that she will write to you at the end of the week. I shall do the same, and I shall then supply what is wanting in these lines, which can only reveal to you the disorder of my thought. Ah, who can behold such spectacles without weeping for the victims,

even were they the most culpable of men! Adieu, for a few days. My God, what need I have to think of you! Wishing to prepare for every eventuality, I have placed all my papers that I prize most highly in a chest by themselves. I came across your letters, and I spent nearly a whole night re-reading them. The perusal of them has also served to maintain order in my mental condition in the midst of these frightful scenes the noise of which is still resounding in my ears.

Noon.—The official news of the complete pacification and capitulation of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine has just reached all the quarters.

LETTER V

PARIS, July 1, 1848.

THE storm has passed, my dear sister, but what fatal traces it will leave after it for a long time to come! Paris is no longer recognisable; the victors indulge in songs and follies; the vanquished are overcome with sorrow and fury. The atrocities committed by the conquerors make one tremble, and bring us back to the period of the religious wars. A veritable reign of terror has succeeded this deplorable war, and the military government has displayed at will all the arbitrary and illegal qualities that characterise it; something of hardness, ferocity and inhumanity has been introduced into the manners and language of the people. Law-abiding persons, those who are known as honest people, call out for grape-shot and bullets; the scaffold is overthrown and massacre substituted for it; the bourgeoisie have proved that they are capable of all the excesses of

our first Terror, only with the added features of reflection and selfishness. And they believe that they are conquerors forever; what will occur on the day of reprisals? . . . And nevertheless, such is the terrible position in which we have been placed by the force of circumstances, that we are obliged to rejoice at this victory; for the triumph of the insurrection would have been still more dangerous. Not that you are to believe all the fear-inspiring accounts invented by hatred and the ridiculous newspapers.

I have seen the insurgents at close range; we were in their hands for a day and a night, and I can say that we could not wish for a display of more consideration, honour and rectitude; and that in moderation they infinitely surpassed their opponents who committed unheard-of atrocities, in our presence, upon the most inoffensive persons. No; pillage, murder and incendiarism would not have been the order of the day; there would have been vengeance wreaked, and violent measures; the hired brigands who this time, as always, formed a goodly portion of the insurgent troops, would have been restrained with difficulty; but

other men would have come upon the scene, and the movement would have been directed anew. I do not believe in the exaggerations which nowadays it is the fashion to repeat everywhere, and which, be it well understood, I repeat like everybody else. But the difficulty, the invincible difficulty, would have been on the part of France, which certainly would not have yielded to the revolution of Paris; and even supposing that in a few great cities like Lyons, Rouen, etc., the popular insurrection had gained support, a frightful civil war would have been necessary to make possible the violent and premature triumph of a cause, which required time to develop. It is then a great blessing that the insurrection has been put down; and I repeat if the twelfth legion had not seceded, it is probable that I should have laboured with it at least in the attempt to bring these madmen back to reason.

I am not a socialist; I am convinced that the theories advanced for the purpose of reforming society will never triumph in their absolute form. Every new idea takes the shape of a system—a narrow and partial system which never arrives at

practical realisation. It is only when it has broken this first shell, and has become a social dogma, that it becomes a truth universally recognised and applied.

What is more in the nature of a system than the Social Contract? And is not the whole constitutional régime, which is henceforth an established reality, almost a system? This is what will happen to socialism. It is now narrow, unpractical, a pure Utopia, true on one side and false on the other; true in its principles, false in its forms. The day is not far off when, pruned of its exaggerations and chimeras, it will become an evident and recognised law. Who will then have triumphed? Will it be the partisans who upheld falsehood as truth, and wished to realise the impossible? Will it be those adversaries who denied the truth because of the false, and tried to prevent the purification of the new doctrine? Neither one nor the other; it will be humanity which will have taken one step more, and reached a more advanced and more just expression.

Let us put aside all ideas of justice and humanity, and consider the question simply as econo-

mists and politicians. Is it not evident that the only remedy for the terrible evil that our society bears in its bosom, is to do away with that class that wages an eternal war on wealth; to destroy it, I say, not by massacre, which would be at once atrocious and impossible, but by moral education, and by improving its condition? Is it not a frightful thing that the majority of mankind should be forcibly disinherited of intellectual and moral happiness, and herded together in drunkenness and disorder? This happiness, it will be said, is open to all. Assuredly not; how can it be imagined that the miserable wretch who has grown up in this hideous atmosphere, without education, without morality, ignorant of religion which in any case would have no power upon him, exposed to death by starvation, and *who cannot possibly escape from this condition no matter what effort he may make*, how can it be supposed that such a miserable creature would console himself by thinking of a better world of which he has no idea, or that he would not seek to acquire by crime what he cannot obtain by legitimate means? Such a one would be an angel of virtue, which is hardly

to be expected, since virtue is impossible in this case.

Even honesty has become a monopoly with us, and one cannot be an honest man unless he has a black coat and a little money. We consider the privileges of the ancient nobility over the bourgeoisie indefensible. But is it not also an atrocious thing to see a considerable portion of mankind, children of God like ourselves, condemned to dishonour and prevented by fate from breaking their iron fetters?

It is physically proved that he who enters the world without means, or without having others to pave the way for him, can only live by gross manual labour—that is to say, can hardly live at all. It is physically proved that a woman who has no outside aid to depend upon, *cannot* live by the labour of her hands, and consequently has to choose between theft and prostitution. How can you argue, after this, that we should not feel some resentment against the egotists, who refuse to consider this question in their economic policies, who persist in interpreting this science in the interest of the rich, and refuse to see in such needs a

reason for making any sacrifices? How could you think that we should wish to return to the age of stock-jobbers and speculators, in which mercantile aims absorb everything and intelligence is choked under money-bags?

These are my principles, my dear sister. I think that it is time to overthrow the exclusive reign of capital, and to associate with it labour; but I also think that no means of making the application has yet been found, that no system will furnish it, but that it will spring ready made from the developed nature of things. All this is certainly very far from the Mountain or the Terror. It is this faith in humanity, this consecration of one's self to the perfecting of it, and consequently to its happiness, that I call the new religion. It is my desire that you may share in this solemn and holy revolution.

I know well, dearest, that there are pictures which are seen best from afar, and that revolutions are in this category. But take care that there is not a prism placed between you and us.

What newspaper have you seen? Or do you see the French papers at all? If, perchance, it is

the *Constitutionnel*, I implore you not to believe a word either of the news or the editorials. This paper has become a laughing-stock on account of the canards with which it leisurely fills its pages. If you read the *Débats* I should be less sorry. It is at least conducted with good taste, and respects France sufficiently to prevent it from inventing calumnies against her. But you conceive that it is hardly fit to appreciate properly the present crisis. As regards the *Presse*, it is like a spiteful little man uttering nonsense. I am not of the most optimistic, my dear; above all, I am not very enthusiastic about my fellow men, and in truth this is slightly their fault. But I none the less persist in believing that in spite of all their petty fashions, personal ambitions, misfortunes and crimes, they are accomplishing a great transformation for the benefit of humanity. I believe that we are in accord on this, dear and excellent sister. But you cherish exaggerated fears; you believe that this revolution will only be accomplished by frightful catastrophes; you say (and this sentence has pierced my heart) that if prosperity issues from this chaos, it will be when you are in your

grave! No, my well-beloved girl; you yourself shall profit by it; bright days shall dawn for us all; more than this, we shall do better than merely enjoy them; we shall have worked to produce them, and we shall have suffered while awaiting them. What, my Henriette! Are not you, yourself, one of the sad victims of these deplorable social conditions which we wish to change? If with your prudence and virile faculties, if with your learning and character, if after such sacrifices and such painful self-denial the future may still be sad for you, are we not in the right in accusing the social order under which such injustice is possible? I assure you that the new order cannot be otherwise than favourable to us, even if in the beginning we have to pass through trying days

