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# TOURAINNE





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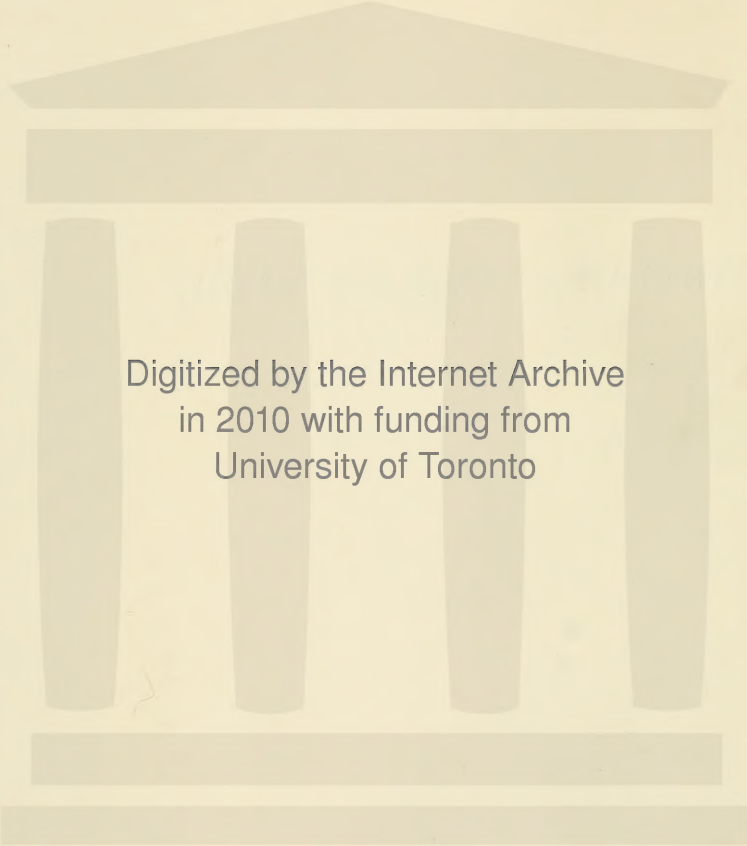
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TOURNAINE AND ITS STORY



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LA VIEILLE TOURAINE.



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# TOURAINNE AND ITS STORY

BY ANNE MACDONELL  
WITH COLOURED ILLUSTRATIONS  
BY A. B. ATKINSON

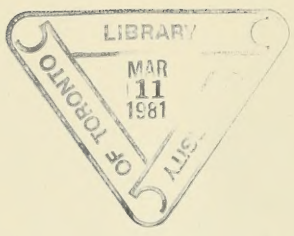
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# CONTENTS

CHAP	PAGE
<p><b>I. INTRODUCTORY</b> . . . . .</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;"><i>The greater and the lesser chateaux — A land of rivers— The Land of a Thousand Valleys—Touraine's many suitors— Summary of its history—In praise of Touraine.</i></p>	<p><b>I</b></p>
<p><b>II. TOURS THE HEART OF TOURAINE</b> . . . . .</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;"><i>Present-day Tours — Earliest Tours — Cæsaredunum — Martinopolis.</i></p>	<p><b>15</b></p>
<p><b>III. ST. MARTIN OF TOURS</b> . . . . .</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;"><i>“Our Martin” — Martin the Soldier — Bishop of Tours— Marmoutier—The Wanderer—The Thaumaturgist—Martin and the Creatures—The Councillor of State—Death at Candes— Sulpicius Severus—Martin in Folk-lore—The wanderings of his bones—The later history of the shrine.</i></p>	<p><b>23</b></p>
<p><b>IV. THE BARBARIANS</b> . . . . .</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;"><i>Clovis and St. Martin—The mad Merovings—GREGORY OF TOURS—The Carolings—Battle of Tours—Charlemagne—Alcuin —le roi Hugon—The Northmen's ravages—St. Martin's danger —Siege of Tours—Battle of S. Martin-le-Beau.</i></p>	<p><b>39</b></p>
<p><b>V. FULK NERRA</b> . . . . .</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;"><i>Theobald the Trickster — Rise of Anjou — Fulk the Good— FULK NERRA—Fulk and Tours—The Great Builder—Fulk and King Robert—Savage and Pilgrim — Montrichard — The Abbey of Beaulieu—Battle of Pontlevoy—Fulk threatens Tours and takes Saumur—Last Journey to Jerusalem.</i></p>	<p><b>53</b></p>
<p><b>VI. THE PLANTAGENETS</b> . . . . .</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;"><i>Geoffrey Martel—Second Battle of S. Martin - le - Beau—Fulk Rechin—Fulk the Young—Geoffrey Plantagenet—HENRY II.— Tours “a Second Rome”—Treaty of Colombiers—Cœur de Lion and John Lackland—Arthur of Brittany—Touraine lost to England —Early Art in Touraine.</i></p>	<p><b>65</b></p>

CHAP.	PAGE
VII. THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR . . . . .	97
<i>English and Gascon brigands — St. Louis — The Knights Templars—THE HUNDRED YEARS WAR—Ravages of the Black Prince—The Boucicauts—Burgundy and Tours—Siege of Tours by the Dauphin—The Scots in France—Douglas Duke of Touraine—Le Roi de Bourges—JEANNE D'ARC—Gradual union of the national leaders—Charles VII. King of France at last—The rise of the financiers.</i>	
VIII. LOUIS XI.; CHARLES LE BON PETIT ROY; LOUIS, FATHER OF HIS PEOPLE . . . . .	97
<i>Louis XI. and Margaret of Scotland — Tours the seat of government—Plessis-lès-Tours—Commines and Louis XI.—S. François de Paule—Death of Louis XI.—Anne de Beaujeu Regent—Charles the Adventurous—Anne de Bretagne twice Queen—The Father of his People—The Renaissance in Touraine: Builders, Sculptors, Painters.</i>	
IX. THE LATER HISTORY OF TOURS . . . . .	123
<i>Francis I. and Tours—Jacques de Beaune—The Wars of Religion—Extermination of the Huguenots—The States-General at Tours—Tours abandoned by the Court—The Sun King blasts Tours—Eighteenth-Century Tours—The Revolution—BALZAC—Ghosts.</i>	
X. S. CÔME . . . . .	147
<i>L'œillet de la Touraine—Hervé the builder—Bérenger the heresiarch—Louis XI. and the shepherds—RONSARD—Ronsard on his grave in the Ile S. Côme.</i>	
XI. AMBOISE . . . . .	155
<i>Tours to Amboise—Ambacia—The Building of the Castle—Charles VIII. at Amboise—The Youth of Francis I.—LEONARDO DA VINCI—The Enterprise of Amboise—Saint Denis-Hors—Rock-dwellings—"Le philosophe inconnu."</i>	
XII. CHAUMONT AND BLOIS . . . . .	177
<i>De Vigny's praise of Chaumont—Early visitors—The House of Amboise—Astrologers—Diane de Poitiers—Madame de Staël—Pleasant BLOIS—The House of Orleans—THE POET DUKE—The Maid at Blois—Louis XII. and Anne of Brittany—The Salamander—Catherine de Medicis—Mary Stuart—La Reine Margot — The Murder of Guise — Gaston and La Grande Mademoiselle—Blois restored.</i>	

# CONTENTS

vii

CHAP.	PAGE
<b>XIII. TOURS TO CANDES</b> . . . . .	205
<i>La Grenadière—Luznes—Cinq-Mars—Langonais—S. Patrice—The Cripples of La Chapelle—Montsoreau and Busy d'Amboise—Candes.</i>	
<b>XIV. THE CHER</b> . . . . .	221
<i>Grammont—Scots at St. Avertin—Largay—Paul-Louis Courier and Vézetz—Gabrielle d'Estrées—Bléré—CHENONCEAUX—The Marques and the Bobiers—Diane de Poitiers—Catherine de Medicis—Rousseau and the Dupins—Later history—Notre Dame de Nanteuil—Montrichard—Ballan—Villandry—Lignières.</i>	
<b>XV. THE INDRE</b> . . . . .	247
<i>AZAY-LE-RIDEAU—Ussé—"Le Lys dans la Vallée"—Montbazou—The Legend of Couzières—The Abbé de Rancé—Corméry—Courçay—LOCHES—The royal castle—Agnes Sorel—The prisons—Il Moro—Beaulieu—The Chartreuse de Liget—A tale of Chicot—Montrésor.</i>	
<b>XVI. THE PLATEAU OF STE. MAURE—THE VALLEYS OF THE CREUSE AND CLAISE</b> . . . . .	283
<i>The isolation of the plain — The shrine of St. Catherine de Fierbois—Port de Piles—La Haye-Descartes—La Guerche—Le Grand Pressigny—A happy valley—Preuilley-sur-Claise.</i>	
<b>XVII. THE VIENNE</b> . . . . .	297
<i>A generous land—CHINON—Ancient Caillon—S. Mexme—St. Radegonde—The Plantagenets—The Knights Templars—Charles VII. at Chinon—Jeanne d'Arc—Louis XI. at Forges—The Wars of Religion—Richelieu the Wrecker—RABELAIS in Chinon and the Chinoisais—Coudray—Montpensier—The Wars of Gargantua—The road to Candes—The Véron—Turpenay—Champigny—Church architecture in the Vienne Valley—N. D. de Rivière—Les Sibylles de Panzoult.</i>	
<b>XVII FRIENDS: TOURANGEAUX AND TOURANGELLES</b> . . . . .	329
<i>A grande dame—Balzac and his compatriots—The Tourainers' philosophy—La Vieille Touraine—An articulate race—A Touraine village—Love of the soil—Old faiths and new—St. Vincent a Bacchus—Vanished legends—A mother: old style—Passing of the handicrafts—A prophetess—Greeting.</i>	
<b>NOTES</b> . . . . .	343
<b>INDEX</b> . . . . .	351



## COLOURED ILLUSTRATIONS

LA VIEILLE TOURAINE . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
CHINON FROM THE VIENNE . . . . .	<i>.. facing page</i> 5
A VILLAGE ON THE INDRE . . . . .	" 12
THE COTTAGE DOOR . . . . .	" 20
WINTER IN THE WOODS . . . . .	" 29
PLACE PLUMEREAU, TOURS . . . . .	" 33
RUE FOULQUES NERRA, LOCHES . . . . .	" 48
OLD HOUSES, CHINON . . . . .	" 67
CHÂTEAU ROYAL, LOCHES . . . . .	" 78
A VILLAGE IN TOURAINE . . . . .	" 86
AU LAVOIR . . . . .	" 91
CHENONCEAUX FROM CHISSEAUX BRIDGE . . . . .	" 115
THE OLD MANOR . . . . .	" 126
AZAY-LE-RIDEAU . . . . .	" 135
LA PSALETTE, TOURS . . . . .	" 138
TOURAINE OF THE FUTURE . . . . .	" 145
THE LITTLE SHEPHERDESS . . . . .	" 160
AMBOISE FROM THE LOIRE . . . . .	" 163
AMBOISE FROM THE TERRACE . . . . .	" 174
CHAUMONT-SUR-LOIRE . . . . .	" 178
MARKET DAY . . . . .	" 182
FONTAINE LOUIS XII., BLOIS . . . . .	" 191
FOUGÈRES-SUR-BIÈVRE . . . . .	" 215
UNDER THE NUT-TREES . . . . .	" 218

PASTORAL ON THE CHER . . . . .	<i>facings page</i>	222
CHENONCEAUX FROM THE GARDEN . . . . .	”	225
EVENING ON THE CHER . . . . .	”	229
MONTRICHARD . . . . .	”	236
CHENONCEAUX FROM THE WATER . . . . .	”	240
AZAY-LE-RIDEAU . . . . .	”	245
THE ROAD TO CLOCHEGOURDE . . . . .	”	252
THE MILLS, SACHÉ . . . . .	”	257
COURÇAY BRIDGE . . . . .	”	260
PORTE PICOYS, LOCHES . . . . .	”	269
ST. OURS, LOCHES . . . . .	”	272
BEAULIEU . . . . .	”	277
MONTRÉSOR FROM THE INDROIS . . . . .	”	279
MONTRÉSOR . . . . .	”	284
LA GUERCHE . . . . .	”	286
LE GRAND PRESSIGNY . . . . .	”	291
PREUILLY-SUR-CLAISE . . . . .	”	294
CHINON FROM THE QUAY . . . . .	”	304
OLDEST CHINON . . . . .	”	310
CHINON FROM THE CHATEAU . . . . .	”	315
THE GUARDIAN OF STE. RADEGONDE . . . . .	”	321
RUE DU GRAND CARROI, CHINON . . . . .	”	322
OLD CRAVANT CHURCH . . . . .	”	327
LE DOYEN DU VILLAGE . . . . .	”	332
LE JOUR DES MORTS . . . . .	”	337
SPINNING . . . . .	”	340



## ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE TEXT

	PAGE
EMBLEM OF FRANCIS I. . . . .	13
ST. MARTIN DESTROYING THE IDOL . . . . .	23
<i>(Ancient Sculpture, Château de Chaumont)</i>	
TOUR DE L'HORLOGE, OLD ST. MARTIN'S . . . . .	36
MONTBAZON . . . . .	58
DOORWAY, TAVANT CHURCH . . . . .	76
OLD HÔTEL DE VILLE OF CHÂTEAUNEUF . . . . .	92
PLESSIS-LÈS-TOURS TO-DAY . . . . .	100
LA RABATERIE, HOUSE OF OLIVIER LE DAIM . . . . .	107
STATUE BY JEAN GOUJON . . . . .	122
<i>(Open Staircase, Chateau of Blois)</i>	
HOUSE OF THE CURÉ DE TOURS . . . . .	143
EMBLEM OF QUEEN CLAUDE . . . . .	153
GRANGE DE MESLAY . . . . .	156
EMBLEM OF LOUIS XII. . . . .	176
CHÂTEAU DE CHAUMONT . . . . .	178
BLOIS . . . . .	184
STATUE OF LOUIS XII., BLOIS . . . . .	193
CHÂTEAU DE LUYNES . . . . .	205
THE MARKET, LUYNES . . . . .	209
CHÂTEAU DE LANGEAIS . . . . .	214
CANDES . . . . .	219
CHAPELLE DE SEIGNE, BLÉRÉ . . . . .	226

	PAGE
MONTRICHARD . . . . .	239
BALLAN CHURCH . . . . .	242
CHÂTEAU DE L'ISLETTE . . . . .	248
USSÉ . . . . .	251
NOTRE DAME DE FOUGERAY . . . . .	260
LE GRAND PRESSIGNY CHURCH . . . . .	292
RUINS OF THE CHÂTEAU DU LION, PREUILLY . . . . .	295
IN THE RUE HAUTE-ST.-MAURICE, CHINON . . . . .	305
NOTRE DAME DE RIVIÈRE . . . . .	325
—————	
MAP OF INDRE-ET-LOIRE . . . . .	350

*Dirons-nous aux héros des vieux temps de la France  
De monter tout armés aux créneaux de leurs tours,  
Et de ressusciter la naïve romance  
Que leur gloire oubliéé apprit aux troubadours.*

LA NUIT DE MAI.

*Le temps où se faisait tout ce qu'a dit l'histoire,  
Où la Vie était jeune,—où la Mort espérait.*

ROLLA.



# TOURAINÉ AND ITS STORY

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

*The Greater and the Lesser Chateaux—A Land of Rivers—The Land of a Thousand Valleys—Tourainé's many Suitors—Summary of its History—In praise of Tourainé.*

To most travellers of to-day, and not English travellers only, Tourainé is a land of chateaux. The name recalls white witch-like Amboise with its sinister beauty ; the sombre donjon of Loches, with its grim stories of torture ; the fairy palace of Azay ; Chenonceaux rising Undine-like from the waters ; the stout towers and battlements of Langeais ; and the broken fortress of Chinon commanding the valley of the Vienne as proudly as when the Plantagenets ruled within its walls. These visions may flash the memory of but a single hour between two hurried journeys. So was it not wont to be. And believe us who have made this book that the vision grows the fairer as it grows in fulness through many days spent in the shade of the ancient walls, or in the sunshine of the slopes about them. But even if the castles—their architecture, their history and romance—be all the traveller cares to seek in the old province, he will not easily come to the end of them, give him English indefatigability and American swiftness in his pursuit. Tourainé is a land of chateaux indeed. Thick they lie, or hang, or tower, on scarp, and down, and dale ; and whatever it be you seek in them—history, or romance, or architecture, or site—you will lose much if you limit yourself to the usual round—Chambord, Blois (both outside the province), Chaumont,

Amboise, Tours, Luynes, Langeais, Chenonceaux, Azay-le-Rideau, Chinon, and Loches. These are imposing, typical, salient. Moreover, they are on the great roads, and the hasty or the anxious traveller may be sure of dining well in their neighbourhood. But for the flavour of old time, we have found it still oftener while lingering by the lesser known ones ; those that have not yet given up their secrets to the tourist, that are not yet summed up in set guide-book phrases. Their walls are crumbling perhaps. The sheep feed in the tufted grass of the moat ; in the *salle des gardes* is the wine-press or a rabbit-hutch. The chapel is a barn and the great hall a granary. Farm stuff lies about the court where bold knights caracoled, and by night an owl flies out of the turret chamber of my lady. The scutcheons are defaced, the carvings broken. Or, tricked out in new whitewash, the place is remodelled to fit a newer life—a real life, where children are born, and gardens are stocked for food, and the old folks linger about under the roses, gently loath to go away ; but all this everyday reality is less disturbing to the picture of the past than the presence of official guardians, with their glib catalogue and their guide-book tale. Amid the shabbiness your imagination has freer range in the past ; for there is a great silence about these old neglected places, and you may mostly wander as you will. The peasant owners may deface the surface for the needs of their labour—though in many cases the defacement took place before the property fell into their hands—but they hardly disturb the atmosphere. They call up no vulgar images, and beyond their respectful “Oui, c’est antique, c’est antique,” they have no catchwords in their mouths.

And here let me say in parenthesis : there are travellers so cool-headed, with so perfect a control of their memory and their historic sense, that in the quarter of an hour their presence is suffered within the walls of some great chateau by the stern or weary guardian (it is only guardians who are ever stern or weary in Touraine), they can transport themselves back to a remote age, live stirring scenes over

again, trace the different stages of architecture, and appreciate the beauties of the decoration. They have my profoundest admiration. There are many such. I have met them very often, bands of them. Unimaginably swift in eye and mind, they would fain be off to fresh pastures ere the guardian has told his tale. Humbly I own myself other. I have to pay many visits where one would suffice, were I endowed as they; and thus my weakness drives me by preference to haunt such places as are so shabby that I am left alone in them, to people them as my memory and imagination may serve.

In others less fallen to decay you will better than in any "museum chateau" realise the old country life of France, the life of the lesser seigneurs, very simple, very practical, intimately connected with the growing things about—the wheat on the upland plain, the vines on the hillside—a life that after innumerable disasters and revolutions has remained age after age nearly the same. Paris draws the Tourangeau squire more than in the old days; but there are some that resist the siren. The old order changeth, only to be renewed. The lawyer buys the castle and the vineyards of the bankrupt noble, and retires to a life of country labour and content.

Do not be hasty in dating these places. The little white coquettish chateau on the hill, with its trim tourelles, its dainty flowering terrace, and its fame for good wine, has perhaps as teeming a history as the broken donjon on the neighbouring scarp. The English sacked it. Or the "roi de Bourges" stopped there when he was out at elbows. Or he made love to its lady in the intervals of consulting with La Trémouille or La Hire. Or it was pitchforked to and fro in the wars of religion. Huguenots manned it; Catholics wrenched it back. It ravaged, and was ravaged. And it has survived, hiding its scars bravely from the hasty passer-by. The old donjons, the old castles with the first glories of the Renaissance still stamped on them, old manors, old hunting-lodges, old abbeys, old moated granges, each a

surprise and a delight, I call them up one by one in unfrequented valleys, or by-roads, or hiding in the midst of forests—Preuilly, Coudray, Montpensier, Saché, Vannes, Turpenay, Artannes. And every traveller of leisure and sentiment can easily cap my list out of the roll of this rich land. The great châteaux have irresistible claims—Amboise, Langeais, Ussé and the rest are great indeed. But let the by-ways have their turn.

Call then Touraine a land of châteaux if you will. But what does it mean? Before those peaked and towered and crenelated piles were there, the province was not a mere pasture for cattle, nor a forest for the wild boar and the wolf. On those very sites the Romans and the Gallo-Romans built their villas. They liked Touraine as well as did the Orleans and the Valois courts. And it was not chance that led them there, or their successors; nor was it political necessity. It is, and ever has been, a land of fine romantic dwellings, of pleasure-houses, because it is a pleasant land. And if good to live in, then good to keep. Hence the grim fortresses. In this land of happy valleys you may build your cot or your castle with its back against a rock that shields you from the north wind; so you live in a high airy place, yet warm and sunny. It is a land of a kindly, active soil. Scratch it and something grows. Labour is worth while, and may even enrich. But a little labour makes life possible, and lovely. And if labour is worth while, so is leisure. A chateau is a fine thing here—but a hole in the rock will do; and a rock-dwelling in Touraine, where there are many thousands, with a rose-bush flowering half the year about the door, your fig-tree growing on the roof of the neighbour just below you, the row of espalier vines in your other little garden elbow-high, is a pleasant and a civilised habitation.

The secret of the pleasantness is that Touraine is a land of rivers. They are very many and very varied—from the Loire with its great southern tributaries to the little streams like the Choisille and the Bresme flowing to it from the north, all of them, great and small, fed







CIVITANOVA FROM THE VIENNESE.

by lesser ones, the least of which may remain significant in your memory. Who knows the little Tabaretier? Contemptible in size when it reaches the Indre, it winds its little volume of water through an imposing and delightful valley, such an one as makes you fickle to the rest, and you cry, "Here will I build my tabernacle." And so with a score of other streams, whose names are unknown beyond three parishes. I search again, therefore, for the name that fits Touraine, and this time I have found it—The Land of a Thousand Valleys.

The rivers have enriched, and they have ravaged, but save the Loire they are mainly beneficent. If you would know the charm of Touraine, leave the straight high roads over the high plateaux where your coachman or chauffeur rushes you from castle to castle, and follow the rivers. You risk no monotony. The noble Loire, *grand seigneur*, irresponsible, rapacious, and glorious to the eyes, urges its waters with stealthy swiftness through its wide valley. Here it is like a great lagoon; there, in summer, but a group of pools amid its twisted, tortured, changing sands; and now it laves softly a line of green islands. The pastoral Cher, open and smiling, a plaything of the sky—the great river on a smaller scale, but without its caprice, its temper or its treachery. The Vienne faring fast through its rich pasture-land and vineyards, proud, unwilling vassal of the Loire—see how it fain would keep its own face still after it has passed Candés. The shy, winding Indre, secret, exquisite, yet serviceable, feeding half a hundred mills—the Brownie among rivers. The dark deep Creuse, with its fatal underground workings, and its great wooded western bank shutting out Poitou. And the little glinting, meandering Claise, of which who would tell aright must speak in ballad speech. Each has its strong character, and, however small, some significance in human romance. For in counselling travellers to follow the rivers I am not supposing them to be all landscape painters. Those who made history in old Touraine followed the rivers, too—and not merely the

great ones—and left their traces : the fortress builders, the chateau builders, the abbey founders, the hermits and the saints ; and what are but pretty streams draw the sentimental wanderer by a score of memories—this of the warlike Du Guesclin or Boucicaut, that of the Blessed Martin ; now of Agnes, “ Dame de Beauté,” gentle and frail, and now of laughing Rabelais. But on a spring day, when the poplars are fluttering their young green, or in autumn when the world mocks at decay in a great outburst of golden laughter, the most determined antiquary may forget the memories, the monuments, the ruins that drew him, and find the little stream, with its hillsides, its valleys and meadowlands, good and sufficient company.

I know no landscape that shows a friendlier face to man, and its friendliness has many aspects. The old tag, “ the Garden of France,” is applicable, if it call up a garden of widely different purposes and styles. Most cultivable it is, of course, and much cultivated. But where the strictly utilitarian does not predominate—what we may call the *potager* on a great scale—the garden runs wild, gently, graciously wild. There is but one large town, and even there you can look almost everywhere across the commonplace brick and mortar of its newer quarters to the high wooded banks of Loire and Cher ; while in Loches and Chinon you must always touch the country somewhere, turn your eyes this way or that. The villages are thickly planted, but they hardly disturb the general quiet. The land is diligently tilled, but great silent places and secret refuges remain in forest and ravine. Touraine has endless corners for the solitary. Solitaries have always loved it. The valleys are full of the memories of hermits—those poets of the Cross, passionate lovers of Nature, who mortified the flesh and had all the beauty of the world for their portion. And here one might turn solitary without moroseness. Moroseness is foreign to the air. From your cell you look down on the stream below you. The road winds along across the valley, or above your head, bringing you human sounds. You may have

escaped to concern yourself with great art or your own little soul ; but you cannot hate man. The constant fisher in the stream below will not harm you. The children running past have the seed of grace in them. If the labourer passes on his road to work, or to his snug nest among his own folks in the village, he will respect the taste he does not share. "A chacun sa besogne," he says to himself.

A flat land it must seem if you apply to it geographical measures. Its highest points, Le Signal de la Ronde and the Haut-Montais, both on the frontier of Loir-et-Cher, are insignificant hills ; but after wandering about its innumerable downs and dales, and sojourning in its clambering towns, the idea of flatness is impossible to entertain. Daily exercise in the ladder streets of Chinon may be recommended as an excellent preparation for mountaineering. The gracious wildness which I have spoken of, gives way frequently, of course ; and not only to the dinted bare plains between the Cher and Indre, to the fruitful and dull plateau of Ste. Maure. There is, besides, the untamed, desolate Gâtine in the north ; the rugged wildness of the southern parts of the Valley of the Creuse—though George Sand's own romantic river is at its best in Berri. But for wildness of a savage kind, one does not go to Touraine. There Nature and Man are reconciled. Man does not take all. He leaves some places for the shy nymphs and the naiads ; and in return, Nature garlands his very workshops. You are at peace with both. I know many landscapes more stimulating, none more consolatory.

The Loire has always been reckoned a great dividing line of races and language and political history. It makes no very sharp physical division. The South hardly begins on its left bank. There you are still in good mellow Central France—not very evenly mellow in climate, however. If the summer sun will satisfy a Southerner, the winter winds sweeping down the valleys may make a shivering Northerner feel discomfortably at home. It is rather a climate of marvellous possibilities of softness and exhilaration, very frequently

realised. North and South mingle in Touraine, not only in climate, but in the wide range of its Flora, and in its architecture. It is not easy to define this mingling; for Touraine is French, made out of the very heart and soul and body of France. But now and then a whiff of another air, or a vision of something far comes to the traveller. The dun hillsides in autumn, with the loose stone dykes running up them, topped by cold grey farms, or stern turreted manors, will take you back to Scotland. The heart of Quentin Durward must have fared straight back at sight of them. They have not altered much since his day. Many of his countrymen settled there—I will not say for the sake of the dun hillsides only—for they did not undervalue the vineyards. But the lively Tourangeau spirit and the *perfervidum ingenium Scotorum* agreed very well; and the different blood, not too alien, flowed genially together in after generations. But again comes a vision of a still farther land. Was it a mere atmospheric effect that, on a summer day of glamorous light, looking up the Loire from Langeais, at the white villas and villages on the north bank, drew from us—"Italy!" In late autumn, about the lower valley of the Indre, still more on the Claise below Le Grand Pressigny, the resemblance is definite. It is in the colour and the line, in the high perched castles, in the oxen ploughing on the hillsides. Winter in North Italy, you say. It is the Veneto.

No wonder this pleasant land of rivers has been desired and fought for like a very Helen. Its beauty as much as its strategic position, has made it a battlefield. Who knows what combats secured it to the Celtic Turoni whom Cæsar's legions found there?—the Turoni of whom Tacitus speaks slightly, and ignorantly, say spirited local patriots. The earlier inhabitants are lost to us in a vague mist—the pilers up of the dolmens that, hardly a generation ago, lay thick about the upland fields, that are still to be found tamely enclosed by fence or garden, or, in the open, broken and disfigured as the memories of the giants and the fairies that flit about them; the

first burrowers of the rock-dwellings, of the rock-castles, intricate refuges from the oncoming foe, as at Château Robin on the Lower Indre. As for the Turoni, *imbelles* or *rebelles*—they threw in their lot with their kindred in the great anti-Roman struggle; sent a full contingent to aid Vercingetorix in his gallant rally; and suffered in his defeat. The Roman march could not be turned back. The Romans swarmed to the pleasant land and built themselves agreeable residences. The remains of these, dug up in recent years, show how well they chose their sites, and how they had come to settle in permanence and luxury. Than the Turonic Gauls, they never had apter pupils. But the sensitive, quick-brained Gallo-Romans learnt in the course of ages more than law and the arts. In spite of St. Martin, they sucked in the decay of a rotting civilisation; and they could not withstand the furious energy of invading Goth and Frank. Goth and Frank now strove for the fair Helen, and Clovis the Frank won, and was proclaimed Augustus in St. Martin's basilica. Barbarians as they were, they liked so well the land of rivers and roses that the men of his race fought with each other for it tooth and nail. Now a Neustrian, now an Austrasian possession, it became the scene of a long series of wild, mad Merovingian dramas—for the Franks were essentially barbarians till Charlemagne came. The spiritual ascendancy remained with the conquered Gaul, who stamped the land with his mental and temperamental impress as neither Roman nor Frank ever did. There were other greater towns, but Tours was still the spiritual centre of France; for did it not contain the holy place, next to Rome the holiest spot in Europe, the shrine of the Blessed Martin? And when those came who scouted the Blessed Martin, the Mussulman hordes, the Northmen in the long keels, the bride was still delectable, though they wooed her with fire and with sword. When the province fell to the Counts of Blois, the jealous rival Anjou fought for it with grim Angevin tenacity. Fulke Nerra built his black donjons, menacing still after nine centuries,

built them under the very eye of Blois ; and to whom else could it belong but to the men of the Black Falcon's race, while a drop of his quick blood ran in their veins? And when the princes of his race were called Plantagenet, Touraine became the fairest appanage of the English crown. Henry II. loved Chinon better than any other of his castles in England or Aquitaine or Normandy. There, too, he knew his bitterest sorrows ; and there death found him. John's treachery lost the province to the English. The English never forgot it. There was envy in their harrying and their ravage, when the crownless Charles VII. found it a fair and loyal refuge in his shrunken kingdom, ere Jeanne won back France for him. It was in Touraine Jeanne lit the fire that warmed the land to hope. Her first triumphal progress was through Touraine. Louis XI. would fain have made Tours the capital ; and he made it so in effect. At Plessis he matured all his greater schemes of kingcraft. There he lived twenty years, and there he died. Under his adventurous son there budded, under Louis XII. there blossomed, that marvellous flower, the French Renaissance. Touraine was its earliest home. In Tours worked Michel Colombe and the Juste, who were its glories in sculpture, Fouquet and the Clouets, its glories in painting. In Touraine or on its borders, were born the builders of Chenonceaux and Blois and Chambord and Azay. In Touraine worked the Pinaigriers and the far earlier miniaturists in glass who made the rosy glories of St. Gatien's choir. Louis, Father of his People, loved the Loire ; and if Francis found a new field for his later artistic energies, yet Chambord and Blois are stamped with his best impress ; and up and down our province we meet his salamander signature. It was the courtly retreat of the later Valois princes. To the banks of the Loire and the Cher they transplanted their sumptuous and corrupt court ; and one is sometimes tempted to forget the earlier and much more picturesque history in the crowd of splendid and sinister memories of the two Henries, of Charles IX. and Catherine de Médicis. But



Mary Stuart in her girlhood glides across the scene to lighten the picture; and Ronsard sings to lighten our hearts. The last Valois brought not only their sumptuousness and their orgies but their Medicean politics too. And the Ligue made it a battlefield. Castle strove against castle. Their fair faces, so lately adorned, were scarred and seamed. Crime stalked about; the price of the massacre of Amboise was paid in the blood of Guise at Blois. With the desecration of St. Martin's shrine by the Huguenots, Tours lost the last shadow of claim to be the spiritual centre of France. The deferred payment of that sacrilege brought commercial ruin to the town. The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, by chasing the silk-workers, shattered its prosperity for many an age.

To the Bourbons Touraine was a fair possession, but never the seat of choice. Paris and Fontainebleau and Versailles gained what Tours and Amboise had lost. Yet not, apparently, without notable protest. Says Balzac: "Is it not incomprehensible that Royalty did not follow the advice given indirectly by Louis XI., to make Tours the capital? There, without great cost, the Loire could have been rendered accessible to trading vessels and light war-ships. There the seat of government would have been sheltered from sudden invasion. The places of the North would not then have demanded so much money for their fortification, as costly as were the sumptuosities of Versailles. If Louis XI. had listened to the counsel of Vauban, who wished to build his residence at Montlouis, between the Loire and the Cher, perhaps the Revolution of 1789 had never taken place."

The answer—if answer need be given—lies probably in the different degree of serviceableness of Loire and Seine. The Loire grows ever more intractable. I have never seen a freight boat of any kind above Montsoreau. The age-old problem of its navigation is unsolved still, like that of combating its fierce, ravaging temper; the fiercer, they say, the more it is baulked and bridled. And as

for Touraine sheltering Louis XVI. in its happy valleys—when Balzac spoke thus he forgot, as, indeed, he always did, that the Revolution did not turn on the safety of King Louis; that it was not a mere political event, but the action of an incalculable, inevitable force of Nature. Touraine felt it too. A loyal province—but they danced the Carmagnole there as elsewhere; and the *fleurs-de-lis* on its chateaux walls were a special mark for mad demolishers. Tours had, indeed, its turn as capital. At an unhappy time, during the Prussian invasion, the seat of the government of national defence was transferred there for a few months.

And so the whole procession and pageant of French history has passed through the old province, a chosen stage for France, the eternal dramatist of Europe, the ceaseless experimenter, the self-destroyer, the phoenix, France the eternally young. “Auvergne is Auvergne, Languedoc is only Languedoc; but Touraine is France, and the most national of all our rivers is the Loire.” Thus, since there are tales for all the highways and the byways, one more attempt at naming it: Touraine is the Land of Stories.

The scope of my book forbids me dwelling very much on the country as it is to-day—which after all should be studied by every traveller at first hand. But if I fill my pages with the old stories, I would not have you look on it as only a land of memories and ruins. It is alive to-day with a lusty life of its own. When my tales are told, I will speak of the people as I have known them. Now I but greet them in passing, with the vividest remembrance of their genial grace, their bright intelligence, their mingled gaiety and philosophy made for every day's use.

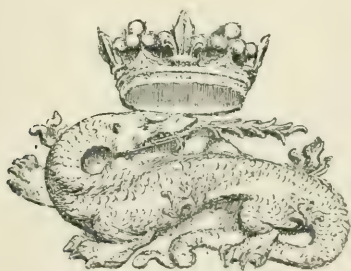
Touraine has had many articulate lovers out of strange lands—Alcuin and Cardinal Bentivoglio and Florio, whose epithet, *Francie viridarium*, has been in everyone's mouth ever since, and many moderns. But a country's best praise is out of the heart of her own sons. And she has had very gifted sons to do her homage. Who



A View of the Esplanade.



does not know the lyric prose that opens De Vigny's *Cinq Mars*?—  
“Connaissez-vous cette partie de la France que l'on a surnommé son  
jardin? Ce pays où l'on respire un air pur dans des plaines  
verdoyantes arrosées par un grand fleuve? . . .” And on it flows  
and sings to the rhythm of the motion of the great river winding  
under Chaumont's towers. It is by the mouth of Felix speaking to  
his mistress that Balzac utters his tenderest rhapsody; but it is,  
nevertheless, a cry from his own heart. “I do not love it as one  
loves the place where one was born, nor as one loves an oasis in the  
desert. I love it as the artist loves art. I love it less than I love  
you; but without Touraine maybe life itself would fail me.” It is  
her greatest son, Rabelais, who was neither lyrical nor tender, who  
has paid most spontaneous homage to the land of his birth. For  
Rabelais, the traveller, the cosmopolitan, who took the whole world  
for his theme, the war-game and the state-game for his butt, yet laid  
the scenes of his world-drama in the fields, the vineyards, the hamlets  
of his own Chinonais.



EMBLEM OF FRANCIS I.



## CHAPTER II

### TOURS THE HEART OF TOURAINE

*Present-day Tours—Earliest Tours—Caesardunum—Martinopolis.*

TOURS is not one of those towns that demand a special mood, that call imperatively on visitors to be archæologists and connoisseurs, or else leave it weary and depressed. It is gay, bright, liveable. There is a sense of modest present prosperity all about, of present living. You can buy things there. You can even go to the theatre sometimes. Its boulevards and quays are spacious, sunny promenades; and its surviving ancient monuments may be lightly judged as just numerous enough and conveniently enough dispersed to afford a refuge to the *flâneur* when the summer sun has stricken him weary, or when the keen winds sweep down the Loire. Tours—outside a small circle of savants—does not take its past too seriously. Hardly seriously enough perhaps. But till that problem of municipal fathers be solved, how to respect antiquity without sinking to be the mere guardians of a museum, we had best not blame Tours over much. It is alive now; and the craving present refuses to take old stones for bread.

The old stones vanish, but not too quickly; and so the dreaming lover of the past still finds hospitality for his spirit. But he will be more of a shrinker than is wholesome, if he do not pass some cheerful half hours in the Rue Nationale, the Rue Royale of yesterday, the centre, or at least the show-room of the life that beats in Tours to-day. Balzac, the native, vaunted the cathedral, and commemorated some ancient houses of mediæval mustiness; but the real Tourangeau broke out in his lyrical outburst in "L'Apostrophe," in praise of the "queen of streets," the "delicious street" where he was born.

If we follow him here sympathetically, he asks no further admira-

tion for the modern city. Indeed, he can have known little of the great inchoate, characterless wilderness south of the railway terminus. After all, the real Tours remains pretty much within the boundaries of three centuries ago, when in Henry IV.'s days the ramparts, begun by Francis I., were completed. These boundaries are : to the North, the Loire ; to the South the Boulevards Béranger and Heurteloup ; East, the canal joining the Loire and Cher ; West, the Rue des Acacias. Within these limits are the cathedral, St. Julien, old St. Martin's towers and cloister, the lively Rue Nationale, the library with its treasures, the teeming markets, the quays, and the silent, secret walled-in great houses round St. Gatien. If only the huge, blatant new Hôtel de Ville, Gargantuan in its mass of material, empty, petty in its design, had been built outside !

But of all its possessions the dateless Loire is still its glory—the dangerous, capricious, and most lovely Loire. No longer a highway : it has almost given up service. The sails on its waters grow fewer and fewer. But choose the right hour, and look down on it from the heights of St. Cyr ; and your eyes may search the world for a fairer scene. Out of a vibrating silver grey stand St. Gatien's towers. The shores of the wide water, opal now, iridescent an hour hence, seem destined playgrounds of romance. The little figures that move along the great bridge are surely not those that rubbed neighbourly shoulders with us in the streets below. At Loches, still more at Chinon, it is easy to think modern life away and repeople the past. But at Tours, only looking on the Loire can you blot out the lusty present. The effort is worth while ; for here is the very heart of Touraine, the kernel of its long growth. It has secrets to give up, and tales of a life which, for distinctive character, vivacity, and passionate drama, the present is all inadequate to compete with, the life of the days before Paris drew the brains and the arts and the fervour and the adventure of the nation to itself. Have you walked the quays by night, and when the winds blow ? It is then perhaps



the door first opens to the past. They say the Roi Hugon is at rest, that he hunts no longer on his old course above the banks, driving poor mortals before him as his prey, snatching them out of the living world into his savage kingdom of the night. They say the gas-lamps on the levées banished the *feu roi Hugon*. I do not know. Wild cries come down that river-bed, and drown the soft romantic airs that play about you on the heights above the siren river in the daytime. Echoes they seem of the struggle all along the road that led to the pleasant tameness of to-day.

It was the old fond belief of all good Tourangeaux who concerned themselves with the history of their land, that the city and the province were founded by Turnus. Escaping from Italy and the triumphant Æneas, he founded a new kingdom in Central Gaul. But Turnus has been dethroned.

What made Tours then? Two rivers and a shrine.

Blot out the Rue Nationale, its shops, its *cafés*, its hotels, its good-natured, cheery modern men and women. Blot out all save a low plain between the Loire and the Cher, with a few rising-grounds—one where afterwards was built the famous convent for great ladies, Beaumont-lès-Tours, another where St. Gatien stands. They could never be called hills, and they have long since disappeared. The Gallic inhabitants, the Turoni, had doubtless settlements on the heights of St. Symphorien and St. Cyr; but they were probably here as well. If it was their capital, or if they had any capital at all, nobody knows for certain. Defended by two rivers, yet they were not well enough defended, for the Romans came. The Turoni and the neighbouring tribes burnt in one day nearly all their villages, so as to starve back Cæsar's army. And that is why throughout Touraine there are no ancient Gallic habitations save in the rocks: only the dolmens and the *tumuli* remain to tell a broken tale of ancient builders. It was a land of forest and heath, not thickly peopled; but certain distinctly Celtic place-names seem to tell of Gallic settle-

ments which the Romans developed. Of such are Amboise, Langeais, Chinon, Candes, Ligueil, Pont-de-Ruan, and Veigné. They burnt their villages in vain. The Romans still came on. Vercingetorix called them and the Turonic Gauls rallied to him. But when Cæsar dragged the hero about Rome on his triumphal car, and put him to death, the Turoni and the rest gave in. Their most obstinate revolt was in 21 A.D., but Vitellius Varro, withdrawing his legions from Brittany, put it down with a strong hand. They were peaceful enough after that till the middle of the fourth century. At first they formed only a part of the great Celtic division, of which Lyons was the centre ; but in A.D. 374, at a later redistribution, Tours became the capital of the Third Lyonnais.

The Romans found the site to their liking. They built a great many villas, and planted gardens in the well-watered fertile plains, and on the hills, north and south, above the rivers ; and so did the Gauls when they had accepted Roman civilisation and partly fused with the conquerors. The Romans made themselves an agreeable and permanent settlement here between the Loire and Cher, and called it *Cæsarodunum*. About B.C. 27, the Emperor Adrian made it a free town. Built as a *ville de plaisance*, what we should call a residential place, it soon developed some commercial importance from its situation, though its circumference was very small. Where now St. Gatien and its cloisters stand was its nucleus. But permanence meant comfort, luxury, amusement. And so in the first century they made great baths, and built an amphitheatre, for gladiator and wild-beast shows, on a vast scale, larger than that of Nîmes. You can see the remains still, near the cathedral, in the very heart of oldest Tours. When you follow the winding Rue Général Meunier, it is interesting to learn that its course is so shaped because it is built on the very walls of the old Roman circus. To realise the remains completely one has to be a determined archæologist, and grope about in the cellars here and in the neighbouring streets.

General Courtigis did this thoroughly in 1853; and discovered the old passages and arches, and traced the plan. It was then that modern Tours read its most ancient charter in the mutilated inscriptions of the third century in the cellars of the *archevêché*. Casts of them are now in the Archæological Society's museum.

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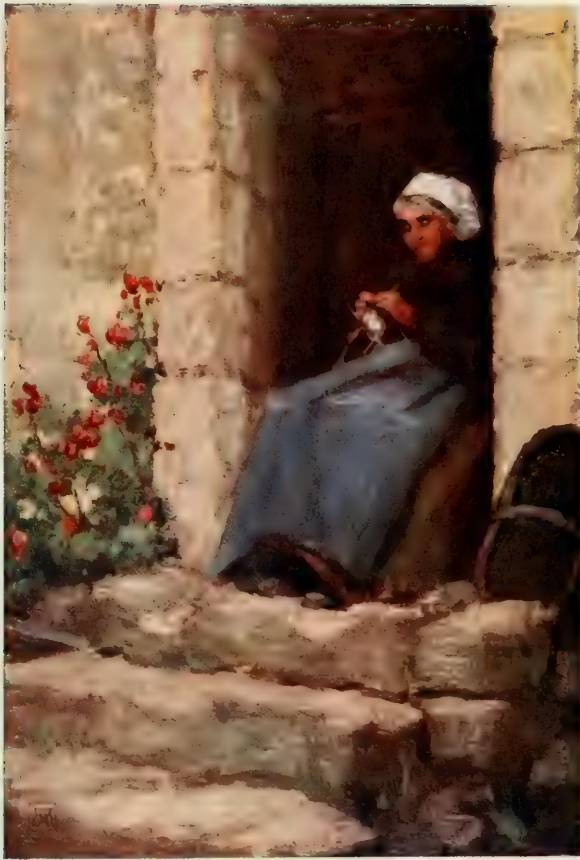
But St. Gatien came. Do not connect him yet with the great church here. It was twelve centuries before he was honoured on this spot. He never built any church. His figure is so dim and shadowy that he might never have entered into the popular imagination had not St. Martin revered him, and prayed at his tomb. That was enough to secure him veneration. National piety has woven one legend about him, which has been stoutly maintained as historic fact even in these latter days. St. Gatien, says this legend, was Jesus Christ's disciple from a boy. He was a comrade of the apostles, and a witness of many of the Master's miracles; was present at the washing of feet, and at the Last Supper; and on the Day of Pentecost he received the gift of tongues. According to another version, he was the man with the pitcher who showed Peter and John the upper chamber wherein to spread the Passover. St. Peter appointed him bishop, and sent him to Central Gaul, where he won the heathen heart to Christ.

But alas for legend, St. Gatien had no part in the first abortive mission to Gaul, nor in the second. He came from Rome in the reign of Decius, about A.D. 250, with many famous companions, St. Trophinus, St. Denis, St. Paul (of Narbonne), Saints Saturninus, Austremoine, and Martial. Christianity did make some headway under him, and he was recognised as its chief in that portion of Gaul which had Cæsarodunum for its centre—chiefly among the

Turoni at first, who, if they had given up to some extent their Druidic rites, had never accepted Roman paganism. But all his life long he and his converts were persecuted outcasts. Bishop, we call him: he was a poor hunted missionary, making his home with the wild things on the hillside over the river, which later became Marmoutier. I have said he built no church. In caverns, or by the roadside, or secretly at Gaulish hearths, he carried on his work. Dying in the first year of the fourth century, he was buried in the Cemetery of the Poor, outside the Gallo-Roman town, as the law required. This cemetery gave its name to the church built near it, Notre Dame la Pauvre. When St. Gatien's relics were deposited there, it took the name we know, Notre Dame la Riche. Its successor, with the glorious Pinaigrier glass, is therefore, so far as site goes, the oldest church in Tours. To-day a stone monument outside commemorates St. Gatien's resting-place.

Nevertheless, his gospel made some way, enough at least to put the special shows of the amphitheatre out of fashion. In the early part of the fourth century the next bishop, St. Lidorius, built the first Christian church in Cæsarodunum, making it out of the house of a Roman senator. This was the church to which St. Martin was called; and near it—within the walls of the *archevêché* is the spot—he built his first cell. St. Martin presented to the church of St. Lidorius the greatest treasure he owned—some relics of St. Maurice and the Thebean martyrs; and the successive churches built on this site (that of the present cathedral) were dedicated to St. Maurice till the fourteenth century, when St. Gatien's name rose again to honour.

Rome gave much to Touraine—roads, bridges, laws, settled life, luxury. The Roman *thermae* and the Roman amphitheatre have their great significance, but the Gauls were Gauls still, however Romanised. There were many nationalist revivals and struggles, and the fusion was always incomplete. The barbarians' advance doubtless



THE COLLEGE DOOR.



drew the races together for mutual defence at the end of the fourth century, when fear of the wild invaders drove the rich senators to abandon their villas on the Cher, and concentrate themselves in the spot where now stands the cathedral and the *archevêché*. They used the stones of their villas—indeed, they used even the stones of the amphitheatre—for defence, and built the *castrum* between A.D. 373 and 385. This Gallo-Roman wall remained standing till the eleventh century; and it is not all gone: traces are still to be seen between St. Gatien's and the Loire. But now—and the fact is significant of the Roman decay—the city within was no longer *Cæsarodunum*, it was *Turones*, *Urbs Turonum*, *Urbs Turonica*,—Tours. There was little growth here for long. Harassed and harried by barbarians, it remained a poor city, with a strong young rival not a mile away.

The rival was Martinopolis. When St. Martin's body was brought down the Loire from Candes, where he died, it was landed near Tours, and buried according to his desire in an open field. Scholars quarrel over the spot, but most probably it was where you find his shrine now, or very near it. His tomb became at once a place of pilgrimage. Folk came from every land, princes and statesmen, and monks and saints, and rich folks and beggars. The shrine got many gifts. The pilgrims had to be lodged. Hostelries rose on every side for rich and poor; religious houses for such as wished a retreat near the holy place; churches for these religious houses—the church of St. Martin itself, reared by St. Perpetuus, in place of the chapel built by Martin's friend, St. Brice. A great and splendid basilica it grew into, with mosaics and paintings and royal gifts of gold and silver. Shops for money-changers and goldsmiths and every kind of craftsmen grew up. For a time Martinopolis was under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Tours, and very restive thereat—a vigorous, turbulent place, cosmopolitan, teeming with people, and one of the real centres of Europe. In the tenth century it had twenty-eight churches, the treasure of which tempted the pirate

northmen. Then it fortified itself with walls, and called itself no longer Martinopolis but Châteauneuf (*Castrum novum Sancti Martini*). This is anticipating ; but it shows that in spite of the Roman settlement, without St. Martin, Tours had been a mere provincial centre of precarious existence. And so the story of St. Martin is the first great chapter in the history of Tours and of Touraine.





ST. MARTIN DESTROYING THE IDOL

## CHAPTER III

### ST. MARTIN OF TOURS

*“Our Martin”—Martin the Soldier—Bishop of Tours—Marmoutier—The Wanderer—The Thaumaturgist—Martin and the Creatures—The Councillor of State—Death at Canaë—Sulpicius Severus—Martin in Folk-lore—The wanderings of his bones—The later history of his Shrine.*

You cannot omit St. Martin from the story of Touraine. He is the greatest of all the personalities which have moulded and coloured its destiny. An alien out of a far land, he came to be servant, friend, father of his new-found people, and by a process of adoption which points to a peculiar spiritual kinship, they made him at once and for ever their son, brother, spokesman, champion and patron—but always their familiar. “Our Martin”—so they spoke of him. The whole Christian world held him dear. All France claimed him; and he is far more the French national saint than is St. Denis. For ages

France found in this Slav the embodiment of its own spirit and destiny, its chivalry, its strenuous battling for an idea, its democratic force. He left deep traces in many parts, especially in Poitou, Berri, and Burgundy; but the most active and notable part of his life was spent in our province; and there he died, and there was his shrine, which drew all Christendom to Tours.

The people who loved him and adopted him, transformed him after their own image. No other saint has so inextricably entered into folk-lore. Martin is a historical personage, fairly clear to the eyes. His biography was written in his own lifetime by a learned scholar, one of his intimates. The cultured Gallo-Romans read it widely and with enthusiasm. But meanwhile the rustic Gauls, to whom the exquisite narrative of Sulpicius Severus was a sealed book, were making their own *Martiniad*—out of their gratitude and the stuff of their own life. So we have the Martin of history and Martin the myth. I can hardly hope to separate them in my narrative. The mythical atmosphere is but the aura of what in him made history. History is illumined by the myth.

For the sober tale about him Sulpicius Severus is our principal informant. From him the later biographers mostly borrowed—Gregory of Tours, Fortunatus, and, with some legendary additions, Péan Gastineau. Martin was born about A.D. 316, far away from Tours, at Sabaria, in Pannonia, Hungary. His father, a pagan, was first a soldier in the Roman army, then a military tribune. For his services he got land in Italy, at Ticino, and there the young Martin spent his boyhood. At Ticino he fell under Christian influences, became a catechumen, and looked forward to a religious life. But the Emperor Constantine called all the sons of his veterans to aid him in the defeat of the Goths, or to enter the civil service. Martin's father forced him to enter the army. It is said he did so, at fifteen, a captive loaded with chains. After passing through his military apprenticeship, he became a regular when he was nineteen. Constantine

sent his regiment—probably a body of Sabarian lancers—into Gaul ; and thus gave Gaul its great apostle. The homage of kings and warriors would have been granted him less frankly had his profession been other. Clovis yielded, I am sure, to a brother-in-arms as well as to a holy man.

Martin's office demanded character and a knowledge of men. As *circitor* he reported on discipline, inspected the outposts, and made the night round. Even then, so far as his military service allowed, he lived a life of complete charity. The winter of 338-339 was a hard one in Picardy, and the young *circitor* had parted with nearly all his garments. Riding in one day, at the gate of Amiens, his garrison town, he met a shivering beggar who asked for alms. Martin raised his sword and cut his cloak—the white woollen chlamys—in two. The beggar shared a not superfluous covering. So runs the gallant story that all the world knows. That night Jesus Christ appeared to him. The Lord of Glory wore the divided cloak about His shoulders ; and He said, while He lamented the want of charity of the professed Christians—“ But here is Martin, only a catechumen, who has clothed Me with his garment.” To Martin it was the signal that he might now be received into the Church without presumption.

Of his evangelising in a soldier's coat, of his leaving the army, his friendship with SS. Maximin and Hilary, his journey to his native land and to Rome, his stay at Milan, and in the Isola d'Albenga, I cannot tell here. He settled at Poitiers, as Hilary's humble exorcist, then as priest, and formed a community at Liguge, the oldest monastery in France. He had gained great spiritual power; he healed the sick, brought men back from over the shadowy threshold. Later, he was wont to say this was the time of his greatest power, that the higher dignity forced on him took away something from his earlier gifts. He lived, as he thought, under the shade of Hilary's great name. But the bishopric of Tours fell vacant. It would have been vain to

offer it to Martin, who desired to be the least of men. They resorted to a trick. Rusticus, a citizen of Tours, came to him, saying his wife was at the gates of death, and he alone could help. Martin, hastening to comfort a dying woman, was met at the gate of Tours by all the people crying—"Martin! Martin! He is the worthiest! He is our bishop!" Resistance was in vain. There were dissentients among the clergy—he was not gifted with a comely or imposing person. They saw a poor, rugged, unkempt monk, hurrying to a sick bed. That their bishop? And he remained ever the same lowly, ill-clad, unclerical man. He wore a black slave's robe, lived like the poorest, never used the bishop's seat in the church, would have no fine residence, was at every man's beck and call. But he needed solitude to nourish his activity. So he made his way to the wild wooded banks on the other side of the Loire, where holy men, notably St. Gatien, had been before him. Martin built a hut, and afterwards chose a cave above St. Gatien's. You can still climb to St. Martin's Rest (Le Repos de S. Martin). He was no hermit. From this place, to be known as Marmoutier, he administered his diocese; but the streets of Tours and the roads of Touraine knew him still. Others joined him; and it became a kind of informal monastery and school. An unwritten Rule governed their austere lives. They owned nothing save in common. They neither sold nor bought. The younger men copied books and illuminated. The elders were given more time to pray. They ate together their frugal meals of fruit and vegetables, and dressed in the coarsest garb. The place was open to all strangers, and Abbot Martin washed their feet. The Seven Sleepers came; St. Ninian came, and St. Patrick. Meanwhile Martin kept his cell in Tours, and the city knew him as its best friend. To ransom captives was his constant care, and among his missionaries were both great nobles and freed men.

The insolent Avician, Governor of Touraine, came into Tours one day with a long line of fettered prisoners behind him. On the

morrow punishment and death awaited them. Martin made haste to the palace. It was nearly midnight and all slept. Martin lay down on the threshold. He did not sleep; and there was one waking within—Avician himself. An angel spoke to him and said: "Martin is at the door, and seeks thee." He sent his slaves to open to the holy man. But while feigning obedience, they mocked Martin and kept the door closed. An angel spoke again; and this time the Lord Avician rose and opened the door himself, crying: "I know what you seek. Go away lest fire from heaven consume me. I grant all you ask." He called his officers, and let the prisoners free. Then Avician left the city, and Tours was glad.

But the idea of St. Martin that has most deeply entered into the popular imagination is that of the wandering apostle. Before the end of his life his diocese probably included Anjou and Maine. We cannot date his wanderings, but they must belong to all periods of his life. He and his friends were as well known on the road as the Friars Minor of eight centuries later, whom in so many ways they anticipated. He went on foot, or mounted on an ass. Martin's ass and Martin's staff became proverbial. The rustic Gauls knew him as one of themselves. They saw him in all kinds of dangers and difficulties, but he left an impression of complete success. His was a struggling course: Martin was ever the Battler—*Bellator Domini*. A man of large humanity, but masterful, and with one dominant idea: monotheism. The people ran hither and thither sacrificing to scattered gods. "There is but one God," said Martin—"mine. Yours, too. Listen, I will make Him manifest unto you. Down with these shrines, these heathen altars!" Martin the Wrecker was a very formidable person. Since his time there have been many wreckers in Touraine: Huguenots, they have been called, or Revolutionaries, or Restorers. "Away with the old! Heigh-ho for a new world!" their cry. Martin is the most spirited and convinced of them all. And he never doubted but that he destroyed the deity

in the shrine. Yet another shared the honours with Christ. Were the old gods indeed dead? Christ was a shadowy substitute, but Martin was near and real; in all the remoter places the heritage was his.

The wonder-stories of his fight with the old polytheism are many and very striking. Indeed the tales of Martin the Thaumaturgist are among the most magnificent in the records of the saints. Once when he was about to destroy a rich pagan temple at Leprosum (probably Levroux in Berri) he met determined opposition. Foiled for the moment, he retired to fast and pray. After three days there came to him two angels armed with lance and buckler, soldiers of the heavenly host. With them he went back to the temple and destroyed it without hindrance, so struck were the pagans with terror and daze. Another time, when he set fire to a temple, the flames gained a house near. Martin got on the roof and presented himself as an obstacle to the flames. Then they saw the fire repelled by his bodily presence against the direction of the wind. Flames and wind struggled hard, but in vain, against the body and the spirit of the wonderful man. Even Christian shrines had to prove their authenticity to him. One near Marmoutier, called the Tomb of the Martyr, had many pilgrims. Martin ended the cult effectively, bidding the holy man rise. A spectre out of Hell rose at the call, and confessed that on earth he had been a man of many crimes. Martin, the protector of so many callings, should be also the patron of historical research.

But through all his iconoclasm breaks a great humanity. He cannot resist the cry of the mother who has lost her child. He kisses the leper at the gate of Paris. Friend of all the simple folk, of the slaves, of the disinherited, he held them in his spell. But he held another world, too. The great elemental saints and poets have never made sharp distinction between the different orders of creation. In his love for beasts and his power over them, St. Martin is the





WINTER IN THE WOODS.



precursor of St. Francis. He stops the dogs in their wild career after a hare.

“Martin a pitié eue  
De la petite beste mue.”

He has pity on a poor mad cow and chases the demon out of it. The cow kneels down before the saint adoring. He has pity on the fishes of the Loire devoured by the divers. And at his bidding the greedy birds fly away to the hills and the forests. Here is a curious and pretty legend out of Berri :—

“One day when St. Martin, with his friend, St. Brice, was going to Levroux . . . he stopped to say mass at Argy. But the frogs of the neighbouring ditches began to croak in so indiscreet and persistent a fashion that he was forced to stop and send his faithful St. Brice to ask them to be quiet—an injunction which they obeyed at once. The office ended, the pious pilgrims mounted their asses and went on their slow way towards Levroux. But remembering ere long that he had left Argy without giving the frogs back their speech, the bishop bade his companion tie up his ass and go back to release the poor croakers from their hard penance. In the meanwhile he should take a little rest, for he had great need of it. Thereupon he dismounted, lay down on the grass and fell asleep. But before going away St. Brice stuck his own staff and his master's into the ground, one at the sleeper's head, the other at his feet. When he had come to the Argy ditches he bent down, and announced to the frogs that they were now free to sing. One of them, from obedience, uttered a croak or two, and then was silent again like the rest. And never since have they lifted up their voices in that place.

“On his return, what was Brice's astonishment to see that the two staves had grown into leafy trees to shelter his master from the rays of the sun! For long the trees were known and venerated in the country under the name of the Trees of St. Martin-le-Riche.”

But this friend of the people and the creatures was the foremost man of his time. At the court of Tours or Treves his influence was great. When Valentinian, of Aryan tendencies, began to persecute the Catholics, Martin appeared to plead for the persecuted. Valentinian, influenced by his wife Justina, was obstinate, and Martin found a closed door. Never was obstinacy equal to Martin's, however, and he presented himself day after day, till at last he found a door unguarded, and made his way into the Emperor's presence. Valentinian, brooding and sulky, would not rise to receive him. "I know what you want, and I refuse," he said. Suddenly his seat was enveloped in flames. He threw himself at Martin's feet, and granted all.

One of his warmest friends was the wife of the Emperor Maximus, Helena, a Welshwoman. The great day of her life was when she was permitted to send all the servants away, and serve Martin at table by herself. She laid the table for him, covered his seat with a cloth, gave him water to wash his hands, served him with food she had cooked herself. While the old man ate, she stood silent at a distance. Her own meal was the crumbs that had fallen from his table.

Maximus recognised fully the worth of the man who never flattered him, and could not be cajoled. The name of this Emperor recalls the incident in Martin's career which has made men honour him outside the Church, as one of the heroes of humanity. The Priscillianite heresy was disturbing the Church, especially in Spain. Maximus, a Spaniard, was inclined to put it down with a strong hand. The confiscation of the heretics' property was doubtless tempting. The Gallic clergy, with some honourable exceptions, hounded him on; and the Councils of Bordeaux and Saragossa encouraged him. Two Spanish priests, Ithacus and Idacus, clamoured for the heretics' punishment by the secular arm. But Martin, stalwart champion of orthodoxy as he was, resisted, and in 385 he went to

Treves to plead for the persecuted. He prevailed. So long as Martin stayed at court, the Ithacan party were foiled; when he left, they had the upper hand again, and Maximus gave the suppression of the heretics into the hands of the unrelenting Evodius. Priscillian was killed. Exile and death were the fate of his followers. Heresy blazed the stronger, and a worse persecution was threatened. Then Martin left his cell at Marmoutier, and set out again for Treves. News of the old man coming along the road on his ass reached his enemies within the city. They met him at the gate, and refused him entrance. "But," said Martin, "I come with the peace of Jesus Christ." And such was the power of his presence that they could not close the city gates against him. But the palace doors were closed. Martin refused to see the Ithacans or to receive the communion with them, and their fury at this is eloquent testimony to their sense of his power. They appealed to the Emperor, who delivered over Martin bound to them. But in the night-time Maximus sent for Martin, argued, coaxed, persuaded him to compromise. The schism would be great, he persisted, if Martin continued to exasperate the Ithacans. Martin said he had nothing to do with persecutors. In wrath the Emperor let him go, and gave the orders to the tribunes to depart for Spain and carry out a rigorous inquisition. Then Martin returned to Maximus and bargained. Let the order be revoked, and he would receive the communion with the Ithacans next day at the election of the new Archbishop. The order was revoked, and Martin kept his word. But when he knew the cause of humanity safe, he departed, and on his way back to Tours experienced a great agony. Why had he had any dealings with the Ithacans? In a lonely place he pondered sadly. An angel spoke to him. "Martin, you do right to be sad, but it was the only way. Courage, Martin!" Never again did he go to any Council; he did not like the air where he breathed compromise. And after, he was wont to say with tears, that if he had saved the heretics, he himself had lost power over men, over demons. Tragic

agony of a simple, direct soul! They have outraged the meaning of the episode who explain Martin's protest as merely against the surrender of the Church to the secular power. It was *dése-humanité* of which he held the Ithacans guilty.

His laborious, friendly life wore to its end in company with his disciples, the saintly Clair, the scholarly Sulpicius, the erring, fascinating, beloved Brice—with celestial familiars, too, with Agnes, Thekla, and Mary. An old frail dying man he went to Candes, in 397, to make peace between quarrelling churchmen, a band of brothers with him. He brought the disputants together, and then was fain to return to Marmoutier; but his strength gave out, and he knew that death was at hand. "Father, why leave us in desolation?" they cried. "The wolves will devour your flock when the shepherd is gone. Have pity and stay!" And Martin cried: "If I am still necessary to Thy people, I will stay and will not murmur." They would have given him straw to lie on, but he refused such luxury; would have lifted him to an easier posture, but he said: "Let me look at heaven, brothers, rather than earth. My soul will have an easier flight." Even at the last the Demon whom he had fought all his life came to torment him, till he cried: "What dost thou here, cruel beast? Thou wilt find nothing on me of thine. I am going to Abraham's bosom." And he died.

Away in Marmoutier, that night Sulpicius slept a restless sleep on his bed. Then entered to him Martin, clad in white raiment, his face and eyes and hair shining with a glorious dazzling light. He carried Sulpicius's little book in his hand, and he gave him his blessing. "I felt the soft touch of his hand on my head." But as he looked, Martin rose and vanished. Sulpicius tried to rise, too, but with the effort he woke. While he was cherishing the vision, news came that Martin had died at Candes.

At Candes sharp disputes arose over the body. The Poitevins said: "He is ours. He was ours first. You have had him long





PLACE PLUMERLAY, TOURS.

enough." The Tourangeaux said: "He is ours—our bishop. Now we take him home." Both watched by night in the cell at Candes. But while the Poitevins slept, the Tourangeaux waked. Besides, they had made their preparations. Outside there, where the dark Vienne meets the great Loire, the boat was ready. Brothers within hoisted the blessed body to brothers outside, who furtively conveyed it to the boat. Up the Loire, while all the world slept, went the waking boat with its holy freight—past La Chapelle, past Langeais, past Maillé, only known then as stations of the faith—rowers replacing rowers with tireless haste, and men at the stern peering into the night lest pursuers should come and rob them of their treasure. And so they came to Tours. The banks were lined with weeping folk. There were two thousand monks in the procession.

Over his humble grave the well-beloved Brice built a little chapel, which St. Perpetuus replaced by a larger church. And gradually rose the great basilica of Martinopolis.

In his lifetime his fame had been carried throughout the whole world by the work of Sulpicius. With pardonable author's pride he notes in his *Dialogues* its wide circulation. Nothing at Rome sold so well. Posthuanus tells him: "At Alexandria they know it better than you do yourself." The monks of the Thebaid have listened in wonder to the wonders of Martin. The holiest knows that Martin surpasses him. Only in Gaul are there envious priests to decry him. In all the annals of the saints there is nothing more exquisitely human than those *Dialogues*—unless it be Leo's memories of St. Francis in the *Speculum Perfectionis*. Old friends gather round Sulpicius and Posthuanus, back from the East, and speak of their lost friend. It is a foretaste of *Nos qui cum eo fuimus*. Gallus is there, full of memories but rough of speech. "Speak in Celtic or Gallic, if you will," they say, "but speak to us of him." They speak far into the night, and at break of day begin again. And with the morning come a great band, out of breath, excited. They have heard of the story-telling, and all

who seem not merely curious are let in to listen to Gallus, who sits in the middle. They talk and listen till the going down of the sun.

Martin, the friend of the people, was adopted by them in a primitive people's own way, made grotesque and entirely familiar. Yet in a kind of affectionate caricature he retained some recognisable traits of the original man—his serviceableness, his untiring travels, his constant fight with the powers of darkness. To the rustic population of Touraine he appeared by their sides—a reaper, a gleaner in the fields, more wonderful than they, but always one of them. Or he was the reincarnation of their former deities. The old sacred stones were called by his name. The marks which had been the footsteps of the elder gods were now the *Pas de St. Martin*, or the tracks of his ass. The gradual emergence from heathendom is everywhere commemorated by the tales of Martin and the Devil. In these he appears as a shrewd, tricky jester, but always as the people's friend, who by ruse or strength invariably gets the upper hand. The Devil, impersonating their enemy, is the fool of the story, making foolish wagers, foolish bargains, and ever losing. Yet soberer legend shows Martin, too, as pitiful of the Devil, and as desirous of his salvation. The confusion between him and Merlin—Myrdhinn the enchanter, of a century later—has given rise to a strange theory that they were the same. In Germany and the wilds of Belgium, he fell heir to the Woden wonders. The wandering Martin was the mystic Wanderer of God, and fires were lighted in his honour.

No other saint's name has passed into the language like his. Birds and fruits were called after him. His staff made all staves "Martins." Jeanne d'Arc swore by her "martin-bâton." When sunshine strives with the oncoming winter about his feast-day, we still speak of "St. Martin's summer."

Everyone wanted him for patron saint. If Martin the apostle,



the bishop, the thaumaturgist, became the patron of Tours and Lucca, Martin the Roman soldier was chosen as the patron of horse-soldiers. Tailors and cloth-merchants invoked him who had cut his cloak in half for the beggar. Travellers placed themselves under the protection of Martin the Wanderer. Those on horseback nailed up horse-shoes as ex-votos to his shrine. They called on him in perilous passages. Innkeepers sought as patron one who had known the toils of the road. "Our Martin" was, long before St. Vincent, the vinedressers' saint. It was he gave increase. "Martin, Martin!" they cried, "ce soir du moût, demain du vin!" By a grotesque extension the *mal de S. Martin* became a euphemism for drunkenness; and *martiner* signified to be too fond of wine. Penitent drunkards invoked with confidence the water-drinker! But indeed those who sought his protection were so many that the great Gregory of Tours hardly exaggerated when he referred to Martin as *Toto orbi peculiari patrono*. (All the world's own patron.)

While his legend was growing unconsciously among the people, in the more coherent world of church and state his fame and influence grew by leaps and bounds. He was the greatest treasure of western Europe north of Rome. Save Rome and Jerusalem, no shrine was so famous. None save St. Peter's had so many pilgrims. In his life he had been "Ce bon Martin qui a la main toujours ouverte pour donner." Now he got many and magnificent gifts. The kings of the earth and the saints came from afar and prostrated themselves before his tomb; and in the tale of his pilgrims are counted all the notable men of the West, from the fourth to the twelfth century. Eligius (St. Eloi) goldsmith, statesman, and saint, made a covering of wrought gold and jewels for his tomb. The kings of France were proud to be Abbots of St. Martin. (Louis XIV. was the last.) Military chieftains fought under his banner, till gradually his name became the symbol of the national spirit; and with his fame grew

the power of Tours. Tours guarded the treasure jealously. When the Northmen came sweeping down the Loire in the ninth century, and burnt St. Martin's church, the treasure was secretly taken away ;



TOUR DE L'HORLOGE, OLD ST. MARTIN'S

and till 919 it wandered hither and thither seeking safety. Once back in its old home, nothing was good enough for it. Louis XI. gave it a silver trellis enclosure—in gratitude, characteristically, for the death of Burgundy—and a kneeling silver statue of himself. But such treasure was tempting, and Francis I. stole it, when his difficulties in the year 1552 made sacrilege seem a small thing. Tours wished to ransom it, but the king was in too great a hurry ; and Tours saw the consequence in the disaster of Pavia. Francis did penance after his liberation ; but it was never quite convenient for him to replace the precious railing.

With the desecration of the tomb by the Huguenots passed the greater glory of

Martin. Later, the shrine was built again, but more modestly ; and in the course of ages Tours got a new religion—the passing religion of the Revolution. The city offered the regathered treasure of St. Martin to the altar erected by the Convention. A bell-

ringer saved the saint's skull, and a woman his arm-bone. These, in 1803, were declared authentic, and disposed in St. Gatien's, to be returned to St. Martin's should it ever be restored again. Meanwhile the traces of the old tomb had been lost under the foundation of houses. The piety that dreamt of its rediscovery, that roused enthusiasm to its search, belongs to another tale, that of Monsieur Dupont, "the holy man of Tours." The discovery was made in 1860, poor and insubstantial in profane eyes, but enough for love and piety. They found "the earth on which the remains of the national apostle rested, and the cavity which held him for ten centuries." Six years later, a baldaquin was erected over the old tomb; and the pilgrimage began again. Now above the little crypt where the meagre remains of him are treasured, rises a great, handsome, chilly basilica, a monument of modern architectural cleverness. But it is hard to call up a vision of the humble, genial Martin there. He is more likely to be with the parti-coloured beggar at the door, or in the little crypt where figures kneel in the half-darkness, where the ex-votos recall the many tongues in which he has been praised, and where the votive swords on the wall tell of soldiers of to-day and yesterday, who have been glad that one of their order should have been so good a friend to God and man.

I was at Tours during his *neuvaine* lately. The streams to his tomb were continual. Trains brought in pilgrims by the thousands, and it was impossible to get footing on the pavement of the Rue Nationale. It was a gay, good-humoured, holiday-making, rustic crowd. Piety was there, I doubt not, and medals and pictures and rosaries were being carried home; but holiday was uppermost. "Our Martin" was ever genial. We have ever honoured him so. So at least they think. And the summer before last there were special St. Martin *fêtes* at Marmoutier round the old cells. The guardian sisters of the Sacré Cœur saw their guardianship near an end. Their school was being closed. Who now would watch over the holy places? "Come on

Sunday," said one of them. "You will see all Tours." "All Tours" was apt to be sceptical; but "all Tours" loved its Martin. "About the bon Dieu they are mightily indifferent," she remarked with candid humour; "but don't say a word to them against St. Martin." And "all Tours" was there—the archbishop, the clergy, the nuns, the young men of the Church Societies, the medical students, workmen, haunTERS of *cafés*, professors, pretty modistes, fathers and mothers, children, devout old ladies, every rank, every political colour. A good many made the pious round; the rest looked on respectfully, or even climbed to Le Repos, and to where Brice prayed and rebelled, where the Seven Sleepers sleep—a full half of them sceptic perhaps, but all of them vaguely or definitely proud. Martin was a great man, Martin was theirs. He was the symbol of their old national life. A shadow this of the close friendship which the apostle inspired in men of every rank—emperors, scholars, slaves, labourers in the field. Then as now he did not convert all. But he softened hearts and he unified. In the cell which he built for himself near the cathedral some one wrote an inscription in Latin verse, commemorating both Martin the Battler and Martin the Friend:—

"Here have we come, and only the silence to meet us,  
 Here we have come—No clash from the arms of the Cross.  
 God's soldier sleepeth, never again to greet us.  
 Ah, might he wake, whose sleep is all men's loss!  
 Yet let us enter and sorrowful vigil be keeping;  
 Here before Martin's God let our prayers be laid.  
 Kneel here low in the place he washed with his weeping,  
 And his strong spirit will come to our weak hearts' aid.

The warrior sleeps; but Thou that watchest well,  
 Thou that slumberest not, save us, save Israel!"

## CHAPTER IV

### THE BARBARIANS

*Clovis and St. Martin—The mad Merovingians—Gregory of Tours—The Carolings—  
Battle of Tours—Charlemagne—Alcuin—le roi Hugon—The Northmen's  
ravages—St. Martin's danger—Siege of Tours—Battle of St. Martin-le-Beau.*

THE Gallo-Romans between the Loire and the Cher could not long withstand the barbaric hordes. The Visigoths were up and down the Loire. They conquered Aquitaine, and now Touraine was theirs. The Franks were at their heels, and a new war of races began. But the Roman power was hopelessly decayed, and the Gauls who had learnt many arts, had lost their native energy under Roman dominion. Thus the struggle was serious only between Frank and Goth. It came to a head under their great chiefs, Clovis and Alaric; both determined to have this province as the brightest jewel in their crowns. Theodoric the Ostrogoth played the part of peacemaker; and an imposing—to-day it would be called a theatrical—demonstration of mutual regard took place at a meeting on an island in the Loire opposite Amboise. But the peace made was baseless, and was broken at once. Clovis the Frank sent his rival a challenge to single combat. Alaric declined; but his army could not refuse the inevitable battle. Both were Christians after their fashion—Alaric Arian, and, for theological or political reasons, actively propagandist. The modern muscular Christian can see his primitive type in Clovis. Clovis prayed hard to the God of Battles, and clamoured to Him for success, bargaining shrewdly with Him. Before the struggle with Alaric, at Vouilly, near Poitiers, in 507, he sent messengers to

St. Martin's church at Tours to learn the issue. As his messengers entered the basilica, from the choir came ringing out the psalm—“Thou hast given me the necks of mine enemies that I might destroy them that hate me. They cried, but there was none to save them. . . . Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind.”

The augury was heartening, and the grateful Clovis did not forget St. Martin. After the battle, on their march to Tours, he forbade his soldiers to pillage: only grass and water might they take—in reverence of the saint. By his victory over Alaric he was virtually Cæsar in Gaul—at least, King of all the Franks, and Roman Consul. The ceremony of his investment with the purple took place at Tours, in the great basilica. “Augustus!” cried the people as he rode up. Splendidly apparelled he knelt in the church, a sturdy, not at all a servile henchman of Jehovah and of Martin. He was openhanded to the shrine. In an impulsive moment he gave his best treasure of all—his great war-horse. Gratitude could go no further—nay, hardly so far; for he wanted it back again! He carried gold crowns to ransom it. But the horse moved not from the sacred precincts. He doubled the sum—and his favourite came to him neighing. “St. Martin is a good friend,” quoth Clovis, “but he drives a hard bargain!”

Clad in his purple robe, a gold crown on his head, Clovis rode from his sacring in Martinopolis to St. Lidorius's humbler church in neighbouring Tours—where now St. Gatien stands—then on towards the Loire. To the shouting people he threw largesse. The place of his splendid triumph should remember the great king; and at one of his halts near the river he ordered a shrine to be built in honour of the Blessed Virgin. And this was done. His wife Clotilde retired to Tours not long after, to expiate the sins of her house; and died near St. Martin's shrine in 515.

In the next century St. Gregory gave the Virgin's shrine into the

keeping of some Auvergne monks, his countrymen. They brought with them the relics of a local saint, and built the church and abbey of St. Julien—not the church that we know to-day, old as it is, but on the same site. They were busy, practical men, the monks of St. Julien's abbey. A settlement grew about them. They built a little port (or *Echelle*) on the river, perhaps at first only a landing-stage for their own use. The bourg all about St. Julien and the port were called L'Echellerie. The well-known Rue de la Scellerie, where now the theatre stands, may, later, have been the southern boundary of St. Julien's port. Here, then, was a third nucleus of modern Tours. A fourth was the hamlet built about the old Christian cemetery, where St. Gatien had been buried. Between these scattered groups of Tours, Martinopolis, Echellerie, and Our Lady of the Poor—whose centres are marked to-day, severally, by St. Gatien, St. Martin, St. Julien, and Notre Dame la Riche—were meadows and marshes and woodland. The one real link between them was devotion to St. Martin. But in spite of the shrine, Tours, the old free city of the Romans, retained the chief formal dignity.

With the conquest of the Franks, Tours, and all Gaul, took a long step backward. The Gallo-Romans, too much or too little Romanised, had no national unity, and the Frankish rule was as inevitable as it was brutal. The Christianity of the new-comers was a fantastic travesty, hindering not at all their murderous quarrels nor mitigating one of their savage passions. They destroyed an old world as a spoilt child might a masterpiece which it had seized for its toy. Tours suffered acutely, and worst of all under its governor, Count Leudastus, a Gaul, but a nominee of the Franks, who had risen from the post of cook and baker in the royal household to his high rank by serving his master's evil passions. He had learnt nothing from Roman civilisation but debauchery, nothing from the Franks but cruelty. His reign in Tours was one long wanton outrage on decency and liberty. The Gallo-Roman nobles, cultivated,

subtle-minded, scornful and helpless, might have sunk almost to the level of the uncared-for people, while Tours and Touraine, after the death of Clovis, were shuttle-cocked to and fro between the various Frankish principalities.

And then a great Gaul rose. No leader of armies, but a man of peace. The great Gregory never questioned that the Franks had come to stay. When, at twenty-seven years old, he came from Auvergne to be Bishop of Tours, he recognised clearly that he was called to be apostle of both Frank and Gaul, that politically he owed allegiance to the Merovingian powers. But he never forgot he was a Gaul. He gave back to his own people their self-respect, when he forced the Franks to own, in fact if not in word, that Gaul still possessed a spiritual and intellectual force, to which they must go to school, if they would ever rise out of the state of turbulent childhood. They went to school, and learnt but slowly. They had to wait for the great schoolmaster of their own race, Charlemagne, before their progress was very apparent.

It is not another St. Martin we find in St. Gregory of Tours. The people did not make him one of themselves and weave absurdly affectionate legends round his name. Perhaps he was too great a noble. The circumstances of his time demanded that he should be much concerned with the dignity of the Church, and we cannot picture him journeying barefoot about the country, or riding on an ass, in the garb of a slave. Yet though he was not one of those elemental beings, part of the very world-spirit, like Martin, Gregory was a great man. Aristocrat and scholar, he might have become a courtier of the barbarian princes, whose permanent power he never disputed; or he might have retired to his cell at St. Maurice's to write books and moan over a broken world. He did neither. From the first he was like a great rock of shelter—for Gaul and Frank—in a weary land. His conception of the Church was an impregnable refuge against oppression. Justice and courage glow in him like great fires;



and for clemency, he was Martin's own scholar. Princes and queens and greedy tyrants clamoured round him for their victims whom he protected. His will was as strong as theirs, and far steadier. He had dealings with all the Merovingian princes of his time; treated between them; civilised their missions; persuaded them; withstood them; and was their uncrowned master. When Duke Gontran, pursued by Chilperic's vengeance, fled to St. Martin's sanctuary, Gregory defended its absolute inviolability—not from admiration of Gontran, but because some safe place for poor humanity must exist, or the world would dash itself in pieces. Commanded to give him up, he refused. Thereupon the General Roccolena rushed with his forces to Tours and encamped on the banks of the Loire. His men devastated the neighbourhood. Not Gontran only but now Gregory and all about him were threatened. Yet Gregory refused to consider submission. Roccolena determined to put Martinopolis to fire and sword, and rode sacrilegiously into the holy precincts on his charger. But ere the signal of death was given, he himself died, "struck by the virtue of Martin." "And so was appeased his insolent pride." Merowig, Chilperic's son, fled in his turn to the same sanctuary after his marriage with Brunehild, pursued by the wrath of his father and the wild termagant Fredegonde. This time the king came himself with fire and sword, demanding his son. But fire and sword were weaker than Gregory's will. Chilperic retired defeated before Gregory's "No." And when Chilperic, egged on by the wild cat Fredegonde, cited Pretextat, Bishop of Rouen, to Paris for performing the marriage rite, Gregory dared to defend him and to chide the king. It was to brave a very angry man. "Instead of keeping silence," he said to the cowering clergy about him, "speak out loud before the king. Show him his faults to his face, lest evil come on him, and yours be the weight of his soul's perdition." So great was the impression he made that Pretextat, but for his cowardice, would have departed a free man that day. Alas, he threw himself on

the king's mercy ; so fell into Chilperic's keeping, and died for his mistake.

Even for sacrilege to St. Martin he had mercy. Those who robbed the sanctuary of the dead saint were pardoned, because the living Martin would have pardoned and loved them. The Count of Tours, that audacious adventurer, Leudastus, had done all he could to wreck Gregory's reputation, yet it was Gregory who tried to save him at the last from the implacable Chilperic and Fredegonde whom he had betrayed. The betrayer had never learned to trust, and so he could not be saved.

A statesman Gregory was in a great sense, prudent, slow to offence, with an ear open to all, not given to fighting windmills, asking no idealism but only fair dealing from the Frankish rulers, and willing to temporise on secondary things. With storms continually about him, ambassador to courts, father of a harassed flock, he yet found time to be the reviver of Gallo-Roman learning, and to earn for himself the name of "Father of French History." They say his Latin is barbarous. Let them say ! He wrote living history in a great book—the *Historia Francorum*. Of St. Martin he spoke as a son ; and the pages on which he wrote his own experiences are living drama. He knew the worth of what he wrote. "Though these books are written," he says, "in a rude style, nevertheless, I conjure all the priests of the Lord, who, after me, shall govern the church of Tours, I conjure them by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the day of judgment, terrible to all the guilty, if they will not on that day be confounded and damned with Satan—that they never destroy these books, nor rewrite them, nor choose certain portions and omit others ; but that they keep them all in their entirety and without alteration, as we have left them." You can make curious studies in his invaluable record—exquisite civilisation meeting the wildest savagery ; intellectual subtlety cohabiting with wild-beast ferocity ; Chilperic discussing fine theological points with the bishop

and gloating over the torture of a wounded enemy. That the mad Merovingian struggle did not end in general annihilation is greatly due to St. Gregory of Tours, who stood for inflexible law, for justice and clemency to Frank and Gaul through all Touraine, and far beyond its borders. And so in the shade of St. Gatien's, or by St. Martin's shrine, the sojourner in Tours owes him pious remembrance. He rebuilt the burnt and pillaged cathedral; rebuilt the ruined basilica that St. Perpetuus had reared. A great restorer, a great maintainer!

Gregory had no worthy successor for many a day. And the Merovingian clash and struggle became muddle and petty anarchy, till at last the dynasty fizzled out and gave way to the Carolings. In Martinopolis there was life enough of a somewhat turbulent kind. It was the scene of perpetual town and gown fights, burghers against churchmen, both swearing by St. Martin. His shrine grew ever more a centre for cosmopolitan devotion; and he again appears as the sign and symbol of western civilisation when, in 732, Charles Martel goes out to defeat the Saracens under his banner.

Shall we call his famous battle—the greatest event of the eighth century—by the name of Tours or of Poitiers? Local historians have raved and raged round the point. But it was not one battle that settled the question of Christian or Mahometan civilisation in Gaul. The great dark Abderrahman and his vast hordes were not so promptly defeated. But if he was finally routed at Poitiers, it was but the sequel to a preliminary tremendous defeat on the plains of Ballan, seven miles south-west of Tours. Out of Tours poured Charles Martel and his men and met the Saracens on the wide bare stretch of country—desolate-looking now even under cultivation—which has kept to this day the name of the Landes de Charlemagne. The name may commemorate the great Emperor's vast hunting-ground, or this very battle; for Charles Martel, before his greater son, was Carolus Magnus. They were desperate men that fought

under St. Martin's banner that day. For them it was victory or death: there was no shelter for defeat. The gates of Tours were closed after them as they marched out—only to open to the conquerors.

Save round the shrine the general anarchy had desolated the land. The arts of peace had sunk low; men's minds had grown stiff and unadventurous. The doors of the greater kingdom moved on rusty hinges, when Charlemagne came to show, as hardly ever monarch has shown again, how material conquest and intellectual sovereignty can go hand in hand. Tours knew Charlemagne well, and received many benefits from him. He was there on at least three separate occasions. His second wife, Hildegard or Luitgarde, was a great huntress, and her memory, too, hangs about the *landes* beyond the Cher. At Tours, just after a great hunt she died, and was buried in St. Martin's. The Tour Charlemagne still stands, raised by Hervé, the treasurer of the basilica, nearly two centuries later, to mark the place where her body was laid.

Charlemagne's Palatine school and the school at St. Martin's, which he founded, or at least revived, in Tours, have a special interest for English folk, in that the chief master of both was the Kentish Alcuin. The Emperor sat at Alcuin's feet, and learned his lessons like a schoolboy. His courtiers went to school, and so did his sons and daughters. Alcuin he would have had about him always; but the master was growing old, and desired peace away from the bustle of courts. So under him the school of St. Martin's became the most famous of Europe, and indeed some have traced to it the origin of the University of Paris. Alcuin loved Touraine, and "loved the smoky roofs of Tours better than the gilded palaces of the Eternal City." What he had learned in Bede's school at Jarrow he taught with unsurpassable devotion, and scholars flocked to him from every land. But among the great men who have made Touraine, Alcuin, the Englishman, does not stand in the first rank. A man

of vast learning, both religious and secular, and of a gentle devoted nature, his mind was neither original nor daring. His successor, two hundred years later, Bérenger the Heresiarch, was a far greater influence on European thought. Alcuin did not prepare thinkers, but good Christians and subtle-minded students. His conversational methods of instruction, tending to promote readiness of speech and agility of reasoning, give him a high rank among educationists: and by his strenuous application of dialectic talents to theology, he may be ranked as the founder of the schoolmen. Something of a Puritan, as perhaps all great schoolmasters are bound to be, he who had been bred up on the pagan poets, forbade his pupils to read Virgil; and it may be he warred against the genius of the Tourangeaux while strengthening their morals and sharpening their wits. Among Touraine's debts to him is the development of the great Abbey of Corméry on the Indre, where we shall meet him again, resting in his old age, before he returns to St. Martin's to die.

Tours under Charlemagne recovered much of its ancient dignity. It was singled out for special honour and interest, chiefly because it housed St. Martin's shrine. Indeed, Touraine on the left bank of the Loire was for the first time—if we except the short reign of Clovis—really united to the Frankish kingdom. But beyond the building and the school-founding, the glimpses are few of the life of the people. They were ruled by elective counts. Charlemagne gave them one called Hugues, about whom sober history has not very much to say, but whose name has come down with a sinister sound through popular tradition. A tower at the eastern extremity of the walls, on the Loire, was built by him, or in his time. Till its destruction in 1719 it bore the name of the *Tour du roi feu Hugon*, or *Comte Hugon*. Doubtless the people were still *Turoni rebelles*. The local circumstances inevitably bred strife. The city of Tours, poor still and jealous of its richer neighbour, clung fiercely to its ecclesiastical authority over Martinopolis. And St. Martin's town was ever

restive under the yoke. Why should St. Maurice seek to lord it over our great St. Martin? Within St. Martin's town the strife was even keener, and much more constant, between arrogant churchmen and restive citizens. And beyond both boundaries Hugues had probably no easy task.

Was he an austere, unbending administrator, or was he a rapacious, ruthless grinder of the poor? Or has a tame and respectable substitute suffered for a name that was a reminder of some earlier grim being? At least, in after days, tales of the *feu roi Hugon* made men keep indoors when darkness fell, and shiver round winter fires. From him all shrank. His coming meant blight and destruction. The folk-lorists have been on his track. The Hugon that rode the air, and drove his victims before him, whose breath and touch meant death, who haunted the Loire from Angers to Orleans, and whose chief home was Tours, has been identified as a werewolf. Another more daring theory dismisses the *loup-garou* idea as too petty, as not fitting the traditions; and suggests that the fatal Hugon was the great Odin, who rode the wind sublimely, but who lost his divinity with time; and became in his decline a devil-spirit of the air. Odin, or Vodan, was a Turonic divinity, especially under the names of Nikar and Hug. And the *Tour du feu Hugon*, M. Péan will have it, was but the *Tour de l'alfe* or *elfe Hugon*. Here is a pretty puzzle for the folk-lorists. But let the tradition attach to degenerate Odin, or werewolf, or Charlemagne's Count of Tours, the last bears some of the brunt of an evil name. Was the dark legend but a mythical echo of the fact that Hugues and the Counts from him onwards, had a more absolute sway than any governor had been given before?

There were men coming who recked little of Charlemagne's schools and little of his counts. The Northmen, whose ravages Charlemagne had foreseen, swept down the Loire in the long ships—"along the path where float the swans." The cities on the Loire



RUE FORTIFICS NERVA, LONDRES.





were rich. It was treasure the pirates wanted, immediate treasure—St. Martin's treasure above all. To get that they were ready to reduce a world to ashes. Fire and sword cut a remorseless short path to where the booty lay. At the sound of their fierce northern cries the village folk left houses and chattels to them, and hurried within whatever city walls would give them shelter. A more destructive enemy than any that had come before, because their first dream was not of conquest but of booty, and they had no thought of preserving what they might not carry away. Even the Goths and the Franks had respected St. Martin's shrine, and desired the saint's protection. St. Martin had been as a bulwark to Martinopolis; now his guardians were to feel the lack of material defences, when Hastings and his men came down the Loire singing *la messe des lances*. Hastily the clergy removed the precious *châsse* and armed the citizens, and never a burgher but would have desired to be of the chosen guard of honour. Then began those long wanderings of St. Martin's bones. First they took the road to Corméry on the Indre, to the great monastery there, an offshoot of St. Martin of Tours, Alcuin's beloved retreat. But Corméry was not strong enough, nor far enough, and on the treasure went to Orleans till it seemed safe to bring it back to its old home; that was after the Northmen had glutted themselves with slaughter, pillage and ruin. The walls of Tours resisted the pirates, who, foiled, crossed to Marmoutier, and worked their will on the abbey. It was a wholesale massacre; a hundred and sixteen monks were killed. The prior, who fled, was tortured to death when they found him. Next St. Martin's own burgh was ruined, the great church and twenty-one others were burnt. A very ecstasy of destruction possessed them, which died down only when they had made a desert. Glutted, they went away. But St. Martin's *châsse* knew many wanderings still. The Northmen had happy memories of the banks of the Loire, and at the next rumours of their coming the *châsse* set off again to Léré. Then to and fro

between Léré and Tours, and on to Marsat in Auvergne. The monks seem to have despaired of the old shrine ever being again a place of safety, and it was determined to build a new one at Chablis.

The monastery was begun, but Tours strengthened its fortifications, and fetched the body back. Martinopolis had still to wait. Then the sudden, terrible Hastings threatened again, and again the treasure was removed, this time to Auxerre. At Auxerre, as elsewhere, its presence was marked by many miracles, but the Auxerrois were jealous for the honour of their own St. Germain. Indeed, they declared it was St. Germain worked the wonders. "Tush!" said the scornful guardians of St. Martin; "but let's put the thing to the proof!" and a paralytic was chosen for a test case. He was placed between the enshrined bodies of the two saints. And lo! the side towards St. Martin got well, while on the other towards St. Germain there was no change at all. "There!" said the Martin guardians confidently. "But," returned the Auxerrois, "here we have no real proof of superior virtue. Our saint was ever noted for his courtesy. Now he plays the host to the good Martin. He veils his virtue that his guest's fame may shine the brighter."

From courteous Auxerre it sought a refuge at Chablis, where the new monastery was ready for it. But the defeat of Hastings in 855 gave it another chance of return. Tours claimed it, and Martinopolis, still poorly defended, had to yield. On its return was instituted the great feast of the Church of Tours, the Reversion of St. Martin. The *châsse* was deposited in a church built within the ramparts, St. Martin de la Basoche.

Hastings, however, had left stubborn successors. Their most determined siege of Tours while the precious treasure was within the walls, was in 903. They had burnt and ravaged the banks of Loire and Cher, and on they came in a frenzy of confidence. The attack was stubborn, and stubborn the defence. For twelve days

citizens and soldiers manned the walls at every point, and kept the pirates out. With every available stone and handful of earth they strengthened the walls. There was no hope of relief from without, for every other town was in danger, and there were no spare adventurous bands. So it was like to be every man's life for St. Martin's bones. Then it was St. Martin proved himself alive once more—Tours' great champion—and in spite of civil and military devotion, it was a churchmen's victory after all. The Northmen had made a breach at last. (An archæological eye can still see the mark of it, near the Rue du petit Cupidon, for it was mended in another fashion and with different materials). In vain the men of Tours defended every stone, and stopped the growing gap with their bodies: the gap grew, and ere long the cathedral, the shrine, their hearths and homes would be desecrated. But St. Martin's spirit stirred in the heart of a great archbishop. He stopped praying at the shrine, and marshalled his clergy. Arrayed in their solemnest vestments, they took up the *châsse*, and bore it in procession, with chanting of hymns and waving of holy banners, up to the top of the wall at the point where the breach had been made. So sudden, so solemn, so triumphantly confident was their appearance, that instant confusion and terror struck into the assailants' hearts. The foremost pressed back, and the men of Tours took the chance offered them. They were down among the Northmen, hustling them, driving them. The Northmen were in flight, the men of Tours after them; nor was their flight stopped till the borders of the forest of Amboise near the Cher, where they gave battle. The end of the short, sharp fight was utter rout for the Northmen. And grateful Tours built a great church in the little bourg near where the fight had taken place, in honour of their protector, and called it St. Martin of the Battle (Sanctus Martinus de Bello). A fine church still stands on the same site; you pass it on your way to Chenonceaux. With time the name has changed to St. Martin le Beau.

Meanwhile the faithful in Martinopolis were rebuilding the basilica and fortifying it. In 919 the body was restored to its own home ; and there it remained till the Huguenots, with a wantonness that fell little short of the heathen Northmen's savagery, scattered the bones and pillaged the treasure.

## CHAPTER V

### FULK NERRA

*Theobald the Trickster—Rise of Anjou—Fulk the Good—FULK NERRA—Fulk and Tours—The Great Builder—Fulk and King Robert—Savage and Pilgrim—Montrichard—The Abbey of Beaulieu—Battle of Pontlevoy—Fulk threatens Tours, and takes Saumur—Last Journey to Jerusalem.*

WITH the growth of feudalism the Counts of Touraine became hereditary vassals of the king. In the middle of the tenth century nearly the whole of the country was united under Thibaut le Tricheur, Count of Blois. Theobald the Trickster, subtle politician or sly brigand, was bold warrior as well. He left a fame for ruthlessness as well as craft. "To man nor to woman did he bear friendship; no mercy or pity had he on great or on little," said a chronicler of him—

"Thibaut fut plein d'engein et plein fut de feintie :  
A homme ne a femme ne porta amitie ;  
De franc ne de chetif n'ot merci ne pitie."

He left great fiefs to his successors; and contrived to make his vassalship as slight a thing as possible. He raised his own armies, levied his own taxes, without a "By your leave" to his overlord and relative, the Duke of France.

But meanwhile a greater, a more concentrated power than that of Blois had been rising. The House of Anjou was making its way, from humble beginnings. Tradition says the founder was the forester Torquat or Tortulf, who lived on the Breton frontier, appointed for his dash and valour by Charles the Bald to keep the Northmen out of Touraine. From his home, the Blackbird's Nest, he and

his woodmen swooped down on the pirates with a swift boldness equal to their own. His good service was rewarded by the advancement of his family, and his son, or grandson, Ingelger, married Yolande, the heiress of Amboise. So it was Anjou first got a footing in Touraine. In their son, Fulk the Red, the family energy was seen to be combined with uncommon political capacity; and the Duke of France appointed him Viscount of Angers and, later, Count of the Angevin March. Fulk, too, married a Tourangelle, Roscilla, daughter of the Lord of Loches. Loches and Amboise were two fine footholds; and the anxiety of the Counts of Blois was not groundless. But the administration of Anjou was work enough as yet; and whatever spare energy his successor possessed was given to religion and letters.

In the story of Fulk the Good Tours plays a great part. His connection with it was not political, but one of sentiment. A devoted son of St. Martin, he desired to serve the saint in his own church, and through the favour of his overlord, the Duke of France, he became a canon of St. Martin's. Energetic administrator in Anjou, like all his family, yet when he could snatch a little while from the cares of state, he made his way—a peaceful way that no one stopped—eastward to Tours; and in the cloisters there lived the gentle humble life of the pious scholar. One day he found himself at the ferry on the Cher at Port Cordon—a little to the south-east of Plessis. There he met a leper who desired to go to St. Martin's. All shrank from the creature save the good count, who took him on his back, bore him to the church, fed him with his own hands, and gave him a bed to lie on. And, lo, suddenly the leper vanished. Wondering greatly, Fulk sat in his stall that night. St. Martin appeared to him, and comforted him, saying, "Good cheer! This day thou didst bear the Lord Himself." Once King Louis d'Outremer came with a train of courtiers to St. Martin's; and entering the church they discovered Fulk in the choir chanting the psalms. There was great mirth over

“the Count of Anjou turned clerk.” But Fulk turned the jest elsewhere in his letter to Louis. “Know, my lord, that an unlettered king is a crowned ass.”

Fulk the Good died in St. Martin's arms. In a respite of troubles with the Bretons he had repaired to Tours; and as he knelt in the basilica to receive the communion, death took him. His body rested in St. Martin's. One of his sons, Guy, became a monk at Corméry on the Indre. In the youngest, his successor, Geoffrey Greygown (Grisgonelle), the aggressive spirit of the family appeared again. The destiny of his race was shaping fast in him. Absorbed in the wars of his patron, the Duke of France, Hugh Capet, he was not able to bring to a head the already conceived Angevin project against the Count of Blois; but before his death he had added Loudun to his domains; and his successor knew how to use the stronghold as a point of vantage against Chinon and Saumur and Tours.

But that successor cannot be passed in the narration of a fact or the telling of an anecdote. He forces himself before us, a marvel of swiftness and weight; and though the circuit of his energies was narrow, he fills our minds as do William the Norman, Louis XI. or Napoleon. There was something of each of these in Fulk Nerra, Fulk the Black, Count of Anjou.

The career of Fulk Nerra has hardly been all explained. Perhaps never in the history of Europe have such energy and genius been concentrated on so narrow an end, a difficult end, in sooth—the strengthening of his Angevin marchland—but narrow for him. For that he fought for Touraine, year after year. For that he sought and won influence in Brittany. For that he procured a royal alliance. It may be the Time-spirit was only using him, great man though he was, as a tool to shape the destiny of his race, more particularly of his famous descendant, Henry II., no greater than himself in general capacity, not so great in military genius. He was hardly more of a *parvenu* than were the Dukes of France; and

in those unsettled times daring and promptness such as his might grasp at the highest power. Yet there is no evidence of his plotting for a wider rule than he could wrest from the Counts of Blois and Tours. Doubtless he thought his son, beginning where he ended, would inevitably be forced to wider channels; and he may have dreamt of a crown sprouting on his grandson's brows. But the wonder remains he did not seek to realise the ambition of his race in his own person. His great political sagacity would keep his ambition within bounds for long; but towards the end of his life his road pointed outward. By that time his son Geoffrey Martel had grown to man's estate; had rebelled, submitted, been forgiven. Together they might have done more than defy the Count of Blois and wrest castle after castle from him. But perhaps his political sagacity may have been chilled to mere caution, after fifty-three years of ceaseless fighting; and the visionariness which was his may have once too often diverted his feet from ambition to piety. He died on his last journey back from the Holy Land. But the story of the Black Falcon's long, well-aimed, savage swoops on his prey, and the building of his nests, is very good as it is.

Fulk was but a child when his father Geoffrey Greygown died. As a child he learnt there were hungry mouths all round him ready to devour his heritage; and before he had ceased to be a child he had learned to defend his own by seizing theirs. They say he was only fourteen when he defied Conan of Rennes, won the first battle of Conquereux, seized Nantes, and set up a lord in Conan's place, who was his creature. It seems entirely incredible; but to get all his history in, you can only add a few years at most! From the first he knew that the lord of Blois stood in his way. Odo had Champagne as well, and Chartres and Tours—that is, all Touraine, save Fulk's few fortresses—with Saumur, too, on the Angevin border. To keep his own fortresses Fulk needed Touraine, and went straight to this end. First he made a league with Adalbert,



Count of Perigueux, against Odo. They marched to Tours. Odo appealed to Hugh Capet, who with an eye to Touraine for himself, forbade them to advance. Whereupon occurred the famous passage of words: "Who made thee Count?" says Hugh to his vassal. "Who made thee King?" retorts Adalbert, who did not forget his own services. Odo absent, Tours fell, and was given to the young Fulk. But he could not keep it. He was fated never to keep it. Tours was faithful to Odo, a good ruler. And, moreover, Fulk committed the unforgiveable sin. Enraged with a canon of St. Martin's, he rode furiously on horseback into the holy place itself! Another Roccolena! The canons took down the great crucifix from its place and all the reliquaries; placed them low on the stone slabs; covered them and the shrine with thorns. They shut the doors of the great basilica, nor opened them day or night save to pilgrims from far lands. Fulk, ever sensible to ghostly terrors, humbled himself, went barefooted, and prostrated himself before the crucifix and the relics, swearing eternal reverence to the same. But submit as he liked, it was all over with him in Tours. Tours would have none of any lord who outraged their Martin. And it may be that he bore a grudge to St. Martin ever after. For when he built his great abbey church at Beaulieu, it was not St. Martin that was honoured there, but the Celestial Virtues.

In the years 991 to 994, when the rest of the world were trembling for the coming of the end of all things, Fulk was making sure of a very definite future here below. Right in the heart of Touraine, the enemy's country, he built a chain of forts so strong, with such wonderful strategic skill, that he has been known ever since as the Great Builder. None had been like him since the Romans. You cannot forget Fulk Nerra in Touraine, while his black nests still frown at you over the soft valleys. Loches he had already. He built the great square donjon there we know. Farther along the Indre he built Montbazou to threaten Tours. On the Indrois he

strengthened Montrésor. By the fortress of Sainte Maure he intercepted the old Roman road from Tours to Poitiers. North of the Loire he built Langeais, to guard the Loire from Tours to Anjou, and Semblançay, to be master of the road from Tours to



MONTBAZON

Le Mans. Of great importance for Touraine were likewise his castles of Loudun and Mirebeau; from them he commanded the Vienne, could dash on Montsoreau, Chinon or L'Île Bouchard. His plan of building seems to have been, a temporary occupation, a temporary fortification near his chosen site, under cover of which the permanent walls rose. You know his towers because they are always square. His donjons — after the Norman fashion, are in the most exposed

part of the castle. When you meet a round donjon with the castle built round it, in the Frankish fashion, it is not his.

Odo, roused at last, was a formidable foe; and Montbazou fell in 994. Fulk looked round for new allies, temporised, promised, persuaded; and at last got aid from Hugh Capet and Robert his son. He would have had his will of his enemy, if Odo, cowed by

the presence of his overlord, had not sent submissive messages, which induced the king to withdraw. Left alone, Fulk was as yet the weaker; and Langeais fell in 995. But the year before, Fulk, according to one story, defeated Odo at Châteaudun, marched to Tours, made himself master of the unwilling town, and burnt Châteauneuf, with St. Martin's and two other churches. His biographer, De Salies, will not own this; but the fact of the burning is indisputable; and who else save Fulk was there to do it? But Hugh Capet was called in; Fulk was checkmate for the moment, and Tours still to win. Odo had died, in 995, a monk in Marmoutier; and his widow Berthe sought Hugh's aid for her children against the Black Falcon. He had got back Montbazou; and what else might he not tear from Berthe and her sons? Young King Robert loved Berthe and married her; and when Fulk once more seized Tours, in 997, he had all the royal power against him.

Fulk was not alone in fearing the power and wealth of Blois thus aggrandised; he had many well-wishers when he backed the Church, nay rather provoked it, to dissolve the marriage on the ground that Robert and Berthe were cousins german. King Robert's next wife was Constance of Toulouse, Fulk Nerra's niece.

"We come from the devil, and to the devil we go," said Richard Cœur de Lion of his race. Fulk Nerra, his ancestor, had a still nearer relationship. His first wife was Elizabeth, daughter of Bouchard of Vendôme. When after a long period of sterility, she at last bore him a daughter, he accused her of adultery; had her judged (by judges of his own choosing), and condemned. She was burnt alive at Angers in 1000. A few days later Angers was almost totally destroyed by fire; and the people trembled at the promptness of Divine justice. His next wife, Hildegard of Poitiers, was the mother of Geoffrey Martel, born about 1006.

But ere his son's birth he made a long journey. In the wake of Fulk's hot passions and crimes there ever came intense repentance. The ghost of Elizabeth haunted him. The thought of the sacrilege at St. Martin's cowed him. He was "stricken with the fear of hell," thinking of all the blood he had shed. Fearlessly on a stage before the world he committed his crimes; as frankly before the world he did penance. To cleanse the stain he set out for the Holy Land, in 1002. He came back doubtless with the fresh conscience of vigorous youth. He had need of his vigour. The Count of Blois, a new and abler Odo, was ravaging his lands in Touraine. Joined to the lords of Pontlevoy and St. Aignan—the latter young Gelduin, son of the Devil of Saumur, Anjou's mortal enemy. He fought for his own; he kept his own, and watched his chance of permanently frustrating the allies, which came ere many years were over. His weakness lay in the valley of the Cher. From their strongholds they could threaten his castles of Loches and Amboise. So, in the teeth of his enemies, on their own land, he built the great donjon of Montrichard, which isolated Pontlevoy and St. Aignan, made them useless, and commanded the upper valley of the Cher. The place, Montriveau then, was Gelduin's; and the hill on which the new castle was built Gelduin held as a fief from the Archbishop of Tours. It was Fulk's fate ever to desire Tours, and ever to offend it mortally. The archbishop did not forget the outrage, as we shall see. Fulk's work was thorough, and after his own fashion. Doubting his hold over the inhabitants of Montriveau and Nanteuil, he made a clean sweep of them. In this rollicking humour and lucky hour, he was not content with hemming in his enemies. Leaving Roger of Montrésor—Roger the Devil—to guard his new fortress, and Lisois of Basougers as Governor of Loches and Amboise, he swept along the plain between the Cher and the Indre—the Champeigne of Touraine—and made it his own. Odo was engaged far off; and ere he could come to the aid of his harassed friends,

Fulk was off again to the Holy Land. He knew his men ; he could trust Roger and Lisois to ravage or defend.

But war had not filled all his time in Touraine between his first two journeys to Jerusalem. Fulk had the intensest belief in two worlds, and need of them both. And so he built a great abbey where his soul might be interceded for, while his corporal part was working its will, and after death should lay him low. A splendid abbey it was, with a great church, of which a substantial part remains. We shall visit Beaulieu, by Loches, later on ; and merely stop here to note that it was not only munificently endowed, and a great monument of architecture, but was given a charter and constitution by its founder, which was a wonder of sagacity and enlightenment. Nor was his conduct to the burghers under its sway less worthy of praise. The two Fulks are as irreconcilable as those gracious, generous patrons of art and learning, poisoners and parricides in their more active moments, presented by the Italian Renaissance.

The church was built and dedicated to the most High Virtues, the Celestial Majesty, the Holy Trinity, the Holy Archangels, the Cherubim and Seraphim. But the Archbishop of Tours refused to consecrate it till Fulk should restore the land on which he had reared the donjon of Montrichard. Fulk appealed to Rome, not in vain. A cardinal legate, the Bishop of Viterbo, performed the consecration ; and if the storm that whirled off the roof seemed to vindicate the wronged archbishop, Fulk was not cowed.

Fulk's attitude to King Robert is a measure of his power at this moment. Queen Constance, his niece, complained loudly to him ; for Berthe, the divorced queen, was still beloved of Robert ; and a certain Hugh of Beauvais was suspected of helping the king in his project of remarrying Berthe. Before the king's eyes Fulk killed Lord Hugh at a hunting-party—and took no harm thereby.

It was soon after this that he made his second journey to Jerusalem. The gates of the Holy City were barred against him.

But before such determined piety as his, bars and hindering Turks and private enemies melted as water. Besides, Fulk could always bend when necessary. Prostrate, nay, dragged along the street by his own commands, and with many obstacles in his way, he reached the Sepulchre. Low he bent over it, shed bitter tears of repentance, kissed it—but also bit off a portion of the stone and brought it home as a relic!

On his return he found the league of Blois against him at its height. Amboise was seriously threatened. Without delay he raided the Blésois and the Chartrois, and sacked Châteaudun. Thus he diverted his enemies, and when he returned to Touraine Amboise was safe. Odo was not ready for revenge till 1016. Montrichard was his point of attack. Fulk took up his position at Pontlevoy on the tableland. His ally, Herbert of Maine, was posted at Bourré, a mile or two from the new donjon. Their position was good; their forces less so, and numbers told at first when Blois and St. Aignan came up to Pontlevoy. Fulk was thrown from his horse, and in great danger; for though he kept his men together their ranks were thinning. A messenger brought Herbert of Maine—Herbert Wakedog—to the rescue. “*Rallie, rallie!*” burst out from the Angevins—it was ever after their cry—and the rout of Blois was decisive. Fulk turned soon from Touraine to deal with his late ally. Their quarrel was inevitable. Herbert was little better than a bandit, and the Angevin towns were worth plundering. Wakedog resisted Fulk’s pretensions of overlordship, and was imprisoned for his audacity. This gave Fulk the chance of a footing in Maine—which had an indirect consequence in the establishment of the house of Anjou on the throne of England.

In 1025, Odo strengthened by his acquisition of Champagne and a royal alliance, gathered his forces against Fulk’s further aggressions in Touraine. Montboyau was the newest and most audacious sign of it—a perpetual, insolent menace to Tours. Opposite St. Côme,

and on the height just above the mouth of the little river Choisille, Fulk had raised a camp and donjon. (Its site and some of its plan can still be traced at Belle-Vue, St. Cyr.) Hurrying to its relief, he heard that the Devil of Saumur was investing it. Gelduin had better have stopped at home, for Fulk's vengeance took the form of swooping on strong Saumur on its rock. The garrison fell. The monks of St. Florent within the castle walls, were valiant in defence ; but St. Florent was less potent against Anjou than St. Martin against the Northmen. Besides, Fulk bribed him. As his relics were carried out of the blazing citadel, Fulk cried, " Let the fire burn, holy Florent ! I will build thee a better home ! " And he did—two homes—an abbey near Saumur, on the Thouët, and a church at Amboise.

Now he was free to relieve Montboyau ; but his plan was first to attack his other fortress of Montbazou, for years in Odo's hands. So best could he withdraw Blois from the camp near Tours. His plan was successful. Odo raised the siege ; and when he thought he had Fulk fast in the valley of the Indre, the Black Falcon was safe at Amboise, and in a position to make hard terms with the enemy. In the treaty that followed, it is true that he promised to raze the insolent Montboyau ; but only the tower was razed. The great earthwork remained, still a menace to Tours, and Saumur had been lost entirely to the Counts of Blois. Odo had other things to think of. Pursuing a visionary imperial crown, he lost Touraine.

Fulk's next years belong rather to his native Anjou than to our province. When peace and peaceful pursuits wearied him, he set out again, the third time, for Jerusalem. Every great man has his far dream. Odo's was the imperial crown, Fulk Nerra's penance and ecstasy at the Holy Sepulchre. On his return, he learnt that the son he had begotten was of his own temper. Geoffrey Martel was in hot rebellion. But the Falcon's presence soon quenched the fire, and the culprit appeared before his father saddled like a beast of burthen.

"Conquered!" roared Fulk, with his foot on the neck of his son. "By none but by thee, my father," answered Geoffrey. This was reconciliation.

His last years showed he had lost neither his ability nor his persistence. He captured St. Aignan, he retook his own keep of Montbazou, and when Odo died at Bar, Langeais as well. Two strongholds in Touraine he still desired. One possibly fell to him ere he died, proud Chinon on the Vienne; certainly not the last and most desired. In vain had he built Montbazou, Semblançay, Montboyau, from which to swoop on Tours. The swoop was ever foiled.

Death overtook him at Metz, on his return from his fourth pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The Black Falcon had folded his wings at last. They buried him in his own Abbey of Beaulieu, and Beaulieu did him great honour for many ages. Fulk their patron, Fulk the palmer, Fulk the clamorous penitent was saint enough for them. But not Beaulieu does he haunt. Rather about the grim towers of Loches and Montbazou and Montrichard does his untamed spirit hover. By night you feel the flutter of black wings. Woe to little weak things beneath!



## CHAPTER VI

### THE PLANTAGENETS

*Geoffrey Martel—Second Battle of St. Martin-le-Beau—Fulk Rechin—Fulk the Young—Geoffrey Plantagenet—HENRY II.—Tours “a Second Rome”—Treaty of Colombiers—Cœur de Lion—John Lackland—Arthur of Brittany—Touraine lost to England—Early art in Touraine.*

WITH much of Geoffrey Martel's history we have nothing to do—his conquest of Le Mans, his hold on Aquitaine, his struggle with William the Norman—but to Touraine belongs a striking chapter or two, and he was its first Angevin Count. A Tourangeau perhaps by birth, at all events he was reared from infancy at Loches by a blacksmith foster-father. At his accession he owned all Touraine south of the Loire save Tours and probably Chinon; and Odo's successor, Thibaut, engaged in the conspiracies which fascinated and scattered the energies of his race, let Tours slip through his fingers. He forfeited it by rebellion, and the king granted the investiture of it to Geoffrey Martel. But Geoffrey had to count with the citizens, faithful to the House of Blois, in spite of long neglect. To Châteauneuf, indeed, he gained easy entry, but to Tours he laid siege for a year. The siege might have been longer and of doubtful issue, for Thibaut set out tardily to its relief; but Lisois of Amboise, his father's and his own best general, persuaded him to raise it and give battle instead to the approaching army. Geoffrey fixed the banner of St. Martin to his spear as he rode out of Châteauneuf to meet the men of Blois, and again St. Martin was victorious. At Montlouis on the Loire Blois was completely routed.

Indeed, after the first onset his soldiers hardly fought. What use to fight against St. Martin, who had taken the Angevins under his protection? Thibaut with a little band of fugitives, brought to bay, did make some show of resistance, but in vain. The saint had willed it so, and the last stand had been made on his own ground, just outside the village of St. Martin-le-Beau, which had seen his utter rout of the Northmen a hundred years ago. Thibaut was a prisoner. From the dungeons of Loches he ransomed himself by a surrender of Tours and all Touraine.

Geoffrey Martel died childless in 1060. His nephew and heir, Geoffrey the Bearded, was not the man to keep together the great heritage, and most of it, but not Touraine, dropped off in the first year of his rule. From that time he had an implacable enemy in his own brother, Foulques le Rechin, Fulk the Rancorous. Geoffrey fell into the Rechin's hands, who kept him for eight-and-twenty years in a dungeon in Chinon. Towards the end of that time the Pope intervened, and Fulk's son, Martel the Second, had pity of his uncle. A real friendship seems to have sprung up between the old frail, doting prisoner and the gallant young soldier, who forced Rechin to some show of mercy. But Geoffrey came out broken, dazed and dying.

Fulk Rechin, a surly cur, centre and instigator of endless feuds, plots, civil wars, ruiner of the Angevin heritage, bred trouble in Touraine as elsewhere, but Touraine he did not lose. Fulk Nerra had built too well. His matrimonial life was adventurous and unhappy. The last of his four wives outwitted him, Bertrada, daughter of Simon de Montfort. She was an ambitious lady. Fulk thought he had raised her high in making her Countess of Anjou, but Bertrada was only making a step of him by which to mount higher. To the little chapel of St. Jean, behind the "Petit St. Martin," where now the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts perpetually adore—Bertrada went one day, on devotion all intent it seemed;





OLD HOUSES AT CHINON.

but the chapel was a rendezvous. A lover waited there, a bold, resolute lover, who carried her off. Bertrada's lover was no other than King Philip of France.

One great debt later ages owed to Fulk the Rancorous. He had the intellectual temper of his race; he was a scholar and a historian. It was he who wrote the first Angevin Chronicle, perhaps in the years of his abdication, when Geoffrey Martel the Second ruled in his stead. Geoffrey's promising reign was cut short at Candé by a poisoned arrow; and many said that Bertrada, his stepmother, was behind the hand that let fly the shaft. When Fulk Rechin died, Anjou and Touraine fell to her son Fulk V., Fulk the Young, le Jérosomolitain. His was a prosperous reign. Tours best remembered the incident that closed it. After marrying his son Geoffrey to Matilda the Empress, the heiress of England and of the Duchy of Normandy, he had still enough of the adventurous spirit of his race to think of a new career. His wife was dead; and now Baldwin II., King of Jerusalem, sought him as bridegroom for his daughter Melisande. Fulk had already made a long sojourn in the Holy City, and it was as a ruler of tried experience, and one who knew the snares and pitfalls prepared by wily Turks and jealous Christians, that Fulk was offered the throne of Jerusalem.

In the Cathedral of Tours the solemn renunciation ceremony took place. Archbishop Hildebert gave Fulk the cross. At Marmoutier, where he retired for meditation, he had a vision which blessed the undertaking. Then he fared forth to new adventures. He was always Fulk the Young. No wonder Cœur de Lion became a Crusader. The love of the East was in his blood. His forefathers, Fulk Nerra and Fulk the Young, beckoned him.

Geoffrey Plantagenet, Geoffrey the Fair, fascinating, unstable, picturesque—knight-errant, pilgrim, poet and scholar—left legends at his passing. Touraine knew him well, in his knight-errant mood, in his undress moments, away from the cares of state and war. He

strewed vague memories behind him in the forests, and among the country folk. His son was to leave deep marks.

By Geoffrey Plantagenet's will his elder son Henry was to get England and Normandy, his mother's heritage, Geoffrey the younger, Anjou, Touraine, and Maine. But till Henry was established on the English throne, Geoffrey's share was the castles of Chinon, Loudun, and Mirebeau. There was strife between them from the first. Henry thought his brother a poor creature; and his way with poor creatures was to shove them aside. The question of a woman, too, embittered the strife. Louis VII. had divorced Eleanor of Aquitaine, who retired towards her own domains. She was a prize, indeed, for any ambitious prince. On her way to Aquitaine, at Blois, Count Theobald sought to woo her by force. He was not to her liking, and she fled up the Loire to Tours. Thence she made her way southward, and at Port de Piles, on the borders of Touraine, narrowly escaped another impulsive wooer. Geoffrey had hatched a very pretty plot to carry her off. But he missed her, and she reached her own land. From there she offered herself and all her possessions to the man of her choice. She had an eye for strength, if not for the chances of conjugal felicity. Aquitaine was a handsome dowry, and Henry II. did not hesitate.

Geoffrey had used his three castles, Chinon, Loudun, and Mirebeau, as a basis of rebellion, pretext enough for wresting them from him. Some money compensation was given him; but the future of the dispossessed lord of Touraine had been miserable indeed, had not the inhabitants of Nantes called him to rule them as their Count. At Nantes he died in 1158. Others had been revenging him in Touraine, for their own interests. To the King of France and the Count of Blois Henry's aggrandisement was intolerable. They fortified Chaumont on the Loire against him. He chased them off, and hurrying up the river, strengthened Amboise. Touraine was his effectively—till his sons

grew up to attack him and sow dissension in the dearest portion of his wide dominions.

Henry II. of England is one of the great makers of Touraine : a Frenchman, who probably never spoke a word of English, here was his natural home. It has been always hard to call him up as he lingered in Rosamond's thick mazy bowers. It is easier to think of him here, with his hot Angevin blood, his quick Angevin brain, restlessly brooding as he stalks on his castle walls above the Vienne, or hurries from fortress to fortress, taking swift reprisals on his enemies. He developed the material resources of his country with infinite pains : engineered roads, made bridges—at Pont du Cher, at St. Sauveur, and the Pont des Nonnains at Chinon—made canals, built embankments for the Loire. To strengthen Tours, and as a symbol of his authority, he raised a strong castle there, overlooking the river. The Tour de Guise, now part of the barracks, is the last remnant of it.

In his day Tours became more and more a centre of European activity. Pope Alexander III., chased from Rome by Barbarossa, took refuge there, and held a great Council. So magnificent was the gathering that the city was called a "Second Rome." The kings of France and of England were there, seventeen cardinals, one hundred and twenty-four bishops, four hundred and forty abbots, while the minor clergy and the great lords were so many that the town could not hold them. One member of this Council that excommunicated Barbarossa was the great Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas a Becket. The cathedral saw splendid scenes ; but it suffered sorely in the end. The Council determined to raise money for the Crusade. A quarrel arose as to who should collect it, Louis's men or Henry's. Henry was not likely to yield in his own Tours. In the scuffle that ensued the greater part of the church was burnt.

The struggle between Church and State in England, which ended in the murder of Becket, had its echo in Touraine. Henry, struck

with remorse, turned, after the fashion of his ancestor, Fulk Nerra, to building churches and abbeys in expiation. To this period belongs the construction of the monasteries of Aigues Vives, near Montrichard, Baugeais, near Loché, the priories of Bois Rahier (Grammont) at the gate of Tours, on the south side, Villiers, near Villeloin Coulangé, and Pommiers Aigres near Chinon. But the ecclesiastical establishment most clearly connected with his remorse is the Chartreuse of Liget. We shall visit it from Loches.

Touraine was his favourite home ; but from Touraine came many of the troubles of his last days. His turbulent family fixed greedy eyes on his possessions there ; and Eleanor encouraged Prince Henry in demands which his father laughed at. It was his youngest, John, for whom he destined all the best of the fair province. When Henry fled to the French court, he was joined by his brothers Richard and Geoffrey. Intrigues filled the air ; and some of the great lords of Touraine favoured the younger Henry—the lords of Preuilly, La Haye, and Champigny, for instance—though only the last held out for a space against the swift, effective king. At a conference at Montlouis on the Loire, in 1174, a peace was made, which lasted till the reign of Philip Augustus ; but in this Richard had no part ; and after the death of his elder brother he made himself obnoxious to the French king by an attack on the Count of Toulouse. In revenge, Philip invaded Touraine and besieged Montrichard. His men burrowed like moles below the fortress of Fulk Nerra, and all but destroyed its foundations. At last they gained an entry ; the town was burnt, and the French army swept on and took Montrésor. But if Henry preferred to war with his natural enemy rather than with his own sons, such very moderate satisfaction was not to be his long. Richard, constantly stung to jealousy by his father's favour of John, made a new alliance with Philip ; and the two renewed their attacks on Henry. Harassed, disappointed, and broken in health, he retired to Chinon, while the two young princes swept up the Loire in



triumphant progress. Chaumont, Amboise, Rochecorbon fell before them. It was the turn of Tours. Now as ever, the weak part was Châteauneuf. In spite of the English garrison, the princes had friends inside. On Châteauneuf, therefore, the attack was made from St. Cyr. The Loire was in flood; but the leaders would not wait upon the northern heights till the waters had gone down. "Follow me!" cried Philip to the rashest of his men. Jumping into the water, he sounded a way across the treacherous river with his pike, and reached the other side without losing a man. Some say the exploit was Cœur de Lion's. He was not likely to remain behind. Châteauneuf fell before their swift attack; and the sick King Henry, hurrying from Chinon, had cause for alarm. There were parleys and overtures; and at last, Henry, being hard driven, made a peace at the chateau of Colombiers (now Villandry) on the Cher, whereby Philip and Richard retained Tours and Le Mans. It had not come to this, but that death had hold of Henry. He returned to Chinon to die.

Richard Cœur de Lion was better known in Touraine than in England. He was a stormy acquaintance in his father's lifetime, as we have seen; and even when his heritage was secure, it was always with lance and buckler that the Tourangeaux were to see him. He never had time for sober administration or the development of the country; but he provided them with shows. At Tours he arranged a great tournament, where he appeared as the chief combatant, arrayed in a suit of black armour. Twelve knights who accepted his challenge fell before him. He pierced the throat of the one that refused to own himself vanquished. The next scene of his drama passes in the cathedral, where, with Philip Augustus, he received from the Archbishop the cross and staff. The staff broke: it was a bad omen. Then after kneeling for blessing before St. Martin's shrine, he set off for the Crusade.

During Richard's imprisonment in Austria, John Lackland, with

the encouragement of Philip, who shared the spoil, seized the principal fortresses ; but his brother's return sent John abject to his knees. Cœur de Lion made short work with Tours, which opened its gates to him ere long. As Châteauneuf had shown some obstinacy, he punished it with a heavy tax, chased out the canons from St. Martin's, and emptied their treasury. The French king and he made still another treaty, but its substantiality had no long test before Richard's death at Chaluz.

His death let loose a bitter strife between John and his nephew Arthur, son of Geoffrey and Constance of Brittany. Touraine was the chief battle-ground. At different times Richard had declared each his heir ; but Arthur's was the better claim ; and all Touraine was for the gallant young prince, a precocious lad of sixteen. Tours received him. St. Martin's gave him a canon's stall, and there was a moment when he might think himself veritable Count of Brittany. Philip languidly took up his cause ; then disloyally made a treaty with John, an unstable treaty, which only embittered the strife that followed. The chivalrous Arthur ranged himself with the French king in the quarrel. He was given two hundred lances and bidden assure himself of Brittany attacked by England. But first he would lay siege to the castle of Mirebeau, which Queen Eleanor was holding for John. There John wheedled the boy's friends into giving him up ; and the rest of the story, with the end at Falaise, all the world knows.

Tours had been striven for by John and Philip Augustus, Arthur's tardy champion. John took it, lost it, took it again. With fire and slaughter he wooed the country he claimed as his heritage. It was as if his name of "Lackland" had stung and burned him, and he left nothing but loathing where he had passed. Richard had been a gallant spectacular knight ; John was only a greedy waster, and when the nobles of Touraine heard the news of Arthur's foul murder, they rose in their wrath. John, who had returned to England, was summoned back by the peers, and failing to answer, he was con-

demned to lose all the lands for which he did homage in France. It was a notable edict. It was not directed against the foreigner. John was no stranger ; but he was a felon, and the peers hounded him out of their ranks. All Touraine was lost to him save Loches and Chinon, which Roger de Lacy, an Englishman, and Girard d'Athée, a Tourangeau in his service, kept for him with pluck and determination while they could. But they had to give in at last, and the dastard John lost the last inch of ground in the province his ancestors had won with their marvellous energy, and which his father had loved best of all. His son, Henry III., made some weak pretensions to it, but in vain. It was diverted to the French crown, and governed for a time by hereditary seneschals.

In the Musée of Tours the traveller should make a persevering way through the stuffed-bird section to the portion of the building reserved for the collections of the Archæological Society. There he will find some relics of the earliest art in Touraine. That art is Roman, of course. Some old stones with inscriptions on them, heads of capitols, etc., are remains of Cæsarodunum. From the public buildings of the conquerors, the sumptuous villas looking down on the valleys, and their temples, the Turoni learnt architecture and sculpture. But from the first, building for the lust of the eye and the pride of life, or for religious sacrifice, has alternated with frenetic enthusiasm for a new idea, which has generally meant destruction. And the first of these enthusiast destroyers was the good St. Martin. The gods in the Roman carven stone temples were easier to destroy than the old Celtic gods in the stream and the tree. But he built, too ; and, necessarily, after a Roman pattern. Those who came after him built in honour of him. In the sixth century Gregory of Tours gives a description of the church St. Perpetuus built in Martin's honour, the basilica that succeeded the humble chapel erected by St. Brice over his master's tomb. In shape it was an imitation of the Church of the

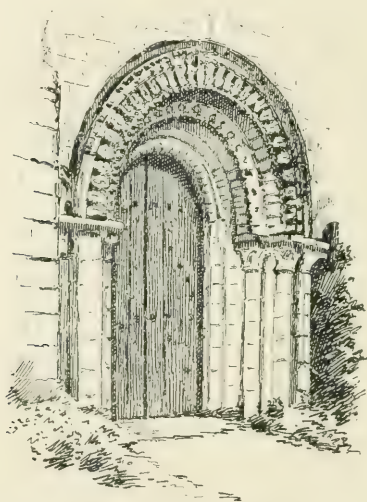
Holy Sepulchre. We know its proportions. It was 160 feet long, 60 wide, and 45 high. It had 120 columns, 8 doors, 32 windows in the choir, and 20 in the nave. It was richly decorated with marbles and brilliant metals. St. Gregory restored it as well as the Cathedral of Tours, adding mosaic decorations and paintings by local artists. Round about St. Martin's in the seventh and eighth centuries, there was no indifference to art. The churches in Martinopolis supplied work for a large body of craftsmen; and in 640, St. Eloi, saint, statesman, and most celebrated goldsmith of his time, came to Tours to make the famous *châsse* for St. Martin's relics. The basilica type remained, adapted to the needs of great abbeys and little hamlets, with few and slow transformations till the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Though of the Mergovinian churches we see only fragments of walls, identified by their "petit appareil," the substructure in many cases exists still, regulating the general plan which has remained to this day.

In Charlemagne's time there was an effective Renaissance of art and letters. To the stimulus and patronage of the Emperor there answered an awakening energy in Frank and Gaul, during a time of hope and more settled government. The artistic manifestations of this energy in Touraine centred in the new school of St. Martin of Tours, under the government of the English Alcuin. Besides being scholar, disputator, theologian, Alcuin was a great calligraphist, and probably artist as well. At least, under him, and from his time, St. Martin's became a noted school of illuminators, perhaps the best in France—a fact of capital importance. The work of this school still remains in part. It was even then not a new art; for in St. Martin's days the younger recluses at Marmoutier were set to transcribing documents; and the art of the calligraphist developed, by natural stages, into that of the artist. In the interval, however, the skill acquired seems to have died out; for Alcuin complained of the clumsiness of his first pupil-scribes—*Cum Turonica quotidie pugno*

*rusticitate*. The magnificent *Évangélaire* of Charlemagne, now in the Library of Tours, on which the kings of France used to swear to maintain the rights of St. Martin's, the so-called Bible of Charles the Bald, in the Bibliothèque Nationale, are the most notable examples of this Carolingian school of illuminators, a school, which, if it decayed, still maintained a great tradition, and of which the work of Jean Fouquet—the greatest artistic glory of Touraine—was but the revival and culmination. Churches, schools, abbeys, grew out of this Carolingian Renaissance. And then came the Northmen to blight and blast, and harry. St. Martin's was burnt; Marmoutier was burnt. The arts hid away while men's lives were in hourly danger. The scourge of the Northmen was followed by that period of frantic melancholia which preceded the year 1000. What chance had the arts when men's minds were turned on eternity and the terrors of hell? Just a little with those who conceived church-building might appease an angry deity. Fulk Nerra built the great Beaulieu abbey that his soul, very much in peril, might have continual intercessors. The year passed: the Judgment had not come; and the relief found expression in a great architectural enthusiasm. Round Tours, Hervé, the Treasurer of St. Martin's, was the great builder. He rebuilt his own basilica, he built St. Côme. To this age belong, besides Beaulieu, Corméry, the reconstructed St. Julien, St. Gilles of L'Île Bouchard, St. Mexme of Chinon, St. Mars-le-Pile, St. Venant de Maillé (Luynes); to name but a few of those of which we can realise something to-day.

Enough remains of eleventh-century decoration to let us judge of its condition and ideals. The difference in the degree of skill in the delineation of humanity and nature is strongly marked. You would say that to those early reflectors of the world, natural objects, trees, leaves, flowers, were lovely and beloved, and mankind only absurd. The carving is far in advance of the frescoes—those, for instance in St. Julien, to be seen at the back of the organ-loft, and the curious

Pagan scenes in the crypt at Tavant, both of this date. The paintings of Rivière have been restored beyond recognition, and those of Liget, of the next century, are almost obliterated by time and neglect. But sculpture even of human forms is making its slow way. Witness what remains of the statues of Corméry and Cruzilles, crude, archaic, but alive. Not many years go by before a real attempt at portraiture is seen in the statues of the Plantagenets in the Abbey Church of Fontevrault. The human heads carved on the outside of the apsidal chapels of St. Gatien are full of variety and expression ; and ere the golden age of Gothic, the thirteenth century, has passed, sculpture is already looking forward to a time when it will be something more than the handmaid of architecture.



DOORWAY, TAVANT CHURCH

## CHAPTER VII

### THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

*English and Gascon brigands—St. Louis—The Knights Templars—THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR—Ravages of the Black Prince—The Boucicauts—Burgundy and Tours—Siege of Tours by the Dauphin—The Scots in France—Douglas, Duke of Touraine—Le Roi de Bourges—JEANNE D'ARC—Gradual union of the national leaders—Charles VII. King of France at last—The Rise of the Financiers.*

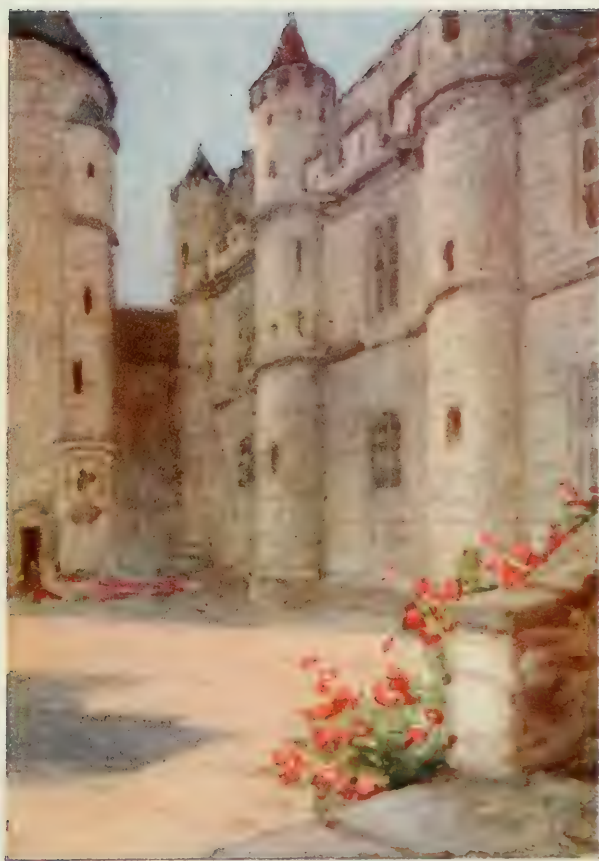
JOHN'S hired bands still ran through the country pillaging and fomenting disturbance, nor were they disarmed by the peace made with Henry III. War in Touraine had given way to an irregular sporadic brigandage, in which town and country suffered acutely. "Misfortunes of every kind have ruined the brilliance and splendour of Tours," writes one churchman to another at this time. "This city once so famous, so rich and populous, is reduced to such misery that you meet nothing save wretchedness and pain. The greatest of its griefs lies in the remembrance of its past prosperity, since it has now nothing but tombs to bequeath to its children." Indeed, from this time onward the country was never long free from the attacks of the English marauders, or of Gascons and Bretons carrying on a petty warfare in the English name. The memory of a pleasant land haunted them even while Louis VIII. was showing them how hopeless it was to keep the remainder of their French possessions. Yet awhile they would be only brigands, and the advent of Louis IX. in Touraine was caused not by foreign aggressors but by internal disturbance.

St. Louis was but a boy when his mother, Blanche of Castile brought him to Tours that they might face and overawe the rebel

nobles gathered in Poitou, who were disputing his sovereignty. Their stay in the city is commemorated in the royal arms and the arms of Castile, blazoned on St. Julien's roof. It might have been a stiff fight had not Thibaut of Champagne come over to the side of the queen mother and her son. There was as much romance in this as politics, for Queen Blanche was the *dame de ses pensées*; and in homage he contrived and ensured the allegiance of the other great barons. A good lord to Touraine was St. Louis. Pious churchman, yet he perceived the tyranny of St. Martin's canons, and formally recognised the rights of the burghers of Châteauneuf, though the strife between the two powers lasted till Châteauneuf and Tours became one in 1354.

The most outstanding event of the province in the beginning of the fourteenth century was the Council called at Tours, in 1308, by Philippe le Bel to consider the suppression of the Knights Templars. The question is still wrapped in mystery. There were long and secret conferences between the king and Pope at Poitiers the year before, when all the Templars in France had been arrested. The case against them—atheists, blasphemers, traitors, and much worse were they called—was formally presented at Tours; but the only evidence brought forward seems to have been the wild accusations of their denounciators and some confessions wrung from the Knights themselves under torture. Nevertheless, they were judged guilty. King and Pope again conferred at Poitiers, whither the dignitaries of the Order were summoned; but harassed and ill, they got no farther than Chinon. There they confessed, retracted, confessed again under torture. "I said what they told me to say," groaned one of them, "I would have said more if they had wanted. I think I would have killed God Himself had they told me to." Exile, prison, torture, death, was their portion. The dignitaries were burnt at Paris. Their crime? They had fallen from their high chivalrous ideal of two hundred years ago; but the sensational





CHÂTEAU ROYAL, LOCHES.



stories of treason on a great scale, debauchery, and orgies, have never been corroborated. They were certainly very rich. The greater part of their property fell to Philip and the Pope. The knights of St. John got the rest.

In 1328 Touraine was brought still nearer the crown. The seneschals disappeared, and the province became a duchy in the gift of the king. Danger was at hand, and it grew more menacing every year. A new and vaster claim was made by England, and the Hundred Years' War broke out. Touraine was never a great theatre of the disastrous war; but it felt the reverberation of the shocks, and suffered much from the brigandage that came in war's train. The great highway through its centre, the Loire, enforced constant watchfulness on the Tourangeaux; and in the latter part of the time the province gained importance as the home, first from force, then from choice, of Charles VII., "Charles le Bien Servi," around whom gathered the national champions. From that time Touraine became "the heart of France" in no mere geographical sense only.

It was danger from the English that at last, after centuries of rivalries and jealousies, drove Tours and Châteauneuf to seek union. The new walls, begun in 1354, rose quickly. The woods round Les Montils (Plessis) and St. Côme were cut down for the building of them. But the cloister of St. Martin's had its own separate walls.

The army of the Black Prince, in the campaign which culminated at the Battle of Poitiers (1356), ravaged Touraine; and after Poitiers, the English, or adventurers in their pay, wasted and pillaged the Cher valley and the country between the Cher and the Indre. By the Treaty of Bretigny (1360) Edward III. renounced all claims on Touraine, for a consideration; and the castles of L'Île Bouchard and Langeais that had fallen into English hands, were formally evacuated. But the brigandage went on. Marmoutier was taken. South Touraine suffered specially, for English garrisons took

the great Château du Lion at Preuilly and Roche-Posay, and from there swooped and pounced, and held all the country round about under contribution. Then came the League of the great Tourangeaux captains, Jean de Bueil and Pierre de Bueil, under whom in this campaign Bertrand Du Guesclin himself fought, nor would consent to take the command. Boucicaut, too, came to his countrymen's rescue; and for the time at least the foreigners were cleared out of the valleys of the Creuse and Claise. But other *condottieri*, the Gascon De Buch and Robert Knoll the Englishman, with their bands, started up elsewhere. Tours was seriously threatened. The reign of Charles VI. had opened—a time of such intolerable anarchy throughout France that the weathering of it can only be explained by some rare toughness in the national constitution. Yet the unfortunate king had excellent intentions, and before his malady came on, some capacity, firmness, and trust in the right men. The alliance between him and the Duke of Brittany, made at Tours, seemed to be the beginning of an effective generalship. It was then he honoured the great captain, Jean le Meingre, Boucicaut the Second. In the Rue St. François de Paule, you see the splendid remains of a fine Renaissance house, with the Salamander carved on it. It belonged to the financier and minister of Francis I., Jacques de Beaune. But de Beaune's mansion was built on the site of the Boucicaut house: and there it was Charles made the second hero of the name Marshal of France. "Boucicaut," said Charles, "your father dwelt in this town and here he lies, and you were born in this chamber, we have been told. So in the very spot where you were born, we give you your father's office, and to do you the more honour, after mass on Christmas day, which draweth near, we shall hand over to you the bâton, and you shall take the oath that is due." They used to say that if the Devil came out of hell to fight a duel, a Boucicaut would start up to accept the challenge.

When we read the general tale of the time in the light of later

ideas of French nationalism, we see only chaos and decay. Survival and regeneration seem impossible. Not so, if we look closely at the human stuff that was seething in the general ferment. Even the worst disturbers of the peace, the nobles and soldier adventurers, had a high personal standard. The code of chivalry had been first drawn up in Touraine ; and chivalry lasted long as a reality in the province. Even after its decay there was many a Tourangeau Don Quixote. They committed acts of brigandage, but cherished an ideal of intellectual attainment, of courtesy and piety. Boucicaut the Second, who wandered over Europe seeking adventures, sword in hand, was far more civilised than the soldier of a later day. He made "balades, rondeaux, virelais, lais, et complaintes d'amoureux sentiment." In his *Livre des Faictz* he is given perhaps too often the *beau rôle* ; but even then the author is only refining on the general standard of his class. "When he was at dance or feast where she [his lady] was, there was none surpassed him in graciousness and courtesy, in singing, dancing, laughing, speaking, and every accomplishment. There he sang songs and rondeaux whose words he had made himself, and sang them with grace to let his lady secretly, and as under a veil, understand how love of her was working in him. But he was never so hardy as to speak out all his thoughts as do the base flatterers of the present time. . . . Thus before her and before all ladies he was gentler and milder than a maid. He served all, he honoured all, for love of one . . . Humbly and doubtfully he served love and his lady. For it seemed to him that he had never done enough to demand so high a thing as the love of his lady."

Valour in him went hand in hand with romance. In his first Flemish campaign he was so young that the Fleming whom he attacked told him to go home and suck. "Va teter, enfant." But the boy had him down, crying, "Do the children of your country play at such games?" As if continual fighting at home and abroad were not enough, Boucicaut founded, in 1399, the Order of the

White Lady of the Green Shield, for the relief and protection of ladies and damsels and widows oppressed by tyrants who threatened their wealth, or lands, or honour. There were thirteen companions; and they carried a gold shield enamelled with green, in the midst of it a white lady. And a *lettre d'armes* was sealed with the seals of the thirteen, and published in all parts of France, so that ladies and damsels might hear of it and know whom to call on in their need. So did Boucicaut and his twelve design to take away all stain from the fair name of France, "où est la fleur de la chevalerie et noblesse du monde." Indeed, there was no lack of captains or of valour. But their evil fate forbade them to be more than partisans. There was no clear cause. There was no head, no nation. There were only gangs of valiant men turned by circumstance into brigands, a mad master, clamouring dissentient chiefs; and the foreign enemy did not seem the worst of the evils.

After Burgundy's partisans had killed Louis d'Orleans, the king's brother, poor Charles was brought to Tours for a time, for safety, which showed Touraine to be in much better case than the capital. His son soon made it his home. By the death of his brother Jean, in 1416, it fell to him, with Poitou and Berri. Next year he was Dauphin; and the first accession of power stirred the intelligent, if unstable, prince to a sense of responsibility. Schooled by Armagnac, he had learned that France had no worse enemy than his own mother, the faithless Isabeau, at once autocratic, frivolous, and treacherous. When Armagnac exiled her to Blois and then to Tours, it was with Charles's full consent; and that the decree might not be idle, he had her spied on night and day. Isabeau chafed, clamoured, and then appealed to the enemy Burgundy. Gallant Burgundy came to Tours at her call. The Queen retired to Marmoutier, on a pretext of devotion; Burgundy's men appeared at the abbey, and her guards fled at the sight of them; nor did the monks make any useful defence. When the

Duke himself came up she was free to accompany him; and together they set out for Tours. Tours hesitated to open its gates, for Charles the Dauphin was master. But the master was far, and Isabeau spoke with an authority that made them doubt any other, bribed the city with a remission of taxes, and she and Burgundy made a triumphal entry. Isabeau held her court there, acted as regent, declared war against her son, and in the name of her poor mad husband did Burgundy's bidding, or followed her own caprice.

She stung the young Dauphin to action. He was but fourteen, and his career was opening at a hopeless time. Only two years before had come the paralysing blow of Agincourt, where the flower of the French nobles had been laid low, where his cousin of Orleans had been taken, where Boucicaut had been taken. It seemed as if he might have to be content all his life if he could keep Berri and Touraine, and these were threatened. His early experiences had made him loathe Paris. Now he made Bourges his headquarters; and from there he prepared an attack on Tours, which, threatened by Burgundy, refused submission. Charles laid siege to the town in November 1418, and it held out for five weeks. The citizens themselves had been longing for its reduction. They were not Burgundian at heart; and the young Dauphin they held to be their natural lord. Above all, siegers and besieged wanted peace. Says a rhymer of the time,

“Je soutiendrai devant tous  
Que la pès vaut mieux que Tours;  
Je veil soutenir qui qu'en grogne,  
Que pès vault mieux que Bourgogne.”

The Dauphin had proved himself a personage to be counted with; and Burgundy was meditating an alliance with him when he was murdered by Charles's men on the bridge of Montereau.

Burgundy had a readier and more determined avenger than Louis d'Orléans had found. Philip the Good's vengeance took the form of a treaty with the English, and the support of the claims of Henry V. Henry married Catherine, and was declared heir to the French throne. The Dauphin, condemned by the Marble Table, disinherited, and with only his faithful Touraine, Poitou, and Berri at his back, played the man. He took the title of regent, and sent to Scotland for help. Scots soldiers in France were no new sight. The two nations were traditionally friendly and instinctively sympathetic. Service in France to a poor Scot meant not only subsistence and adventure, but the chance of dealing a blow at the common enemy, England.

The Dauphin's uncle, Louis d'Orléans, had had many Scots in his household. But now it was an army came; and Charles's first conspicuous success was gained through them. The battle of Baugé (1421) was really a battle of Scots and English on French soil. The English loss was calamitous, and the Duke of Clarence fell. There was a greater than Clarence to be counted with now. Baugé was like to be paid for dear; Henry in his wrath was sweeping all before him; and the Dauphin had never been King of France had the mighty progress gone on. Death stopped it. Henry V. and poor mad Charles VI. died within a few weeks of each other.

The Dauphin, now the uncrowned Charles VII., might reckon little of a royal infant far away in England; but Bedford was a near and very real power, and Charles had all France to conquer, save his provinces of the centre. He was only the *voitelet*, the *roi de Bourges*. There was no great rally to his standard. He needed another Baugé.

There must be a good deal of Scots blood in the Tourangeaux of to-day. Many a man of the *garde écossaise*, worn out with the knocks and blows of a lifetime spent in the fortresses, the skirmishes, sieges



and battles about the Loire, found it good to settle down for what remained of life in the sunny land, rather than seek the misty northern regions where their sinewy thews were made. Domestic alliances helped the political one; and the favour of Charles VII. and Louis XI., bought by hard service, made settlement easy. Chambers, Conyngham, Crawford were to become great lords in the province; but the conspicuous favour shown the Scots culminated when Charles VII. made Archibald, Earl of Douglas, Duke of Touraine.

The general national feeling in Scotland had never been more hostile to England. But the King, James I., was in an English prison, and the country was ruled by the able, wily, unscrupulous regent Albany, whose policy had been to keep the peace with England. To have the King, of whose vigorous character rumours had reached him, back on his hands, was not at all to his mind, nor to the interest of his family. So Scotland, longing to be at her old enemy's throat, was restricted to sporadic Border raids. The irritation caused by the peace, as well as the general distress due to Albany's policy of leaving the great nobles free to work their will on the land, so long as they kept him in power, had given a particular zest to recruiting in France. It was enough for many a young Quentin Durward to find any field where he could use his adventurous sword for a pittance; but it was fine luck when that sword could be turned against the hereditary enemy on a foreign field.

The Scottish sword did gallant work for France at Baugé; and the lethargic heart of Charles leaped within him at the news. The helper had come. With Scottish arms he would win back his kingdom. The Earl of Buchan, the victor, made Constable of France, was as hopeful as himself; and when Vendôme went to Scotland to ask for further help, he persuaded Buchan's father-in-law, the mighty, crafty Archibald Douglas, to lead into France an army of Scottish

knights and soldiers. The army came, many thousands strong, and sat down about Charles's court at Châtillon-sur-Indre, and followed it to Bourges. The dispossessed king treated with the Count as if with a more fortunate brother sovereign. He should be one of his most conspicuous allies; and when he proclaimed him lieutenant-general of his armies, he gave him the Duchy of Touraine, with special ownership of the town and castle of Chinon. The duchy he had already given to his wife, Marie d'Anjou. But a king in straits must cancel old gifts to make new ones; and the lady obligingly stood aside.

When Tours heard of its new master, it was confused and alarmed. Already it had recognised Marie as its "très redoutée et naturelle dame"; and now it sent anxiously to Bourges to see if the news were really true. When they were assured that by Douglas they would be "doulcement gouvernez et en paix," they prepared for his reception. The state entry of a duke was a costly affair, and Touraine was traditionally liberal. Six pipes of wine, six measures of barley, fifty sheep, four fat oxen, one hundred pounds of waxen torches, fell to him as a kind of due. They sent complimentary envoys to him at Loches, and he was met at the gate of Notre Dame la Riche by all the dignitaries and many mounted citizens. When the keys were given him, he swore to keep the rights of the city inviolate, and handed the keys back again. The streets were decked with flowers and tapestries as the new Duke rode along. Coming in the wake of Baugé, he stood for victory and friendship, and few rulers had ever so splendid a welcome. At the cathedral the archbishop and canons met him. The dean gave him a surplice, an amice, and a breviary. He took the oath and was installed as canon. And next day the same ceremony was repeated at St. Martin's.

Douglas had little chance of enjoying his new duchy. Buchan and he were again in the field a few months later. Bedford, burning



A VILLAGE IN TOULAIN.



to come at them, sent his famous letter from Verneuil in Le Perche to Douglas that he fain would drink with him. Douglas sent his answer back. "What else have I come for out of Scotland?" Alas! to the Scots Verneuil was an earlier Flodden. It was an unlucky leader Charles had sought. Perhaps he did not know his nickname at home—"Tyneman"—because every battle in which he had been engaged, from Homildon onwards, had been lost. But his was not the blame this time, save so far as he did not control his Scots, fatal allies to the French that day. Their action was so fiery; their determination to give no quarter so grimly unbending, that they roused the English to desperation. Bedford revenged Clarence's death; and the grim Scottish pride had a fall. Buchan was killed, and Douglas, and Douglas's younger son, James. Their bodies were taken back to Tours; but Tours, bitterly disappointed, confounded, alarmed, and in peril, buried its new duke in the cathedral choir, hurriedly, and without pomp.

A vague rumour ran that Douglas's heir was dead in Scotland; and the duchy was given to Charles's brother-in-law, Louis d'Anjou. The new Earl of Douglas, alive and eager for his French heritage, claimed it; but he was pacified by other lands and the empty title of Duke of Touraine, which he and his descendants bore for long.

Charles's court in Touraine was a moving one—now at Châtillon, now at Tours, now at Chinon, now at Loches, again at the chateau of some faithful lord who gave him hospitality. A curious contradictory man, a subject for the investigation of modern mental pathologists. Mostly disinclined for action, far from courageous in habit, he had yet periods of fine energy, and was capable of heroism. He was self-indulgent; he was austere and devout. From long lethargies he woke to prove himself master of difficult situations. The condition of his country sickened him to despair; and his despair found expression in indifference or frivolity. He was quick to recognise great qualities,

and slow to give them a chance. He played dangerously with the devotion of his great captains and counsellors while he gave himself up to easy dalliance with favourites, who asked less of him; but he did not scorn the better men meanwhile. With all his languor he was not shifty. His purpose remained the same throughout; only the fire of it flickered. He was often below the level of his task, but he always recognised it, and had never a thought, as other men of his physical constitution might have had, of abdicating. This partly explains the wonderful loyalty of great men whom he exasperated. In fact as well as in name he was the national centre. The Maid's instinct was right; and that is why he was "Charles le bien servi."

After Verneuill came one of his most languid periods. In Touraine and Berri he was master; but even there the English bands scoured the country under his nose. Richmond, brother of the Duke of Brittany, joined him, and was made Constable in succession to Buchan. But in vain was Richmond austere and energetic: the favourite who made the king's hours pass pleasantly, stole the precious time. Richmond and La Trémouille were no kid-gloved patriots. The favourites were torn from the king. De Giac was drowned; Camus de Beaulieu was done to death. Charles stormed—and gave in. Richmond demanded that La Trémouille should be placed at the head of the Council; and when his wish was fulfilled, repented of it. For La Trémouille, energetic intriguer, made head against Richmond as no frivolous favourite could. Confusion reigned supreme when the English sat down before Orleans. Their success was all but assured. Was Charles to be harried from his last refuge in the Loire valley?

When Tours heard of the siege of Orleans it felt its own agony was near. Orleans taken, the English would sweep down the Loire, triumphant and insolent. The city fathers were diligent in organising their defences, and they opened their purses—sadly light in these hard

times—that Charles, their good friend, encourager of their liberties and their commerce, might pay his captains.

But Jeanne was near.

“ En ceste saison de douleur  
Vint au roy une bergerelle. ”

From Domremy she made straight for Touraine to seek Charles at Chinon. We can follow her route through the province. At sight of the Loire they say she trembled with joy, because now she was in the lands of the Dauphin—dispossessed everywhere else. She entered Touraine at Mosnes, between Chaumont and Amboise. From Amboise she and her little troop hastened on, breathless and full of hope, to St. Martin-le-Beau on the borders of the forest. There they crossed the Cher, and marched over the high Champagne to Corméry. Did the monks in the great abbey look doubtfully at the passing of the *bergerelle* with her little train? There, or at Bray (now Reignac), a few miles on, she crossed the Indre, and made her way over the high bare plateau of Ste. Maure, past Manthelan, to St. Catherine de Fierbois. It was a slight deviation from the straightest road to Chinon; but her prayers were due to one of her own special saints: and here St. Catherine had a noted shrine. She kissed the relics—perhaps the ring she afterwards valued so much had touched them—and heard three masses ere she went upon her way. It was the 6th of March 1429, when she reached Chinon and alighted at the house of the *bonne femme*, who sheltered her till the Dauphin consented to see her. Of her life there up in the great castle, and of her wonderful power over Charles and his court, we shall tell in the story of Chinon.

Tours was to furnish her armour and weapons: and she reached Tours on 21st April. There she drew all hearts and eyes. They followed about the high-hearted maid, whom their best craftsmen were equipping for the holy fight. Her lodging at Tours was with a certain Jehan

du Puy, councillor of Charles, and his wife Eleonore de la Pau, lady-in-waiting to Marie d'Anjou ; and its site should bring some consolation to many a sentimental tourist whom sober history has robbed of another association.

The old house in the Rue Briçonnet that we all know, with its fine carvings on door and pillar, its grimy but beautiful courtyard, its motto of *Priez Dieu Pur. Assez aurons et peu vivrons.*, we are not allowed any more to call the house of Tristan-l'Hermite. Alas for the goodwife's grim tales as we mount the worn stone steps ! Alas for the shudders she raises at the top by her sinister tale of how Tristan's victims dangled from the iron spike in sight of all Tours ! The cord traced on the outer walls is not the hangman's rope which gave the trees about Plessis so constant a crop. It is but the symbol of widowhood. Widows, it seems, were wont to use this sign of the *corps délié* even before Anne de Bretagne founded the Order of the Cordelière for the ladies of her court, in 1498, at the death of her first husband. The house in its present form—one of the last gems of Gothic—did not exist in Tristan's day. It belongs to the late fifteenth or early sixteenth centuries. But the newest archæological theory respecting it, carries, as I have said, some consolation. The widow was probably Marguerite du Puy—see the marguerites mingled with the cord—the regretted lord was Pierre du Puy, whose initials are repeated in *Priez Dieu Pur*. And Pierre du Puy would have been a son of Jeanne D'Arc's host ; and thus the fine du Puy house which we visit now in its decay, was most likely built on the site of the older paternal mansion that sheltered the Maid. So to the Rue Briçonnet—once the Rue des Trois Pucelles—whose crumbling grandeur suggests romantic history to every sensitive tourist, still clings a definite memory, and one more glorious than what has vanished. It will be an archæologist of convincing power who will drive us from this last outpost of the imagination in the Rue Briçonnet.

Jeanne was content with the lance and the hatchet made for her at





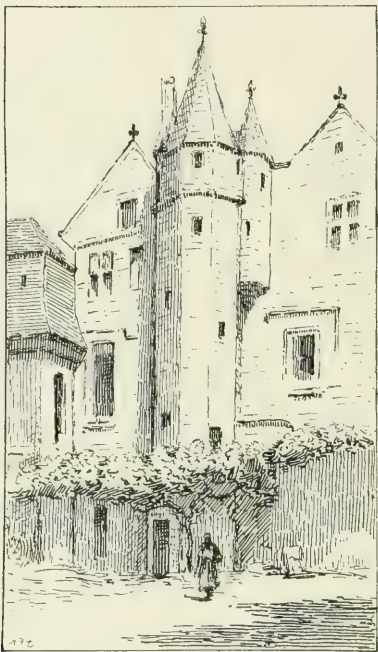


AT LAVOIR.

Tours, but not with any sword the finest armourer could contrive. Then it was they sent at her command for the magic sword hidden underground behind the altar of the chapel of Ste. Catherine de Fierbois. But the scabbard of vermilion velvet they gave her was made at Tours, and the leather one she ordered for herself. And Tours furnished her banner and her pennons. The great banner of white linen with silk fringes and fleurs-de-lis all over its ground, in the centre the Lord God enthroned in His clouds, surrounded by the adoring angels, and for device *Jhesu-Maria*, as well as the pennons with the Annunciation painted on them, which her knights carried—who painted them, or designed them? Who was Heuves Pouloir or Poulnoir? Was he a Scot, James Polwarth, as has generally been supposed, or some Flemish Hans, or some Lorrainer Hauves? At all events, he was a resident of Tours from 1428 to 1431, and in the employment of the city. That Jeanne watched his work day after day with delight seems likely; for his daughter Henriette became her friend. When Henriette married, the Maid, with full confidence in the citizens' love for her, wrote to the magistrates and to her late host, Jehan du Puy, to dower the bride with a hundred crowns. It was a time of strait. The city fathers had not a hundred crowns to give away; but they did what they could, and for love and honour of the Maid, Henriette was given bread and wine for all her wedding guests, and such smaller present of money as could be made up by the citizens and churchmen.

When we visit the old Hôtel de Ville of Châteauneuf, its remains now part of the Hôtel de la Croix Blanche, a melancholy part of the programme is a peep into the stable, or such cursory examination of it as the stamping horses will allow. It is a slice off the ancient church of St. Denis—one of the many old ecclesiastical glories of Martinopolis. Just enough beauty of detail in arch and vault is left to rouse regret, while the sympathetic young ostler waits on your mood, as if hoping you will not bear him or his horses malice for their intrusion. He

will tell you the old tradition that here the Maid's great white banner was blessed. Antiquarians ignore the tale. Why in St. Denis, when St. Martin was but a stone's throw away? But St. Denis of Tours,



OLD HÔTEL DE VILLE OF CHÂTEAUNEUF

though originally built by an abbot of Pontlevoy for the use of Pontlevoy priests and pilgrims to St. Martin, may have had a greater local fame than has been recorded. And in any case Jeanne had her own taste in shrines. The banner may have made a round of the shrines of Tours, as she did, followed by the wondering people who were all her friends.

On 25th April of the year 1429, Jeanne and her little troop of knights and men-at-arms set off along the Loire for Blois, the appointed meeting-place of all who were to march under her banner to the relief of Orleans. But Tours saw her again, and perhaps more than once. Her gentle but un-

tiring persistence would not suffer the lethargy of Charles; and Tours watched her, with victory in her eyes, hurrying on to Loches to rouse him to action. When his Councils met at Tours to consider ways and means, Jeanne was still the heartener, perhaps in person. Ways and means—ways and means? The way is straight

enough to Rheims, where the crown lies waiting. Means were not wanting at Orleans. And he set out at last for the campaign of the Loire—she, too, by another route. It was just over the borders of Touraine that Guy de Laval saw her “armed at all points, save her head, and lance in hand.” “And after we had got down at Selles, I went to her lodging to see her; and she brought wine, and she said I should soon drink with her in Paris; and all she did seemed divine; divine it was to see her and to hear her voice.”

The tale of Jeanne in Touraine is the tale of the morning glory of her mission, before the night closed around her, or even the shadows fell about her path.

Jeanne d'Arc had saved France; but salvation did not show itself at once. The king had abandoned her from indolence rather than mistrust. Indolence, broken by fitful energy, ruled his next years; and the ablest of his adherents quarrelled round him. Each thought the safety of the cause lay in having Charles under his exclusive sway. Louis d'Amboise and Richmond plotted to carry him out of La Trémouille's influence. La Trémouille took swift reprisals. Amboise was imprisoned on a life sentence; and his castle of Chaumont was razed to the ground. Richmond stung to more furious determination, had La Trémouille seized, and De Bueil flung him into the dungeons of Montrésor. Nevertheless, through all their rivalries, jealousies, strifes, these men had one clear purpose. They united before it was too late to reap the fruits of the Maid's sacrifice and death. The great soldier, De Bueil, Comte de Sancerre, played a hero's part; and Richmond let slip his private animosities and set to making peace with Burgundy. The Treaty of Arras, a great landmark in the war, was ratified at Tours in 1435.

During the latter half of his reign Charles's energy rose higher and burned steadier. Romantic history has persisted in attributing this in great part to the influence of Agnes Sorel, his “*Dame de Beauté*.”

Sober investigations do not entirely discredit the tradition. But the union of his captains doubtless contributed much; and another cause may be sought for in the danger he saw in his own household. There was a strange bird in the nest. He might almost have doubted the paternity of the surly, turbulent son, who craved independence, and plotted like a master-conspirator almost before he was out of childhood. Charles was strong enough to defeat the Praguerie; but unless he kept watch over the son, who never slept, his throne was in danger. At the Council and in the field he was a king at last. In 1449, he left the shelter of his loyal Touraine for the most determined and most brilliant of his campaigns, in Normandy. In Guienne he followed up his triumphs; and in 1453 the English had nothing left save Calais. The King of Bourges was King of France at last. Yet these days of success at the end of his life were melancholy and embittered by the ceaseless opposition or open enmity of his son. Louis thought his own time had come, and he let his father know it. When Charles died, in 1461, at Meung-sur-Yèvre in Berri, poison was spoken of. The truth seems to be that he suspected his son, abstained from food, and died of inanition.

An incident of the Guienne campaign marks the new era that was dawning. In the Rue du Commerce at Tours we stop to look at the charming Hôtel Gouin. Much restored, it yet gives us a pleasing and not inaccurate glimpse of the late Renaissance town-house of the Tourangeau noble or rich citizen. For long it was called l'Hôtel Xaincoing, because on its site was the mansion of Jehan Xaincoing, Charles VII.'s minister of finance. Through all the troubles and anarchy the bourgeois had been steadily rising to power, and some of them to wealth. The best use kings knew to make of them was to get money from them, or by them. Xaincoing was one of these clever convenient financiers. A smaller man than the great Jacques Cœur of Bourges, yet he all but met Jacques Cœur's fate. For the

exchequer was empty when money was wanted for the Guienne campaign, and on him fell the blame. He was imprisoned in the chateau of Tours, and ruined, escaping only with his life. His house fell to Dunois. He was one of a race to be conspicuous in Touraine. The Bohiers, the Beaunes, the Briçonnets, will come after him, financial geniuses, munificent patrons of art, most convenient friends to the king, rising by wealth, and falling by it.





## CHAPTER VIII

### LOUIS XI.; CHARLES LE BON PETIT ROY; LOUIS, FATHER OF HIS PEOPLE

*Louis XI. and Margaret of Scotland—Tours the Seat of Government—Plessis-lès-Tours—Commines and Louis XI.—S. François de Paule—Death of Louis XI.—Anne de Beaujeu Regent—Charles the Adventurous—Anne de Bretagne twice Queen.—The Father of his People—The Renaissance in Touraine: Builders, Sculptors, Painters.*

TOURS has known many kings—kings in war, kings in council, royal refugees, royal sportsmen—for the forests round about were full of game—but one king made Tours his very own; his memory is deep graven on it still, the great and formidable Louis XI. Crafty and sinister, but a *maitre-homme*. The dreary waste of the Hundred Years' War was past. He was king in a new world. He used the new with surpassing intelligence, but governed by means of the darkest terrors of the old. Some later historians have tried to reinstate Louis in popular esteem, denying that he was the melodramatic tyrant he has been painted. Their efforts have emphasised for us his extraordinary mental powers and force of character, but have left him not a whit less sinister than before. Do fewer corpses swing in the wind on the outskirts of Plessis? But the horrid things are still there. And the iron cages are not mythical, "cages being eight foote square, and one foote more than a man's height, some of iron, and some of wood, plated with iron both within and without, with horrible iron works." So says Commines, who was shut up in one of them in the next reign. Commines admired him vastly; and his incontrovertible and most vital *Memoirs* survive to tell how Louis turned

Plessis from a palace into a jail, himself being at once chief turnkey and chief prisoner.

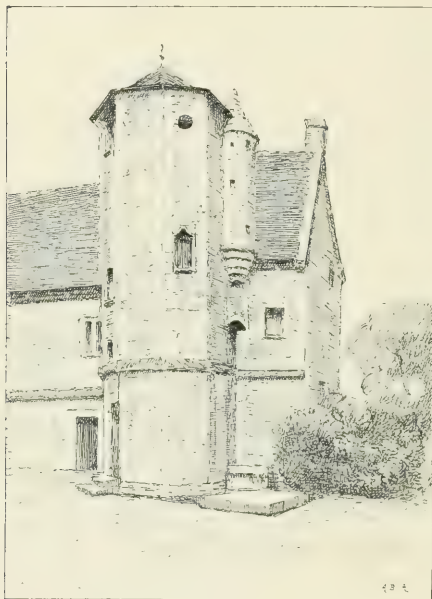
But that was at the end of his life. There was no Plessis when Louis first knew Tours ; but in its place, near the banks of the Cher, an old manor, Montils-lès-Tours, belonging to the chamberlain, Hadouin de Maillé. Even in its dilapidated condition it had been used by Charles VII. sometimes as a royal residence. It was not there, however, but to the strong castle built by Henry II. on the banks of the Loire that the Dauphin Louis's bride, Princess Margaret of Scotland, came—to her unhappiness—in 1436. Her father, good poet in his imprisonment, great statesman after his release, had made his kingdom a power in Europe, and the alliance was thought a good one. There were great rejoicings in her honour. They danced in the public places of Tours ; indeed, so eager were they to be dancing that they danced to the sound of the cathedral organ dragged out to a promenade near Notre Dame la Riche. She was married to Louis with all honour in the chapel of the château. It was little enough happiness she knew after in what remained of her short life. True, one picture is flashed back to us of her riding out of Montils on a May morning, followed by three hundred lords and ladies and squires, all merry and all young, to cull the blossom in the forests of the Cher. Probably Louis was not of the party. A sulky, suspicious youth, he never liked her ; and the poet's daughter, poet herself, had good reason to think her own grey skies kinder than the sun of France. But her father's murder blackened the grey skies, and with none to avenge her, none to remonstrate, she suffered on, kept late vigils over her books, shed tears over her husband's cruelty, and died. The tale of the kiss bestowed on Alain Chartier, mythical or not, tells what alone were the consolations of a woman of her temperament and destiny. "Fi de la vie de ce monde : ne m'en parlez plus !" she said as she lay dying. She was twenty-one.

When Louis came into his inheritance he chose Tours as his chief

residence, and Montils was the nucleus of the great castle he built. During his long stay of twenty years he was an uncomfortable, a dangerous, but not unserviceable neighbour to the citizens of Tours. He encouraged their industries, always at their own expense, but with intelligence, if not with generosity. The bourgeois trembled, cowered—but they prospered. He imported silk-weavers from Nimes. And the town very nearly led the way in the new art of printing in France. Nicolas Jenson, master of the mint there, was sent to Mainz to learn all that could be learnt of it. On his return Louis was at the wars; and for lack of encouragement, he took his skill to Italy. Christopher Plantin also, born across the Cher at St. Avertin, gave his life work to Antwerp instead of to his native Tours. Yet the king was, indeed, a friend of the press, gave it freedom and encouragement through his realm generally, shrewdly seeing in it the best of all weapons against the great nobles. To artists he was an occasional and frugal patron. Now and then circumstances stirred him to generosity. On the death of Burgundy he railed St. Martin's shrine round with a silver trellis, and placed a silver statue of himself, kneeling devoutly in front. The maker is said to have been Jehan Gallant, whose house is pointed out to-day in Foire-le-Roi. And if it be not his, 'tis a very fine house and worth looking at.

It is difficult enough to reconstruct his old palace from what remains of it to-day—part of a single wing and one little tower. We cling to the tradition that the room where Louis died still exists; and we peer down the hole, across the court, said to be the entrance to La Balue's prison. To-day Plessis has the look of a simple old manor. Its venerable brick is rich and mellow, and though its rooms are deserted, there is some life about the farm, and flowers and vines grow luxuriantly. But its ancient splendour and its ancient grimness are alike unthinkable while we look at the remnant, cared for now, but so little and so tame. Then we go home and read *Quentin Durward* or *Commines*, and the old place rises before our eyes. And yet Scott

reconstructed Plessis without having set eyes in it—out of Commines's *Memoirs* probably, with some help from his friend Skene's Diaries and the Gazetteers of the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh. He has



PLESSIS-LÈS-TOURS TO-DAY

done it for ever. The name sends us back at once to that "delicious summer morning, before the sun had assumed its scorching power, and while the dews yet cooled and perfumed the air, [when] a youth, coming from the north-eastward, approached the ford of a small river, or rather a large brook, tributary to the Cher, near the royal castle of Plessis, whose dark and multiplied battlements rose in the background over the extensive forest with which they were surrounded."

This great forest was Louis's playground. He played vigorously but grimly, after his fashion—"In this pastime of hunting," says Commines, "he tooke almost as much paine as pleasure; for the toile was great, because he ranne the Hart to death by force. Besides that, he arose verie earely in the morning, and oftentimes went farre, neither could any weather make him leave his sport. Sometimes also

he returned verie wearie and in manner ever displeased with one or other : for this game is not alwaies made as they wish that have the ordering thereof : notwithstanding in all men's opinions, he for his part understood it better than any man in his time. In this pastime he exercised himselfe continually, lodging about in the villages till warres began."

Louis knew not the meaning of relaxation. An uneasy master, "when his body was at rest, his minde was occupied, for he had to do in many places, and busied himselfe as much with his neighbors' affaires as with his owne. . . . When he was in war he desired peace or truce, which notwithstanding when he had obtained, he could not long away with. He medled with many trifling matters in his realme, which he might well have passed over : but such was his disposition and life. And to say the truth, his memory was so excellent that he forgot nothing, but knew all the world, all countries, and all men of estimation round about him ; so that he seemed a prince worthier to govern the whole world than one realme alone."

In spite of its defences, Plessis was not meant as a strong fortress. Its towers, its moats, its ramparts, especially its bristling guards—the Scottish archers serving as *chevaux de frise* along the battlements and by the bridges—proclaimed it a formidable place ; but, architecturally, it was a castle of the new time, with great halls, well-lighted, and planned for spacious, even gracious living. In itself Plessis was less gloomy than most castles of the period. The gloominess was all in the life there, especially in the king's later days. It was no easy task to approach him. You would be challenged many a time ere you crossed the rampart fortified with great towers, and again as you crossed the drawbridge kept by the Scots guard. In the first courtyard where the troops lodged, everything seemed ready for attack, no matter how peaceful was the outer world you had left. And the second court was even better defended, being surrounded

by deep ditches. Round this inner court rose the chateau proper, with the apartments of the king and the great lords above the covered gallery, up and down which the restless Louis stalked when illness or suspicion kept him within the precincts.

Towards the end of his life this suspicion grew into a mania. His terror was, lest seeing him ill, they should force him to lay down his government. So he kept aloof especially such as were "worthie of credit and authoritie." Commynes remained, but save for him there were only Tristan and Olivier le Daim, Jacques Coitier, the doctor, and other underlings. His sick fancy desired also new and curious objects of interest, and he sent for strange animals out of foreign lands—dogs, beagles, horses of a kind unknown in France before. Not from curiosity only, but that men should see in his new interests a mark of life. "But when all these strange things were brought him he made no account of them, no, verie seldom spoke with those that brought them."

"No man debated any matter with him, unlesse it were of some great importance that concerned himself: he seemed rather a dead corps than a living creature, for he was leaner than a man would beleeve: he appalled himself sumptuously, yea more umptuously then in all his life before: for he wore no gowne but of crimson sattin furred with good marterns: he gave gifts to whom it pleased him without any sute; for no man durst moove any sute to him, nor debate any matter with him: he punished faults sharply to the end he might bee feared, and not lose his authoritie as himselfe tould me: he changed officers, cassed companies of men of armes, diminished pensions, or tooke them cleane away, and told me but a few daies before his death that he passed away the time in making and marring of men. To be short, he caused himselfe to be more spoken of within his realme than ever was any King, and all for feare lest men should think him dead."

Doctors failing, and Our Lady deaf, he craved new means

of prolonging his life, to him so miserable, yet to which he was so bound. At his request Pope Sixtus sent him "the corporall upon the which St. Peter sang masse. . . The holie viole which is at Reims and never has been removed thence, was brought into his chamber to Plessis, and stood upon his cupboard at the hower of his death." He had relics, too, sent from Constantinople. "But all would not helpe. There was no remedy; needes he must go the way his predecessors went before him."

Then it was "he sent into Calabria for one Frier Robert, whom he called the holy man." This was the great S. François de Paule, founder of the Minimes. Like many men of guile, Louis had complete faith in the power of innocence, once he was satisfied he had found it.

"I never saw in my time," says Commynes, "a man of so holy life, nor by whose mouth the Holy Ghost seemed rather to speake; for he never had beene scholler, but was utterly unlearned: true it is that his Italian toong caused somewhat the greater admiration of him. This heremite passed through Naples, being honoured and received, as if he had been a great legat sent from the Sea Apostolike, both by the king and by his children; with whom he communed of the affaires of the court, as if he had beene a Courtier all the daies of his life." At Plessis the king "honoured him as if he had beene the Pope himselfe, falling downe before him, and desiring him to prolong his life: whereunto he answered as a wise man should."

For long they dared not speak to him of death. He had forbidden them to speak the "cruel word"! They might only say, "Parlez peu!" But Olivier le Daim urged the doctor, Coitier, to do so.

"The said Phisition used him so roughly, that a man would not give his servant so sharpe language as he gave the king; and yet the king so much feared him, that he durst not command him out of his presence; for notwithstanding that he complained to divers of him, yet durst he not change him as he did all his other servants, because

this Phisition once said thus boldly to him : ' I know that one day you will command me away as you do all your other servants, but you shall not live eight daies after,' binding it with a great oath. . . "

He was convinced at last : and when once he had looked death in the face, he lost all fear of it, and showed something better than defiance at the end. His brain ruled then, as it had done all his days. " After all these feares, sorrowes, and suspicions, God (according to his accustomed goodnes) wrought a miracle upon him ; healing him both in soule and bodie ; for he tooke him out of this miserable world, being perfect of sense, understanding, and memorie, having received all his sacraments without all grief to mans judgment, and talking continually even within a *Paternoster* while of his death ; so that he gave order for his funerale, and named those that should accompanie his bodie to the grave [to Clèry] ; saying ever, that he trusted to die on no day but Saturday, and that our ladie, in whom he had ever put his confidence, and alwaies devoutly served, had purchased him this grace, and sure so it happened : for he ended his life upon Saturday the 30 of August in the yeere 1483, at eight of the clocke at night, in the said castell of Plessis, where he fell sicke the Monday before. His soule, I trust, is with God, and resteth in his blessed realme of paradise."

Had ever prince at once so open-eyed and so charitable a minister as Commynes? He deserted Burgundy ; he may have betrayed Charles, or Charles's interests. To Louis he was uniformly faithful and devoted. There is something of the cynical pupil of Machiavelli, and something of the fair-minded and kindly philosopher in his admiration. He denies none of his master's crimes or his tyrannies. Yet, " for my part," he says, " I am not able to accuse him, neither saw I ever a better Prince ; for though himselfe pressed his subjects, yet would he suffer none other so to do, friend or foe." He was a king. He had intellect and far-reaching aims ; and Commynes had rather have been ground by such than rule himself over a royal fool.



It is not the sly slinking mate of Tristan and Olivier le Daim, laughing to see his subjects dangle from gibbets, that he has immortalised in his pages, but the vital, masterful king, defying the approach of death by his "noble hart," and ruling to the last.

As for Plessis after him—his son Charles never loved it. His childhood had been spent at Amboise; and his visits to Tours were associated with fear of his terrible father. But he had merry hunting-parties in the forest; and Plessis smiled just as it was being abandoned. Nor had Louis XII. any better reason for loving it. Half prisoner, ever suspect, he had hung round Plessis, the unwilling son-in-law of Louis XI. Out of his paternal castle of Blois he was to make a great new royal dwelling. Francis I. left it in charge of a captain. Sometimes he lodged guests there—his sister's daughter, little Jeanne d'Albret, for instance. Henry III. found a refuge at Plessis when his murder of Guise made Paris dangerous to him; and there he concluded the treaty with the King of Navarre, which brought peace at last to France after the long Wars of Religion. Save as the scene of an occasional *fête*, or as a lodging for the night of passing princes, it was gradually abandoned. In the eighteenth century it had become an asylum for poor decayed nobles and soldiers; but at the Revolution they lost their home. The town of Tours took possession of the old place, which passed through various stages of decay. Louis's old palace became a house of correction, a military store, a bullet factory. Then it was pulled down, save the little remnant we see to-day. It is now in private hands and well cared for.

But let us think of Plessis as still standing. Now it was Anne that reigned there in Louis's stead—Anne de Beaujeu, the wife of Bourbon the regent, in reality regent herself, a woman of subtle mind, of some statecraft, with a large endowment of her father's ability, and a profound admiration of his policy. Even at twenty-three, when

power fell to her, she showed a pretty talent for distracting the players in the game of state while she moved the pawns. Anne initiated little, if anything; but Louis had left her full instructions. Arrogant by nature, she could be persuasive, too: not without kindly traits, she preserved her young brother's affection even while he was restive under her rule. When he shook himself free from it, he still wrote to her, *ma bonne sœur ma mie*. Murmurs quickly rose around her, against her regency, against the insults to the nobles and the burdens laid on the people in the last reign. Anne knew her part. Did they demand the meeting of the States-General at Tours? Then the States-General should meet. But before they met she had set her house in order. Olivier le Daim, the barber favourite, she gave up to the enemies clamouring for his life; Coitier the doctor, to those who now squeezed money out of him faster than he had squeezed it out of his royal patient. She opened prison doors, and gave some relief from taxes. Her conduct seemed to promise humanity and a new era of justice—and committed her to nothing.

Reports of Councils find little place in these pages. But this meeting of the States-General in the Archbishop's palace at Tours, that opened in January and closed in March 1484, stands apart. In its records we hear the knell of the Middle Ages. The demands, the complaints are an effort after a Charter of the Rights of Man. Three hundred years later would seem to be their date. Many personal quarrels were fought out; but above them all rose the clear demand for practical reform, for the reduction of taxes on industry, for the building of bridges, for the safeguarding of personal liberty. The forest laws raised a storm of protest. Nobles and lesser folk complained that the beasts had rights, and they none—"Les bêtes sont plus franches que les hommes." And there were some that spoke eloquently the plaint of the poor. "The great ones snatch from the labourer even his very bed and his last bit of bread; when they can take no more, they drive him with blows into the city to get wine

for them, and white bread, and fish, and spices, and other things of luxury ; and in very sooth, were it not for God who is the counsellor of the poor and lends them patience, they would fall into despair." The democratic attitude and faith of a later day found utterance here ere the fifteenth century was out, by the mouth of Philippe Pot, a



LA RABATERIE, HOUSE OF OLIVIER LE DAIM

Touraine landowner, lord of La Roche. " Before aught else I would have you be convinced that the commonwealth (la chose publique) is no other thing than the welfare of the people ; it is the people who have entrusted it to kings. For such as have possessed it in any other manner, without the consent of the people, they must only be reputed as tyrants or as usurpers of others' wealth. The commonwealth (chose du peuple) . . . belongs to all."

Anne was self-effacing and courteous. She listened to all; she flattered most, her promises were profuse, and she deceived the most astute. Her policy was settled: she never altered it. But she gained time and the charge of the king while he was young; and for the moment she made the influence of Louis d'Orléans as naught.

As for Charles—a boy of fourteen, forced through long dreary hours to sit on a blue velvet throne and listen to quarrels and speeches—what did he care for his sister's projects, or the nobles' plots, or the burghers' discontent? His head was full of dreams; he was king; a few more years now, and he should make these dreams out of story-books real. He would be Roland, he would be Charlemagne, he would be the heroes of Quintus Curtius. What were politics and the rights of man when you could hold tournaments and make conquests, yourself always the hero? *Le bon petit roy*, as Brantôme called him, continued to dream his *Caroliad*, to be realised one day—with some insufficiency, as dreams are realised—in his Italian campaigns. He played at soldiers with the Plessis men-at-arms, he always the captain. He played at soldiers just as lightmindedly in Italy—but there he did learn something of the art of war. There was a great spirit in the *bon petit roy*. Meantime Sister Anne ruled for him, and others plotted to carry him off from her guardianship. No one plotted with impunity against Anne de France. The Duke of Orléans was prisoned fast in Bourges. Philippe de Commines, who was to describe Balue's iron cage, now actually knew its limits. "I tasted of it," he says; and he says no more in those wonderful, so dignified *Memoirs* of his. Elsewhere he said—so goes the tale—"I sailed out into the depths of the sea, and a sudden tempest overwhelmed me." Georges d'Amboise, the Bishop of Montauban, and the Bishop of Périgueux, stayed for two years in Louis's black dungeons at Loches. Anne did not let the power slip out of her hands. "Estant regente, elle tenoit terriblement sa grandeur."

The most of Charles's life in Touraine belongs to Amboise; but

round Plessis he hunted, and he made frequent stays there during his minority. There he endowed the convent of the Bonshommes, as he called the community of St. François de Paule. A little new chapel marks to-day the site of the first convent of the Minimes, where the Founder died in 1505. To Plessis came Charles's sister, poor unlucky, sweet-natured Jeanne de France, Duchess of Orleans, to beg for her husband's liberty. Charles was tender-hearted; besides, the occasion gave him a chance to assert himself. But no assertion was possible in the neighbourhood of Anne de Beaujeu; so on pretence of a hunting-party he escaped with some friends, reached Montrichard, and from there wrote peremptorily to the commander of Bourges castle to send Orleans to him. Orleans was freed. Charles was freed. The reign of Anne was over.

Charles's marriage was sudden. His dying father had betrothed him to Margaret of Austria, but time and politics had cancelled the betrothal. A rich heiress, Anne of Brittany, had been spoken of for him, but she seemed as likely to go to Austria or to England for a throne. Anne—already, at fourteen, a young woman of decision—thought the deliberations too long. Having made her choice, she set off for Langeais, *sans appareil et sans bruit*, and met young King Charles by appointment. They were married in the chateau there without delay, and Tours received the bride and bridegroom with great ceremony after their coronation. At Plessis four of their children were born and died. They buried them in St. Martin's. There is no visitor to Tours but knows the pathetic and beautiful tomb of the two elder—transferred to St. Gatien's—with the two little sleeping angel-guarded figures, carved by great sculptors in this blossoming-time of art. The elder, Charles Orland (named after his father's heroes) is the chubby, serious, determined-looking child of Jehan Bourdichon's well-known portrait.

The death of this valiant infant, and of his father in 1498, made the Duke of Orleans, great-grandson of Charles V., undisputed King

of France. It is at Blois that we shall meet Louis XII. in the fulness of his activity; but Tours saw him at Councils. It was still the city of Councils. An important but not very creditable question brought him to Tours soon after his accession. His wife, Jeanne de France, Louis XI.'s daughter, was not pleasing in her husband's eye. She was plain, she was sickly; and she limped. She had been barely good enough to be Duchess of Orleans. That she should be Queen of France was out of the question. Besides, she was very meek. There was nothing of her father or sister in Jeanne. Louis XII. swore he had been coerced into marrying her; and that the marriage had never been consummated. The Pope, desirous of the King's support of his son Cæsar Borgia, decreed the divorce, after a Council at Tours. Jeanne stated her case, but did not protest loudly. She retired to a religious life at Bourges, and founded the Annonciades. The Church that had taken an earthly crown from her brows waited till the eighteenth century to give her a saint's aureole instead; but to the people she was from the first the Blessed Jeanne de France. Anne of Brittany, an inconsolable widow but a few months before, was induced to become Queen a second time. With her new royal husband she made a second triumphal entry into Tours. At Tours again, in 1506, the States-General bestowed on Louis the amiable title of Father of his People. And it was at Tours that his daughter Claude was betrothed to the heir of France, Francis, Count of Angoulême.

Now that Plessis is built, and the fortress of Amboise made into a great sumptuous palace, it is time to review briefly the progress of architecture in Touraine. With Louis XII. we have reached the full spring of the French Renaissance. The main point to be remembered is that it was essentially a *French* Renaissance. The old notion that French art was dead, and that it was born again from the contact with Italy during the Italian wars of Charles VIII. and Louis XII., is now altogether untenable. On the contrary, as

soon as Italian influence became important and touched essentials, French art was doomed. The French spirit is a thing not to be lightly defined. It is Latin—but it is not all Latin. Its highest flights have not been Latin. The *grand siècle* did not see its highest flights in literature. Of that time only Molière came near Montaigne and Rabelais in rich vigour and originality. It is Latin in its capacity for discipline, its love of logic, its sanity, its clear integrity of thought and expression. It may be that these are the things that have given France its extraordinary stability in spite of all the shocks it has undergone. But they do not always predominate: occasionally they are but handmaids in the service of a less accountable force, now more explosive, now more fantastic, now more gracefully free. The Latin spirit did not breed the French Revolution; it only gave it a terribly logical consistency and thoroughness. Call the other part of the French genius what you will. Northern? Celtic? These are but names to quarrel over. At least, it is often uppermost in what is characteristically French. It was uppermost in the French Renaissance of art—a peculiarly national movement.

The special art of Touraine is architecture, of course. In any case, it is the only local art that may be studied there now, save in rare specimens. The ebb and flow of the two spirits I have spoken of may be traced in the churches of the province. The more directly national elements can best be studied in the civil and domestic architecture, which Roman tradition did not touch, which was influenced by the Italian Renaissance only after its best days were over. First, as to the churches. It needs leisure to discover the special charm of the churches of Touraine. They have suffered terribly, and often you must spell their past beauty from fragments. Nor have war and fanaticism and neglect been the worst enemies. Pious, zealous parish priests have done incalculable damage in the name of a revival of religious life, and the debased taste of the modern Catholic has penetrated here as elsewhere. Only extreme

poverty has saved a blessed few from the invasion of atrocious glass. The name of Lobin—but let us not speak of Lobin! To many eyes there is not enough of Gothic, the proper expression to Northerners of spiritual aspiration and mystic thought. But at Tours, at St. Catherine de Fierbois and elsewhere, there are fine specimens of the pointed style; and at least it can be said that Gothic remained a living force in the valley of the Loire to an unusually late date, far beyond the golden age of the thirteenth century. Nay, it survived there in a purer form. The floridity and extravagance of the later Gothic churches of the north you do not find here, where there was never a temptation to overload or over-emphasise. It transferred its plans and qualities to civil architecture while it was still living. But when Gothic first came to Touraine, it came largely as a restorer. The extraordinary activity of the church-builders of the eleventh and twelfth centuries had strewn the land thickly with churches, from the hamlet temple to the great basilica; and these with their round arches and solid pillars have survived in such numbers, and in so many cases unaltered, that they are still the prevailing type. How often does one's memory call up these interiors of white stone, solid, symmetrical, balanced, very simple, real temples of a sun-loving people, where majesty is expressed not by loftiness and dimness, but by a flood of light that laves the floor and gilds the walls! You may wander from village to village, without finding a single shrine with a great fame outside the province, yet in each there is something to tempt you to linger. Here is a perfect gem of Romanesque. There is another, mended, meddled with, where you can trace every age since Charlemagne. Here you will find Paganism taking refuge in the crypt below the Christian altar. There some local artist of nine centuries ago, or of yesterday, has been given freedom to tell *naïf* stories on the walls. And in the carvings on doors and porches, friezes and capitols, you will see a rich, crude imagination that delighted in impish goblin forms, and loved, too,



all growing things of the earth, shaping them in stone with charm and grace.

But the most prominent signs of the artistic energies of Touraine are the chateaux. You can trace their development from the austere fortresses of Montbazou, Montrichard and Loches, to the smiling, gracious Azay. The Hundred Years' War kept everything back, but it was not ended ere the castle-building began in Touraine. The national spirit engendered by resistance to the invader, found here its first artistic expression. The presence of Charles VII. in the province raised up a great number of new castles, homes for his partisans; and many old mediæval fortresses were repaired for his defence. The Vieilles Salles of the Château Royal at Loches are of his time, if they be not older. He added considerably to Chinon, but all we can see of his building is the roofless, ruined hall, where he received Jeanne d'Arc. When he built La Guerche for Antoinette de Maignelais towards the end of his life, it was only a pleasure-house he was thinking of, and no fortress. Under Louis XI. there was much building. The need of strength was not so pressing. Peace at home had brought newer needs, especially space and light. Plessis in its great time seems to have been more beautiful than it was strong; and half its strength came from the traps and guards of the suspicious king. Langeais, built in his reign, is still a château-fort, but then old Fulk Nerra's donjon at the back of it was perhaps partly in ruins, and the new castle had to guard the road to Angers; but it is built, however, on an ample scale, for hospitality and pageants. In Coudray and in its neighbour Montpensier, above the Vienne, the arts of peace are already more thought of than the arts of war. Leisurely hands embroidered the walls. The towers and *tourelles* are not only for defence. They have to make points in a landscape. And now the smaller manors, like Clos-Luce, begin to show daintiness and grace of plan and detail.

Charles VIII. maintained the feudal aspect and strength in Amboise ; but within and without, ornament was growing richer and more elegant ; and the façade on the Loire was meant to dazzle by its splendour as well as overawe. Chaumont, too, grimly feudal on the outside, has an inner court where sculptors worked for beauty. Under Louis XII. the continued stability and the prosperity of the country gave domestic architecture a still freer chance. His home at Blois—or what remains of it in the “Aile Louis XII.”—is the perfection of domestic Gothic, strong, light, graceful, warm in colour, simple, yet giving opportunity for the play of delicate fancy. The advance, too, may be noted in the Logis du Roi at Loches, of this time, as compared with the Vieilles Salles to which it is attached. Fantastic Gothic had its triumph, almost its exaggeration, in the forest of *tourelles* in Ussé.

Italian influence was making its way, but only as yet in detail. Soon the panels of façades will be embroidered with arabesques, but these fit themselves for a time to a French foundation. Even under Francis I. the chateau architecture in Touraine and on its borders is still the work of local master-masons, altogether national in designs. Chambord is Gothic, swelled, attacked with megalomania. In the François Premier wing at Blois, the Italian influence is much stronger ; but the wonderful staircase is an imaginative adaptation of a French mediæval plan. And Chenonceaux and Azay, both built in the first quarter of the sixteenth century, from which the fortress form has disappeared, are, save for their Italian staircases, French in structure and character. Indeed, not till after 1525 can it be said that Italian influence dominated. And by that time—and not in architecture alone—the best was over.

Sculpture in the Loire region had never been dead. From early times the carving in stone on church porch and pillar had been distinguished and imaginative. From the descendants of the crafts-





CHENONCEAUX FROM CHISEAUX BRIDGE.

men of the porch of Candes the finest development was to be expected. There are heads and faces there of the thirteenth century, which might have been touched by the chisel of Michel Colombe. Nor had there been any break apparently. Alas, for the meagre remains! But at Neuillé-Pont-Pierre there is a fourteenth-century virgin, probably from St. Julien of Tours; and in the Archæological Society's museum a *mater dolorosa* of the same period, both notable works, and anticipating the lightness and grace which were the distinctions of the best age. Most of the remains of sculpture actually in Touraine are funereal monuments. The tombs of the Bouicauts in old St. Martin's have vanished; but enough is left of the tombs at Bueil (fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries) to let us appreciate the vigour of the sculptors at work then. Agnes Sorel's monument at Loches (soon after 1489) has been much retouched; yet of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth-century sculpture of the region we know enough to say that the Renaissance had arrived. We see the gradual giving up of an archaic convention, the return to nature, and what M. Paul Vitry calls "une préméditation de simplicité." All is native, or the foreign influence is slight. Flemish hands can probably be traced at Amboise, in St. Hubert; in the grim Christ of Limeray, once in St. Florentin du Château, Amboise; and at St. Catherine de Fierbois. But there was no Italian sculptor of any great note working in the region of the Loire till about 1510. The tomb of the children of Charles VIII. (1506), now in St. Gatien, has been attributed to many hands, especially to Michel Colombe and the Justi. But the Justi had not arrived in Tours when it was erected. It seems certain that an Italian artist had something to do with it; and the most plausible theory is that the general design was Jerome of Fiesole's, as also the actual work on the pedestal; and that the figures of the children and the angels came from the studio of Michel Colombe.

This great master was not Tourangeau by birth, but a Breton,

born at St. Pol de Léon about 1430. He came to Tours soon after 1470, was employed by Louis XI., and lived all the rest of his life there. In his studio in the Passage des Filles Dieu, off the Rue du Faubourg St. Etienne—now Rue Michel Colombe—several distinguished pupils worked, Jean de Chartres, and his nephews Guillaume Regnault, Bastien François, and François Colombe. His greatest patron was his compatriot, Anne of Brittany. The attributions to him are numerous, the existing works certainly by him are very few—and these were all done after he was eighty! (1) A medal of Louis XII., now in the Louvre, “chef-d’œuvre d’un réalisme impitoyable et pénétrant,” as M. Vitry says; (2) St. George and the Dragon at Gaillon; (3) The tomb of Francis II. of Brittany, at Nantes—a great complicated sculpture group. The plan of this last may be Perréal’s, but all the figures and the detail are Colombe’s. It is a masterpiece of conception, feeling, and execution, where vigorous realism of portraiture is joined to exquisite religious feeling. His last great enterprise was the tomb of Philibert de Savoie at Brou; but the actual monument is not his. Margaret of Austria gave him the commission, and he worked out elaborate designs; but complications arose through Perréal, who was to have collaborated with him; and Colombe’s designs were never carried out. The great monument is the work of Flemish artists. To the pupils of Colombe we owe the cloister of St. Martin and the Fontaine de Beaune. Belonging at least to his school are the Vierge de La Carte (Ballan); the Vierge d’Olivet in the Louvre, from the Château d’Olivet, but perhaps originally from Notre Dame la Riche at Tours; the Vierge d’Ecouen in the Louvre; and the tomb of the Bastarnays at Montrésor. It has been suggested that some artists of the Loire region collaborated in the tomb of the Cardinal d’Amboise at Rouen.

The three brothers Juste, more properly Justi, Antoine, Jean, and André, who settled definitely at Tours in the beginning of the sixteenth

century, were Florentines. With them distinctly Italian influences began gradually to assert themselves.

Touraine had a golden age of art apart from architecture and all the crafts that serve architecture. For what remains of it, however, the sculpture (save in a few tombs), the paintings, the portraits, the miniatures, look in Paris, Chantilly, Berlin, Antwerp, London—anywhere save in Tours and Touraine. Tours has in its fine library many treasures of an earlier age in the shape of wonderful illuminated manuscripts; its picture gallery contains not a single specimen of its own great art. Go up and down among its chateaux, and it is in vain to look for products of the school of the Loire. Azay-le-Rideau has been stripped bare. Langeais and Chaumont, rich treasure-houses of art and decoration, have been furnished from out the wealth of the Italian and the French Renaissance; but there is little that is especially local, and hardly a picture worth notice. Chenonceaux has nothing to show. Ussé has pictures of historical interest; but they are not of the golden age. At Cheverny and Chambord, both in the Blésois, two or three fine sixteenth-century portraits of second rank hang on the walls. And in the churches, when one has named the triptych at St. Antoine's, Loches—which may be a Bourdichon, and is at least good enough to be called so—one has named all. So outside architecture and its kindred arts, one has to take the great blossoming time in Touraine a good deal on faith.

But the remains are worth while seeking out; and they will lead us to the same conclusion we came to in regard to architecture—that while the Renaissance in France was a vital thing, it was French. Later, a decaying art invaded the land; and decay meeting decay led on swiftly to the dull exotic classicism which was death. And of all the manifestations of the Renaissance none was more national, none so gracious as that of which Tours was the centre and the workshop for more than three-quarters of a century.

If we must have a date for the beginning of this Renaissance, why not say 1429, when Jeanne d'Arc first came to Tours for her equipment before her expedition to Orleans? A banner was made for her from the designs of James Polwarth, or James Power, a foreign painter, probably a Scot. Her arms, weapons, the sheath for her sword, were made in Tours, which discovers itself to be a town of skilled craftsmen, metal-workers, armourers, embroiderers. We have little information on the point, but it is quite definite; and there is nothing very sudden in the development of the city into an artistic centre. The craftsmen in town and village, the illuminator in his monkish cell, led inevitably to Fouquet and Colombe and Pinaigrier. The Hundred Years' War over, there was security; there was a renewed sense of national life. The arts were not lost. They had been bound by evil circumstance, and now they were released.

Forty years before Charles VIII.'s first Italian expedition, in 1453, Jehan Fouquet of Tours visited Italy. He had a fame there. Says Vasari of him—"It was at this time that there came to Rome Giovanni Fochetta, a very celebrated painter, who painted Pope Eugenius IV. at the Minerva, which was then thought to be a very fine thing." But the only Italian trace we can find in Fouquet's art is his interest in classic architecture; and the Roman arches and Florentine palaces which appear in his miniatures had hardly any effect at all on the French building of the next half century.

Jehan Fouquet, born about 1415, worked occasionally for the town of Tours, but was mostly employed about the court and by the great lords. In his house—now destroyed, near the Tour Foubert, at the angle formed by the Rue de Jérusalem and the north side of the Rue des Fouquets—nearly all his work was done; and there lived his sons and helpers, Louis and François. He may be called court painter to Charles VII., Louis XI. and Charles VIII.; but his greatest



patron was Etienne Chevalier, Charles VII.'s treasurer, and the friend of Jacques Cœur and of Agnes Sorel. For him he painted the famous diptych of Melun and the still more famous "Book of Hours." The first great portrait-painter of France, one of the greatest of any time, Fouquet is a link between the *naïveté* of the primitives and the complexity of the moderns. He is a whole Renaissance in himself. But of his portraits very few remain. The following are the only certain ones:—(1) The portrait of Charles VII, in the Louvre, painted just after Fouquet's return from Rome. There his genius is not yet seen at its maturity. (2) Portrait of Etienne Chevalier, with his patron St. Etienne. This is part of the diptych, originally intended for the Collegial Church at Loches. It commemorated Agnes Sorel, who is the Virgin of the other panel (now at Antwerp); but when difficulties were made about that famous lady being buried in the church, Chevalier sent it to Melun to adorn the tomb of his wife, who had died in 1454. In Melun the Virgin might pass for Catherine Budé. (3) A small portrait in enamel of Fouquet himself, now in the Louvre, probably part of the setting of the diptych. "Sa physionomie finaude et sincère," says a critic, "est encore celle de certains paysans de la Touraine." (4) Portrait of Jouvanel des Ursins, in the Louvre. (5) Portrait of a man unknown, in the gallery of Prince Liechtenstein in Vienna. This is held to be his masterpiece and one of the great portraits of the fifteenth century in any country. A few minor works, and some that are doubtfully attributed to him, need not be mentioned here.

In all his portraits he shows himself a master of reality, a frank and virile exponent of character. His methods are simple and direct. This power of rendering types and temperaments is to be seen not merely in his portraits, but in his miniatures as well. Indeed, to know Fouquet, we must know him as a miniaturist. The most celebrated collection, "The Book of Hours of Etienne Chevalier," is to be seen at Chantilly, with the exception of a

few detached leaves in the Louvre and in London. It is one of the most charming picture-books in the world. His holy stories, his legends of the saints, are fairy-tales made out of a rich and delicate imagination—not very divine, but full of a fresh, sweet, human grace. The little figures, peasants and artisans and soldiers, great lords and soft-faced women, are real people he has seen. The backgrounds are real, too—now a Florentine tower, now a French Gothic castle, now a landscape of Touraine. The colour is gay and varied, yet ever arranged with discretion. In colour and in mastery of detail, in force of expression, he is brother of the Van Eycks. Some of their intensity he may lack; but Fouquet has what no Fleming ever had—romance. Among his other collections of miniatures are “*Les cas des nobles hommes et femmes malheureux*”—illustrations for a translation from Boccaccio—now at Munich; “*Les antiquités des Juifs*” and the “*Grandes Chroniques de France*,” both in the Bibliothèque Nationale. “The Book of Hours” of the Duchess of Orleans is now lost, with many others.

Most of his pupils, such as Poyet and Perréal, are but names to us. The best known is Jean Bourdichon. Alas, most of his portraits have been lost—those of Francis I., of St. François de Paule, of Charles VIII. and Anne of Brittany, the two last figuring in religious pictures. But the well-known and masterly portrait of the child Charles Orland remains, in the Louvre. For Anne of Brittany he painted the “Great Book of Hours,” now in the Bibliothèque Nationale, where he shows himself, if not the equal of Fouquet as master of portraiture on this small scale, at least a loving and graceful interpreter of nature, and above all of flowers. Perhaps one specimen of his work remains in Touraine, the triptych of St. Antoine's, Loches. If he be not the painter, it is at least of Fouquet's school and his.

Bourdichon worked for four kings, of whom Louis XI. was the

least munificent. Not an easy master to work for, it would appear, from the following royal command to another artist.

“Mestre Colin d’Amiens, il faut que vous faciez la portraiture du roy nostre sire : C’est assavoir qui soit à genoux sur ung carreaul comme icy dessoubs et son chien costé luy, son chappeaul entre ses mains jointes, son espée à son costé, son cornet deux botz. Oultre plus fault des brodequins, non point des ouseaulx, le plus honneste que fere ce porra ; habillé comme ung chasseur, a tout le plus beau visaige que pourres fere et jeune et plain, le netz longuet et ung petit hault, comme savez, et ne le fectes point chauve.” There is a fine frankness in ordering “the handsomest face you can make, and young and full”; and “he is not to be made bald.”

Perreéal and Bourdichon were still court painters at the accession of Francis I. One of their assistants in 1516 was Jamet (Jehannet) Clouet. This is the first mention of Clouet the elder at the court of France, where in 1533 he was chief painter and valet de chambre. He was replaced by his son François (Janet) about 1540. The elder Jamet was certainly a foreigner, probably a Fleming; but he settled at Tours, married a goldsmith’s daughter there, and became so closely associated with the town that he must in a sense be held to belong to the school of the Loire. There is still much darkness as to Jean Clouet’s work. Very few portraits can be attributed to him with absolute certainty. M. Bouchot thinks many so-called Holbeins are probably his. The Carlisle collections of crayons, now at Chantilly, are from at least two powerful hands. Judging from their subjects, the first of the two masters would seem to have worked from 1515 to 1540. He was probably Jean Clouet.

François Clouet (“le docte Janet”), though born at Tours, before 1522, is outside our range. He did his work at Blois, at Paris, wherever the court was. Indeed, with neither Clouet have

we to do here, save as they left vivid records of the great lords and ladies of Touraine. The Clouets remained Flemish in genius—strong, vigorous, unflattering realists of the new time. They told no fairy tales, as did Fouquet and Bourdichon.



STATUE BY JEAN GOUJON,  
OPEN STAIRCASE, CHATEAU OF BLOIS

## CHAPTER IX

### THE LATER HISTORY OF TOURS

*Francis I. and Tours—Jacques de Beaune—The Wars of Religion—Extermination of the Huguenots—The States-General at Tours—Tours abandoned by the Court—The Sun King blasts Tours—Eighteenth-Century Tours—The Revolution—BALZAC—Ghosts.*

THE glorious Francis never showed his full exuberance at Tours. Some rays from his glory reached it ; but he did not often sun it with his presence. Plessis was not to his liking. Amboise, Blois, Chambord, Paris, Fontainebleau, mark his progress. But he hovered near ; his salamanders are scattered about the province ; and one public work of importance he set going in the town itself. The growth of Tours demanded new and strong walls to enclose the City, Châteauneuf, and Villeneuve lying between them. But money was always scarce with the splendid prodigal ; and the building stopped till the days of Henry IV., when the ramparts were solidly brought to completion. The rest of his connection with the town is less creditable. To procure money for his Italian wars, he stole the silver grille of St. Martin's shrine, the gift of Louis XI., in spite of the Church's remonstrances and horror—stole it with pomp and circumstance. By the presence of two bishops and Jacques de Beaune, his minister of finance, at the pillage of the treasure, he thought to give some show of regularity to the affair. All should be restored to St. Martin, he promised, at a convenient season. St. Martin's arm was not shortened to avenge, said the devout, when they heard of Pavia ; and Francis's penitential pilgrimage to the shrine

may not have been entirely dictated by policy. But penitence stopped short of restoration.

A still blacker deed soils his memory at Tours. His mother was the culprit in the first instance. Jacques de Beaune, Lord of Semblançay and La Carte, was gathering money for the wars, when Louise de Savoie demanded the immediate payment of her pension—she would brook no delay; and he emptied the treasury for her—100,000 crowns—just before Lautrec's call came. Lautrec had to be refused; the military operations in Italy ceased; the campaign was ruined. The conditions Beaune had imposed on her displeased the queen-mother, who vowed vengeance. (He had only demanded from her a receipt, like a good man of business.) Now she denied receiving the money, and got back her acknowledgment of it. Francis, perhaps blinded at first to his mother's villainy, afterwards certainly in collusion with it, sent his venerable minister to the Bastille on a charge of robbing the public exchequer. Though the pious saw in this a punishment for Beaune's acquiescence in the pillage of St. Martin, the king's action outraged the public mind, and the old man's journey to prison was a veritable triumph all along the road from Tours to Paris. He trusted in the king's ultimate clemency till the last moment. The king who called him 'father' would relent. But Francis was a perfidious son. Wrote a wit of the time,

"Si le roi te nomme son père,  
Ne va pas t'en glorifier.  
En se disant ton fils, il est clair qu'il espère  
Devenir à ce titre un jour ton héritier."

And so Semblançay died at Montfaucon by the executioner's hand; and the king struck blows all round at the other financiers, by way of simulating a fine indignation at the possession of great riches, and to save the credit of himself and his mother. Semblançay had loved his native town and been an open-handed patron of the arts there.

You can see part of his great mansion in the Rue S. François de Paule, with the salamander on it, the symbol of the king who betrayed him. It had been the old Boucicaut house ; then it had passed to the Dunois. Beaune bought it from Louise de Savoie, and rebuilt it splendidly. In front of it, facing what is now the Rue Nationale, he raised the beautiful fountain, which, mutilated and transferred, we see now in the Place du Vieux Marché.

Plessis held one unwilling guest in Francis's time, young Jeanne d'Albret, the daughter of his sister Margaret of Navarre. She was brought there when she was four, by Francis's orders, who feared a Spanish marriage for her did she live with her parents in Béarn. As she grew older she loathed the place and cried all day long, and made her comrades suffer too. She beat her playmate and cousin, Françoise de Rohan, who in after days obligingly declared she had liked it. One day King Francis rode over from Amboise and announced to his young niece her approaching marriage with the Duke of Cleves. She defied him to his face, as she defied her mother. And Cleves she never really did marry. There was nothing more than a solemn formal betrothal while she was still a child, against which she drew up a protest ; and the contract was, later, broken by the Court of Rome.

With the wars of religion began the decline of Tours. A long unhappy period now opened, full of strife and bitterness and anarchy. The town by no means depended on the presence of the court for its prosperity. Indeed, it was rather the prosperous bourgeoisie that played the part of entertainers and protectors of the princes who occasionally visited them. In the early sixteenth century Tours bade fair to become one of the greatest centres of commerce and of intelligence in France. Religious strife and persecution alone hindered the realisation of the promise. The Reform took an early hold there ; and among the richer citizens and the silk workers its

adherents grew steadily, though in secret. They held meetings by night among the rocky caves of Rochecorbon and St. Georges. Then the bolder spirits took to preaching in the streets. But fanaticism began to mingle with their fervour; venerated crosses and images were knocked down; and the dull hostility or scorn of the majority became enflamed. So energetic was the early Protestant propaganda at Tours that the name Huguenot has been ingeniously, if erroneously, derived from *le roi Hugon*—"a spirit who haunted the streets every night and whom they called *le roi Hugon*. . . . Wherefore the people hearing that there were certain persons who held meetings by night after their fashion, called them Huguenots, as if to say, disciples of Hugon, who was only to be heard at night. And I believe it. For I can tell you that eight or nine years before the Enterprise of Amboise, I heard them so called, by some friends of mine in Touraine." So says Pasquier.

The "Enterprise of Amboise," which I shall tell of in its place, was the damnable culmination of the first act of the tragedy. When Catherine de Medicis fled with her young son Francis II. and his wife Mary Stuart, from the stench of the rotting bodies of the Protestants at Amboise, they stopped at Tours on their way to Chenonceaux. But that they knew the strength of the Reformers in Tours is testified by the fact that they slept that night not inside the town but at Marmoutier.

The blood shed at Amboise cried for revenge. Life in all the greater centres of the province was poisoned. A fire was smouldering that needed only a breath from the outside to fan it to deadly fury; and Condé's march along the Loire brought that. Condé had declared himself openly at last, and was the bold leader of the Reformers—not so bold, however, as to be their master. Their military leader, he was in no sense their controller. In Tours he knew himself powerless to hold the Protestant revenge in check, and he let things have their course, declaring that the excesses were committed "by the





THE OLD MANOR.



permission of God and against his intention." On came his men, sacking and burning churches and abbeys. "Liberty of worship!" was their cry, as they hurled down altar and image and crucifix. It was their turn now, and of lukewarmness they could not be accused. From every pulpit in Tours the clergy thundered against them, but the Reformers' hearts were high at Condé's coming, and hope bred strength and insolence. The defences of the town were borne down, and for nigh three months it might be called a Protestant city. The army needed money. Where was it to be got if not from St. Martin's treasure? What better method of combining the indication of right principles with military advantage? In this matter Conde shuffled. He declared that his sole wish was to safeguard the treasure, when he sent commissioners to remove it, but as much of it as he got hold of went into his exchequer; and if after watching the greedy fury of the mob he intervened, it was only to "regularise" the pillage. So soldiers and people set on St. Gatien's and St. Martin's. In the name of a newer Martin, they broke down, they trampled, they wrecked, they went mad. A furnace was lit in the church, and the holy bones of the saint and his brethren were thrown into it. Here is the dry record of the event by the clerk of the chapter:—

"On Tuesday the 26th of May Monsieur Jacques Brunet, sub-dean, did say and report in the presence of messieurs of the chapter, assembled in the Psalette of the choristers (the Huguenots having seized the church, the galleries, and the chapter-house), that yesterday, after dinner, on the 25th of the present month, Monsieur le Comte de la Rochefoucauld and Monsieur du Vigent, accompanied by several gentlemen—and in the presence of the said sub-dean, of Monsieur Philippe du Guy, chamberlain, and Messieurs the lieutenant Gohyer, Houdry, king's procurator, and Falaiseau, king's advocate—burned in furnaces which they had made in the said church to melt the reliquaries, the jewels, etc., the body and the bones of Monsieur St. Martin and Monsieur St. Brice."

And more than St. Martin's glory passed then. St. Julien and the Abbey of Beaumont fell into the hands of the Protestants. Inside and outside the town there was murder and outrage. Nor was it always clear what the fighting was about ; many private wrongs were revenged, many public discontents in no way religious found terrible utterance. Chateaux were burnt as well as churches. Loches, Corméry, L'Ile Bouchard, Azay, were ravaged. Now it was the Catholics, now the Protestants who were the aggressors, and in bitterness and fury they were well matched. Numbers told at last. For a time the Huguenots had been masters of Tours, under a small but determined garrison, but now a general uprising of Catholics revenged St. Martin, and the Protestants were driven out or driven underground. A reign of terror ensued. The garrison retired towards Poitiers, and on the way were massacred, or drowned in the Vienne. A little remnant was driven back to Tours. Only about two hundred reached there, to be shut up and almost starved to death in Notre Dame la Riche, and taken out two by two to be drowned in the Loire, or to suffer worse things.

When the fanatics on one side had been exterminated or silenced, and those on the other had glutted themselves with slaughter, the fire died down. Sorrow and shame and fear and exhaustion kept a kind of peace for a time. Even some shadow of toleration for the Huguenots appeared. They might not worship in Tours, but they were allowed to meet at certain places in Touraine, at St. Avertin, at Langeais for a time, at Maillé (Luynes), at Montrichard, at Limeray. But the fire was only smouldering. Aggression and reprisals began once more, and it was not till after the total defeat of the Protestant army at Moncontour, near Loudun, that the town settled down into something like quietude, and to its own business—a peace periodically broken, however, by riots, skirmishes, and private quarrels on religious grounds. At least Black Bartholomew had no immediate echo in Touraine. The governor of the province at the

time, René de Prie, was a man of sense and firmness. When orders for persecution reached him, he retired to his chateau of Montpoupon, where his hands could not be forced, leaving behind a mayor whom he rightly trusted to ignore the orders. Tours recovered wonderfully; its powers of recuperation were astounding. Some further slight relief was given to the "religion" by the Treaty of Beaulieu, otherwise known as the "Paix de Monsieur," in 1576, concluded between Catherine de Medicis and her son, the Duc d'Alençon, in the little town below Loches. It was no great triumph for him or for the Protestants. D'Alençon was bribed—he was not hard to bribe—with the Duchy of Touraine and Anjou. In his capacity of "Duc apanagiste,"—the last of them—he made a magnificent entry into Tours.

Tours, always famed for the splendour of its *fêtes*, surpassed itself now, and transformed itself to fairyland. The Carroi de Beaune became a garden, with growing flowers and orange trees, and through it a river ran, in which swam real fish, not too much disturbed by a mimic naval battle on the waters. The banks were clad with verdure, and symbolic figures of the Loire and Cher leaned against the mouths of grottos, and looked on. The poet Ronsard, then prior of St. Côme, was begged by the municipality to return to his priory, "to honour and enrich the entry by his epigrams and other inventions." And while the Duke stayed at Plessis, they sent a messenger to St. Côme every day with wine to feast the guests the poet entertained, and presented him and his suite with garments of black velvet and black taffeta. The king, Henry III., gave a feast at Plessis, after his fashion, where his courtiers appeared as scantily-clad women, and the court ladies as gallants. Catherine imitated it later on a great scale at Chenonceaux. But the new Duke soon went off to Brabant, where his troubles kept him absorbed enough. Touraine saw no more of him.

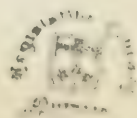
Towards the end of Henry III.'s reign, Tours regained for a time

its old importance. The League had never been very strong in the province, nor the Guises very popular; and the murder of the Duke of Guise at Blois inspired no great regret. Paris practically declared war on the king for the act. But Tours offered him a refuge, and the seat of Government was transferred there. In 1589 the States-General met in the chapter-house of the Abbey of St. Julien. It was real hospitality Tours showed at the time, for the guest was in danger, and brought a twofold peril to their gates. On one side Henry was threatened by the League under Mayenne. On the other, he was pressed by the King of Navarre, who was already in Touraine, having taken Loudun and L'Île Bouchard. As it was clearly impossible to fight both at once, Henry had to choose one for an ally. To choose Mayenne would have been to give up all he had tardily struggled for; so he turned to his cousin of Navarre. Yet he gnashed his teeth and wept aloud with vexation at being forced to sue to the man whom he and his mother had despised. Catherine lay in her neglected grave at Blois, and so was saved this last humiliation. Duplessis-Mornay, Navarre's general—the Huguenot Pope, as he was called—came secretly to Tours, disguised as a merchant. A conference between him and the king took place in the cathedral. Hasty and decisive it had to be; there was no time for barter. Mayenne was too threatening. His army was already ranged above the heights of St. Symphorien. Navarre came on, stationed his vanguard at St. Cyr, whence he sent a message to Henry that if he would honour him with a visit he would kiss his hands. Henry preferred that Navarre should be his guest; so the Béarnais came promptly, simply, with a very little train to Plessis. In the great alley of the park they met; but the crowds were so great that the people had to be pushed off ere the two kings could touch hands and embrace. Everyone knew the meeting was a momentous one. It meant peace to the nation, or ruin. To and fro along the great alley the two Henrys paced and talked, ere they entered the council room and

came to terms. It was high time. St. Symphorien was fortified in haste, and indifferently.

Tours at this time saw the best of Henry III. The courage which his effeminate habits, his debauchery, his frivolous degeneracy had masked, came now to the top. He went fearlessly to and fro between Tours and Marmoutier, on devotion intent, a mark for Mayenne's soldiers on the heights above; and when they rushed down the hill on St. Symphorien, with a terrible onslaught, and waged a desperate battle, Henry fought with the best. Crillon saved his life, and at the moment it must have seemed a gallant life worth saving. But it was like to have gone ill with the bravest, had not Navarre's men come up and routed Mayenne and the Leaguers. There were some Leaguers inside Tours who plotted to secure the king's person, and send him to Mayenne to undergo the oft-threatened tonsure; but the plot failed. His success at Tours sent Henry back to Paris a more determined and more confident man. He owed Paris a grudge, and would have paid the debt, as he sometimes did, in a grim if desultory fashion. He promised to raze it to the ground, if it still resisted. But Jacques Clément's dagger prevented that.

Tours was still looked on as the seat of government at the beginning of the reign of Henry IV. His reception of Mocenigo, the Venetian ambassador there, was a kind of inauguration of his reign. The only remaining part of the old castle of Henry Plantagenet overlooking the Loire, is known as the Tour de Guise. The name commemorates an incident of this time. The tower then served as prison to the Prince de Joinville, son of the murdered Guise. Young Joinville had friends outside with whom he was in communication. On Assumption Day he had gone to Mass in the chapel of the castle. He was a friendly prisoner, on genial terms with his guards, and quips and jests were always passing between them. On this day, returning from chapel, he cried at the foot of the stairs,



"Who'll be at the top first?" And he wagered. Thinking it only a boyish prank, they let him regain his prison easily. But once inside, he made fast the door against them, and by the aid of his servants, let himself down from the tower by a rope. He was down, falling fifteen feet, and hurting his knee—he was off! "Le Guisard se sauve," called an old woman; and the guards fired. But he ran, he doubled, he crept, till he came to the suburb of La Riche, where he seized a baker's horse. He rode off; the saddle turned under him, and at that moment he was about to surrender to a soldier who came up, when the prince discovered in him an old Leaguer and a friend. The soldier gave him a better mount. Crossing the Cher, he found adherents at St. Avertin who took him on to Bourges. The shrewd Henry made no attempt to recapture him. He did not fear young Guise; and he knew that Mayenne did, for his youth and popularity. His nephew's escape took the spirit out of the old Leaguer's resistance.

The Béarnais owed Tours a good deal. Among his minor debts to it must be counted the Holy Oil for his coronation. The famous Sainte Ampoule was in the hands of the Leaguers; how to be crowned at Rheims without it? The heresy stain would never be washed out lacking it, even were the ceremony valid. But Marmoutier had a "Sainte Ampoule," too, given to St. Martin by an angel. And so, with great reluctance, the monks of Marmoutier were persuaded to let it go to Rheims, with a great escort of guards and churchmen. For this and for what doubtless seemed to the bluff Henry more substantial service, he continued the fortification of the town begun by Francis I. "A pretty gem!" said Henry, looking at the cathedral towers, "It only wants a casket." He now gave it the casket.

But a greater benefit than its fortifications came from his general gift to the peace of France, the Edict of Nantes, which secured liberty to the Protestants, ratified at Tours in 1598. The industry



of the town took a fresh and vigorous start ; and Henry, far from indifferent, taking Charles VII. and Louis XI. as his example, looked specially to the industrial development of the fair city on the Loire. To encourage the silk industries he planted mulberry trees on the outskirts of the town as well as in his own park of Plessis. He thought of its adornment, too, and on the waste district to the south of the town planted a great mall, where now is the Boulevard Béranger. But the centre of Henry IV.'s government was Paris definitely. For pleasure hours and as hunting ground he had Fontainebleau, while his own hilly Béarn, the home of his youth, called to him with a stronger call than the valleys of Touraine.

His successor, Louis XIII., lived occasionally on the outskirts of the province, at Blois and Chambord, and now and then he came to Tours and took such mild pleasure as his melancholy temper allowed him, with the local company of arquebusiers. His mother, Marie de Medicis, for a time held her court—ever a hot-bed of intrigue—in Tours, at the Hôtel de la Bourdaisière. But Touraine had its influence on the general current of French affairs during this reign mostly through two Tourangeaux favourites of the king, the brilliant and unfortunate Cinq Mars, of whom there will be mention elsewhere, and the powerful minister, Charles d'Albert, Lord of Maillé, better known as the Duc de Luynes.

According to their own account, the D'Alberts were descended from noble Florentines settled in France since 1400. Gossip gave them an humbler origin. The gay cynic, Tallemant des Réaux, in his *Historiettes* says : "The Constable de Luynes was of very mediocre birth. This was what people said of him. In a little town near Avignon there was a canon called Aubert. The canon had a bastard, who bore arms during the troubles. The Captain Luynes they called him, perhaps from some little hut or other of the name." The captain had three sons, one of whom became the Duke. The three brothers, when they went to court, had but one coat between them

and one poor nag. Charles, a page of Henry IV., was attached to the Dauphin's person, and won his favour, becoming in time Grand Falconer, Captain of the Louvre, and Governor of the Bastille. He married a daughter of the Duc de Montbazon, the lady who afterwards became Madame de Chevreuse. His influence over Louis XIII. was great and mostly evil. He more than anyone else embittered the relations between the king and his mother, Marie de Medicis. The Maréchal d'Ancre, her favourite, did his best to stop D'Albert's advancement. D'Albert pushed him out of the way, and inherited his fortune. It seemed as if there were to be no limits to his advancement. He became Duc de Luynes; and then it was that Maillé on the Loire, of which he was lord, took the name of Luynes which it bears now. But he overreached himself in his craving for place, and to stifle the murmurs around him, he persuaded the king to make war on his Protestant subjects in Béarn. Luynes' campaign was entirely inglorious; and his raising of the siege of Montauban covered him with contempt. Louis never pardoned weakness, and Luynes's ruin was at hand when he died. Richelieu—of whom he was a kind of *ébauche*—held him in scorn for his "mediocre and timid mind," his limitless and hollow ambition, his lack of statesmanlike aims. To him he was but the man on the top of the tower, who turns giddy and does foolish things.

The reconciliation between Louis XIII. and his mother, which took place at Couzières, near Montbazon on the Indre, had its culmination at Tours. The *fêtes* at Plessis were splendid enough, but rather hollow, as all that concerned this Louis was wont to be. His want of staunchness, which left the country at the mercy of Richelieu, stirred the religious strife again; and at Loudun the horrors of the worst time of the persecution were surpassed, while Tours became once more a fighting-ground for factions and fanatics.

But it was reserved for the great Louis XIV. to give the final blow to the prosperity of Tours, and to relegate it effectively to the





AZAVALL-REBÉAC.

rank of a third-rate provincial town. *Le roi soleil* was to Tours as a blighting frost. After the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, more than three thousand Protestant families emigrated. The silk weavers and the directors of the industry were almost entirely Protestant. With them went wealth, skill, tradition. The trade was paralysed, and never recovered. The authorities tried to stop the emigration, guarding the frontiers, imprisoning the fugitives, and sending them to the galleys. But 10,000 escaped to Holland, Germany, and England. Of the handful that remained, some recanted, and the faith dwindled. Only in the nineteenth century did it hold up its head again, and open a temple in Tours. To-day the temple has a moderately steady number of adherents, and there are two annexes at Huismes and Chapelle-les-Naux. In 1698 Hue de Miroménil, reporting to the Duke of Burgundy, writes: "The town of Tours gets smaller day by day. The silk industry is nearly altogether ruined; the cloth industry is less by three quarters; tanning has no better fortune. Of four hundred master tanners there are now but fifty-four. Formerly the town consumed ninety oxen a week; at present it hardly needs five-and-twenty." There was general bankruptcy and starvation, and, indeed, for years after this, there is but one long groan. The floods of the Loire rose higher; never were the winters so hard.

As if Louis had not done mischief enough, he attacked the ancient liberties of the town, abolishing the electoral system and making the mayor's office hereditary, a foolish experiment, doomed to failure, which hindered public business at a critical time. Yet when the king paid a visit to Tours, the inhabitants were ordered to illuminate, and so inveterate was the habit of feting kings that they put up an *arc de triomphe* at the north end of the Rue Traversaine (Rue Nationale). When the arch was taken down from that site, it was built up again for the present gate of the archbishop's palace.

It was to Tours that the *roi soleil* owed her who charmed and inspired his youth—the fair Louise de la Vallière. She was born here, 6th August 1644, and baptised in Saint Saturnin. Her family, La Baume-le-Blanc, were closely connected with the town. Three of them had been mayors of Tours in the sixteenth century, and they held seigneurial rank in the province, at Château-la-Vallière and elsewhere. The little Hôtel de la Crouzille is often pointed out to visitors as her birth-place, on the strength of the cockle-shell on its façade, from which it takes its name, and which was their family badge. But M. de Grandmaison has certainly proved that the inn has no claim to the event. Some part of the old La Baume-le-Blanc house still remains in No. 7 Rue Ragueneau, built in the second half of the sixteenth century by Laurent le Blanc, mayor of Tours in 1558. It was a great place, with a *porte-cochère* topped by a *crouzille*, in the Grande Rue (now the Rue du Commerce). Here Henry IV. got down on his first visit to Tours after his accession.

Narrowing fortunes, growing anxieties, and the departure of the great ones did not take away permanently the spirit of the civic fathers. They had to keep their city worthy of a great past; and they did so munificently, and, on the whole, with a fine sense of art. Travellers out of other countries had always delighted in the brightness and beauty of Tours. John Evelyn came here in 1644; settled down and “took a master of the language and studied the tongue very diligently, recreating himself sometimes at the Mall, and sometimes about the town.” Opposite his lodging was a house that “had been formerly a king’s palace,” *i.e.* l’Hôtel de la Bourdaisière, where Marie de Medicis had held her court. It stood opposite Foire-le-Roi; but nothing of it exists to-day. Evelyn admired Tours, especially its walks and its opportunities of out-of-door recreation. “The Mall without comparison is the noblest in Europe for length and shade, having seven rows of the tallest and goodliest elms I ever beheld, the innermost of which do so embrace each other, and at such

a height that nothing can be more solemn and majestic. Here we played a party, or party or two, and then walked round the town walls, built of square stone, filled with earth, and having a moat. No city in France exceeds it in beauty or delight." He visited also "an agreeable solitude called du Plessis." It was a statelier Tours than we see to-day. He tells of the church and monastery of St. Martin, very large, "of Gothic building, having four square towers;" also of "that good and venerable Abbey of Marmoutiers, being one of the greatest in the kingdom; to it is a very ample church of stone, with a very high pyramid."

Tours owed the fortifications and the great Mall to Henry IV. The Boulevards Bérenger and Heurteloup are their meaner, but still agreeable successors. The next transformation began in mid-eighteenth century, and on a large, bold scale. It included a new bridge across the Cher, the construction of a *digue* to join it to the town, the rebuilding, straightening, and completion of the street which is now the Rue Nationale, a new stone bridge across the Loire, and on the other side a cutting (the *Tranchée*) through the hill of St. Symphorien. Thus, from the northern to the southern heights, from St. Symphorien to Grammont, was made the great thoroughfare, straight as an arrow, a section of the Paris-Bordeaux road, which forms so striking a feature of Tours to-day. And the city authorities and their architect, M. de Limay, did not merely draw up the general plan and make the cutting, but carried out details as well. They built or rebuilt all the façades of the houses in the principal street up to the first storey. Doubtless they took away much of the picturesque irregularity that we now go to the Châteauneuf quarter to find; but the result was at least a precise and dignified stateliness, which was the best the epoch had to give in architecture. Indeed, before the Revolution there had been a great fervour of building: withal, the outcome was somewhat chilly. The Palais du Commerce of the earlier part of the century was followed by the rebuilding of the greater part of the Archevêché,

and by the Hôtel de Ville and Musée facing the Loire. Young in his travels in France, tells how he visited Tours in 1787, and especially admired the new street-plan. "It is altogether a noble exertion," he says, "for the decoration of a provincial town. Some houses remain yet to be built, the fronts of which are done; some reverent fathers are satisfied with their old habitations, and do not choose the expense of filling up the elegant design of the Tours projectors; they ought, however, to be unroosted if they will not comply, for fronts without houses behind them have a ridiculous appearance."

Tours lived on, crippled in its commercial and industrial resources, yet drawing on the riches of the province and on its own admirable temper and good spirits, till the Revolution. It was not so proud of its past but that it welcomed the new. A loyal province, while its kings were its own, to entertain or to protect, Touraine had made the *roi de Bourges* king of France, and had saved Henry III. from the League. But its later kings were shadowy persons, seldom seen on the banks of the Loire: or when they emerged from the shade it was generally to annoy. The loyalty of Touraine had been a personal matter; not a conservative instinct or habit. The province has always been open to new ideas. Its two greatest geniuses, Rabelais and Descartes, were great innovators. So in 1789, when the assembly met at Tours to elect deputies to the States-General, the gathering welcomed the new time. Touraine became Indre-et-Loire, and broke its links with the past cheerfully enough. Royalist La Vendée marches on Tours. Its hero, La Rochejaquelin, sets out for Chinon. The west is up for King and Church. But Tours fortifies the banks of the Cher against the royalists, and defends the Republic. It was the first town to propose a contribution towards the liquidation of the public debt. Ladies gave their gold rings for the purpose; and it was the fashion to wear copper ones instead—*boucles à la nation*.

It had its time of madness, too. There was always *entrain* about a





LA PSALTERIE, TOURS.



*fête* in Tours; and they danced round the Tree of Liberty in front of St. Gatien with wild mirth. Great St. Gatien became the Temple of Reason. In place of the altar was a mound topped by the tricolor banner. St. Martin was deposed for St. Marat.

Only one of the patriotic clubs received the news of the execution of Louis XVI. with enthusiasm; but the frenzy that began to run through the land in 1792 had exhausted people's sense of surprise; and, besides, protests were dangerous. The prisons were full enough of reactionaries, moderates, suspects; but to the average mind these seemed hardly more pitiable than the poor creatures who had suffered under the old *régime* in the prisons below the château, who used to put their hands out through the grating to beg from the passers-by. Tours followed generally in the wake of the opinion brought to a head, if not engendered in Paris. In its delirium it smashed the symbols of the old powers, kings and nobles. And the chateaux of the Loire were specially fine targets for revolutionary marksmen. Touraine always paid high for its enthusiasm, under St. Martin, St. Martin Luther, St. Marat—wreckers all three! When the cult of Reason was followed by the cult of the Supreme Being, it was a sign that the pendulum had begun to swing back. But St. Gatien's towers were still crowned by the *bonnet rouge*, and the vast church was the scene of another *fête*. A fire was lit outside, in which figures representing Ambition, Pride, Selfishness, were burnt, while out of the fire rose a fairer *Sagesse*. One by one, however, the churches were given back to the Catholics, save St. Gatien's, till 1802 the Temple of the Eternal. During the reaction of the Directoire the altar of the *patrie* was stored away for a time in the museum!—to be brought out again, however, before its final disappearance. Napoleon came and went, leaving no very definite mark. Tours had become moderately monarchical again. But its particular history is over—After this, its only public duty, says its historian Giraudet, has been to take down its flags and change their colour.

Touraine had needed a new birth. The parturition was painful ; the birth-pangs were agony. But it was no monster that was born into the world, as the Chouans thought, who fain would have done it to death at Château la Vallière and at Neuvy-le-Roi. And if its monuments were smashed, its people suffered less than in other parts of France, though Courier rather overstates their immunity when he says : " We knew by hearsay of the disasters of Lyons, the horrors of La Vendée, the human hecatombs of the High Priest of Reason, and the deliberate massacres invented by war and the state police. But then we heard only the rumours of these troubles, calm in the midst of tempests, like oases surrounded by the moving sands of the desert." The Revolution had nurses that betrayed it, the Napoleons great and little ; and what had seemed so sublime a thing at its birth dwindled and mocked them. Other peoples despaired. The Tourangeaux sank into indifference—a pleasant, genial indifference. Never can Touraine be altogether embittered. Never had it seemed pleasanter—or so the English thought, who came down on it in the forties and fifties like locusts, as Balzac said, and found it a delightful place of voluntary exile.

The appearance of the menacing stranger at the gates woke them up. Tours housed for some months the executive government that fled from Paris ; but when the Prussians entered Touraine in 1870 from the north, it was a feeble resistance they met at Meslay. The shell mark on the old Hôtel de Ville that records the Prussian attack, records also the final awakening of the Tourangeaux into vigilant guardians of the child of 1789. It is growing to-day into lusty youth. Up in old dismantled chateaux you will find lamenters of the times that are past. " Every wrong that exists appeared at the Revolution," said one of them to us, in mild tones but with deep conviction. The common sense of the people, however, is against regret ; and Tours, the old court city, flourishes now in ease, if not in riches, with its medical school, its printing-works, its glass works ; sells the

produce of its rich valleys, and sends Paris good store of fruit from the Vienne. It increases and multiplies, and receives very pleasantly its bands of tourists, who have no thought save for its past. But Tours does not live on them nor on its past.

For achievement since the Revolution, Tours points to Balzac. It had lost the court long before; had lost a great part of its trade; and its recent progress was respectable but not striking. It was in danger of sinking into an insignificant provincial town, when Balzac came. Nothing very provincial about the place out of which sprang the *Comédie Humaine*, is there? they ask. Paris counts Balzac as hers, and the *Comédie Humaine* as her own special invention. Nevertheless, the Tourangeau was strong in Balzac—how strong no one has ever yet sought to prove in detail. He was born here, at what is now 45 Rue Nationale,—the Crédit Lyonnais have the house—16th May 1799. Neither of his parents belonged to the province. His father, a native of Languedoc, who had been secretary to the Council of State under Louis XVI., was appointed under the Republic Director of the Commissariat of the 22nd Military Division at Tours. Only the early days of Honoré's childhood were spent here, for he was sent to school at Vendôme and Paris. But he kept up a close connection with his native place all his life, and returned very often on visits to town and country. At Saché on the Indre, with his good friends, the Margonnes, he was as a child of the house. Touraine is woven inextricably into the fabric of the *Comédie*. He loved the soil, the sky, the landscape of his native province better than any other. He loved the people too, though he was always ready to make fun of them. At one time the summit of earthly happiness seemed to him to be master of La Grenadière, the little house on the hill-side of St. Cyr, which we shall pass on our way to Luynes; and he did actually live there for a few short months. From there he cries: "La vertu, le bonheur, la vie, c'est six cents francs de rente au bord de la Loire."

He was constantly teasing his compatriots for their indolence. When he missed the restless minds of Paris he began to find the Tourangeaux *bien mous*. But he accounts for this genially. "On y oublie tout. Je pardonne bien aux habitants d'être bêtes, ils sont si heureux ! Or vous savez que les gens qui jouissent beaucoup sont naturellement stupides. La Touraine explique admirablement le lazzerone." But he sought their genial company, nevertheless ; and respected their probity and goodness. It is not for nothing that he makes César Birotteau, the martyr of commercial honesty, a native of Chinon. And by the way, he aspired himself to be Deputy for Chinon in the Chamber. Only a carriage accident in Paris prevented his standing for the seat.

An interesting task awaits whosoever will trace the Touraine material in the *Comédie Humaine*. The "Contes Drolatiques" form the most artificial portion of his work. They declare themselves as drawn from the repertoire of the joyous monks and abbots of Touraine. In truth these stories of Tours, and Turpenay, of Sacché-les-Azay-le-Ridel, of Vouvray, Rochecorbon, and a score of other familiar places, commemorate the province in no heroic fashion. The book is a remarkable *tour de force*. Of the tongue of Rabelais and Verville, he was the most serious student ; he was their aptest pupil. Wit it has and invention in abundance. But its high spirits, the source and the justification of its kind, are forced. The licentiousness never seems quite spontaneous, quite inevitable ; and thus Rabelais seems to me savoury by comparison. Verville rather than Rabelais is its inspirer. The "nerf comique" is there ; hardly the "naïveté jeune" ; and it remains a brilliant piece of literary archæology. Pass to what came out of his heart as well as out of his invention. In "Le Lys dans la Vallée," in "La Femme de Trente Ans," in "Catherine de Médicis," he chants the landscape. Old Tours is vividly described in "Maître Cornélius," intended as a counterblast to Scott's idea of Louis XI. in "Quentin Durward." The life of the cathedral close is pictured in that marvellous bit of

*genre* painting, "Le Curé de Tours," the drama of poor Abbé Birotteau, "dont la bonté allait jusqu' à la bêtise," the sheep made to be devoured by those terrible wolves of appetite and power, Mademoiselle Gamard and Abbé Troubet. Balzac drew endlessly on his native province for names of persons and of places, and for stories to which he often gave another setting. "Une Ténébreuse Affaire" is a real story of the neighbourhood of Loches, though he does not say so. And though there are mystifications about the material of "Les Paysans"—and with some reason—the earlier draft of the novel had Touraine for a background; and in Touraine he made some of the lurid observations of



HOUSE OF THE CURÉ DE TOURS

a class which, bourgeois as he was, he profoundly misunderstood. Student, or critic, or satirist of Touraine, he was always its lover. Paris was his workshop, his museum, his theatre, Touraine was his escape; without it he "perhaps would not have gone on living." And the author of the *Comédie Humaine* was not too much citizen of the world to be faithless to the "city that stands with its feet in the Loire."

Do not take his praise of Tours too solemnly—and yet it is sincere. If there is a twinkle in his eye while he pens his rhapsody, there is also warmth at his heart.

“Tours stands, will always stand with its feet in the Loire, like a pretty maid that bathes in the water and plays with it, making a flick-flack as she whips the waves with her white hands. For this town is laughing, jolly, amorous, fresh, flowering, fragrant, more than any other town in the world, not one of which is worthy to comb the tresses of her hair, or knot her girdle. And take heed, if you go there, that you shall find in the midst of her a fair parting, to wit, a delicious street with folk walking about, where there is always air and shade, and sun, and rain, and love. Ha, ha! laugh if you will, but make your way thither. It is a street ever new, ever royal, ever imperial, a patriotic street, a street with two footways, mind you, and an opening at each end, well pierced; a street so wide that never is there need to cry ‘Make way!’ A street that never wears out; that leads here to the Abbey of Grandmont, there to the cutting which is on good terms with the bridge, and ends in a fine market ground. A well-paved street, well-built, well-washed, shining clean like a mirror; full of folk, yet silent, too, sometimes. Coquettish; what a fine night-cap its pretty blue roofs! To make no more words about it, it is the street where I was born, the queen of streets, hanging between earth and sky. It has its fountain, too; indeed, it lacks nothing to make it famous among all other streets. The real street, the only street of Tours. If others there be, they are dingy, tortuous, narrow, damp, and they all come respectfully to salute this noble street, their mistress. Where have I got to? Sooth, once in this street, there is no coming out of it, so pleasant is it. But I owed this filial homage, this hymn descriptive, out of my heart, to the street where I was born, wanting only at its corners the brave figures of my good master Rabelais and the Sieur Descartes, both unknown to the natives of the place.”







TOKENS OF THE FUTURE.

The statues are there now in the gardens by the bridge; his own, too, at the other end of his "delicious street."

Tours the cheerful has its dim hours and corners. Old decaying Châteauneuf and the stately quarter about the cathedral have their secrets. They send out ghosts in the twilight—ghosts out of romance, out of history. One cannot separate them. A curious fantastic procession! Black Fulk rides in his wrath into the holy place, and stuns St. Martin's canons with his sacrilege. St. Gatien's fills with abbots and monks, and barons and knights come to the Pope's Council in "Second Rome." Penitents—beggars and queens—go their way to good St. Martin's shrine. Cœur de Lion is in the lists—all Tours applauding him. Proud Ysabeau, Burgundy by her side, defies her son, and bribes the city fathers with golden smiles. Jeanne the Maid rides along with the wondering people after her. King Louis is making his way to some sardonic relaxation outside grim Plessis—or perhaps to hear the Poitou shepherds pipe at St. Côme. Timid eyes watch from narrow windows as Tristan passes. In the dim cathedral the old Sire de Saint Vallier spies on his fair young wife, and gallant Georges d'Estouteville behind a pillar swears to avenge her. St. François de Paule casts blessings from his haggard eyes. Fouquet and his pupils are painting fairy tales with all the colours of the earth and sky. Verville is sniggering in his canon's stall at some salted facetiæ, Rabelais's or his own. A woman is hiding fearfully a remnant of the holy relics, while the Huguenots are wantonly, frantically avenging Amboise in old St. Martin's. L'Abbé Birotteau slinks from the terrible spinster under St. Gatien's shade to the consolations of Madame Listomère across the river. Béranger, clad in loose garments, a new song in his pocket, an old regret for Paris in his heart, plays the "petit bourgeois de province," on the sunny quays. And, strange mediæval survival in modern garb, the "holy man of Tours," a beautiful smile on his face, "does his stations"; careless of cynical nineteenth-century folks

at his elbow, he pauses and prays, before a shop, before a blank space, where once stood a shrine ; or he works his miracles, clasps his relics, sets up his images, and with a genial innocence or obtuseness, clutches bewildered freethinkers, rough soldiers, or common-sensible citizens by the arm, and stuns them with his, "Now of course we both want to talk of God." Or he is urging the labourers digging for the foundations of old St. Martin's, fiery inspiration that has ended in the great cold structure of the new St. Martin's. And there, too, watching the walls rise, is Mademoiselle Cloque, venerable, austere, and charming, she who once spoke with Châteaubriand, great-souled little spinster, lover of all lost causes, conceived in expiation of Mademoiselle Gamard. Out of history, out of romance—they are all real now, and all ghosts.

## CHAPTER X

### ST. CÔME

*L'œillet de la Touraine—Hervé the Builder—Bérenger the Heresiarch—Louis XI.  
and the shepherds—RONSARD—Ronsard on his grave in the Ile S. Côme.*

THE pilgrim will not leave Tours without seeing St. Côme. It is a place of many memories. It was the home and the grave of Ronsard, Prince of Poets. St. Côme lies on the left bank of the Loire, opposite St. Cyr, at the south end of the Pont de la Motte. Once an island—St. Côme-en-l'Île it was called—now it is joined to the mainland; but it lies still in the lap of the river, and far enough away as yet from the suburbs of the town to make it a favourite haunt of quiet fishers. Were it not for the near railway a poet might still choose the spot to end his days in. In old times its charms had a great fame. *L'œillet de la Touraine*, an old writer calls it. The remains of the priory are now humble farm buildings. The intelligent owners are quite alive to the interest of the place, but too poor to do aught save refrain from hastening the decay. Part of a wall of the church remains, as well as two chapels of the apse with their vaults and columns, which serve to house a pony and some rabbits. There is also the prior's house—Ronsard's very house—a fifteenth-century structure. His chamber has been identified with some probability. From its windows he watched the Loire and his own last days flow past.

The exquisite Romanesque architecture of the remaining chapels marks the earliest date. St. Côme was founded and built by Hervé,

the great treasurer of St. Martin's. He retired here just before the terrible year 1000, to meet Eternity. But the terrible year went by; the Judgment Day had not come; and Hervé's meditations were disturbed. They needed him at St. Martin's, and called him back. He gave the retreat to Marmoutier on condition that twelve monks should reside here and that St. Martin's should be owned as the mother church. The conditions were not fulfilled; and by the end of the century St. Côme had fallen back to the canons of St. Martin's.

The name of a great man is early associated with St. Côme—Bérenger the heresiarch of Tours, "l'esprit le plus libre de son temps, l'audacieux Bérenger," as Ampère calls him. He was born in Tours in 1005, and studied at St. Martin's school. At Chartres his master Fulbert saw his rare powers and his restless mind. "Follow the great roads," he exhorted him. Fulbert's "great road" was the way of authority, Bérenger's that of reason. Though appointed archdeacon of Angers, his future work, nevertheless, lay at Tours, where he became head of St. Martin's School. His enthusiasm, the brilliance and subtlety of his mind drew a host of scholars round him, and the school won a fame it had lost since Alcuin's time; moreover, his austere and saintly life added to his influence. But Bérenger was not content to expound. He wished to think; and, articulate and literary, he thought aloud. Poet and philosopher, he rejected the current materialistic theology; and a disciple of John Scot Erigena, he declared that the Eucharist was but a symbol. The Church knew that to let this pass was to permit the whole theological fabric to go to pieces. At Council after Council was he condemned—at Rome, Vercelli, Florence, Tours, Bordeaux. He did not resist; he was not made in that way. Meekly he asked for guidance in belief; subscribed—and then went away to think in his own fashion. Thinkers are not always ready food for martyr fires. Some of them bend, and mutter *E pur si muove*. But at least his backslidings into

the path of reason were very obstinate ; and for that he suffered much persecution, and was reduced to poverty. A far more formidable adversary than bishops and Councils was the great Lanfranc. Against Lanfranc, definite, positive, clear-headed and narrow-minded, with his back set to the firm rock of authority, Bérenger, his feet on the unstable sands of speculation, and with the dancing lights of imagination before his eyes, had hardly a chance of success. In such a controversy charm of speech, brilliancy of art, and a wide knowledge of letters counted for little. In vain did he urge that the spirit of truth impelled him. To Lanfranc he was only urged *inanis glorie appetitu*. Bérenger was utterly routed in the eyes of the Church and world. But it is his words that remain. "You call me," he writes to Lanfranc, "an unhappy man, a miserable soul, and in that you are in accord with me. I confess my iniquity before God, that He may forgive the impiety of my sin. Troubled by the approach and the menace of death, I was silent on the truth. . . . But you, what kind of priest and monk are you then? You who without mercy persecute humanity in my person, you are the priest who saw the Samaritan left wounded and half killed by the robbers, and passed by on the other side." And this is notable for an eleventh-century churchman—"Doubtless one must use sacred authorities on occasion, although it cannot be denied, without falling into absurdity, that it is infinitely superior to use pure reason in the discovery of truth."

They tired Bérenger out at last. Perhaps the ghostly terrors they hung before his eyes did shake his loyalty to his own faith, and sent him for refuge to authority. At least, it is said, when he retired to St. Côme, after the Council of Bordeaux, it was to do penance there for his sin of heresy. In the pious island he lived a life of charity and humility, meditating and working with his hands. He died a very old man in 1088. For long every Easter Tuesday the Canons of St. Martin went to St. Côme, and recited on his

tomb a *De profundis*. He deserves the homage of more cheerful pilgrims.

The Isle slept on, the quiet retreat of unknown recluses from St. Martin's. Four centuries after Béranger, King Louis XI. came over from Plessis, tired of his prison-palace. The *maître-homme* was sick and lonely. He desired the mirth he had banished, and at his command the island resounded. Says the chronicler, Jean de Troye : "In this time the king sent for a great number of players on low and soft instruments. He lodged them at St. Côme near Tours, where there were gathered even as many as a hundred and twenty. Among them were some shepherds of Poitou, who often played before the lodging of the king ; but they did not see him, for the king was fain to have quiet pleasure and pastime from this music, and to be kept from sleeping."

Ronsard knew the place well before he went there as prior. Not a Tourangeau born—Vendôme his native place—he is, nevertheless, almost Tourangeau by adoption. The poetic account of his expedition to St. Côme, "*Le Voyage de Tours ou les Amoureux*," is a pretty bit of autobiography, agreeably rusticised by the courtier-poet. To Bourgueil he went to see his Marie ; on the Blésois border he wooed his Cassandra ; and at Blois for a time his Muse was a queen and a fellow-poet. There Ronsard capped verses with Mary Stuart. After many adventures and many loves, he accepted the Priory of S. Côme-en-l'Île, where the courtier turned to simple man. He dug his garden, and pruned his fruit-trees. And the less he was courtier, the more faith had he in his art and in himself. It was there he chose to lie at the last, hushed by the sound of the Loire ; and he saw the isle honoured ever after for his sake. Ah, he did not know how short men's memories are ! Etienne Pasquier, who went there on pilgrimage three years after, found his tomb neglected. He describes its place exactly—on the left of the altar in the church. The indignant Pasquier, "urged by his influence, or by a just anger



at seeing so great a personage in so poor a sepulchre," made him an eloquent epitaph. A later prior, Joachim de la Chatardie, raised a monument to him in the beginning of the seventeenth century. Of this the slab containing the inscription, composed by Héroard, the doctor of Charles IX., alone remains—in the museum at Blois. Colletet translates it thus :—

“Arreste, passant, et prends garde, cette terre est sainte. Loin d'ici profane ! cette terre que tu foules aux pieds est une terre sacrée, puisque Ronsard y repose. Comme les muses qui naquirent en France avecque luy voulurt aussy mourir et s'ensevelir avec luy, que ceux qui luy survivent n'y portent point d'envie, et que ceux qui sont à naistre se donnent bien garde d'esperer jamais un pareil avantage au Ciel.”

If they had buried him in the open and given him for monument the tree he desired, they might have saved him ignominy. When the Archæological Society of Touraine dug for his bones, they found nothing. Did the waters of the Loire consume them? But then what of the stone coffin? Botero (*Annales de France*) was probably right when he spoke of Ronsard's tomb as being “ruined less by the long course of the years than by the sacrilegious attack of the Huguenots, who had hated him bitterly in his lifetime.” They certainly sacked the church.

In 1712 the priory was suppressed, the property reverting to St. Martin's. The canons knocked down still more of the already ruined church, and displaced the monument of the “prince of poets,” transferring it to their own chapter-house. But St. Martin's vanished, too, and with it the tomb. The bust disappeared—those at Tours, Blois and Vendôme are but casts.

Too much of tombs, since he desired none ; and too much, since Ronsard lives still. The courtier-poet's love of the earth and sky and simple country things had to be rediscovered after three hundred years. Théophile Gautier's echoes of him dates the renaissance of

his fame. His craft, wise in its limitations, exquisite in its subtle simplicity, is inimitable still.

To his beloved St. Côme he attached eternally his own name and fame in the verses he wrote concerning his chosen resting-place :—

“When Heaven shall deem it meet  
That from the fair and sweet  
Abode of common day  
I pass away,

Let them, I pray, not break  
Fine marble for my sake,  
Nor labour vain be spent  
On monument.

Rather than stone a tree  
I fain would shelter me.  
In shine or winter keen  
An evergreen.

I would that from my clay  
Ivy should grow one day,  
Its clinging arms me hold  
In many a fold.

And may the twisting vine  
Garnish about my shrine,  
Making where I am laid  
A tender shade.

Then on the ordered day,  
From near and far away,  
Herdsman and flocks shall hie  
To where I lie.

They shall perform the rite,  
The pious prayer recite ;  
Then to the Island meek  
Thus shall they speak.

“Isle, how art thou blest,  
To be chosen for his rest !  
For men his verses rare  
Sing everywhere.

His not to teach the use  
Of secret, amorous juice ;  
Nor dark magician’s art  
Did he impart.

The Muses followed his lays  
Along our country ways  
Rhythmic, as he did pass,  
They trod the grass.

He sang, and aye since then  
Our fields, we shepherd men  
Have in the world’s eyes  
Worn fairer guise.

Soft doth the manna fall  
Upon his grave, and all  
The humour tender and light  
Of the May night.

The green grass rings him round,  
And the river’s murmuring sound ;  
Constant the wavelets pass,  
Nor fades the grass.

Forgetting not the claim  
Of his glorious fame,  
Him, as great Pan, each year  
We honour here.”

So speak the shepherd band ;  
And with their cups in hand,  
Lamb's blood and milk like snow  
Over him throw.

O'er me.—Already far  
I've travelled, to that star  
Where happy spirits by grace  
Win dwelling-place.' ”



EMBLEM OF QUEEN CLAUDE.



## CHAPTER XI

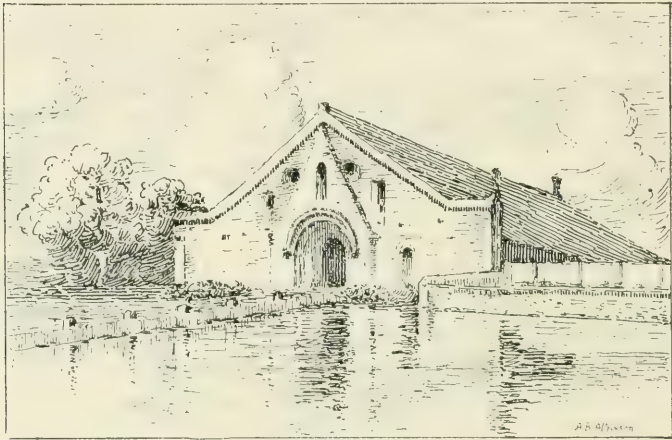
### AMBOISE

*Tours to Amboise—Ambacia—The Building of the Castle—Charles VIII. at Amboise—  
The Youth of Francis I.—LEONARDO DA VINCI—The Enterprize of Amboise—  
Saint Denis-Hors—Rock-Dwellings—“Le philosophe inconnu.”*

BETWEEN Tours and Amboise the great stretch of the Loire has been described once and for all by Balzac in his *Femme de Trente Ans*. He turns two travellers out of their chaise at Pont de Cisse, near Vouvray ; and so gives them time to contemplate the stream twining like a silver serpent among the meadows, the Loire with its green islands, the hills of the Cher, the chain of rocks and garlanded rock-dwellings that line the steep banks to the city, Tours rising out of the water like another Venice, its towers mingling with cloud fantasies in the sky. In the line, the extent, the sweep of the flood, there is great nobility. Look at it from the heights above ; and you know it was destined to be a highway of history. Under the serene sky of a summer evening you know it as the fated background of histories more intimate than are recorded on parchment and in tomes. “Quand un poète en a joui, ses rêves viennent sans cesse lui en reconstruire les effets romantiques.” Indeed, Balzac was always poet when his heart travelled back to the rivers of his province. “Cette belle et suave contrée endort les douleurs et reveille les passions. Personne ne reste froid sous ce ciel pur, devant ces eaux scintillantes. Là meurt plus d’une ambition, là vous couchez au sein d’un tranquille bonheur, comme chaque soir le soleil se couche dans les langes de pourpre et

d'azur." On the heights of the north bank, you, too, may cry, "Dressons une tente et vivons ici."

And so on to Amboise. But ere you reach it a score of things may have stopped you on the way. St. Symphorien church, with its fine Renaissance doorway, bearing the marks of the Leaguers' rough



GRANGE DE MESLAY

handling. The ancient church of St. Georges on its bed of rock. Then mutilated, utterly transformed Marmoutier. We have already heard something of its history from the time it was the lonely retreat of St. Martin. The Sacré Cœur buildings get in the way of our realisation of its later history, but not of the early time. Martin's Rest; the cell where the Seven Sleepers slept together at the last—Clemens, Primus, Lætus, Theodorus, Cyriachus, Godentius, Innocentius, their names—young knights, kinsmen of St. Martin, according to the legend, who came to lay their arms at the feet of the

saint, and died on the same day, in the same grotto ; the cell where St. Brice, the beloved, stormed, rebelled, and repented, are all here. The river came nearer the foot of the rock in those days, when there was no cultivated slope, but a lonely desolation, fit only for wild beasts and prayerful men. Of the eleventh-century church nothing remains ; of the thirteenth-century buildings only the gateway, the *Portail de la Crosse*, built by Abbot Hugues des Roches, part of a wall and two towers. Nothing recalls the fact that this was *Majus Monasterium*, the greatest, the wealthiest in Europe. As the old rhyme has it :—

“ De quel côté que le vent vente  
Marmoutier a cens et rente.”

Princes were its abbots ; and they wielded power like mighty nobles. Under their wing learning was sheltered ; and Marmoutier earned honest fame as a school of history. To see a definite, visible sign of its wealth in its most prosperous days, make your way up the little valley which opens out under the *Lanterne*, the signal tower of *Roche-corbon* ; and you will find one under the name of the *Grange de Meslay*, beyond the joint villages of *Parçay-Meslay*. It was the great tithe-barn of the monks, who exploited the rich plateau of corn-land here. If you would know how successfully, examine the grange. Abbot Hugues built it in the first quarter of the thirteenth century. A fine round-arched gateway, part of a fort, or a well-defended *castelet*, leads to a huge farmyard. Opposite is the barn, like a great church for size and effect. Architects examine it, with delight in its strength, its fine proportions, the exquisite arrangement of its chestnut wood columns, which seem to form aisles and chapels. The blazing sun sends a shaft through the old doorway into the long darks and the dim twilight of the empty place.

Curious seekers who may have followed us here, can reach the *Loire* again farther west at *Vouvray*, sitting in its niche of rocks and among its vineyards which give it such genial fame. Nearly opposite, across

La Frillière bridge, is Montlouis, whose noble site has suggested to more than one artist-statesman the transference of the capital from Seine to Loire.

Amboise sits on its ridge of rock above the great river, its history written in its site and on its face—fortress, royal palace, prison—fantastic, original, imposing. Its sinister beauty fascinates and raises a shudder. Seen from the Loire, it is a white witch, smiling and dangerous. Seen from behind, it crushes the town.

There was probably a Gallic *oppidum* here. There was certainly a Roman camp and town, *Ambacia*. The name of some caves of uncertain origin and date, the *greniers de César*, to the east of the chateau, recalls the very doubtful tradition that Cæsar came here himself. The spot where now stands the church of St. Denis-Hors was long called the *forum*, and the neighbourhood Old Rome. Indeed, the church is possibly not called after the patron of France: the name may go back to an old temple of Dionysus. That a temple and an idol were here, is certain, for St. Martin sent his missionaries to knock them down; nor would he rest till he had the upper hand in this heathen stronghold. The cruel Avician, whom only Martin could soften, was the Gallo-Roman governor of the place, and rebuilt the chateau, which had already been destroyed.

But the earliest event of which we can form any vivid picture is the meeting of the barbarian rivals, Clovis the Frank and Alaric the Goth, on the Ile St. Jean in the Loire, opposite the chateau. They had been at each other's throats just before; but Theodoric the Ostrogoth intervened to reconcile them. Now they embraced tenderly, touched each other's beards with solemn reverence, feasted together, swore eternal friendship—which lasted a month or two. The two hillocks between Amboise and Loches, called the *danges de Sublaines*, are said to have been erected to commemorate their peace and mark the limits of their lands. The town and chateau belonged



to the Frankish kings till the Northern pirates burned and pillaged them on their way to the sack of Tours. We have seen already how it fell into the hands of the Counts of Anjou, and how Fulk Nerra made it one of his chief strongholds. About the time he built Beaulieu, he built a church here also, in the chateau enclosure, in honour of Our Lady and St. Florent, known for ages as St. Florentin du Château. We look for it in vain now. It was ruthlessly destroyed, though the mortal remains of the immortal Leonardo were buried in its choir. Fulk Nerra made Lisois captain of the place, which long remained in his family. Hugues II. of Amboise was a valiant and famous Crusader, who fought at the side of Godfrey de Bouillon. He took five thousand men to the East from the Blésois and Touraine. Tasso speaks of him under the name of Stephen :—

“ Ma cinque mila Stefano d'Ambosia  
E da Blesse e di Turs in guerra adduce.”

The next verses do not please the Tourangeaux, of whom he says “*Non e gente robusta o faticosa.*” Nor does history bear out Tasso.

The Amboise family lost their stronghold when the head of the house intrigued against Charles VII. From that time it became crown property. It comes first into notice as a seat of royalty under Louis XI. Before Plessis was built, it was his favourite residence. Here the clamorous Lancastrian Queen Margaret came to demand help for her son. Louis did her royal honour, and made the most cautious of bargains with her. The wily king knew that luck was with York. Where now perches the exquisite chapel of St. Hubert, he built an oratory ; but his was underground—his tastes were gloomy—and it was dedicated to Monseigneur Saint Blaise, one of his favourite patrons. Indeed, it is doubtful if the chapel that followed on the site was ever formally dedicated to St. Hubert.

At Amboise Louis instituted, in 1469, the great Order of St. Michael. The gold collar of the Order, familiar in pictures and

sculpture of the time, composed of cockle-shells and a pendant St. Michael, was always to be worn by the thirty-six knights, save when fighting, or on a journey, or as private persons in their own homes. They were named for life: heresy, treason, or flight on the day of battle could alone annul the election. At the yearly meeting they went two and two to church—the king alone—all robed in long mantles of white damask cloth bordered with gold shell embroidery, lined with ermine, and with pointed hoods of crimson velvet. The headquarters was at Mont St. Michel; but the old house at Amboise, known as the *logis des sages*, has been supposed to be the meeting-place of the Order in the town of its birth.

Louis's son, Charles, was born, and in his childhood was almost a prisoner here. But imprisonment in Amboise with his mild mother was better than being under his father's eye at Plessis. Louis was content he should grow up in ignorance: so should he be the more abject pupil of his own state-craft. But Charles cared nothing for state-craft. He spelt out the romances of chivalry: he was to be Charlemagne; he was to be Roland. And he had another book to read in. His father had here a collection of arms; and wonderful stories were attached to some of the pieces in it. There was "Charlemagne's dagger." There was "An iron-hafted sword, called the sword of Lancelot of the Lake; and they say it is a fairy sword." There was "the sword of victory." Another was called "the sword of the King of France who took arms against a giant at Paris, and conquered him." Also, "the sword of the King of Scotland who was very brave." (Was this Robert Bruce; and did it come with the Dauphine Margaret?) "The Grand Turk's axe," "St. Louis's axe," and "Du Guesclin's." "The armour of the Maid." All the Italian campaigns of Charles VIII. were dreamed by the neglected and happy Dauphin in the castle of Amboise.

The boy's first public appearance was made here, when he went out of the castle's eastern gates to receive the saintly hermit, St. François



THE LAMB (1880-1885)



de Paule, on his way to Plessis. Near the spot where he had humbly knelt for the holy man's blessing, he built, later, a great convent for the Minimes—the Bonshommes, as he called them. They became good friends, this young romantic prince and the rough ascetic, who had a wonderful sagacity in worldly affairs—learnt in a grotto in Calabria!

When he was king and master of money to spend, Charles set about making the gloomy old fortress into a splendid palace. His wife, Anne of Brittany, helped him; and a fury of building set in. He learnt much in Italy; and he brought home tons of Italian things—things beautiful, things merely curious—and a good many Italian workmen. But it was not an Italianate Amboise he made. It was a Gothic palace, attached to the old fortress, which had been extended by his father. The Italian stamp was more clearly seen in the gardens, designed by the Neapolitan Pascello da Macogliano. This artist made those at Château Gaillard also, that charming little castelet, with its back to the rock, perched so gaily on its terrace, looking over the valley of the Amasse to the east of Clos-Lucé.

The chateau was growing fast when Charles died. The chapel of St. Hubert is of Louis XII.'s reign. Who was the architect; who was the sculptor of the little gem of Flamboyant-Gothic, perched on the edge of the wall, with its lace like sculptures inside and its wonderful relief over the doorway, of St. Hubert and the stag, St. Anthony in the desert, and St. Christopher? There seems reason in thinking that both were Flemish; but it is pure conjecture. Both architecture and sculpture might be a development of French-Gothic. But the notion that Michel Colombe did the bas-relief seems as wild as that which connects the sculpture of the chapel with the archaic bas-relief on the house near Notre Dame du Bout du Pont, of the knight giving alms to a poor man.

At Amboise the Dauphin Charles-Orland was born, and there he died at three years old. A noticeable infant, as one sees from

his portrait by Bourdichon. Thus Commines wrote of him years after. Charles VIII. had heard the news at Lyons :—

“ Which newes he tooke heavily as nature would : notwithstanding his sorrow soone ended. But the Queene of Fraunce and Duchesse of Britaine called Anne, lamented the death of her sonne a long time, as much as was possible for a woman to do. . . . The king her husband . . . mourned not long, but sought to comfort her, by causing certaine yoong gentlemen to daunce before her, of the which the Duke of Orleans was one, being of the age of fower and thirtie yeares, who seemed to reioice at the Daulphin's death, because he was heire apparrant to the crowne next after the king ; for the which cause the king and he saw not one another in a long time after. The Daulphin was about three yeeres olde, a goodly childe, bold in speech, and no whit fearing those things that commonly children use to feare. Wherefore (to be plaine with you) his father's sorrow soone ended : for he began already to doubt if this childe grew to yeeres, and continued in his noble conditions, that happily he might diminish his estimation and authoritie : for the king himselfe was a man of very small stature and of no great sense, but of so good a nature, that it was impossible to finde a gentler creature.”

The king's own death took place here ere many years had passed—

“ The eight day of Aprill, the yeere 1498 upon Palme Sunday even, the king being in this glorie as touching the world, and in this good minde towards God : departed out of the chamber of Queene Anne, Duches of Britaine his wife, leading her with him to see the tennice plaiers in the trenches of the castle, whither he had never led her before, and they two entered together into a gallerie, called Haquelbacs gallerie. . . . The entrie into it was broken downe ; moreover, the king as he entered, knocked his browe against the doore ; notwithstanding that he were of verie small stature. Afterward he beheld a great while the tennice playing, talking



AMBOISE, FROM THE LOIRE.





familiarly with all men. . . . The last word he spake being in health was, that he hoped never after to commit deadly sin nor veniall if he could; in uttering the which words he fell backward and lost his speech, about two of the clocke at afternoone, and abode in this gallerie till eleven of the clocke at night. Every man that listed entred into the gallerie, where he lay upon an olde mattresse of strawe, from the which he never arose till he gave up the ghost, so that nine howers he continued upon it. The . . . confessor who was continually by him told me, that all the three times he recovered his speech, he cried, 'My God, and the glorious Virgin Marie, Saint Claude, and Saint Blase helpe me.' Thus departed out of this world this mightie puissant Prince in this miserable place, not being able to recover one poore chamber to die in: notwithstanding that he had so many goodly houses, and built one so sumptuous at that present."

Says Commynes: "I arrived at Amboise, two daies after his death, and went to say my praiers over his body, where I abode five or sixe howers. And to say the truth, I never saw so great mourning, nor lamentation, nor that continued so long for any Prince as for him. . . . He was the mildest and courteousest Prince that ever lived; for I think he never gave foule word to any man. . . . And I think verily, that my selfe am the man whom of all other he used roughliest, but because I knew it to be the fault of his youth and not to proceede of himselfe I could never love him the worse for it."

The building and decoration of the great chateau went on under Louis XII. The east wing is of his time. The modern relief above the St. Hubert, representing him and Anne of Brittany kneeling, reminds us of their work on the chapel. But Louis's heart was elsewhere; and the new palace with its splendours was soon abandoned for Blois, the home of his fathers.

Amboise was given over to Louise of Savoie and her two children,

François d'Angoulême, the future François I., and Marguerite, one day to be Queen of Navarre, patron of learning and reform. A great part of Francis's childhood was spent here. To Margaret there never was anyone like Francis—even to the end of her full and varied life. His mother, the selfish, rapacious libertine, adored her son—*Mon roi, mon seigneur, mon César et mon fils*, as she calls him in the journal she kept, a precious document, for all its scrappiness. Her rival, Anne of Brittany, bore a son, but the child died. "He could not delay the exaltation of my son, for there was no life in him." So, with pride in Francis's exuberance, she noted the event. In many respects she was a model mother. She groaned over his ailments and accidents, but did not forget she was training a great captain. In the *Chronicle* of Fleuranges, his boyhood's companion, we learn what were a brave lad's games and pastimes in the sixteenth century. Fleuranges, known as the Young Adventurer—son of Robert de la Marck, the Boar of Ardennes—as soon as he could sit a pony—he was about eight—rode off from Sedan to Blois to offer his services to the king. Louis XII. gravely received him, said he had no great adventures on hand at the moment, but would let the young captain know when he required his services. So by the king's advice, Fleuranges rode off from Blois on his pony, "to go to Monsieur d'Angoulême and Madame at Amboise, where the said Adventurer lodged between the two bridges at the sign of Sainte Barbe." The boys were nearly of an age, and for the next few years they quarrelled and played together like true brothers-in-arms. They were archers and shot at a bull's eye in a door. They went hunting in the forest, and netted deer and "wild beasts." They built castles and bastions and stormed them; and blows were given and taken. But Fleuranges does not give way as hero—"Et estoit en ce temps le Jeune Aventureux l'homme de la plus grande jeunesse que jamais se visse." When they were bigger they jousted. "Et croy que jamais prince n'eust plus de passe temps qu' avait mon dict

sieur et estre mieux endoctriné que madame sa mère l' a tous jours nourry." The end of this happy time is noted in his mother's journal. "On the 3rd of August, 1508, in the time of King Louis XII., my son left Amboise for the court, leaving me all alone."

But her son—"son fils glorieux et triomphant César"—came back to Amboise as a young king, and held great state there. And to this time belongs the greatest memory of Amboise, the sojourn of Leonardo da Vinci. Francis, who had seen his *Cena* in Milan, invited him to France, and here he came in the spring of 1516. Turn from the Castle, take the road that leads by the back of it towards the Amasse, till on your right you reach the little manor and park of Clos-Lucé, a modest, two-winged brick house with a little tower and a chapel attached to it, a soft warm red in colour, and creamy mouldings about doors and windows. It has been restored with intelligence, and though the statues have gone from the niches, and the old scutcheons are partly blotted out, it still looks like a well-preserved house of Louis XI.'s time. That is in fact its date, having been built by Louis's maitre d'hôtel, Le Loup. After his death Charles VIII. used it as a retreat from the bustling castle above. It had many tenants, the Duc d'Alençon, Marguerite d'Angoulême's first husband, one of them; but it was still royal property. And here, in his manor of Cloux, Francis I. installed the painter and his pupils Melzi and Villanis. He was an old and broken man. His mind was alive, but his active work was nearly over. Sometimes he toiled up to the chateau, and looked out over the great river and its feathery islands. His aid was wanted for court feasts. When the young Dauphin was born and christened; when the Duke of Urbino (Catherine de Medicis' father) was married there, Leonardo directed the gorgeous pageants. But he lived mostly at Cloux, in his studio. Of his work there we can only conjecture. The badly restored frescoes in the chapel are of his time, but are not from his hand. All we know for certain is that he still worked. The

secretary of the Cardinal d'Arragon recounts a visit of his master to "Leonardo da Vinci, Florentine, more than seventy years old, the most excellent painter of our time. He showed his Excellency three pictures: one, from life, the portrait of a lady of Florence, executed by request of the late Julian de Medici the Magnificent; another of the young John the Baptist, and the third, the Madonna with the Child on the lap of St. Anne, all three perfect, although the paralysis which has attacked his right hand would not have led me to expect excellence from him." These works were probably all begun in Florence. An eighteenth-century record says he painted Francis and Queen Claude. Villanis took drawings of the master back with him to Italy.

Ever full of dreams and projects, Leonardo the architect planned the pulling down of the recently built castle of Amboise, and its reconstruction in the style of the Italian Renaissance. Nothing came of it—for which much thanks. Leonardo the engineer planned the fertilisation of the arid Sologne region by means of a canal connecting the Loire and the Saône, to be extended so as to form a great highway between France and Italy. With this in view, he left Amboise for a time, went to Romorantin with Francis, and while the King hunted, Leonardo wandered, brooded, planned. But nothing came of this either—though the idea bore fruit in due time. The king had a thousand schemes, a thousand pleasures to distract him. Blois, Fontainebleau, Paris, St. Germain-en-Laye drew him away from Amboise. Perhaps his gay, volatile spirit was not so much attracted, at close quarters, by the sombre genius brooding on eternity. And doubtless the feeble old man got more pleasure from Melzi's flute than from royal favour. But he never planned to go back to Italy. He had adopted France and Amboise. The great Loire, the little Amasse at the foot of his garden, the trees of Cloux, the great chateau, the honour paid him by the citizens as the king's friend: these made up the external world to the great Leonardo in his last

days. With much care and detail he arranged his place of burial, with such ceremony as should become a great lord, in St. Florentin du Château.

Legend will have it that he died in Francis's arms. More likely he died in Melzi's. Melzi never mentions the royal presence in his letter describing the master's death. A son had just been born to Francis; and he signed a document at St. Germain-en-Laye the day before. Leonardo's pupils left the place shortly after. The furniture and other things provided for the Italians by the royal bounty, were sold on the public Square of Amboise.

Leonardo never had any monument. The church of the castle was demolished by the vandal Ducos, to whom Napoleon gave Amboise in 1808. No one thought of the remains of him who lay beneath. It was not till 1854 that M. Arsène Houssaye began to dig thoroughly and with intent to find. His earnestness kindled a fire of interest. The authorities of Amboise gave him every aid; and all the world looked on. A servant reported an old tradition that a cherry-tree grew at the spot where the body had been buried. There, in truth, were found fragments of a tomb and a skull. There is a thrill in the words that tell of the discovery:—

“On the 20th of August there was brought to light a very ancient tomb covered up at the demolition of St. Florentin with stones of various sizes. Doubtless the slabs had been broken, and out of respect for the dead these had been replaced by stones from the church, on which could still be seen some traces of rough frescoes. . . . The skeleton was uncovered with great respect. Near the feet everything was in the immoveable order of death; but towards the head the roots of the cherry-tree and an ailanthus had come through and overturned the vases [*i.e.* funeral vases placed in the tomb.]

“Having turned aside a few handfuls of earth and some roots, we saw a great physiognomy in all the majesty of death. . . . The head was leaning on the hand, as during sleep. . . .

“ In the last fortnight we had waked up many dead in their tombs ; but we had not yet seen a head formed on so masterly a plan for intelligence, or rather by intelligence. I had brought from Milan a drawing of a portrait of Leonardo at his departure for France, when the thinning of the hair allowed the drawing of his head to be seen. Now the skull that had just come to light offered exactly the same signs. The wide, high forehead hung over the eyes. The occipital arc was ample and pure. Every part was dominant : nothing predominated.”

We dwell on Leonardo, for the next notable chapter in the history of Amboise, forty years later, is full of horror and disgrace. Young Francis II. was king when a conspiracy was conceived, and ably planned, to carry him off from the Guises, who were wielding their insolent power, only modified by the intrigues and the maternal influence of the Queen Mother, Catherine de Medicis. The soul of the conspiracy was Condé ; but he did not appear. He was the *capitaine muet* of the affair. The arm of it was Godefroy de Barri, Sieur de la Renaudie, a gentleman of Périgord, an able, audacious, and desperate man. He roused the Protestants and the discontented throughout France. Probably there was “ plus de malcontentement que de huguenoterie ” about it. On roth March, a small number of Huguenots were to go to Blois to present a petition to the king. They would open the gates to a great band without. Condé would be ready to head them. The Guises would be imprisoned, and the king placed in better custody. But a lawyer with whom Renaudie had lodged in Paris, turned traitor. The court moved from Blois to the far stronger Amboise ; and Catherine sent for Condé to be in attendance.

Renaudie, however, went secretly on with the affair, aiming now at Amboise. A second traitor, Lignières, betrayed his new plans to Catherine ; and as the conspirators neared the town, they were taken

prisoner, or killed on the spot. One band under Castelnau held out in the chateau of Noizay ; but surrendered after a parley with the Duc de Nemours, who swore, "on the faith of a prince, by his honour, and by the damnation of his soul, that no harm should come to them." He brought them to Amboise, where they were tortured and hanged. When Nemours protested, he was told that "a king is in no way bound by his word to a rebellious subject."

Renaudie, still undismayed, was rallying his men. But in the forest of Châteaurenault, in the north of Touraine, he met his cousin Pardaillan, a Guisard, and a fight ensued, during which Renaudie was killed by Pardaillan's valet. This maddened his followers, and next day a band of them attacked Amboise in broad daylight. They were but a mouthful for the garrison. Then began the Guises' vengeance in earnest—and a more hideous chapter is not to be read in history. The prisoners were reinforced by many others brought in. Innocent or guilty, Protestant or Catholic—no fine inquiries were made—all carrying arms in the forest of Amboise were taken. Honest folk, who had never heard of heresy, travelling armed for safety, were hanged on trees, or brought to Amboise to endure worse. A quick sudden massacre would have seemed mercy in comparison with what began on 15th March, 1560.

The horror lasted for a month. For days the court assembled solemnly after dinner, and placed themselves at the windows overlooking the river. In the front row sat the young king, his little brothers, the fair young Mary Stuart, and Catherine, of course. Condé, the *capitaine muet*, was forced to be there! Worse still, the Châtillons who had blood in their veins and hearts in their bodies, were forced to attend! It was the court entertainment for a whole month, and the gay lords and ladies looked on as if it had been some excellent mummery. Whatever sick hearts were among the spectators—the little king himself turned pale—only one protest was uttered so far as we know. It came from the young Duchess of Guise,

Renée of Ferrara's daughter. Mary Stuart did not protest or flinch. Catherine must have thought her a promising daughter-in-law.

They say thousands camped in the fields; and windows and roofs on the Ile St. Jean were at a premium. Villemongis, Castelnau, Raunay and Mazères, the chiefs, were executed. Most of the others were hanged from the balcony in the façade of the chateau—close to the king and courtiers' grand stand. The victims went to death singing Marot's psalms. Castelnau died, calling down Divine wrath on the murderers' heads. Villemongis dipped his hands in his brothers' blood, and cried aloud: "Lord, see the blood of Thy children. Thou wilt avenge it!" How many above felt the sublimity, the pathos, the irony of the chant that mounted?

" Dieu nous soit doux et favorable,  
Nous bénissant par sa bonté."

The singing seemed perhaps a little ridiculous to the courtly spectators—though Marot's psalms had been very much the mode a little while ago. As for the cries of vengeance, they were insolent. Guise called the king's attention to them. "I think it is you they are angry with," said the boy. "I wish you would go away for a time, that we might see whether it is you or I with whom they are wroth."

They say that Guise gave the king secret counsel to kill Condé, when it was impossible to prove his part in the conspiracy—to play with him, and by accident stab him. At least Condé avoided close contact with anyone till he could leave for Navarre. When they accused him of complicity, he stoutly denied it, and threw down his glove in challenge. No one took up the gage, but Guise mockingly offered himself as second in the contest that should prove to the world how much Condé loathed the Reform! Farce followed hard on the heels of tragedy.

During the massacres the young d'Aubigné, a boy of nine, passed through Amboise. "See there, the head of France has fallen!



(Ils ont décapité la France, les bourreaux !”) said his father. “It is for me and you, my child, to avenge these honourable chiefs. If you spare yourself, my curses shall fall on your head.”

The torture chamber, the scaffold, the gibbet, the sword, did their work on fifteen hundred men. Amboise was a foul noisome den. “The streets flowed with blood, and were carpeted with the dead!” Even the strong stomach of the court could not stand it. King, queen, princes, lords and ladies fled—and they never came back. That month of grim entertainment was the end of Amboise as a pleasure-house. The air could never be sweetened after the stench of blood. Its later history is that of a prison. There Richelieu shut up César de Vendôme and his brother Alexandre, Grand Prieur de France, bastard sons of Henry IV. and Gabrielle d’Estrées. Under Louis XIV. Fouquet, the great and prodigal finance minister, was a prisoner in the castle ; and the gallant, amorous Lauzun was exiled to the town. In the next reign the Duc de Choiseul, who had built the enormous chateau of Chanteloup, in the neighbourhood (now demolished), was banished there in his disgrace ; and during his exile many illustrious persons came to Amboise. Choiseul is now curiously commemorated by the pagoda which he erected. At his death the domain of Amboise reverted to the crown. Sold to the Duke of Penthièvre, it passed into the hands of the Orleans family—to whom it belongs now. Confiscated at the Revolution, it was used as a state prison. Then Napoleon gave it to an old colleague of his in the Consulate, Roger Ducos, a vandal for economy’s sake. Perhaps he found the work of demolition also expensive ; for he stopped, and enough was left to make restoration on a great scale worth while. The last of the illustrious prisoners were Abd-el-Kader and his Arab suite.

The restoration carried on under the able supervision of M. Ruperich Robert, is excellent in parts, if incomplete ; but it has not given back life to the great chateau of Amboise. An empty shell inside ; the

*salle des gardes*, the *salle des états*, the great galleries, towers and staircases, are terribly chilly, and echo of dead things and vanity of vanities. The good sisters, and the sick folk, servants of the house of Orleans, tended by them, are the only living creatures—for you cannot count the automaton with the keys, or the bands of depressed tourists under his automatically watchful eye. His master is far from encouraging any lingering, even for the most studious purpose, where he may not enter himself.

But even such hampered visits leave a great impression. The evil memories pass as you look out over the fair country and the river. The sinister figures of Louis XI. and Catherine de Medicis vanish. See, Leonardo has left the noisy *fêtes* within. He paces the terrace, and looks out and remembers the green Lombard plain.

But at Amboise history does not entirely concentrate itself in the chateau. The church of St. Denis-Hors, on the outskirts, is a record of the centuries. The building as it stands is of the twelfth century, the secondary Romanesque period, much restored in the sixteenth, and with some unfortunate additions of the seventeenth century. Its greatest glory belongs to its earlier time—the carved capitols of the pillars, a series almost unique in their vigour and variety, a story-book full of mediæval imagination. Pilgrims and heathen sirens are there; the Virtues and the lurking Devil waiting to devour them, the Massacre of the Innocents; the Martyrdom of St. Denis; and inimitable renderings of the great contemporary satirical epic of “Reynard the Fox.”

The church has been made a museum for stray bits of later sculpture, mostly from the vanished priory of Bondésir, near Montlouis, suppressed in 1770. Encouraged by the guide-books, the Ambacians have fixed on a group of the Entombment as particularly worthy of admiration. There is no great master to whom they will not attribute it. Leonardo, of course, and Michel Colombe have been confidently

named! It is either a commonplace product of a degenerate time, or has been hopelessly meddled with. It hardly rises above the level of the present-day church art of commerce. Tradition calls the figures portraits. The Virgin is Marie Gaudin, wife of Philibert Babou, Seigneur of La Bourdaisière, minister of Francis I. Babou himself is Joseph of Arimathea; the three Mariés, their three daughters, all of them fair and frail. If tradition had not blasphemously assigned the highest rôle of all to the king, we might say he would not be out of place in a group that included his very special friends, the Babou ladies. But the identifications are probably only based on the fact that the Babous were patrons of Bondésir.

The statue called "La Femme Noyée" is another thing. Certainly later than the great epoch, it has, nevertheless, real qualities of sincerity and strength. Its popular name recalls a legend wound about it. The Italian painter, Primaticcio, was one evening with his beautiful young wife in a boat on the Loire near Montlouis. She was playing with a dove, which flew away. Trying to recapture it she fell into the water. The treacherous waves covered her—nor did all her husband's efforts avail anything. He searched the river up and down, wandered night and day on the banks; and at last she was washed ashore to him. He made a mould of her lovely form, and from that the statue. But, of course, the story is pure legend. The haggard expression, the look of sleep or death, doubtless suggested the name and the tale. At Bondésir it was known as La Belle Babou, Francis's mistress; and as she was an elderly woman when she died, the haggardness would thus be explained.

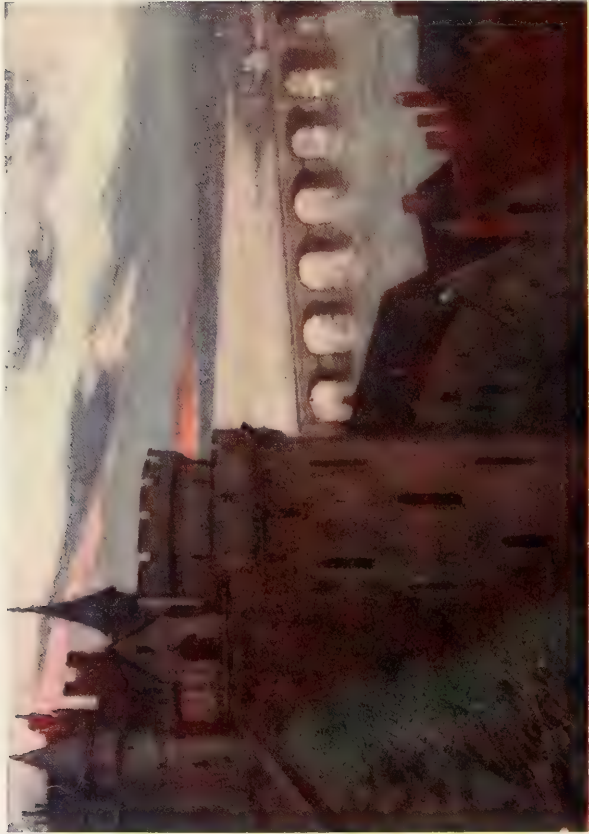
No great names are attached to the spirited little St. Michael and the charming angel, evidently part of an Annunciation; and these are the greatest treasures which St. Denis has fallen heir to from other ruined and vanished churches.

The chateau, Clos-Lucé, St. Denis, the belfrey—they have seen much; they have old roots. But there is an older Amboise to be

guessed at if you make your way along the Rue des Rochers. Of course, rock-dwellings may be seen in a score of other places in Touraine; but Amboise is as good as most for examining them. They lie along the hill above which Cæsar's soldiers made their camp, in lower street, in upper street, singly, or in groups, tier on tier, or with only the hillside above. Now in the burning July sun they are white, tomb-like, austere, a bit of the East. There, shaded behind trees and gardens, they have the coquetry of a villa residence—window-blinds, flower-pots and all. Here is one out of which grows a miniature forest. There a dozen or so can only be compared to sand-martins' nests on a cliff side. About these common rock-dwellings one thing is of surpassing interest. They are of no particular date at all, but of all dates, and are perhaps the best example left in Europe of primitive invention continuously adopted through the ages. Mère Javelle's house was bored out of the tufa five years ago. It differs hardly at all from her neighbour's, which hid a fugitive Gaul. Gaul and Goth have been here—and earlier races—hunter and hunted. Under the chateau ridge and the vineyards there have always been rock-dwellings. The castle has been transformed by one ambitious king after another, from grim fort to Renaissance palace, but the rock-dwellings have kept their primitive shape. Leonardo found them along the Amasse beyond Clos-Lucé. Perhaps they make the picture the most unchanged since his eyes looked out on Amboise. And children are born there now and grow up healthy and gay; and the rock offers hospitable lodging for ages to come.

Kings and princes have made a glorious and a sinister thing of Amboise. Let us not go from it without one gentle memory. Here in the Place, in 1743, was born that strange, original, uncomprehended, not very comprehensible genius, Louis Claude de Saint Martin, known as the *philosophe inconnu*. In the positive, sceptical, materialistic



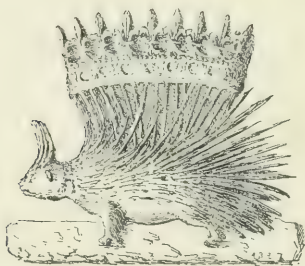


AMBOSI, FROM THE TERRACE.

eighteenth century he knew but one reality,—the Divine. Almost stranger still, he who lived apart from other men's interests, the meditative man, the mystic, felt the shock of the French Revolution, and was not afraid. He had hope and faith in it, even served it, with a straight common sense lacking in more worldly men. He shrank from much in life ; but he did not fear death. A noble, he was liable under Robespierre to be shot or guillotined ; but he possessed his soul in sweet patience. And he never lost faith in freedom, hoping even that through the terrors and adversities of the time, and the shock to fortunes, that the reign of the kingdom would come. "Le mobile secret et le terme de cette Révolution se lient avec mes idées et me comblent d'avance d'une satisfaction inconnue a ceux memes qui se montrent les plus ardents."

Amboise hardly knew what it had bred ; and Touraine does not honour him particularly. Educated at Pontlevoy, and forced by his father to enter the magistracy at Tours, which was purgatory to him, he changed his career for the army—a curious choice, seeing that he said of himself, with that fine wit which might have made of him a great man of letters if he had not preferred the mazes of theosophy—"On ne m'a donné de corps qu'en projet." Yet it was among a military set he came under the influence of Martinez de Pasqualis, the occultist. Retired from the army, he travelled, studied, meditated, wrote. Forced to leave Paris in 1794, he came back to Amboise, where he was appointed Commissioner for drawing up the catalogue of books belonging to the nation. The work was dull ; but he was glad to be employed by the revolutionary authorities in a work where "there was no question of judging men or killing them." But it was not Amboise, it was Strasburg that provided the mystic atmosphere he required. He never was a propagandist ; he hardly founded a school. He sat at others' feet, especially at Böhme's. But he had thoughts of his own, inchoate often, perverse sometimes, yet seamed with gold. The modestest and the least fatuous of men, high-born women were the

most zealous of his pupils. Something incomplete in him hindered his fame and his influence ; and his works remain a twilight chaos through which, rarely, flashes a star—but a star of the first magnitude. He left one immortal word, an observation on life, at once a judgment and a guidance—"J'ai vu, au sujet des vérités si importantes pour l'homme, qu'il n'y avait rien de si commun que les envies et rien de si rare que le désir."



EMBLEM OF LOUIS XII.



## CHAPTER XII

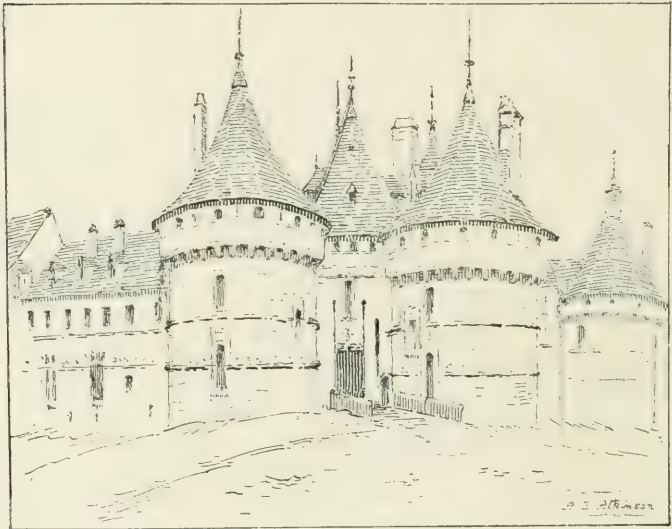
### CHAUMONT AND BLOIS

*De Vigny's praise of Chaumont—Early Visitors—The House of Amboise—Astruciers—Diane de Poitiers—Madame de Staël—Pleasant BLOIS—The House of Orleans—THE POET DUKE—The Maid at Blois—Louis XII. and Anne of Brittany—The Salamander—Catherine de Medicis—Mary Stuart—La Reine Margot—The Murder of Guise—Gaston and the Grande Mademoiselle—Blois restored.*

“BUILT on the highest point of the ridge, it frames the wide rock with its high walls and massive towers ; steep roofs of slate lift these well into view, and give to the whole building that convent air, that religious shape of all our old chateaux, stamping a graver character on the landscape of so many of our provinces. Dark thick trees surround this ancient manor on every side, and from a distance resemble the feathers round King Henry's hat. A pretty village lies at the foot on the banks of the river : the white houses seem to spring out of the golden sand, you would say. It is bound to the protecting village by a narrow pathway which winds about the rock. There is a chapel half-way up. The seigneurs went down and the villagers came up to its altar, a place of equality, like a neutral city between the misery and the splendour bred by war.”

The chapel, which was the parish church, has disappeared, thrust down to the village below. Otherwise De Vigny's picture of Chaumont holds good to-day. There it stands perched on the rock above the Loire, with the village at its feet. The gates are open ; broad and narrow paths wind steep up the rock and lead you to a great, wild, shady park. It is a prosperous, well-cared-for place, but

it retains that air, half-homely, half wild, which is the best charm of French parks and the scorn of the true-born English gardener. Some ornamental trees and bedding-out plants and exotics struggle vainly for convention, while the hay is tossed just under the great walls.



CHÂTEAU DE CHAUMONT

To birds it is a paradise. There are no long vistas, but here and there glistening peeps of the Loire. Worn moss-grown steps lead down to cool, leafy dells, or up to sunny terraces, where in summertime the orange-trees are set out. The chateau might be of yesterday for colour, as it might be a hundred years earlier than its actual date in general form. The scrubbed-up appearance of Chaumont, seen close, offends just because of the heavy severity of its architecture. Once through the port-cullis gate, and in the charming Renaissance



CHAUMONT-SUR-LOIRE



court, with its view over the river, one can understand its pretensions to gaiety and coquetry ; but seen from the park, it is only fortress, and should be moss-grown and hoary. Originally, it was a fortress all round, even on the Loire side, which was only opened out in the eighteenth century. The present castle rose when builders were thinking of elegance as well as strength, yet Charles d'Amboise remembered the fate of the former one, and all the storming and sieging of old time. The tradition of Chaumont was strength, and strong he made it, hiding away its beauties in the inner court, where now we wake the echo in the graceful Italian well.

There must always have been a fortress on the rock here. The Counts of Blois made a strong one to keep out Fulk Nerra ; and gave it to their ally Gelduin, Lord of Pontlevoy, and founder of the abbey there, as an indemnity for Saumur, which the Black Falcon took from him. In his time there was bitterest strife between Chaumont and Amboise, the Angevin stronghold. But it ended with his son, the beautiful and gentle Geoffrey, called the Maiden, who married his niece Denise to Sulpice, son of Lisoys, Fulk Nerra's great captain. From that union sprang the illustrious house of Amboise, which was to give so many crusaders, warriors, ruffians, bishops, and statesmen to France.

Both as a frontier-fortress and as the home of a race with equal talents for war and state-craft, it was a marked place. For centuries Chaumont knew well the men that made the history of their time. William the Conqueror was here when his daughter married the Count of Blois. Henry II. was here, parleying with Becket, in hope of peace, six weeks before the tragedy of Canterbury. Cœur de Lion seized it during his war against his father. And so the old castle grew in name and fame till by Louis XI.'s order, it was razed to the ground, in vengeance for the part played by Pierre d'Amboise (his ex-chamberlain) in the Ligue du Bien Publique. Pierre died of grief ; but his house was well sustained by seventeen children. One of them

became the great Cardinal d'Amboise. Another, Charles, was Louis's ambassador to Dijon when he claimed Burgundy. This service was rewarded by a permission to rebuild Chaumont. The actual builder of the greater part was Charles II. d'Amboise, Grand Master and Marshal of France under Louis XII. It is his arms and his uncle the cardinal's you see carved over the gate. The direct line died out in George, killed at the battle of Pavia.

War and state-craft filled the lives of the men of the race. The women were remarkable for piety. One of them, Françoise d'Amboise was beatified. Another, Catherine, daughter of Charles I., was a poetess. She was a beautiful court lady, had three husbands, and survived them all. Her poetry is not great, but it is assuredly her own, her particular extract from her circumstances and time. It takes the form of devout epistles addressed to the Virgin and to Christ. She appeals to the Virgin to show her letter "tout à loisir," to her Son—for, as she says, "tu en a bien l'audace"! To Catherine, Heaven is only a greater, sublimer Touraine, and the Madonna is an open-handed Queen with the Renaissance love of building—

"Espritz devotz, fidelles et loyaulx,  
En paradis beaux manoirs et chasteaulx,  
Au plaisir Dieu, la Vierge pour nous fonde."

Besides the L and A (Louis and Anne), which recall the period of its construction, besides the arms of Amboise and the cardinal's hat, there are carved on the walls of Chaumont other signs and symbols, which each contribute to the tale. The double C of Catherine de Medicis, interlaced with the H of Henry II., tell of the ownership of the Queen-mother, who bought the place in 1559. The cabalistic signs tell of her reading of the stars with Ruggieri in the tower called the Tour de l'Astrologue.

Says Nicolie Pasquier: "The Queen Mother being desirous to know if all her children should ascend the throne, a magician in the chateau





MARKET DAY.



of Chaumont, which is situated on the river Loire, between Blois and Amboise, let her see in a magic circle he had set up in a hall there, all the Kings of France who had been and who should be, the which made as many turns of the circle as the years they had reigned or should reign." She saw her son Henry's life cut short, and Navarre's reigning years counted. The magician would have gone on, but she had seen enough to make her heart sick. There is a tradition of Nostradamus at Chaumont as well. Indeed, the tradition swells till it is no longer a secret interview with Ruggieri we are bidden imagine at the top of the south-eastern tower, but solemn conclaves of occult professors. Félibien, in the seventeenth century, imagined the "great spacious hall, looking over the water, where Queen Catherine held her assemblies of astrologers and diviners, in whom she had great faith."

The crescents and hunting symbols are marks of Diane de Poitiers' ownership. When Henry II. died, Diane had to give up Chenonceaux, and got this place instead. She thought it a poor exchange, and lived here little.

In course of time Chaumont fell into the hands of the d'Effiat family, and here, according to some historians, in 1620, was born the beautiful, fascinating, and unhappy Henri d'Effiat, Marquis de Cinq-Mars. At least, so says Alfred de Vigny, who should know; and it is at Chaumont he places the first scenes of his romantic tragedy. From Chaumont his hero rides off to the court; but he returns by night to have his stolen interview with Marie de Gonzague; and in a wood near by he attempts the rescue of old Bassompierre—his first offence against Richelieu.

Chaumont changed hands many times. At the beginning of last century it belonged to a certain M. Le Roy, by whose enterprise a pottery was established in the neighbourhood. *Terre de Chaumont* gained some fame among collectors of faïence. But M. Le Roy's personal efforts, extending over years, have been eclipsed in general interest by the few months' sojourn of a distinguished visitor. Dur-

ing his absence in America, in 1810, Madame de Staël made Chaumont her home. Exiled to a distance of at least fifty leagues from Paris, she sought a refuge as near the capital as possible. It was the time she was engaged on *L'Allemagne*. Of course, she brought a train with her; and besides her constant court, there were numerous visitors of distinction. Madame Récamier was there, and Benjamin Constant, the Barantes, Schlegel, and Chamisso. It is to this last we owe a picture of the life at Chaumont during her short reign. Chamisso did not enjoy himself at first. He was fond of his pipe and informal ease; and both the elegance and the terrible intellectual activity that reigned round the châtelaine were irksome to him. Wherever you went, he said, in chateau or park, somebody was writing something. And as if the labours of the day had not been enough, they wrote witty letters to each other in the evening, round the table in the salon. Among so many quick-witted, high-strung persons, irritation was frequent. Chamisso sighed over the fact that jealousy was stirred by friendship as much as by love; and tells how a certain walk in the park was called *l'allée des explications*. M. Le Roy came back suddenly; and though he offered hospitality to Madame de Staël and her company, they migrated to Fossé, where they continued their life of strenuous elegance.

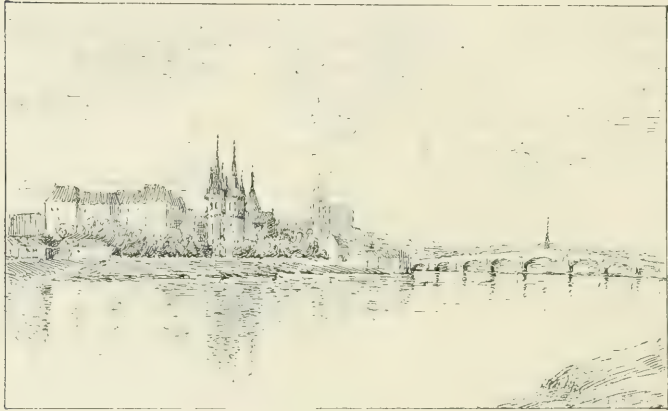
The restored Chaumont of to-day is a treasure-house of beautiful things. If but little of the Renaissance furniture and works of arts finely collected and arranged, have any direct association with the illustrious dames and lords that made old Chaumont, at least they call back their time. But the greatest treasure of all, the fifteenth-century Beauvais tapestries, rosy as the dawn, have seen, it is said, all the life of Chaumont that has passed in the present chateau. "Jamais le temps en ung estat ne dure." So end the verses of the story of Cupid to be deciphered on them. In very truth, from Catherine d'Amboise to Catherine de Medicis, from Cinq-Mars to Madame de Staël, the changes have been many enough.

The village nestling at the foot has little that is picturesque left in its houses. But its situation is beautiful, and it is a pleasant place for the fisher or other idle, contemplative person to loiter in. If his wants be modest he may linger very comfortably in the hostelry by the park gates—l'Hôtel de l'Avenue du Château—under the care of the deft and pretty hostess, Parisienne lined with Tourangelle. From there he may make darts on Amboise, or on the ruined abbey of La Guiche, on stately Pontlevoy, or old battered Fougères; and return to pace the riverside or the castle park with deep content.

We are beyond the boundaries of Touraine, in the Blésois. A pleasant, mellow country. If its landscape cannot compare in interest with the finer parts of Touraine, yet while our course lies along the banks of the broad river, we perceive little change. Chouzy past, by a fine road under high wooded banks we reach the western end of the good town of Blois. A memorable, a generous place, at once stately and homely. First comes the hospital, with the towers of St. Nicolas behind, and then the bridge. If we are wise, we take our ease in the inn by the bridge—the Hôtel d'Angleterre. Who would be at Blois and not have the river for all his leisure moments, eat his food on a balcony overhanging it, and have the bridge for his salon, looking up to the steep towered town above, and east and west to the silver or the golden glory of the broad flood?

The chateau up there, for all its size and magnificence, does not crush the town like Amboise, nor menace it like Loches. It is part of the town, its crown and adornment. It suggests no dungeons. They have knocked down, and replaced, and refaced much of old Blois; but it is still a town the loiterer must love, and not only for such definite objects of interest as the castle, the beautiful Renaissance Maison d'Alluye, the Rue Lubin, the Fontaine Louis XII. He will wear himself out mounting and descending the *escalier des rues*, and not resent his fatigue. From the chateau, from the flower-market, from the terrace of the Archevêché, the views over town and towers

and river are superb. Blois is a little frayed, a little out at elbows, but never sordid. The stamp of old nobility still remains. And up in the town, or down on the quays, are a score of old quiet secret houses, which you will adopt in imagination for that retreat, that escape, that home of philosophy and meditation which is to be yours one day. Something in the air and aspect tends to gentle humour and



BLOIS

serene charity; and if the Blésois be not known to the world as meditative geniuses, it can only be because philosophy is so natural to them, they have never been startled into expressing it. "The citizens of Blois," says an old writer, "by a certain gentle and politic harmony are in agreement with the softness of the air and the pleasantness of their territory."

I do not mean the history of Blois has been tame. But it deserves better than to be associated by guide-books solely with a deed of blood. The tourist only stops long enough to make a desperate attempt to

distinguish the salamander from the porcupine on the chateau walls, and hear the story of the murder of Guise. We have heard too much of the murder of Guise, and are inclined to dismiss it as richly deserved, and to echo the words of Arthur Young concerning the affair—"The character of the period and of the men that figured in it, were alike disgusting." (If only Henry had not kicked the dying man, to remind us he was a poltroon, and that his victim had been a strong villain!) Let us, at least, build up other memories about the old town, so that the stench of blood be not overmastering.

Somewhere on the hillside where the chateau now stands, old Thibaut le Tricheur built a fortress. But he was so busy hunting and harrying the country that he seldom stopped there. His ghost haunts the Blésois from Chambord to Bury, a restless, fast-riding ghost, a tenth-century version of the Wild Huntsman. It does not linger about Blois. His son was Fulk Nerra's great rival. In course of time the citadel and town fell into the hands of the Châtillons; and at the end of the fourteenth century the childless Guy de Châtillon sold it to the fascinating and reprehensible Louis, Duke of Orleans, brother of the mad king, Charles VI. He bought it with the dowry of his wife, the beautiful Valentine Visconti. The porcupine which his grandson, Louis XII., carved on the castle walls, was his emblem. In 1393, he founded the *Ordre du Porc-Epic*, with the motto, *Cominus et eminus* (near and far), in allusion to the old belief that the porcupine could not only defend itself from a near enemy but could throw its spikes from a distance. After the Duke's murder by Burgundy, Valentine clamoured for vengeance in vain; and retired broken-hearted to Blois with her children. She hung her apartments with black, adopted a *chantepleur* with two S.'s interlaced as her symbol (Souci et Soupir), wept, made her young sons swear to revenge their father, and died *de courroux et de deuil*.

With her eldest son, Charles d'Orleans, Blois is immortally associated. The castle of his early days was a rough fortress, but

good enough for the first use he had to put it to. If Bertrand d'Armagnac controlled things, Duke Charles was an energetic captain. Before he had grown to man's estate he was at least the nominal head of the Armagnac faction ; and Blois was the military centre of the party. Here he learnt the arts of chivalry and war, with his brothers, especially the bastard Jean, the great Dunois, whom Valentine loved, and said had been stolen from her, on whom she looked with most hope, when he was but seven years old, to avenge his father. If we happen to find Charles's verses tame, as Stevenson did, let us remember that he touched the lute only when in prison, and when the labour and the heat of an arduous day was over. In his youth, and while free, he played the man ; and the history of France during the next twenty years might have been very different save for his capture at Agincourt. Jeanne d'Arc, who had to prod Charles de Valois again and again to resolution, would have found a ready spirit in his cousin, Charles d'Orleans. It was on the cards he might be King of France. His father had hoped for it. In Paris d'Armagnac had placed a crown jestingly on his head, and promised to win the real one for him. Charles never entertained the idea. His uncle, the poor mad king, loved him so that he could hardly be parted from him. At Agincourt he fought in the van, and was captured by Sir Richard Wallace—a fine prize. The English kept him prisoner for five-and-twenty years—in the Tower, at Windsor, at Eltham, at Bolingbroke, at Pomfret.

As a soldier he had been admirable, as a politician less so. His quick imagination led him to sudden changes of policy, not more capricious than those of many other captains of his difficult time, but more disconcerting and dangerous, from his prominent position. Hence his short pact with the English before Agincourt. In prison he never forgot France, was in constant communication with it ; plotted as a good Frenchman was bound to do ; and was never resigned. And at the end he was still unembittered. Some years before his release he made peace with England, for which he has been

loudly reproached. Indeed, it was a useless submission ; but he never realised that at last they were treating seriously about his ransom, after long years of delay. In England he hunted, when they let him, closely guarded. He made friends. He was a student and a poet. He fretted—but it was not according to the code of his race and breeding and time to fret loudly. In his verse there are no groans or whines. There are tears, but like April weather, mingled with sunny smiles. He toyed with his grief, say solemn folks. So only does a brave man and a grand seigneur.

“ En faulte du logis de Joye  
L'ostellerie de Pensée  
M'est par les fourriers ordonné.”

He affected a frivolous indifference—his motto *Nonchaloir*. Later, in his troubadour court at Blois, he sang “Dans la forêt de longue attente.” It seems a light phrase in his mouth ; but he knew the fulness of its meaning, and did not deign to lay stress on it. His life is its commentary.

He was forty-nine when the English let him come home—a great event at Blois. He represented the national struggle ; was one of its martyrs ; his name was popular ; and the people greeted him along his way “as if he had been an angel from heaven.” Jeanne d'Arc, who had remembered him in his prison, had called him “the beloved of God.” His own popularity was great ; for he had inherited his father's charm—so winning that it was accounted for by magic. At first the ex-prisoner loved to travel. He wasted time trying to win back the Visconti heritage. He made many mistakes, for he did not know the new France that had been shaping in his absence ; and his place in it was not easy to find. His marriage with Marie de Cleves cemented the Burgundian alliance. Burgundy had done most of all to win his release ; and his gratitude Charles VII. thought dangerously effusive. On one occasion Orleans appeared at court with a great

train, such as his father would have had. The king said he would be more welcome with a shorter tail. The Duke withdrew haughtily. But as he gradually steadied his head, dizzy with new freedom in a strange, new world, he rallied definitely to Charles. He had mistaken the national party for a faction; and, indeed, it behaved as such sometimes. The duty he would best have understood—fighting the enemy—a ten years' truce with England made unnecessary. By the time the war broke out again his fighting days were over. He went to court, the greatest noble there. But he left it always willingly to come back to Blois. As he said,

“ Je ne hais pour autre avoine,  
Que de m'en retourner à Blois  
Trouvé me suis pour une fois  
Assez longuement en Touraine.”

Blois was his own court. Here at least he was a prince of the new time, the first and greatest of the Renaissance *grands seigneurs*. He administered his great estates. He was humane and open-handed. In his forests of Bury and Blois his people were free to cut wood for building; he was glad his trees should shelter men rather than beasts; and some of the old timber houses of the town are of his time and built by his encouragement. One of the first of the great chateau-builders, he made his grim fortress-castle into a lordly home. Little of this portion remains—only in the arcaded gallery joining the east and west wings—but in that little we see something of the lightness and elegance that the new safety permitted, and that the new sense of beauty craved. His court was the most enlightened in Europe. His courtiers were all poets; every officer of his court rhymed; his wife rhymed. He gave them themes, and with ingenious fancy and melody they spun their rondeaux and ballades in a pleasant rivalry. What they could not catch from their prince and patron was his genius. Charles d'Orleans has hardly had his due from his own



countrymen. By our critics he has been too much overlooked or reprimanded. Stevenson never showed the "something of the Shorter Catechist" more than in his judgment of this poet of the new spring of France. His essay on him is one long sneer. No need to claim for Charles that he plumbed the depths of emotion. He was but a troubadour, who touched his lyre with delicate grace. It shocks solemn folk that he whose father had been foully murdered, whose mother had died "of wrath and grief," who had seen shameful disasters in France, had lived in English fortresses for a quarter of a century, and had known many troubles beside, had some gaiety left at the end, and the heart to turn a rondeau. Presumably they would prefer he had whined and sung psalms. Our surly northern temper finds his taste in weather frivolous. But a brave man who has known storms sings of spring. And his own day did not find his *Maienlieder* monotonous. What should a man then sing of but the new budding time of liberty and beauty? "For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone." Even long past his prime, and after his many disasters, Charles d'Orleans felt the sap rising in his veins.

"Winter has cast his cloak away,  
 His cloak of wind and cold and wet,  
 And donn'd his broider'd doublet  
 Of pattern'd sunshine brave and gay,  
 Each beast and bird without delay  
 'Gins cry or sing its roundelet,  
 Winter has cast his cloak away,  
 His cloak of wind and cold and wet.  
 See, in the livery of May,  
 Spring and river and rivulet,  
 With silver and gold and jewels set,  
 The world is all new clad to-day,  
 Winter has cast his cloak away."

A greater poet than himself passed through his court, the young rapscaillon Villon. Doubtless Charles honoured him, with some curiosity. The great seigneur was but the president in his little

republic of letters. But just as certainly Villon was not at home in this stately and elegant haunt of the Muses. He preferred his ease in a tavern. But he owed the *grand seigneur* poet something more than a lodging of unaccustomed splendour. He had been a scholar in this courtly school, he who was to add a new note of intensity to the charm of Charles d'Orléans.

But Blois was not only a nest of singing-birds. The new learning, that is, the rebirth of the old, had its centre in the library growing here. Charles's father Louis had been a collector of books. Valentine had added to his library; and now Charles possessed the most considerable of his time in France. It had been augmented by MSS. which he brought from England, thereby only restoring them to his own country, whence they had been stolen by Bedford. His son, Louis XII. was to make additions out of Italian stores. In course of time, the Blois library, founded by three generations of the Orleans house, passed to Paris, and became the most important nucleus of the MSS. department of the Bibliothèque Nationale.

And when the courtiers and troubadours were not at their rhyming games and their books, they were out in the open, fishing, coursing, hunting. The forests of Bury and Russy and Blois rang with the horns of the Duke Charles and his merry court. Some blithe echoes still ring through the ballades and the rondeaux. There is a pilgrimage, which in honour of the great Dunois, and for love of the genial Charles, some may be tempted to make from Blois or Chaumont. Above the valley of the little Bièvre, beyond the village of Ouchamps, stood Dunois's hunting lodge of Savonnières, a little Gothic manor, with the Dunois scutcheon and the fleur-de-lis with the bar sinister. I can hardly say stands, for beyond a portion of the donjon tower and an archway gate there is little of the old place left. It has been intelligently but too completely restored. The stones of the gallant captain's tomb from Châteaudun form the chimney-piece of the salon. Charles gave Savonnières to his much-honoured bastard brother;





FONTAINE LOUIS XII, BLOIS.

and it became a famous *rendez-vous de chasse* for the Orleans court and for all the great lords of Sologne and the Beauce. Charles made a song for them, which anticipates the frank pagan gaiety of Rabelais. "Galerons sans faire prières," has the true Rabelaisian ring. In truth his frivolity is reprehensible. He should have been intriguing at court at his age, instead of being the centre of a light-hearted band, drunk with the air and the scent of the woods and the lust of life.

The great lord, the gay-hearted old sportsman, the light poet, had a pious, simple heart. A very faithful, nay, an affectionate son of the Church, he gave alms, fed the poor, washed their feet, and went on pilgrimage. A homely and touching picture has come down to us of him and his wife Marie of Cleves going on their way as humble pilgrims to the shrine of St. Catherine of Fierbois—the fame of which had lately been revived by Jeanne d'Arc—with crowds of children keeping them company along the road.

Charles was an old man when his only son was born at Blois, in 1462—he who was to be so suspect as Duke of Orleans under Louis XI. and Charles VIII., and reign as Louis XII., Father of his People. The infant was held at the font by Louis XI. and the tragic Marguerite d'Anjou. But there was an instinctive dislike between the sinister Louis XI. and the open-hearted Charles. Louis, who suspected everybody, suspected the great feudal lord most of all. Orleans' last visit to Tours was the death of him. Louis called the great nobles together to discuss his disputes with Burgundy and Brittany. The old Duke went, frail now, but with none of the frankness of his generous spirit dimmed. In the face of the moody king he defended the Duke of Brittany with a boldness none of the younger men dared show. Louis rose in his wrath and covered him with insults, "having no regard to the majesty of his age." Wounded, outraged, Charles went on his homeward way, but he never reached Blois, dying at Amboise two days later, 4th January 1465. His body did not rest in Blois, but was taken to the family

tomb in Paris. In the church of the Celestines, he was laid by his father, the murdered Duke, and his mother Valentine.

While Charles d'Orleans was still prisoner in England, Blois knew three great days, when Jeanne d'Arc passed through from Tours on her way to Orleans. The archbishop of Rheims and the great captains of France were there, waiting for her coming. The hope born at Chinon, that brightened at Tours, burst into a great blaze at Blois. At the farther end of the Place du Château—the old basse-cour—a plaque on the wall of a house marks the spot where the Church of St. Sauveur stood. It was in St. Sauveur her banner was blessed by the archbishop, all the clergy and nobles and captains kneeling there. It was from Blois she sent her famous letter to the King of England and his soldiers, to tell him she was there, “par le roy du ciel, corps pour corps, le bouter hors de France.”

Every day there were processions of captains and men-at-arms and clergy, Jeanne with them, one of them, their comrade for the adventure and the hardship, yet apart by her inspiration. Jeanne was not mealy-mouthed. At Blois she spoke straight counsel to the soldiers she was to lead; and at her bidding they left off swearing and sent away their women. On 23rd April, the march began. Brother Pasquerel at the head carried the holy banner. After him came the clergy, singing the *Veni Creator*. Then the Maid in white armour, riding a black horse. Her army had swelled to nearly six thousand men. They took the road along the Loire, and so on to Orleans.

When we mount to the Place du Château, Louis XII.'s wing faces us. Over the archway is the modern statue of him, which replaces the one destroyed at the Revolution. The mellow brick of the walls, pricked out with warm white, the stone carvings, the pinnacled windows with their scutcheons, the general air of lightness, of rich simplicity, mark the maturity of a national domestic

architecture, and tell something of the builder too—the great lord, who was also good bourgeois, the lover of the arts, who used them to make a home rather than a palace, the king who, in spite of a ruinous foreign policy, did well deserve to be called the Father of his People. His poet-father died before he was three; but Marie de Cleves brought him up at Blois in the early Orleans tradition of valour, enlightenment, and humanity. Saint Gelais describes the education of the young knight:—“And when he came to the age of sixteen or seventeen, he was the best jumper, wrestler and tennis-player. . . . And it is to be noted that in all these games and pastimes of youth he was gentler, more gracious and kinder than the humblest of the company. And there was none who so feared to do anything that might displease or do hurt to any poor gentleman whatsoever.” Plessis and Louis XI.'s patronage were hateful to him who had known Blois and his mother's guardianship; and when after a youth of adventure, intrigue, and imprisonment, he came back to Blois as King, it was with genial words in his mouth in answer to La Tremouille's supplication—“It is not for the King of France to avenge the injuries of the Duke of Orleans.”



STATUE OF LOUIS XII., BLOIS

Blois became the political centre of France. When Louis was not at the wars, he was here with his wife, the good, generous, obstinate, haughty and homely Anne of Brittany. The Scottish royal guard lose importance under them. Anne's Bretons are the favourites now. "They waited for her," says Brantôme, "on that little terrace at Blois, which is still called the Perche aux Bretons. So she herself had called it. When she saw them there, she said, 'Ah, there are my Bretons on the Perch waiting for me.'" King and queen combined to make a lordly pleasure-house, leaving Amboise, the giant toy of Charles VIII., unfinished. Louis carved on the walls the porcupine, the emblem of his house, and Anne the ermine and the *cordelière*. Anne's ermine was the symbol of purity—its motto, *Malo mori quam foedari*. The *cordelière* was an old symbol of widowhood, which she revived after the death of her first husband, Charles VIII.

Anne is the first of the great women of the French Renaissance. Far less brilliant than the Valois ladies, she had character and spirit. If Louis's wars pinched his generosity, Anne made up for it. She was the Lady Bountiful, whom all looked to for largesse and reward. She was a stickler for her rights, uncommonly obstinate, and with the Celt's long memory for injury. "We can find no fault with this Queen," says Brantôme, "save only love of vengeance—if it be one, since it is so pleasant and sweet." She was the first to have a great train of ladies at her court, a homelier, far austerer train than those that followed. Nothing of the "flying squadron" about Anne's good dames. She demanded virtues and stateliness from them rather than brilliance. She kept them in good order—and they all wept sore when she died.

With none of the genius of his father, Louis XII., nevertheless, inherited his intellectual tastes and his love of the arts. His court was a nest of singing-birds, too, only the birds sang less sweetly and ingeniously; and the centre of it was not a poet but a captain, who



looked to the Muses to adorn his leisure. But his love of learning was proved in the Edict sent out from Blois, assuring the liberty of the press. All persons engaged in selling, binding, illuminating, or writing books, were to be free from taxes, and the books were to have free circulation, "in consideration of the great benefit which has come to our kingdom though the art and science of printing, the invention of which seems rather divine than human."

Here at Blois were born his daughters Renée, the famous and unhappy Duchess of Ferrara, the friend of Marot and Calvin and all the Reformers, and Claude, the wife of Francis I. With the death of Anne ends Louis's life at Blois. He had not much longer to live; and that little was spent in trying to satisfy the whims and caprices of his young and lively new wife, Mary of England. The poor old bonhomme died of his efforts to be youthful. And François, Comte d'Angoulême, reigned in his stead.

Francis I. came to Blois as everywhere with a dash and a flourish, but Blois was not enough for him. Amboise, his childhood's home, was now but a place of call. Fontainebleau and Chambord he had to call into being; and had not Claude, his gentle wife, the good Blésoise, loved Blois best, he might have abandoned it entirely. Hers is the pierced swan emblem on the walls. For her it was he built the south wing, a great and splendid, and not a little exotic, addition to the neo-gothic of Louis XII. For her was built the marvellous open staircase with its exquisite plan and its gracious statues. Doubtless, he would have reconstructed the whole in a similar style, had not his restless ambition called him elsewhere. But he had stayed long enough to give the salamander prominence at Blois. The salamander with its device, *Nutrisco et extinguo*, had been the symbol of his father, Charles, Count of Angoulême.

With his son Henry II. something sinister and morbid comes into the history of the place. The mingled brilliance and simplicity of the Orleans house had made its glory. There is a lurid splendour

about the Blois of the later Valois days. Catherine de Medicis is here, biding her time ; or, after her husband's death, tasting of the sweets of power—the strange white-faced woman, “diable et ange,” humble and meek with her father-in-law and husband, meek even with the reigning Diane de Poitiers, but learning the game of power and all its moves ; loving her children as a bear loves its cubs, but husband, favourites, children, all but pawns in her game. “Elle enfanta trois roys et cinq guerres civiles,” was said of her. She made Blois splendid. Good old Anne de Bretagne's court of ladies pales before hers. Three hundred of them there are, journeying where she journeys, chosen for their power to shine, reprimanded even when they did not shine, for the honour of the court. Virtue was not the first quality asked. The pale-faced woman was no wet blanket. None knew better the aid that luxury and pleasure gives to absolutism. In feasts and balls and ballets she presided or led. A genuine woman of the Italian Renaissance in her universality, student and statesman, she was bold huntress as well—though Brantôme hints that her early enthusiasm for the chase rose from the opportunity it gave her of hearing the king's secrets, while riding by his side. She was grave and austere when it was politic, yet next moment “laughing her fill like another, for she laughed gladly. Moreover she was jovial by nature, and loved jest and repartee ; and well did she know how to sting in a light word, and how to launch a straight reproof.” But laughing her fill, she was dangerous. “When she called someone ‘my friend,’ it was because she deemed him a fool, or because she was angry.” Escaping from the great halls of Blois, she withdraws to the terrace looking down over the town. She paces to and fro, her brain in a tumult, thinking out the moves in the game. The future is dark. But up there in the little tower on the terrace, looking over river and roofs and St. Laumer's towers—the Tour de Foix. it stands still—Ruggieri is waiting for her. He has read the stars, and he will make their meaning clear.

The new young Queen of France is at Blois ; and all the court is in love with her, with her alabaster brow and her gold hair, "a little knot of which would subjugate an army," her witty eyes, her white hands, her subtle tongue, her girlish grace, and her mind's maturity. Her uncles, the Guises, flatter while they use her. Also "elle se mesloit d'estre poëte," and she is the centre of the intellectual life of the court. Mere courtiers have a grievance. They can hardly get near enough to the star, with these usurping poets about—M. de Ronsard, M. du Bellay, and M. de Maisonneuve. Brantôme, the court Boswell, shows her retiring from the gay throng into her study to write, coming out again quickly, to show her verses to the elect. When her pitiful little husband died, she made a pretty and touching lament, "En rien n'ay plaisir, qu'en regret et désir." The world seemed at an end for her, who was to have so many other adventures. Her Francis is always in her mind.

" En labeur, en recoy [repos]  
Toujours est près de moy."

Ronsard himself knew other emotions at Blois besides his devotion to Mary Stuart. Cassandra, his first love, he met and wooed near by, on the banks of the Loir.

Intrigue and corruption, art and wit, scholarship and beauty, gossip and debauch, stateliness and mad folly, are all seething in the Valois court at Blois. The only thing that seems completely absent is stupidity. It is no stationary court, however, as in the days of Louis XII. They are now off to the Louvre, now to Fontainebleau. But they were here when news came of Renaudie's plot to carry off the young king from the Guises. That was the signal to move on to the solidier Amboise. "Blois est une salle a quatre entrées. Amboise est un sac." And so down the river to see the new piece produced under the joint stage-managers, Catherine and the Guises—"The Tumult of Amboise."

The demon of hatred is loose, and France a prey to strife for many years to come. To the little pathetic weakling, Francis II. succeeds the mad, tragic Charles IX. But the Count gives pleasant Blois not a few chances of diverting itself from public horrors, by rumours of the great chateau *fêtes*. Grave figures look on sometimes. Jeanne d' Albret is there, negotiating the marriage of her son with the Princess Marguerite de Valois. "La plus maudite et corrompue compagnie qui fust jamais." So the austere woman writes of it to Henry. Perhaps the genial Béarnais judged of it more leniently when he came to Blois to sign his contract of marriage with the brilliant charmer who was to be called la Reine Margot—though his heart was otherwise engaged. Mary Stuart gone to Scotland, with the title of Duchess of Touraine, Margot is now the star. Brantôme becomes lyrical when he tells of her. "To give pleasure to the people of France and gain their goodwill, you had only to give them often enough a chance of seeing Queen Marguerite, and they would be full of pleasure and joy in the contemplation of so divine a face, which she seldom veiled with a mask after the fashion of the other court ladies. For the most part she went with face unveiled and her throat too, which was, as it were, the death of some and the life of others. And one Palm Sunday at Blois . . . I saw her in the procession, fairer than anything else in the world. . . . She was very superbly and richly attired, and her lovely pale face, like a lily in its great and white serenity, was set off by a headdress of large pearls . . . and diamonds in form of stars—so that it might be said the natural face and this artifice contended with the heavens on a starry night. Her fine body was decked with a robe of cloth of gold [a gift from the Grand Turk]. . . . And she wore it all that day, though it weighed a great deal. . . . In the procession, walking in the great place allotted to her, she seemed still fairer, carrying her palm in her hand . . . with a royal majesty, with a grace half haughty, half gentle, in a fashion different from all the rest. And I swear that in this

procession we lost our devotions, and prayed little for contemplating and admiring this divine princess, who raised us to greater ecstasy than the divine service. Nor did we think to sin thereby ; for by the admiration of a divinity on earth the divinity of heaven, who made it, is not offended." He chronicles another day, too. At the meeting of the States-General at Blois, the king, her brother, made a great speech—a very fine speech, indeed, but its effect was lost on more than three hundred persons, who could not take their eyes and minds off Margot, radiant in orange and black. When the Béarnais took her off to Gascony, they lamented.—“How dark is the court! The lights are out ! ”

There was much chatter of politics among the court ladies. But Catherine and Henry III. disapproved of this, and told them to mind their own business. One of them expressed her opinions boldly about the time of the meeting of the States-General. “Their Majesties,” says Brantôme, “gave her a little reprimand, and told her to mind ‘her household affairs and pray to God.’ She, who was a little too free in speech, replied, ‘In the days when kings, princes and great lords took the Cross and went over the sea, and did wonderful feats of valour in the Holy Land, certainly it was our part to do nothing but watch and pray, make vows and fast, beseeching God to give them a good journey and a safe return. But since we see them to-day doing nothing more than we do, it is lawful for us to speak of what we please. For why should we pray to God for them who are not a whit better than ourselves?’”

The morbid, pietistic, effeminate Henry III. shone in eloquence. The Valois intellect was alive in him, in spite of his degenerate follies. At that meeting of the States-General, in 1576, in the ancient noble hall of Blois, he was king-like, and sincerely concerned about the peace of his realm as well as for his own safety. But the effect he produced was only momentary. They wanted a great captain. They could not see such in the man who, in the same hall,

when the Italian *Gelosi* were playing before him, sat pale and sickly, in woman's dress, décolleté, bedizened, bejewelled. Was he *roy-femme* or *homme-reyne*? they asked, laughing. The great captain they knew, the Duke of Guise, insolent, coolly defiant. All the next twelve years are filled by the easy, audacious opposition of the League and the Guisards. It was in vain that Henry called the States-General once more in 1588 to Blois; in vain he bribed and flattered the deputies; in vain he was eloquent. Guise was there, who did not flatter, or bribe, or beseech, or waste words—because he commanded. “Dressed in a mantle of white satin, ‘la cappe retroussée à la bijarre,’ his eyes pierced all the dense assembly to recognise and distinguish his adherents . . . saying, without speech, ‘I see you.’” The king failed. All the world saw it. The next thing would be his tonsuring by the Duchess of Montpensier's little scissors, and the crowning of Guise.

Henry resolved a clean sweep of the Guises, the Duke, the Cardinal, the Cardinal of Lorraine, the Prince de Joinville, with the Dukes of Nemours and Elbœuf. Lognac, first gentleman of the Chamber, was chosen to carry out the vengeance. The day was December twenty-third. You know the oft-told story, how the forty-five were installed in the King's bed-chamber, how Guise came from his mistress in the town to the Council in the chateau. The gates were shut; he was decoyed by a message from Henry, then seized and stabbed. He dragged himself to the king's bed and died. Before the breath was out of his body the king kicked him, saying: “Good God, how big he is! He seems bigger dead than living!” The Cardinal was seized and killed next day. Both bodies were burnt in the apartment above the Louis XII. staircase, and their ashes thrown into the Loire.

Catherine de Medicis, lying ill at the time, heard the news of the Duke's death from Henry himself. “The thing is well shaped,” she said. “Now make the garment” (“C'est bien coupé, mais il faut à

présent coudre.'") The great old schemer lay helpless, and utterly mistrustful of her son's capacity for making anything out of plots or crimes. She died a fortnight later.

The details of the Guise murder can be found in a score of books. At Blois I wish you the conduct of a resolute and eloquent *gardien* whom I know. The days of the *ancien régime* seem back while he places you to hear his harangue to advantage, the tall behind, the short in front. "Vous qui dominez par la taille," he orders, "mettez-vous là!" Ask no questions. Does an artist in oratory like to be interrupted by mere curiosity? Trust to his dramatic recital. He knows details enough, and will spare you none.

As the court had left Amboise after the massacres, so the gay days of Blois were over after the murder of Guise. Henry IV. came there sometimes; but his seat of government and gallantry is definitely transferred to Paris. The later inhabitants of the chateau were mostly weary prisoners. Marie de Medicis was exiled there by her son Louis XIII. They will show you the window out of which she escaped, by aid of Du Plessis, De Brenne and Cardillac, on to the terrace, and so down to the dark streets of old Blois, across the bridge to the suburb of Vienne, where, at the sign of the Petit Maure, a carriage awaited her to take her to Montrichard. A little later the chateau fell to her other son, that dull plotter, that adventurer without a spark, Gaston, Duke of Orleans. Here he wiled away his boredom—in a dangerous fashion, in building and projects of building. Luckily he did not realise his full architectural dream, which was to knock down the whole of the chateau and rebuild it! He knocked down the west wing. A great part of the old Orleans palace went, with the Perche aux Bretons. Gaston's wing—where now the Blois library is lodged—is out of tune; it is cold and dull compared with the early Renaissance grace of Louis XII.'s part, or the later Renaissance splendour of Francis I's. But if it were

elsewhere, we should call it a very dignified building—and it might have been so much worse! Gaston's daughter, the Grande Mademoiselle, the great spinster *malgré elle*, was often at Blois, stormy, formidable, surprising, and yet dull. Here she quarrelled and argued with her father and her step-mother, and her step-mother boiled over with rage, and Gaston disputed and argued back again. And with all, nothing but dulness! Gaston had ambitions. He thought of the old Duke of Orleans, who had the troubadour court here, the court of scholars and bold hunters. He longed for the like. He founded a library, made collections, invited scholars, went hunting. And his court remained dull and dowdy till the end—and he knew it.

But Gaston at Blois recalls to every one the day when the gallant young Vicomte de Bragelonne rode into the court, and Montalais and Louise de la Vallière looked out. The king is coming. The exile Charles II. is waiting for a word from the Sun King on his passage. The Sun King will see Louise, and Bragelonne's heart go heavy ever after.

The stately life gradually died out of the great old castle, till at last it served as lodging for decayed nobles. Then came the storm of the Revolution. The signs and symbols of royalty were so many that the most hurried marksman could hit and knock something down. Old Louis XII. toppled from his niche. But also there were so many that some escaped to make playthings and targets for the soldiers when the place became a barracks—though their playfulness with the gems of Renaissance carving seems to have been less destructive than the deliberate meddlesomeness of a "practical" municipality, bent on putting this home of old luxury to a useful purpose. In 1841 the Commission of Historic Monuments recommended its restoration, which began four years later, and was continued at intervals. But the final turning out of the military was a slow affair. The soldiers have gone. The tourists have come to admire, or be



outraged by the restored decoration, and go wearily through the less than mediocre collection of pictures in the Musée, awake to interest at the guide's narration of the murder of Guise, and to eager curiosity as he taps the shifting panel of the cupboard, where "Catherine de Medicis kept her poisons." For those who have leave to loiter by themselves, there are days of happy interest, of industry, too, if they be craftsmen, architects, or decorators, for the place is a vast delightful school of design. But alone in the great old palace, with the long echoes, the loiterer is haunted with the vanity of things. All the new gilding on ceiling and doors and walls does not keep the ghosts away. What life to-day fits these halls? The tourists file through them ghost-like. The ghosts possess them.

Here in the Blésois, outside Touraine, I have no call to guide you. The obliging inhabitants will point to you the attractions of the neighbourhood. First of all they will name Chambord. Chambord, rising out of the Sologne plain, is a wonder, indeed, a stupefying wonder of the world, a castle made for armies of giants, and, wanting them, absurd, a dreary, inhuman mockery, a *tour de force* rather than a work of art. Yet a great wonder, and so much a bit of the life and times of the exuberant Francis I. that the historian is even more edified by its examination than the architect. There is Cheverny, with its stately park, its white, cold, dignified chateau looking down a long vista of seven kilometres. There is humbler Beauregard; but you will be lucky if you get in to see its series of historical portraits. There is Menars looking over the Loire, where Madame de Pompadour once queened it. At Bury, across the forest, some old crumbling towers are all that remain of the great place built by Florimond Robertet, who also built the Maison Alluye at Blois. It was in the courtyard of Bury that Robertet set up the mysterious vanished David of Michael Angelo.





CHÂTEAU DE LUYNES

## CHAPTER XIII

### TOURS TO CANDES

*La Grenadière—Luynes—Cinq-Mars—Langeais—S. Patrice—The Crypts  
of La Chapelle—Montsoreau and Bussy d'Amboise—Candes.*

ON the hillside at St. Cyr, before you reach the church, is perched a modest dwelling, hidden from your sight when you are on the levée below. Many a palace might envy the desires it has roused, the rhapsodies it has fired. I cannot bid you enter; for La Grenadière is a private dwelling; but it has not much altered since Balzac minutely described it about three-quarters of a century ago. There Balzac lived in 1831 for a few short months, while he was writing *La Peau de Chagrin*; and the place took such hold of his imagination that his regret for it lasted to the end of his days. It became part of his life and heart. The Loire and the whole landscape from La Grenadière

seemed to him the fairest scene on earth, "as vast as that of the bay of Naples or the lake of Geneva." He wrote a story to use it as a background, a story in which nothing is valuable save the background. Again and again did he try to buy the place. The owners would not sell. When at last they consented, he could not buy it. What is this palace of delight then? Only a little long cottage set on a hillside, with vines about it, and a garden in tiers of terraces. Nothing could be simpler. But Balzac is right. Up there you have the kingdoms of the earth for your portion—if you can see them.

"In no place in the world will you find a dwelling at once so modest and so great; so rich in perfumes, and in points of view. In the heart of Touraine, it is a little Touraine itself. . . . The Loire is at your feet; you dominate it from a terrace thirty fathoms above its capricious waters. In the evening you breathe its airs fresh from the sea, and perfumed on the way by the flowers along its banks. . . . A prince might make it his villa. But of a surety a poet must always make it his dwelling. Two lovers will see in it the sweetest refuge—and it is the home of a good bourgeois of Tours. It has poetry for every kind of imagination—for the humblest and the coldest, as for the most sublime and the most passionate. No one stays there without . . . understanding a whole tranquil life, bereft of ambition, bereft of care."

Poor Balzac! But a poet did live there once, after him, and for longer; and sat under the limes and in the "little wooden summer-house leaning against the neighbouring wall, its posts hidden by jasmine and honeysuckle, vine and clematis." Béranger came here about 1836, with his Judith and the cats. He wrote his cheery songs on the slate table in the arbour overlooking the Loire. But the place would set an alderman making ballads. He was less lyrical about it than Balzac, though he was "heureux de sa bicoque," and took kindly to gardening, ruining himself "planting broomsticks, which would never be trees till he was dead." When he left it for

the Rue Chanoineau in Tours, all his friends cried out. What a setting for a poet! But Béranger, who loved the pavement and human faces better even than planting broomsticks, was happier in the little town house with the narrow court and no view at all. *Ma Biographie* is dated from Tours, 1843. About that time he went back to Paris.

The road to Candes runs all the way by the Loire. A tramway jolts and jangles you—if you have no better means—to the little old town of Luynes, with a stern castle springing up aloft on the rock above.

Here at last is the real mediæval fortress, strong still, habitable, inhabited, and wearing its ancient face, its antique hue. There has been no attempt at adapting it to modern ideas. Hardly has a window been enlarged. No sculptor has been given a foot of surface to play with. Four round peaked towers face you gloomily as you look at it from the vineyards opposite. Surly, forbidding—you feel this is the real thing. Chaumont might look so, had it kept the wing facing the river, had it not decked itself about with trees, and scraped and scrubbed itself as white as last year's villa. Luynes is proud of its scars and its hoary age. What tales of wicked barons with this for their nest to home to after raids on the fertile valleys below, you can weave round it!

Yet its unsmiling face to the foe and the doubtful stranger is something of a mask. It had another face for friends. Climb the long flight of steps from the village, and enter the court. You are in another air, another age. Here on this inner side beauty found its way, and tampered with the sternness, at the time of the late delicate flowering of Gothic in the early sixteenth century. Then light was less perilous; and there was leisure to bethink yourself that a door might have resistance and yet give a chance to a sculptor's chisel. Look over the terrace wall, and realise that while the stern baron was hunting or harrying, or away at the wars, his lady might look

out on a fair kingdom, forgetting, ignoring the gloomy face her castle showed to the world.

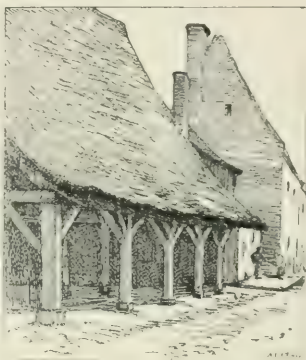
The name of Luynes was given to it late. Its real name is Maillé ; and so it was called till Charles d'Albert got the domain in Louis XIII.'s days, and gave it the name of a little place in Provence with which his family was connected. The barony of Maillé was one of the oldest in Touraine ; the name of the Maillé one of the most illustrious. Gosbert, the first of them, got the place from the Devil of Saumur in the tenth century. All the noble houses were proud to count their alliance. The royal house did not disdain it. Besides many soldiers and councillors, of the family was born a saint—though not at this old castle did the Blessed Jeanne de Maillé first see the light, but at St. Quentin overlooking the Indrois. In time they became Barons of Rochecorbon as well, and viscounts of Tours. They had Montils, too ; but Louis XI. bought that from Hardouin de Maillé, and built Plessis on the site. When Charles d'Albert got the domain, in 1572, Maillé became a duchy, and changed its name. The Duke of Luynes, of the same family, holds it still.

The old open market and the houses with their carved lintels in the little town beneath, keep the memory of the time when it was Maillé. A growing, prosperous place before the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes ; after that it lost spirit. Now rugged and weather-beaten, it makes no hasty strides into the fashion of a new and ugly world. If you linger, Maillé has secrets to give up, old forgotten corners to open, traces of every age. A Roman settlement was Malliacum. Up at St. Venant you see Roman traces, near the little ruined priory that looks down on a superb reach of the Loire. And behind there, in the Valley, about two miles to the north-west, are the remains of the aqueduct of the third or the fourth century. Fifty-three piles still stand, and nine arches—the most considerable of all the Gallo-Roman constructions above ground left in Touraine. They call it *les Arènes* in the neighbourhood ; but as yet no traces have been

found of any amphitheatre. The aqueduct brought water to the monks of St. Venant as late as the thirteenth century. In the old Roman castellum, on the castle site, was built a monastery—St. Gregory knew it—to which came St. Solenne, Bishop of Chartres, to stay for a time. He died there, was buried in the crypt, and forgotten. But his spirit haunted the place, demanding remembrance. Every Sunday night a mysterious light was seen. They dug and found the bones—but could not keep them. Blois took them.

Hardouin, who gave St. Venant to Marmoutier, built a little collegial church on the castle hill. Under the name of the Chapel of the Canonesses, from a later foundation, you find it near the gate of the chateau gardens, broken, desolate, with remains of great beauty, and surely restorable.

Give a little time to Hardouin's priory of St. Venant ere you go. The castle has no such outlook. St. Venant has the site of sites on the Loire between Tours and Candes.



THE MARKET, LUYNES

Some three miles before the towers of Langeais come in sight, the wanderer along the Loire sees a great stalk springing out of the ground, and hopes it may not be a mill-chimney. A nearer view shows it red, quadrangular, isolated, with what looks like sharp-spiked battlements at the top. It has an outlandish look. You ask what it is. Everybody has been doing the same for ages. Archæologists tap it and shake their heads, and read learned papers about it, and people still go on asking what it is. The natives have fewer theories than might be expected. It is the Pile de Cinq-Mars, that is all; and it

is solid through and through. So are the miniature towers on the top that look like spiky battlements. It was a religious edifice, say some. But who built religious edifices of such a pattern? A development of the menhirs, says M. Lièvre. Most likely it marked a boundary. They say there were boundary towers of the kind at Port de Piles on the borders of Touraine. Pass on. There are other things to see at Saint Mars. Note the name: Cinq-Mars is a mere corruption of Sanctus Medardus, St. Médard, to whom the beautiful church in the rather commonplace little town is dedicated. The old black, broken towers on the hill above draw us more than this ancient riddle. At least we know their story. Their mutilation is eloquent of something other than the ruin of age; for they belong to the chateau of the brilliant young Marquis de Cinq-Mars; and when Richelieu took his head, he razed the towers, à hauteur d'infamie, in contempt of his treason.

Up the hill past the *juiverie* you find an entrance to the enclosure, now a fragrant, old-fashioned garden, lying about a long low house, bungalow, or series of cottages, doubtless part of the old communes. The view is superb. Not long ago an illustrious, charming, and quick-eyed personage, rushing by in the train below to Nantes, spied the site and the towers. Next day a man of business came up the hill here and offered to buy site, towers, bungalow, garden and all, at once. Had equal haste been possible on the other side, the illustrious personage on her flights from Paris to Belle-Isle would probably have got no farther than Cinq-Mars.

Two towers have gone. By the courtesy of the owner you may still mount one of the remaining ones, pass vaulted chambers to the top hall open to the sky, sit in the old window-seats, cull the flowers that grow in every cranny, and think of the brilliant and unhappy young nobleman, who took his name from this place, if he was born in another chateau of Touraine. Alfred de Vigny will always be justified in susceptible hearts for the *beau rôle* he has given to



the Marquis de Cinq-Mars. Of whatever hue his treason, he was young and gallant and very beautiful, and he died well. In history he is almost as irresistible as he was in life, when he was given by Richelieu as *joujou* to the melancholy king, when he was the charmer of the whole court, the favourite who became Grand Ecuyer at twenty-one—Monsieur le Grand was the name he went by—beloved of soldiers and all women. Not a very able plotter—and he failed. He chose his accomplices ill, his means ill, his time ill. He was more audacious than astute. He let himself be the scapegoat of the clumsy traitor Gaston, as well as the victim of his own vanity and the ambition of the woman he loved, who cast him off as soon as he dared all to satisfy her and lost. For Marie de Gonzague he rose; and by her he fell—when she made conspiracy the price of her hand. Too much has been said of his ingratitude to the king. Louis XIII., friendless, incapable of making or keeping a friend save by bribery, heaped favours on him. Cinq-Mars, the haughty darling, amused but never flattered. He was giddy; his head swam before the prospect of freedom for France from the cursed yoke of Richelieu, of a great future for himself and Marie—and he fell. But the strain of nobility that showed at his trial and his death, was never altogether absent. A tragic young figure, gifted and beautiful, we see him driven on his fate. Sitting up in his own tower, we feel he would have had high dreams there. When he thought he was making his dreams a reality, he was but a pawn in the hands of vulgar plotters. His vanity was neither mean nor vulgar: it was but the glamour of his own youth and beauty and sudden fortune.

No one misses Langeais, one of the most impressive of the chateaux of Touraine. The completest of all the *châteaux forts*, it is in splendid preservation, thanks to a restoration as skilful as it was thorough. Withal, it is a museum of priceless treasures of the Italian and the French Renaissance, collected by the chatelain and restorer, M. Siegfried. M. Siegfried has given Langeais and all its treasures

as a gift to the Institute of France, though that dignified and learned body do not come into actual possession during the life-time of the donor. Meanwhile bands of visitors are led round it daily ; and they regard it with particular satisfaction as the best show-place in Touraine. It is all there, and there are no cold empty halls.

The one thing wanting to Langeais is a fine site. It is dumped down in the town, on a higher level than the water certainly ; but the houses crowd round it, hiding too much of it from the river side, from all sides. You have to be right under its great solid towers, near the chief entrance, to feel its strength. If it were on the level of Luynes, nay, on the level of the earlier fortress behind it, it would have ten times its majesty. But Plessis reminds us that Louis XI. did not build his chateaux on hill-tops ; and this one was raised to his order.

The earliest recorded builder at Langeais is St. Martin. But by that time the place was old enough to be a noted centre of Paganism ; and he never rested till he had knocked down the heathen temple, and built on its site a church in honour of St. John the Baptist. There are traces of it still in the present church, lately so mutilated by the restorers. The place grew rapidly after St. Martin's foundation ; and till Charlemagne's centralising policy docked it of its rights, coined its own money. To be master of the road from Tours to Angers Fulk Nerra built a donjon here, on the site of a Roman camp, at the point of a triangular hill above the Loire, backed by the little river Roumer. The ivy-clad fragments that remain behind the present chateau are still imposing. Langeais' donjon disputes with Preuilly the honour of being the most ancient in the province. It was wrested from Fulk by Odo, who felt thereupon he had done something so conclusive that he might retire from the world, which he accordingly did at Marmoutier.

Its recorded history is definite and dull till the English settled down there during the Hundred Years' War, with more than their

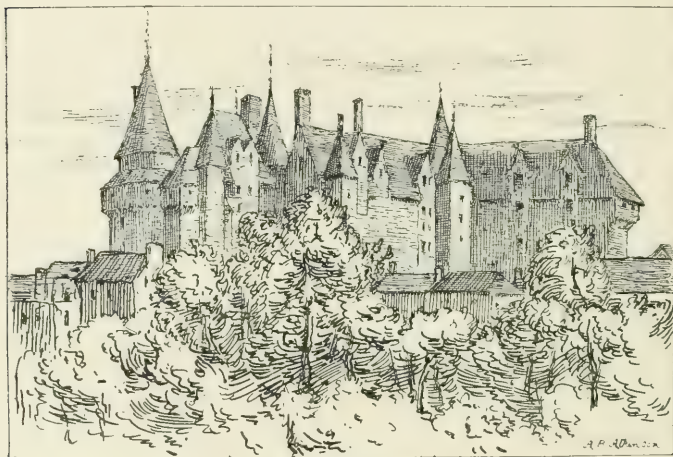
natural obstinacy. Du Guesclin rushed over from Saumur to dislodge them. But they came back. By the Treaty of Bretigny they had to evacuate the place. But again they came back and made it their headquarters for harrying the whole country round. More than once they were bribed to go ere they took their final leave.

Louis XI. built the present chateau, begun in 1464; and appointed Jean Bourré, his treasurer and the tutor of his son, its captain. Indeed, Bourré made the plan of it, and watched it rising. Great architect as well as financier, he built other places of the kind for the king, and had a hand in the enlargement of Amboise. Bourré's ideal was a military one, and Langeais seems to belong to an earlier time than the latter part of the fifteenth century. Majestic, finely proportioned—in plan at least; it was never finished—it is clearly meant for serious defence, as conceived by a suspicious monarch; and on the outer side gives no hint that the age of beauty and light had already dawned when it was called into being.

Bourré in time yielded to Dunois—the son of the great captain; Dunois to Bourbon, without adding any striking page to the annals of Langeais. In truth the annals of Langeais, after the Hundred Years' War, are extremely dull. They have but one romantic chapter, when young Anne of Brittany—she was fifteen—scorning emperors not of her choice, invited young King Charles VIII. here to marry her. It was a kind of elopement carried out with propriety and some state. And married they were in the great hall at Langeais; and Louis d'Orleans looked on. The romantic will have it that he loved her from that day. If so, then fortune was kind in making his future marriage with her so admirably prudent and advantageous.

Archæologists fill tomes with its later history without naming a single event that the imagination can seize on. Notable and romantic personages, however, now and then glide across the scene, like ghosts—stern, harried Reformers lurking among the caverns by the Loire, or lifting their voices in protest and supplication in a

conventicle, when Langeais became for a moment an isle of refuge amidst a wild sea of persecution ; Marie Touchet, a daughter of the place, the amiable mistress that soothed some hours of poor distracted Charles IX. ; and the beautiful and tragic Cinq-Mars. And now the castle, strong and stern as in its prime, has a safe destiny for ages to come, as an architectural specimen, to house a precious museum.



CHÂTEAU DE LANGEAIS

Langeais town is bright, cheerful, commonplace, and proud of the antique castle it has been out of its power to destroy. It is not overflowing with sentiment ; and has made a clean sweep of most of its old corners. But it has learnt the value of great names and associations ; and one house, just under the chateau, it has labelled *la maison de Rabelais*—which has inspired Mr. Cook to an interesting imaginative picture of the great humanist and humorist enlivening his patrons, the Du Bellays, in the halls of the castle, with his wit and his mellow





FOUGÈRES-SUR-BIÈVRE.

philosophy. But alas! the Du Bellays never owned this Langeais. In their household of another Langey, far away in Eure-et-Loire, Rabelais had his place. The little town on the Loire, however, may think, if it pleases, that so good a Tourangeau once trod its streets—since the site of his Thelema is not far eastwards, and since he makes pleasant reference to the fat pasture-lands of Bréhémont across the river.

The summer sun sparkles on the white villas and villages hanging on the cliff of the north bank of the Loire. Standing on Langeais's great bridge, a glimpse of Italy and the south is flashed to you ere you return to the Angers road that lies beneath them. Now we are at St. Patrice. It is midsummer; and alas! we cannot see manifest the truth of the pretty legend of the place. St. Patrick, hearing of St. Martin's fame, came from Ireland to sit at his feet and drink in his virtue. On his way along the Loire, one winter day, he stopped here to rest; and being worn out, he lay down to sleep under a black-thorn tree, though the snow was on the ground. The tree was blessed forthwith, and blossomed while he slept. Since then the black-thorns of St. Patrice have always bloomed in mid-winter. Transplant them elsewhere, and they wait for the call of spring.

Legend meets us again at la Chapelle-sur-Loire, and a very favourite one, which always made the most popular scene of the miracle plays written round the life of the Blessed Martin. When the body of the saint was brought back from Auxerre, in 884, after the invasion of the Northmen, the procession came along this route. There were miracles all the way. The flowers burst into bloom, though the month was December; and the candles on the altars into flame. The church bells were set a-ringing by no human hands; and sick folks got their health again at his passing. But the healing of the halt and the blind struck alarm into two cripples, whose misfortunes had proved a source of much profit to them. Be cured, and have their living taken away? Never! So they hobbled on their

crutches as fast as ever they could, bent on getting outside Touraine, the good Martin's diocese. But here the virtue of the saint overtook them; nor would it be gainsaid; and cured them in spite of themselves. So a chapel in honour of the Translation of St. Martin, was built; and it gave a name to the village that rose round about it.

At Port Boulet two branch railways cut the line from Tours to Nantes, the north one to Château-la-Vallière, the south through the Véron to Chinon. But our road lies onward to the boundary of the department. We strike it about four kilometres beyond Chouzé, where a narrow road runs south to the Loire—which we had left for a time. Follow it to the little wood that lines the river. The Loire has just been swelled by the Vienne, whose darker waters are still distinguishable on the other side. While you wait for the ferry, you are facing a great massive block rising from the water. That is the old chateau of Montsoreau, the key of Anjou. The ferryman will land you just under it. Hiding its tattered beauty on the inner side, it shows here a surly bulk that once was strength. It fain would threaten still the passers-by on the road to Saumur. One day it may fall on them. Perhaps it resents being used as a store for the good vintage of the hillsides behind. An adventurous person has dared its tottering staircase, and sought a lodging half-way up its height. To make a home in the midst of desolation, he has set a pot of flowering pinks in the unglazed window. There are places that would smile on such attentions in their broken old age. But Montsoreau looks grimly ashamed. "A pot of pinks! It was another *panache* I wore!" The castle was built by that black harrier of the Protestants, Jean de Chambes, made governor of Saumur in 1572. He not only persecuted furiously, but he assassinated the heretics with his own hand, and gloated in the deed. As reward, he was made Baron and Count of Montsoreau. He died in 1576. His heir was his brother Charles, Chamberlain of the Duke of Anjou, and Grand Veneur, the sinister villain of Dumas's novel, the gloomy husband of Françoise



de Maridor—not Diane, as in the tale. Françoise was a widow when he married her. Her new husband was far from agreeable; how detestable, we can imagine from her preference for Bussy d'Amboise; for Bussy least of all the heroes of romance can stand the light of sober day upon his actions.

Louis de Clermont, known as Bussy d'Amboise, was made governor of Anjou in 1576. He had always been a bravo; now he was brigand as well; and his men, called *malcontents*, were frankly cut-throats. He first saw Françoise in 1578, when he went with his master Anjou to La Coutancière, the Montsoreaus' little chateau near Bourgueil. (The pious Bussy was "abbé commendataire" of Bourgueil, by the way!) While in Paris, Montsoreau heard of Bussy having boasted of seducing his wife. Secretly he hurried back; forced his wife—pointing a pistol at her throat—to give her lover a rendezvous at La Coutancière, on the night of 19th August, 1579. Bussy came unsuspecting; and was set on by a band of ten armed men. He defended himself valiantly and long, dealing deadly blows with chairs and tables; and he contrived to get out of the window; but he was struck down outside. The Count had been looking on from a safe distance meanwhile. Montsoreau lived happily ever after with his wife, lived to be a particularly venerable-looking old man! Have I spoiled an excellent romance? But the facts are no less extraordinary.

From Montsoreau Cross the road runs south to Fontevrault, where the tombs of the Plantagenets, Henry II., Eleanor, Cœur de Lion, and Isabelle, John's wife, lie in a corner of the vast abbey church, inside the gloomy prison precincts.

There is hardly a division between the weather-beaten town of Montsoreau lying along the left bank of the Loire and the village of Candes, which nestles below the hill at the meeting of the Loire and the Vienne. A little hoary place is Candes, consisting of one street, a great church, and the remains of a castle. There are labyrinthine

passages in the ridge above, which hide away rock-dwellings of all the ages. Here in this one, tomb-like save for the gay tufts of greenery on the top, you hear the cry of a new-born babe. In the dim recesses of the next, by the light of a torch, the primitive wine-press is squeezing the juice of the good grapes of the plain above. From the self-same dwellings the folk flocked down at the coming of St. Martin, and stood about the river banks when they heard his blessed soul had departed.

At the end of the fourth century there was a little colony of monks from Marmoutier, planted here by St. Martin. He came to see them often. He came here at the end to make peace among them. Here he received the signal of death, and amid his brethren weeping for their shepherd, he passed away. At the news of his passing, Poitevin brothers came and watched too, conceiving a pious plot amid their sorrow, to carry off—to carry home, they called it—the holy man who had grown to sanctity under their St. Hilary. But they slept while the Tourangeaux waked; and out of the little cell the body was taken furtively, by night, through a window, down to the Vienne. When the boat with its holy freight reached the Loire, hymns of triumph broke forth, and the singing monks rowed it down to Tours. The Poitevins awoke and wrung their hands.

The little cell is a chapel now, covered by the great collegial church of Candés. Above it piety soon built a temple to his honour, served by his monks till the ninth century, when they were replaced by a college of canons. In eight centuries it crumbled, and the present church was built. Of the four most remarkable existing religious edifices of Touraine, St. Gatien and St. Julien of Tours, the Abbey Church of Preuilly, and St. Martin of Candés, this last is the most curious, and bears the stamp of its history most directly on its face. It rises startlingly out of the midst of the little village, this great crenelated place, with the rich sculptured front—fortress as much as temple. These battlements meant serious business.



Usine aux Ners-Tours.



Consider its site, on the frontier of the province. The battlements were manned by the canons, or their fighting men. It was not only the precious treasures within they had to guard—greatest treasure of all the *ampoule* bequeathed by St. Martin, containing the blood of St. Maurice and the Thebean martyrs, gathered by him as it flowed miraculously among the grass at Agaunum, while he knelt there in



CANDES

reverence. It had to guard the little bourg as well. The church is very vast for such a little place, so planned not only for pilgrims at St. Martin's feasts, but for the folk of Candes to flock into, while the enemy burnt and harried all round. Inside, the place is, indeed, like a great refuge. Built at the transition period, in the form of a Latin cross, the apse is Romano-Byzantine, the naves are early Gothic, with some round windows that testify to the persistence of the Byzantine style. It was restored some sixty years ago, but you would hardly guess it. It is empty, poverty-stricken, and austere beautiful. The

white-wash is crumbling; the keen winter winds whistle through gaping doors. The furnishing is of the cheapest. But the lofty spacious place is a house of refuge and prayer.

The façade below the battlements was once a great carved picture-book, with saints and kings and queens and animals and flowers and fantasies. The saints have toppled from their niches, and there are many lost and ruined pages, but the remnants are still a delight. The best of them are inside the beautiful porch, which feigns to be supported by one slender column like a palm stem. Here are portrait heads and vivid groups made in the thirteenth century, so full of grace and expression, that after having seen them, the work of Michel Colombe and his fellows seems the most natural development.

To see Candes in its setting, mount the hill, and look down from the terrace of the newer chateau, or from the old disused windmill. See the Vienne enter the Loire. The islands of the Loire are fairy. On the right bank, round Varennes, the rich autumn woodland fades into an entrancing blue distance. Below in the Vienne is the bosky Ile Boiret. The banks are gold-fringed with yellow poplars, and across the water, in the tongue of land between the rivers, are the soft green pastures of the Veron. Mellow and vast the landscape lies below you, a wide tremulous dreamland.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE CHER

*Grammont—Scots at St. Avertin—Larçay—Paul-Louis Courier and Vêretz—  
Gabrielle d'Estrées—Bléré—CHENONCEAUX—The Marques and the Bobiers—  
Diane de Poitiers—Catherine de Medicis—Rousseau and the Dupins—Later  
History—Notre Dame de Nanteuil—Montrichard—Ballan—Villandry—Lignéres.*

THE Cher is a river made for pastorals—open, quiet, pleasant. The Abbé de Rancé wandering about the banks near Vêretz, seeking peace for his soul, in that troubled time between his splendid coloured life in the world and the shadowy retreat of La Trappe, spoke of Heaven one day to a shepherd as they both sheltered under a tree during a storm. The shepherd was entirely unresponsive to the abbé's conception of another world. Heaven? He did not want it, unless it was a place of green fields like this, and unless he could take his sheep every day down to the waters. In the Cher valley you feel yourself off the highways, and its stories are mostly of the by-paths—of villagers, hermits, shepherds, queens in retreat, beautiful ladies drawing the great ones away from councils and camps, salons in the woods, philosophers making worlds anew after the pattern of a smiling, placid valley.

The great artery of Tours, the Rue Nationale, becomes the Avenue de Grammont, which leads across the Cher. Where the road divides to east and west, stands Grammont on the wooded hillside, a modern house on the site of Bois-Rahier, a priory of the Order of Grandmont, founded by Henry II. in 1177, one of several he built in Touraine, to expiate the murder of Becket. They prayed



gratefully for Henry's soul here, and history tells little more of the *bonshommes* till their suppression. Becket's memory is better commemorated in the next commune. Avertin, a Scot of the archbishop's household, came here and lived in the woods of Cangé. A holy man of meditation, he hid himself not too closely, and all the folk about, especially those of Vençay, came to him for consolation and healing. His fame spread, and when he died they beatified him. The village dropped its old name, and became St. Avertin, a stirring place—half its houses hostelries for pilgrims. The old church, St. Pierre de Vençay, which contained the good saint's bones, has vanished. The present one, a fine specimen of fifteenth-century Gothic, was probably built by Sir John Coningham (Coningham), captain of the Scots Guard of Louis XI. and his son. Coningham rebuilt the chateau of Cangé up here on the hill, and his family held it for two centuries. Now at St. Avertin the Tours bourgeois build their summer villas, or the tramway brings them out to spend long placid days fishing in the quiet river. Do not expect a Tourangeau to be grandiloquent about his love of nature; but give him a day of leisure, a river, a rod, and for height of luxury an old boat, and the kings of the earth might envy him.

The ridges above this less open portion of the Cher teem with an old, old history that sometimes comes to the surface. The plateau commanding the valleys of Loire and Cher was of great strategic importance; and the banks of the Cher were dotted with sumptuous Gallo-Roman houses. To protect them the *castellum* of Larçay was thrown up in the fifth century. No sincere antiquarian will miss this curious, hastily-built refuge from the barbarians, partly made out of the materials of ruined villas. But in Touraine, ancient and modern are constantly contrasting and clashing. On the south side of Larçay lies the forest; and in the midst of it a spot to which some pilgrims have gone, who care little for old broken towers, and are dead to the fascination of *petit appareil*. A grateful commune erected a





PASTORAL ON THE CHIER



monument to the memory of Paul-Louis Courier, murdered here in 1825. His name is anathema to the sentimental enthusiast for royal chateaux. Did he not bless the vandalism of the *bande noire*, who exploited them after the Revolution, and razed them without ruth? Did he not speak of Chambord as a colossal monument of shame? But we are not so devoted to the *ancien régime* as to pass Paul-Louis with a hasty shudder. In his own way he is as much one of the glories of Touraine as is Chenonceaux. Pass on to the village of Véretz, and rest awhile, and refresh our memory of this strange, uneasy, and most striking personality.

Paul-Louis Courier, *vigneron*—so he styled himself; and so, indeed, he was for the last and best-known years of his life. He lived at La Chavonnière, a little manor high up, off the main road, between Véretz and Azay-sur-Cher, two humble names he made ring throughout France. There he worked among his vines, and went to market, and hobnobbed with the village folk and the curé of Véretz, and anathematized the curé of Azay, and rated the peasants who stole his wood, and the labourers who gave him less labour than his due, and was the good and very irascible friend of all the "little folk" of the neighbourhood. It was a friendship perhaps intellectually conceived, but quite sincere. To him they were the only people worth considering, the makers of France. The good folks of Véretz did not know that to the *bonhomme* Courier, as they called him, whom they saw daily in blouse and sabots, his vineyards were dear, partly as a contrast to his loathed military life under the Empire; did not guess him to be one of the finest Hellenists of his day; and were probably far from appreciating the fine artistry of his famous pamphlets, of which they and their grievances were the illustrations. But when he went to prison for three months because of his *Simple Discours*—on the occasion of the subscription for the acquisition of Chambord for the infant Duke of Bordeaux in 1821—though it was ostensibly for plain speaking on the origin of noble families, they knew that in

reality it was for them. They did not need to wait for his "Pétition à la Chambre des Députés pour des Villageois que l'on empêche de danser." It was not at Véretz he began his pamphleteering. "Je suis Tourangeau ; j'habite Luynes"—that was the first notice France received that a new voice had learnt to speak for village folks against tyrannical curés and mayors and gendarmes. But from Véretz were dated most of the letters and pamphlets which made him spokesman of the anti-reaction, and a French classic. When he was found murdered in the woods of Larçay there was much talk of reactionist plots. The crime, long mysterious, was definitely traced at last to a *garde*, instigated by two labourers. And the world laughed at Paul-Louis, advocate of the *petites-gens*, murdered by his friends! His temper was rasping ; he was a man to make many enemies. But the mockers had not the last word. For long, every year on his *fête* the village girls of Véretz, decked with garlands, danced in Larçay woods, in honour of him who vindicated their right to dance, in their own Place, in their own way. For the rest, do any other pamphlets remain so readable? Were ever any written with such artistic simplicity? Very conscious art his. He chiselled, he filed his indignant words—and the world laughs at indignation which is not rough and extempore. Lovers of good letters will not laugh, but will greet the artist-champion of the peasants as they pass along the Cher.

The chateau of Véretz does not hold the traveller long now. Old famous memories cling about it. The Courtenays had it, and the Estoutevilles. The Abbé de Rancé lived here in his gay days and his days of penance. The beautiful old castle that supplanted the primitive château-fort was rebuilt in the eighteenth century, when the Duc d'Aiguillon was exiled here. His had a short life, for the Revolution almost demolished it. Nearly opposite, much mutilated, stands La Bourdaisière in its park, an old place of the heroic Boucicauts, transformed into a great pleasure-house by Philibert Babou, treasurer





CHENONCEAU FROM THE GARDENS.

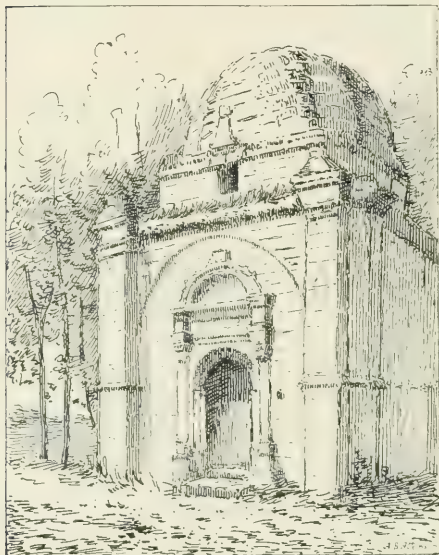
of Francis I. Francis owed him much, and favours more delicate than the care of his finances. The Babou ladies were very fair, and very complacent to royalty. Philibert's grand-daughter Françoise married Antoine d'Estrées, Marquis de Cœuvres, in Picardy; and their daughter, born here at La Bourdaisière, very nearly sat on the throne of France. The fickle Henry IV. was more faithfully attached to the lovely Gabrielle d'Estrées than to any of his other *mies*, and waited only the divorce from "Margot" to set her beside him on the throne. But Gabrielle died, and Marie de Medicis reigned in her stead. The ridiculous Chinese pagoda of Chanteloup becomes a greater irritation when one learns that the Duc de Choiseul made it out of the stones of a large portion of La Bourdaisière, which he pulled down wantonly.

To the south, between the Cher and the Indre lies the long, dull, monotonous plateau, the Champagne, midst of it the once formidable Tour des Brandons, which the Black Falcon used to command this upland plain, if he did not build it.

Across the river, on the right bank, is St. Martin le Beau, on the borders of Amboise forest, with memories of flying routed Northmen, and again of Thibaut's fugitives, pursued by Geoffrey Martel from Montlouis, the great slashed banner of St. Martin both times bringing victory to its bearers. Perhaps nothing remains of the first church founded in honour of the strong protective saint. But its early successor is there, and its carved doorway is one of the beauties of the countryside.

On to Bléré, a shabby neglected little town on the Cher. Round the wharves by the new bridge there are signs of life and prosperity; but the inside of the town seems falling to pieces, not at all in a discontented fashion, however. A place of past splendour and of make-shifts: witness its church, a puzzle to the student, till he learns that it is really made out of two parallel churches, with a third nave thrust between them in the fifteenth century, and with several chapels added

besides. For all its muddled plan, the place arrests you by some details of interest—crisp and vigorous grotesques; a centaur with wings, beasts biting men, devils and an ape bearing away a miser with his money-bags to hell.



CHAPELLE DE SEIGNE, BLÉRÉ

But the pride of Bléré is—or should be—the little chapel built on the grassy market-place on the outskirts. Debased Gothic mixed with Renaissance, but a gem, nevertheless, finely proportioned, exquisite, unique. Bléré points it out, and nonchalantly watches it crumbling to pieces. For forty years at least its praises have been sung by artists and antiquarians; and each has groaned to each over the deplorable

neglect of it. It was a memorial chapel, built in 1526 in honour of Guillaume de Seigne, paymaster-general of the artillery under Francis I., by his son Jean de Seigne, Lord of Bois Pâtaud and of Bois-Ramé. The old fief of Bois-Ramé you may still see in the town, in a dilapidated court-yard with an entrance from the *mail*. Bléré is shabby; and not very picturesquely shabby; but it has an amiable air, and we would gladly linger at the Cheval Blanc were it



not that the dull Champagne country comes up here too near the river.

But Bléré would wonder if you lingered when Chenonceaux was near, the pride of the Cher. The right bank road leads to the hamlet of the name. The chateau—the charmer—lies hid among the trees. We hasten now, but some day we promise to turn aside to the neighbouring village of Civray-sur-Cher, to see the old glass in the church, and to do honour to a former curé, the very learned, very genial lover of his province, Monseigneur Chevalier. Historian in special of Chenonceaux, he knew all Touraine as antiquary, as man of science, as connoisseur, as lover of nature. All who tell the story of the fair province are his grateful debtors.

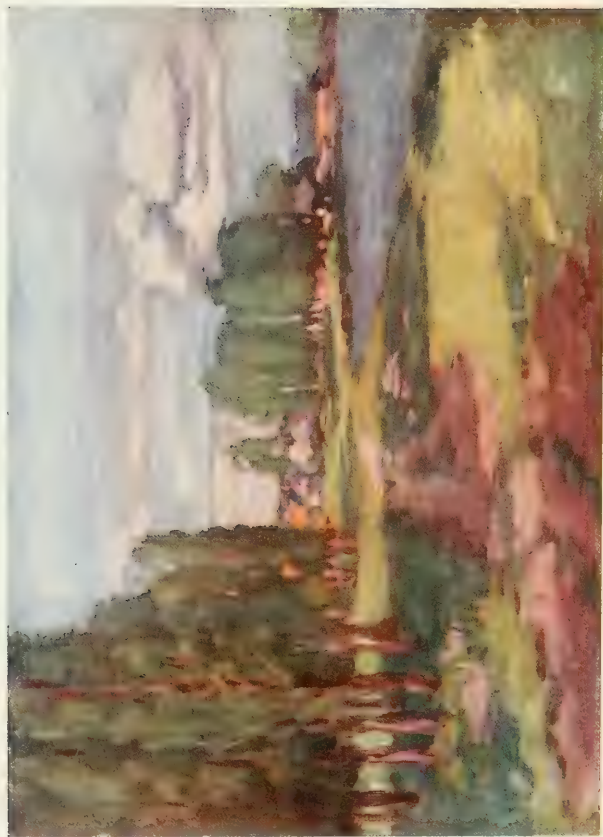
It was a silver-grey morning when we first saw Chenonceaux ; and silvery mornings are its own weather. Never had we seen so still a place—till the hour came when the motors puffed up from Tours. A labourer passed the *Bon Laboureur* now and then, almost stealthily, on his way to the vines—no one else. We might not come near the charmer till ten ; so we wandered through the meadows to the Cher. The hillside behind us, the willows by the ditches, the thin wheat, all were silver-hued. We walked on flowers. Over the water-boundary lay the park, a deep leafy shade. Cows were feeding on the edge, the cowherd asleep. All the little hamlets in sight were wrapt in the same enchanted sleep. Only the birds were awake, to sing of the silence. Quiet, untroubled, the Cher passed by, here and there a group of thin poplars or acacias rising from its banks. It is a landscape made of little, but with the economy and grace which make art.

Back through the meadows to the gate, where we are admitted by a surly Cerberus. The surliness is fitting ; the charmer must be hedged in by grim guardians. Up the long stately arched avenue—and she appears. Not in her full charm yet, but at a first glance imposing, interesting, original. Past the old Tour des Marques, across the drawbridge, we enter by the exquisite door of Francis I.'s

time ; we wander about, under guidance, stopping to mark the fine carvings with the Bohier motto or royal symbols. It is no great museum like Langeais. Indeed, it is somewhat meagrely furnished with beautiful things—outside Catherine de Medicis' room with its painted ceiling and its wonderful Beauvais tapestries of varied blues. There are, besides, some Flemish tapestry, a few pictures, interesting historically only, an indifferent copy of the portrait of Catherine in the Louvre, a portrait of Diane de Poitiers as huntress. Up the great staircase, about the first in France where the winding circular pattern was abandoned for the Italian form ; down through all the show-rooms, a little disconsolately, into the *soubassements*, where the kitchen, the cellars, and the "Queen's Baths" rest on the rock in the river. For Chenonceaux, rarely lived in, is melancholy, seen from the inside. It has not the chill but genuine interest of a museum, nor the warmth of living, nor the bare freedom of an empty shell. The famous gallery is very desolate, regarded as a gallery. Look on it as a bridge, then first of all, from the windows, you realise the wonder of this place built upon the waters.

Chenonceaux is capricious ; it has its moments of revelation and of sullenness. Decipher its history first, in quiet leisure, and the siren will startle you and captivate you ere long. Sit on the green banks of the Cher then, and hear its tale. The Romans, those connoisseurs in fair sites, built a villa here ; and in course of time a strong fortress arose, a fief of the barony of Amboise. By the thirteenth century the Marques were lords of Chenonceaux. They held it long, but not undisturbedly. About 1360 it was seized by some disbanded adventurers of the Black Prince, and only released from these bravos by Du Guesclin. But when, under Charles VI., Jean Marques delivered up his fortresses to the English, the great Jehan de Boucicaut burnt and razed Chenonceaux to the ground. The next Jean de Marques bought back the royal favour by his devoted loyalty ; and Charles VII. gave him leave to build his chateau once again.





EVENING ON THE CHER.

The Tour des Marques, where now the concierge lives, is all that remains of it. On piles in the river he built also a fortified mill, which commanded the passage of the Cher. His son was a spend-thrift, or incapable; and the fortunes of the Marques fell low. A watchful eye was on them, that of Thomas Bohier, minister-general of finance—one of those slow, ambitious men, who know what they want and can wait for it. He played with the owner and embarrassed him, till Marques was forced to sell. But there was Guillaume des Marques to count with, and, after his death, his daughter Catherine, persistent persons, who maintained their right to buy it back, according to the old custom of Touraine. Bohier now played the same game with them, reduced them to extremities; and after sixteen years of struggle and chicanery, became undisputed master of Chenonceaux. Accompanied by his friend, Guillaume de Seigne of Bléré (to whom the memorial chapel was dedicated), he entered into possession in 1513.

Thomas Bohier, a rich and able man, made a fortunate marriage with Catherine Briçonnet of a wealthy Tours family, nearly connected with the *haute finance*. Her maternal uncle was Jacques de Beaune Semblançay. Her father, Guillaume Briçonnet, had been finance minister in Languedoc; but after his wife's death he entered the ecclesiastical state, and rose to be Bishop of St. Malo, Bishop of Nîmes, Archbishop of Rheims, Archbishop of Narbonne, and Cardinal, Thomas and Catherine determined to build on the site of the old Marques's fortress a dwelling worthy of their ambitions and their time. They were lovers of art; and Bohier had twice accompanied Charles VIII. to Italy. The Italian campaign of 1515 drew him again to Milan; and it was on Catherine the duty fell of superintending the building, and to a large extent of planning the new chateau. The description of Chenonceaux as a chateau built by women for women is, therefore, not fanciful, but true from the first.

They razed all the Marques fortress and the mill—save one tower. Then with audacious originality they built the new chateau on the piles of the ancient mill, these being driven into the rock of the river bed. "Cette base," says Chevalier, "nous explique la forme singulière du plan, composé de deux massifs puissants avec une arche intermédiaire, où tournait la roue du moulin, et deux avant-becs pour briser l'effort du courant et porter les eaux sous la roue." Bohier stole as many hours as he could from state finance to watch his home growing. He wrote on it his device, excellent device for the man of long projects, the cautious adventurer—*S'IL VIENT A POINT ME SOUVIENDRA*. He was always hoping for happy days when the cares of state should be thrown aside, and he should live here in peace, play the great lord, and cultivate his vines. But the Italian campaign claimed his time, his brains, and his money, which, ill-gotten or well-gotten, he spent generously for the arms of France. He died at Vigelli, near Milan, in 1524, and his wife a year or so later. Their tomb, the work of the Justis, one of the treasures of old St. Saturnin at Tours, was destroyed at the Revolution.

Their son, Antoine Bohier, fell on evil days for rich financiers. Lest he should suffer the penalties which overwhelmed his cousins, the Semblançais and the Ponchers, and to escape being mulcted to fill an empty treasury, he offered Chenonceaux to Francis I.—for a consideration, for a good round sum, in fact, 90,000 livres tournois. Francis, who had hunted in the "beau et plaisant pays" accepted, and gave it into the keeping of Philibert Babou of La Bourdaisière. The court began to come. The splendid days of Chenonceaux were beginning. They were in full swing under the next king's mature but ever-youthful mistress, Diane de Poitiers. Diane was forty-eight now. Her ugly hunchback husband, Louis de Brézé, grand seneschal of Normandy, was dead; her unlucky father, Saint-Vallier, was dead. Nineteen years older than Henry, she had been eleven years his mistress, and was a great personality at court, with a strong political

influence, which went to the support of the Catholic party. By the accession of Henry II. she was virtually queen—and Catherine de Medicis hated and flattered her, and waited. One of the many gifts of Henry to Diane was Chenonceaux ; but lest it should pass from her hands when Henry died, she began, like the excellent woman of business she was, to play the old Bohier game in an aggravated form. She had to prove it was private and not crown property. Antoine Bohier's contract with Francis I. was broken. Antoine was forced to call himself proprietor again. He had to see himself declared a debtor for a large amount to the treasury, and his property sold. There were bidders for the chateau and estate—none of them serious ; and at her leisure Diane stepped in and bought the place for 50,000 livres tournois—which she never paid. Bohier by this tricky process would still have owed 40,000 ; which, to gain his formal consent to her complicated trick, he was told he need not pay.

Chenonceaux was now Diane's indisputably, and she knew what to do with it. She had an ordered taste for splendour, and was extremely economical. All the great artists of the time were at her beck and call. She employed 14,000 labourers daily in the parks and gardens at starvation wages. Monseigneur Chevalier, who has examined all the archives of the place, has found records of many fines levied by Diane, and not a single gift—even in famine times. The Italian gardens of to-day are but a meek modern imitation of her wonders of the kind. Thomas Bohier had meant to connect his chateau with the Francueil side of the Cher by a bridge. Diane carried out the plan, her architect being Philibert de l'Orme. She was an excellent architect herself, as well as a farmer and a financier. Indeed, her power over Henry II. and the whole court was evidently the effect of strong vitality rather than of softness. But Diane fell when Montgomery killed Henry. Catherine had her chance at last ; and for the three reigns of her sons she fought vigorously, and on the whole successfully to maintain her power. In vain had Diane tricked Bohier over

Chenonceaux. The Queen-Mother had her very life in her hands; and when Catherine proposed she should give it up for Chaumont, she felt the menace in the command, yielded, and retired to Anet. Her reign was over.

The Catherine of Chenonceaux is the mistress of merriment, the queen of *fêtes*, lavish, sumptuous, expansive. Debauch to rule: she was a past mistress of the art. Never, perhaps, were so subtly mixed as in her *fêtes* art and debauchery, beauty and folly, stateliness and high spirits. All that was best and worst in France was there—and youth was triumphant. What a background for love-making, for romantic comedy, this castle rising out of the clear water, the Italian gardens, the great circling woods, the soft singing Cher with its flowery banks!

From Amboise reeking of blood the court came in 1560 to Chenonceaux; and Francis II. and Mary Stuart made their triumphal entry. Their sojourn here was their real honeymoon. We make no such *fêtes* to-day. Primaticcio was the designer of the processions, of the statues, of the triumphal arches, of the playing fountains. He it was arranged the coloured lights on the river and the fireworks. By night and day the river and woods were playgrounds for the young queen and her amorous husband, for the band of beauties, Catherine's "flying squadron," each with attendant lords. The poets rhymed, the minstrels sang, the artists dressed the gay company with elaborate care. The most wonderful *fête* of all—in honour of the young Duc d'Alençon's victory of La Charité—was a great orgy in the garden. They banqueted in the garden, the whole court, with Henry III. in the middle, dressed as a woman. The court ladies, wondrously and meagrely attired as men, waited on the guests. Music, feasting, drinking, jests, filled hour after hour. One thing never failed, save perhaps in the king—high spirits. With all the rest it was a superb abandonment!

But Catherine was no less serious than Diane in the extension and



improvement of her domain. It was she built the tiered gallery above the bridge over the water. Her taste was far from infallible : Philibert de l'Orme had meant it to be of only one storey. At the south end—on the left bank—she was to have built a great salon, but her plan was never carried out. Some of her additions did not make for beauty—the apartments, for instance, which she threw out between the chapel and the library. She extended the gardens, her artist-in-chief being the great Bernard Palissy, whose principal care was the park of Francueil. Palissy's plan, a trained wildness, an arranged landscape, may be traced still. Catherine had even bolder dreams for the extension and embellishment of the place, and if she had seen them all fulfilled, Chenonceaux would have been a world-wonder for splendour, and lost its charm. They say she went on adding and adding, haunted by the belief that the day her palace was finished she would die. She died long before her vast projects were carried out, died at Blois miserably, deep in debt.

The *fêtes* are over. Henry III. followed his mother to the grave ; and his widow, Louise de Lorraine, who had not amused him in his life-time, showed a veritable mania for melancholy after his death. Catherine had bequeathed Chenonceaux to her ; and there she wept and prayed for eleven years in an apartment hung with black, painted black, relieved by white tears, white bones, white sextons' spades, and other lugubrious symbols. Sometimes she went to Francueil to church, dressed all in white. It was all that was seen of *la reine blanche*. Catherine's creditors roused her now and then from her mourning, hungry and rapacious. The bailiffs were in Chenonceaux, and hustled the grieving queen—and the debts were never paid till the next owner, the Duchess of Mercœur, sold all Catherine's treasures, even to her wardrobe. Many owners, including César de Vendôme, the Princess Palatine, the Duc de Bourbon, followed ; but none gave back life to it till it was sold in 1733 to Claude Dupin, farmer-general.

The court has gone for ever. The age of salons has arrived. Chenonceaux became a famous, brilliant salon, a country refuge for philosophers. In Paris all the world went to Madame Dupin's réunions, at least all the intellectual world—Buffon, Voltaire, Fontenelle, and their distinguished contemporaries—and choice friends followed the hosts to Touraine. Among them there was no poet: it was the eighteenth century. The place had its influence, however, on more than one of the philosophers whom Madame Dupin brought down. Something of Rousseau's rustic idyllism, and something of the Abbé St. Pierre's genial hopes for mankind, of the dreams he uttered in his *Projet de paix perpétuelle*, were born or matured here. Rousseau, indeed, broke into verse at Chenonceaux, very bad verse, as he paced his favourite walk along the river bank, *l'allée de Sylvie*; and he knew well enough to wish himself less philosopher for the moment.

“ Je sens qu'une âme plus tranquille,  
Plus exempte de tendres soins,  
Plus libre en ce charmant asile,  
Philosopheroit beaucoup moins.”

Rousseau was young then, and little known. Charged with the education of the Dupins' son, Dupin de Chenonceaux, for a very little time, he declared at the end of eight days he would not have continued the duty even for Madame Dupin's tenderest favours, which he desired, and desired quite in vain. Chenonceaux was a *mauvais sujet*, and came to a bad end. Madame Dupin, beautiful, brilliant, and austere, was indulgent to the young philosopher, if not entirely appreciative of his genius. He was her secretary and her husband's—they both had literary ambitions—and wrote much to their dictation. Manuscript fragments, whose chief interest now is that they are in his handwriting, exist still. Madame sketched out an ambitious “Treatise on Women,” and wrote some aphorisms. But her real talent lay in inspiring good conversation in others. Her success is reflected in her own maxim:

*Ne peser sur rien.* The secretary, however, had a good time at Chenonceaux. "On s'amusa beaucoup dans ce beau lieu," he said. "On y faisoit très-bonne chère : j'y devins gras comme un moine." With M. de Francueil, Madame Dupin's step-son, he studied chemistry and made music. They sang his compositions, and played his comedy, *L'engagement téméraire*, in the little theatre of the chateau. According to its author, its only merit was its gaiety. His greatest friend in the household was Madame de Chenonceaux, the young wife of Madame Dupin's worthless son. But that was later. For her Rousseau wrote *Emile*.

When the Revolution came, Madame Dupin was a very old but very valiant lady, and she refused to emigrate, or even to leave Chenonceaux. It was seized as crown property. She fought her case admirably, and by means of Diane de Poitier's *procès* with Antoine Bohier, proved it. There was talk of pulling down the castle. Her friend, the Abbé Leconte, curé of the village, who was on the revolutionary committee of Amboise, saved it. "What, citizens?" he said, "don't you know that Chenonceaux is a bridge? Would you pull down the only bridge between Bléré and Montrichard?" And she had been too consistently good and useful to the neighbourhood to rouse hatred. They exploited her generosity, but left her otherwise in peace. When she died, in 1799, at ninety-two, she was laid to rest in the park of Francueil, on a rising ground in a grove near one of Bernard Palissy's open spaces. "Il me semble que je reposeraï agréablement ici," she had said. Her tomb is a clumsy block, but it lies in a fragrant spot.

Her grand-nephew, the Comte de Villeneuve, inherited Chenonceaux; and the most distinguished guest during the Villeneuve reign was George Sand, the Count's cousin. Her grandmother, Aurore de Saxe, illegitimate daughter of the great Maréchal, had married M. de Francueil, Madame Dupin's step-son. When her grandmother died, she was invited to make Chenonceaux her home; but as this meant

complete separation from her bohemian mother, she declined. Her refusal caused a breach, and she never came here till she was celebrated. The Villeneuves tended the place for forty years. In 1864, it was sold to Madame Pelouze, daughter of Daniel Wilson, the Glasgow engineer, who made a great fortune by first lighting Paris with gas. Her brother, Daniel Wilson the second, deputy for Indre-et-Loire, was an important social and political force in the department. Under the Pelouze reign, builders and architects were once more at work on Chenonceaux, for good and bad. For good, so far as the exterior is concerned, for they cleared away some of Catherine's heavy additions. A great fortune was spent in the restoration, and for what of it was wasted, the bad taste of forty years ago was responsible. A woman was again the moving spirit; the gay days were revived. Then ruin overtook its owners. The Crédit Foncier bought the place, and exploited it for tourists. It belongs now to a Cuban millionaire.

To-day it has the air of being cared for but too little loved. The *maîtres* come seldom. In summer there is a crowd of puffing automobiles at the gate. Tourists pace the walks, take snapshots at the towers and gallery, and perhaps deviate an instant to see the caryatides (Jean Goujon's?) in the tennis-ground. But who walks or dreams in the Allée de Sylvie, or in the soft wooded shades of Francueil park? The shepherdess who keeps the sheep on the river bank; the country folks on their way to Chisseau or Civray, have most enjoyment of the place. Who else is there to see the waxing and the waning of the light on the little palace on the waters, so old, so ever new in magic?

After days spent up and down the river in its sight, Chenonceaux begins to haunt—for it is haunted. Not only by the lovely ladies, strong or frail, that ruled here, that were wooed here, that decreed the stately pleasure dome as refuge against a crude and unmelodious world outside. But in the silences that have come between its eras



Museums



of joy and brilliance, the old indigenous spirits of the place have come back to take possession. They have never let go.

“Nymphes de Chenonceau, qui, dans les ondes bleues,  
De sa fontaine vive, habitez incongneues  
Ce Parnasse françois et refletant vos yeux  
Du cristal azuré qui rouvre les cieulx,  
Frisez vos tresses d'or où zéphyre se joue,  
Vous baisant, amoureux, et le sein et la joue,  
Coronnez sur le soir de vos dances en rond  
L'aire humide ceignant et les eaux et le mont.”

So wrote an old poet, not all artificially. Some charm, of no one style, of no one epoch or country, of no definite memories or stories, wraps the place about. Poor Abd-el-Kader, who came to visit it from his prison-house of Amboise, called it *un morceau de l'éternel jardin*.

The sheep crop on the bank. The reeds just quiver, the water smiles and passes. And Undine rises, an enchantress. She has not forgotten her wiles. She changes, she calls, she turns away. She wakes, she glooms, she droops upon the waters. What is the colour? As you ask, dull clay. Next moment, flashing marble, rather. Nay, golden.

The village lying opposite her boundaries has no glamour. Well, Undine was never beneficent. I have rarely seen so depressed and blighted a place in cheery Touraine. Not even all the children smile. Nobody laughs. Nothing laughs — save the peonies. Chenonceaux peonies are famous. It is a relief to ride on to Chisseau, a venerable brown and white bourg, with its flowering gardens and cheerful inhabitants. Farther on is the chateau of Chissay. The façade is severe and uninteresting, but the place is set in a wild upland park. A hospitable castle this in old days to Charles VII., who was glad of a lodging here when *roi de Bourges*.

Rising high on the left now as we fare along is the great donjon

of Montrichard. But first comes the suburb of Nanteuil. It is Whit Monday, and all the road is thick with folk making their way thither, on foot or in market-cart, to the pilgrimage church. There was a time when we should have been shoved aside by a statelier *cortège*; when the arms of France on a coach, and a band of Scots archers in white armour, would tell of a greater suppliant; when inside the coach the curious might catch a glimpse of the keen dark face of the king. Though the most ardent vows of Louis XI. were paid to Notre Dame de Cléry, yet Notre Dame de Nanteuil was not far behind in his favour. Indeed, they say he only bought the chateau of Montrichard from the Harcourts, in 1461, as a lodging for those times when he was supplicating the blessing and indulgence of the Bonne Dame de Nanteuil.

Her *fête* day is kept still by the people of ten parishes round with some piety and much merriment. The church is so full—Our Lady's chapel overflowing—that examination of it is no easy matter. It is of noble eleventh-century building, with Gothic additions, its sculpture delicate and rich. The beautiful north door leads into a little mortuary chapel, whence you reach the church. Since its restoration of fifty years ago, it has turned to a soft mellowness. The narrow nave is simple and severe. A carved staircase leads up to the sacred chapel where the Lady of Nanteuil is venerated. Her image is not remarkable—her house is worthier. The walls are lined with *ex-voto* tablets, mostly referring to the eternal tragic drama of mother and son, gratitude for his birth, for his recovery, for his deliverance from danger, for his good death. Louis may never have knelt here. It is probably rather later than his time; but he built the crypt below. Crypts were to his taste.

Montrichard is in *fête* too. Below the castle, among the chestnut trees, there are shows and merry-go-rounds, lions and giants. The holiday invader is everywhere, even in the quiet garden of the beautiful Renaissance hospital, where the old folks sit and sew and



play cards and sleep, tended by the gentle sisters with their white-winged *coiffes*.

Turn down by the locksmith's house—the one with the carved door-jambs. Cross the bridge with its round arches and its pointed, and find a resting-place by the river. This is one of the pleasantest spots on the Cher. A happy life plays about the quays, and the great



MONTRICHARD

donjon poised aloft there, has an airy spring. It stands like a hale old patriarch, who does not brood vainly on uses gone. Montbazon is grim, Preuilly is piteous, but Montrichard is *gaillard*.

There was a little hamlet here under the rock in the tenth century, Rahel its lord. Just below the castle, at the beginning of the Rue de Bourré, an old romanesque house stands yet, and fanciful antiquarians have guessed it to be Rahel's. At least it may have watched Fulk Nerra building the donjon above. The Black Falcon had been realis-

ing how weak he was in the valley of the Cher, and that he must prepare a blow for the Count of Blois and his ally, Gelduin of Saumur. So without anyone's leave—especially without the leave of the Archbishop of Tours, to whom the place belonged, he threw up a rough fort on the rock—"sae rantingly, sae dauntingly!" Archbishop, Count of Blois, Count of Pontlevoy, shouted at him. He strengthened his defences the better. The allies put themselves in battle array. He met them merrily; and though he never ran so close a risk, he beat them at Pontlevoy; and returned to make Montrichard a great place that spoke defiance to the whole countryside.

The origin of the name nobody knows; but, naturally, popular tradition connects it with Cœur de Lion. From Fulk Nerra the place descended to the Counts of Anjou, and thence to the Angevin kings of England, who garrisoned it with English soldiers. Richard Cœur de Lion certainly knew it, perhaps besieged it; and the castle guide will tell you he was imprisoned here—for ten years! Mount the steep winding path, and you will be shown his prison and his oratory. Philip Augustus certainly laid siege to it, and perhaps Cœur de Lion was within at the time when the French king burnt the town below, while his men burrowed under the rock like moles, and took it permanently out of Angevin hands. It passed to and fro between royal and private owners. On the same level as Fulk's square donjon there is part of a façade with a round tower. The first line of walls encircling these is almost complete. Below are broken bits, about which vineyards grow, odds and ends of gardens, tiny allotments, to which a child toils up with green stuff for its rabbits, and grain for the cocks and hens.

Half way up the rock is the parish church of Sainte Croix, worth looking at, and with one memory of some pathos. On the right hand wall as you face the altar, is a modern worthless statue of the Blessed Jeanne de France. Not a widely honoured saint; but it is fitting she should have a niche here, for in this church of Montrichard, on the



CHRONICLE FROM THE WATER.



8th of September 1476, when she was the sad, clumsy, plain Princess Jane, she was married to an unwilling husband, the Duke of Orleans. She was ever a meek and faithful wife. During his imprisonment, when he declined her company, she pleaded continuously for him to her young brother Charles. She had no thought save for him. And as soon as he was Louis XII. and master of his fortunes, he divorced her to marry the prosperous and confident Anne of Brittany. What was there left but religion? She founded the order of the Annonciades, and died at Bourges in 1505.

The lower valley of the Cher can best be visited from Tours. Turn to the right from the Avenue de Grammont, and cross the St. Sauveur bridge. Henry II. first spanned the river at this point. Another turning to the right brings us on the road to Villandry and Lignières, a good alternative route for Langeais. The high road does not follow the river very close till Savonnières, but there are many side paths leading down to it to tempt the leisurely. A divergence to Grand Moulin, for instance, leads us to one of the finest reaches of the Cher. The banks near the picturesque old mill would serve for a delightful summer day's encampment; and a return to Tours might be made by crossing the chain ferry, and so to St. Genoulph and La Riche. But our road is onward—after another divergence, southward this time, however, to Ballan. Before we reach it from this side we shall find ourselves skirting the park of the Commanderie, one of the most delightful in Touraine. A great wild wood of chestnut and beech and pine and cedar, avenues and glades, and long lawns, make a green fairyland, to one enclosed in which the whole world outside were well lost—the loveliest of cared-for places. But I leave the description of it to another, who was no mere passer-by. “A Manor in Touraine,” one of the most charming chapters of Madame Duclaux's (Mary Robinson) *Fields of France*, tells of the place. The ivy-covered house is a restored morsel of a Commanderie of the Knights Templars.

On their suppression it fell into the hands of the Knights of Malta. Since then its fortunes have been private. They could never be unromantic. Ballan is on the direct high road to Chinon, *via* Azay-le-Rideau, you will observe. An old, sick, broken-hearted man came to the Commanderie eight hundred years ago. The Templars lodged

him for one night. He had come from Colombiers (now Villandry), where he had been brought low enough to make many concessions to Philip Augustus. His sons were in revolt and John the beloved was a black traitor. Henry's end was coming, and next day he made his way to Chinon to die. The substantial village of Ballan, a very ancient place in fact, if not in appearance, has something to show. The beautiful old church of St. Rose, on the site of one of St. Perpetuus' foundations, has some fine glass, perhaps a gift from the munificent



BALLAN CHURCH

Jacques de Beaune, who built the "pretty toy chateau" of La Carte near by, a little gem of sixteenth-century domestic Gothic. The St. Peter's keys and the tiara on the glass tell of an older family of La Carte, one of whose sons, born here, became Pope Martin IV. The round towers of the gateway are all that remain of the Pope's birthplace. La Carte has lost its chiefest interest of late years, the glorious glass of its chapel, not destroyed but transported elsewhere.

Here we are off the direct road along the river ; but before returning to it, we might give a glance south-eastward. All about the land is sown with memories, far older than Pope Martin. Across the flat, monotonous country round Miré, the *landes* of Miré, or of Ballan, rushed the dark hordes of Abderrahman, eager for the spoils of the Loire and the Seine. Here they were turned back by Charles Martel at the battle of Tours, the prelude to the great rout of Poitiers.

At Savonnières the high road touches the river. The fine carved doorway draws us into the much restored old church, another foundation of St. Perpetuus. Beyond the village the famous stalactite caves are passed—or entered, if we have a taste for locked-up curiosities. Then we skirt the river to Villandry. The Cher is wide here, and long lawns and copses run down to it ; a shepherd boy lies on his back, his sheep croup round him ; a silent fisher is forgetting the world by the water's edge. And now we are at the gates of lordly Villandry, a great place, built for stately pleasure. No chateau in Touraine has more of the air of the *grand siècle*. The tower is a bit of old Colombiers, where Henry II. and Philip Augustus met to make up their differences, and where proud, dying Henry made his unwilling concessions. Chateau, communes, gardens, on a noble scale, leave a clear impression of ordered beauty—in spite of a hideous blot, the late addition to the west wing. All was very silent when we saw it. The ghosts were in possession ; and the melancholy servant who showed us round had but one hope of turning them out. An American millionaire must be the exorcist. The American millionaire is the reincarnation of the fairy prince who shall wake up the sleeping beauties of old Touraine.

Near here the Cher enters the Loire—opposite Cinq-Mars—but by an artificial channel made in the eighteenth century. The old Cher is barred east and west in its bed, a little thin stream from here to Lignières ; but after that some life is given to its waters by

straggling branches of the Indre. Just beyond Lignières, indeed, we are in a labyrinth of rivers. The Loire, Cher and Indre almost touch. Between Bréhémont and Rivarennés, and all round, the country is extraordinarily fertile. Was it not in the juicy pastures of Bréhémont that the 17,913 cows grazed whose milk fed the infant Gargantua?

Soon to the right we spy the turret of a little castle. A market-woman tells us it is the "château de Monsieur le Curé"; and somehow, without indiscretion, a quarter of an hour later, we are seeing the little "castelet" of Fontenay and making friends with its owner. His ownership is a romance. In his boyhood it was a tumble-down place belonging to a relative of his own. He sought for birds' nests in the dilapidated towers. The place drew him before he knew anything of architecture, and he said: "When I am a man, I shall buy it and build it up again." When he was a man he was an abbé, with a strong artistic bent. He studied at the Beaux Arts, and afterwards carried on, with extraordinary energy, two careers side by side—a cure of souls and architecture. In his time he has visited every chateau in Touraine, Poitou, Anjou, and the Blésois, studying every plan, every detail. His atelier at Tours was a busy place; and he has been one of the most successful of restorers. Overworked, at fifty he took the country cure of Lignières; exchanged his presbytery in the village for the old ruins of Fontenay, and gradually restored them with great intelligence. The little "castelet" provides an excellent lesson in the different ages of building. There is the Gallo-Roman wall, there is the mediæval portion, the Renaissance portion. But the abbé-seigneur is the best of all. "I am seventy-five," he says; "it is time to go away." But he does not believe it. Nor do you, as you look at his fine figure, his noble head, with the young, benevolent eyes. See him tending his vines or his flower-beds, or in his workshop over his plans. Why should he go away? A full, well-rounded







Азвет-Курат.

life! Greeting from two passers-by to l'Abbé Brisacier, chanoine-architecte!

At Lignières we saw some of his work. The old church there he has restored, and not the stones merely, but some curious ancient mural paintings as well. The *naïveté* of the designs has been fully preserved; and a charming and amusing *naïveté* it is. Inside an arch the months are represented: an old man warms himself; a peasant prunes his vines; a woman brings bunches of green stuff for Easter; and so on, throughout the year. The same chapel contains the story of Lazarus and the rich man, distinctly sensational; likewise the Creation, the Temptation, and the Baptism of Christ, all dramatically conceived by a peasant artist working for peasants.

From Lignières the north road takes us by La Chapelle to the bridge across the Loire. See there the towers of Langeais.



## CHAPTER XV

### THE INDRE

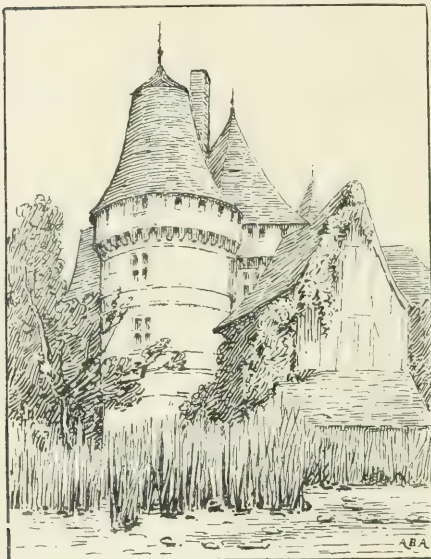
*Azay-le-Rideau—Ussé—Le Lys dans la Vallée—Montbazou—The Legend of Courzières—The Abbe de Rance—Cormery—Courçay—LOCHES—The Royal Castle—Agnes Sorel—The Prisons—Il Mors—Beaulieu—The Chartreuse de Liget—A Tale of Clivat—Montresor.*

THE Loire is for your grand moods. Perhaps you dream of building a lordly pleasure-house on its north bank. Or, for its rich, soft beauty, you may choose the Vienne. The Cher, beloved of shepherds, is very kindly, very candid; but I make bold to say the Indre, if you come to know it, will hold your heart. You will not know it at Azay, nor at Loches. It is a shy river, and hides from the rushing tourist. Give it your leisurely company, and it is of the friendliest. A winding, hither and thither stream. You have it, you have it not; it is ever following some secret impulse of its own. Coy and sweet, it wanders among its copses and meadows, and under its steep rocks. What a green shady country it flows through between Ussé and Bridore, gurgling under old bridges, greeting tiny hamlets! In spite of stately Azay, gloomy Montbazou, great Loches on its banks, it is a river for country folks and children, gentle fishers, lovers, idlers, and for shy little water beasts. Yet for all its caprice, not one of the rivers of Touraine is more serviceable; it meekly drives more than fifty mills. The Brownie among rivers!

The south road from Lignières takes you down to the little chateau of Islette. Thence it is but a step or two to Azay-le-Rideau. The hurried tourist will have come by train from Tours,

or along the straight high road, by way of Ballan and the forest of Villandry. But we all get to Azay by one route or another; and from there we can explore the lower reaches of the Indre.

Transport yourself as quick as may be to the chateau or the



CHATEAU DE L'ISLETTE

church, for Azay is an ugly little town. It gave us the impression of something worse, something unaccountably sinister. Let me not be sensational: perhaps it is only dull. Dulness has sometimes an evil look. But within the chateau gates you have not merely shut out dull Azay: you have shut out the world. Your heart rises as you pass through the stately entrance court — of Louis XIII.'s time, like the communes.

Then the castle is in sight. Azay is the fairy castle. You have dreamed of it. The time when you saw it first seems dateless. It swims on the brain, a scene for the theatre of frail tremulous fancy. It is the more your own that its recorded history is very slight. Chenonceaux you must people with the sumptuous dames of Brantôme's tales: chill, imperious Diane, the laughing young Mary Stuart, white Catherine de Medicis, splendid and terrible

mistress of the revels. Azay you may people as you will—but all your ladies must be gracious and beloved. Chenonceaux is the wicked water sprite; Azay is the kindly enchantress. One rich and perfect thought made the place. There was no fumbling, no tinkering; with all its ornament it remains simple and harmonious, with nothing petty in its beauties. The façade towards the court is noble and stately. The tourelles, slender and graceful, the points and peaks of them, the twists and twirls, however fanciful, spring out of an ordered imagination. The windows are set in with judgment; and time has not yet effaced the delicious carving on these, on the pilasters, and on the door-lintels. The effect is light. Nowhere is there any stress or strain. From the low balcony lovely ladies should lean. The *machicoulis* of the *chemin de ronde* seem a pretty mockery of defence. Doubtless they are genuine; but you can think of nothing more dangerous falling from them than a flower dropped by a gallant guard on the head of a passing lady. One day soon you will see splendid, fantastic Ussé. Azay is fine poetic fantasy—not fantastic. The Indre has been diverted to make a fairy moat about the castle; and in its course through the park you cross it by a dozen little bridges. But a few years ago the castle was a palace of art inside as well as out. The Marquis de Biencourt inherited some of the treasures, collected many, and loved all. But they had to go—even to the precious Clouets. This was the only place in all Touraine where the portraits of the great school of Tours could be seen. A knock of the auction hammer—and they vanished. But it was not the chatelain's fault. Now that the French Government have bought it, Azay may become a treasure-house once more; never again a home of lovely ladies.

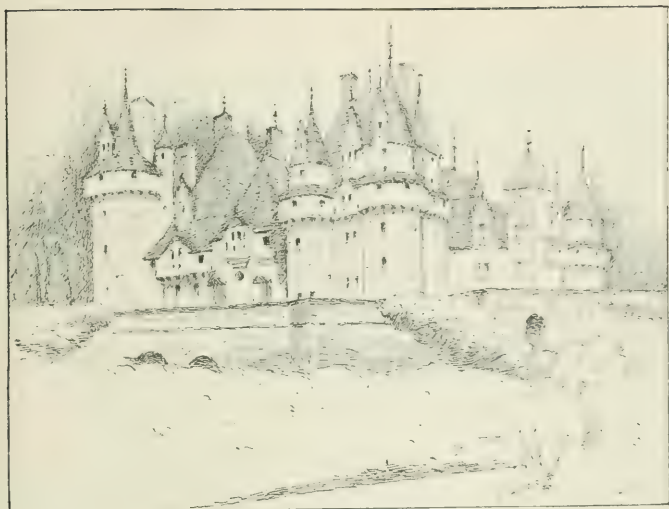
Long before this chateau was built Azay had a strong place. Note its position, and how it commands the road from Tours to Chinon. Its old history was stormy. In the twelfth century one Hugues Ridel gave the town its distinctive name among the other

Azays. When the treacherous Isabella of Bavaria called Burgundy to Tours, he came on determinedly, and as Azay lay on his way, he put his men in it. This brought the Dauphin Charles from Paris. When Charles reached Azay the Burgundians insulted him. "Restes de petits pâtés de Paris"—so they called him and his men, in allusion to the massacres of Paris from which they had barely escaped. Stung to fury, he took the place by assault, beheaded the captain, hanged the soldiers, and burnt the town. Till the end of the sixteenth century it was known as Azay-le-Brûlé. Town and chateau were on bad terms, the more so because of the near neighbourhood of the forest of Chinon, then a famous haunt of outlaws. Azay had no walls, and was at the mercy of the "mauvais garçons, larrons publiques, espieurs de chemin, et aultres gens vaccabuns, mal vivans," who worked their wicked will on its inhabitants, and then retired to the great refuge of the woods.

The present chateau, the fine flower of the French Renaissance, is one of those built by the rich financial families of Tours. Also, like Chenonceaux, it was a woman watched its building. The salamander on the walls dates it, and the ermine, not Anne of Brittany's this time, but that of her daughter Claude, the first wife of Francis I. Begun in 1518, by Gilles Berthelot—allied to the Bohier, the Beaune, and the Briçonnet families—the work was carried on when he went to the wars by his wife Philippe Lesbahy. The actual architect is unknown, but he was almost certainly a Tourangeau. The Berthelots had no long enjoyment of the place. They were ruined in that general attack on the big financiers, begun by Louise de Savoie against Jacques de Beaune. Giles, it is said, died of grief. Since then Azay's history has been private—and leaves the greater space for our romantic invention.

A few miles to the west, on the Indre, just beyond the village of Rigny, and on the edge of the forest of Chinon, stands Ussé. In old days the proud de Bueils had a strong place on the site. The





USSE

Breton d'Espinays built the existing chateau in the end of the fifteenth and the first few years of the sixteenth century. Thus it is nearly contemporary with Azay. But it belongs to an altogether different world. In general plan it consists of two strong wings, enclosing a court, joined to each other by a light gallery with its back to the hillside. (There is a later addition towards the west which should be ignored as much as possible.) This is no Renaissance chateau, save so far as light and space for genial living have been allowed. It is a chateau-fort, though it piles up its towers for effect as much as for defence. Riotously Gothic, with its groups and piles and clusters of towers and tourelles, it is made, almost theatrically, after the pattern of heroic legends; it is the castle of chivalry, given point and scope, conceived consciously when chivalry itself had become a romantic

remembrance rather than an inspiration. Gothic did its utmost, and had nothing more to say at Ussé; and the chapel of St. Anne, to the left of the chateau, dedicated in 1538, is an exquisite specimen of pure Renaissance style. Ussé has changed hands many times. When it came to the Valentinays in the seventeenth century, the great Vauban had a hand in its improvement. The stately terrace, now ivy-clad, is his work. His daughter was Marquise d'Ussé. Built by Bretons, it returned to Bretons in the course of ages, to Auguste de la Rochejacquelin, the youngest of the three noble Vendean brothers, from whom the present owner is descended. Ussé is no museum chateau. It is lived in and cared for, and has pictures and other treasures to show, gradually gathered by chatelains and chatelaines of distinction. All its towers and tourelles are a fantastic framework to a cultivated modern life. But they have got used to modernity ever since Voltaire lived here as guest of Ussé.

From Azay to Montbazon we are reminded that the Indre is Balzac's river. The best guide to the reaches between Azay and Monts is his "Lys dans la Vallée." How many young pilgrims have followed in Felix's steps on that journey in search of his lady, when he made up his mind to "fouiller tous les châteaux de la Touraine, en y voyageant à pied, en me disant à chaque jolie tourelle : —c'est là"? The pilgrim can follow in his steps easily enough, leaving Tours by the St. Eloi barrier, crossing the St. Sauveur bridge, looking up at each house as he reaches Poncher, and then taking the Chinon road. As his mother has sent him to Frapesle, near his lady's chateau, Felix's search is shorter than his knight-errant temper foresaw. Crossing the *landes de Charlemagne*, he reaches the little village of Artannes. There opens before him the "valley which begins at Montbazon and ends at the Loire, and seems to leap under the castles built on its double range of hills, a magnificent emerald cup, through which the Indre winds serpent-like. At this sight I was seized with a voluptuous surprise, reaction after the monotony of the



THE ROAD TO CLOCHESGONDING.



*landes* and the fatigue of the road. If that woman, the flower of her sex, dwells anywhere in our world, it is here. At this thought I leaned up against a nut-tree, under which, ever since that day, I stop to rest every time I come back to my dear valley. . . . She dwelt there ; my heart did not deceive me. The first castelet that I saw on the slope of a *lande* was her home. When I sat down under my nut-tree, the mid-day sun glistened on the slates of her roof and the glass of her windows. It was her cotton gown made the little white spot I saw among her vines." He came down by Pont-de-Ruan ; and he paints a delicious description of its three mills, its wide stretch of waters, its bridges and, above, the old church, which is far, far older than Balzac guessed. It was founded by St. Brice, St. Martin's friend ; and St. Brice's church has been renewed rather than rebuilt.

Frapesle, his goal, lies on the hillside on the left bank of the Indre, just below Saché, a towered house, thickly covered to-day with ivy, crowning great sloping green lawns. In real life its name is Valesne. The young man, in his farther wanderings that day with his host, saw "les masses romantiques du château de Saché, mélancolique séjour plein d'harmonies, trop graves pour les gens superficiels, chères aux poètes dont l'âme est endolorie. Aussi, plus tard, en aimai-je le silence, les grands arbres chenus, et ce je ne sais quoi mystérieux épandu dans son vallon solitaire." Saché is the next property to Valesne, and in Balzac's day formed one with it. But every time he caught a glimpse of the "mignon castel," on the opposite hill, his eyes rested there. It was Clochegourde, he learnt, the abode of his lady. You will find it to-day, a more ambitious place, under the name of La Chevière, commanding the valley from the opposite bank. Cross the little bridge over the Indre, passing the water meadows and the "red mill"—it is now white—and climb the slope to where his "lily" lived and loved and died. Every day he could see her roof, her woods, her vines and gardens across the valley from Valesne.

Balzac was never so lyrical as in *Le Lys dans la Vallée*; and to the traveller by the Indre it seems fitting. The romance-writer could have found no more perfect setting for his tragic idyll had he searched for it. But it came to him very easily. In his day the Margonnes owned both Valesne and Saché, and lived at Saché. Balzac, who had known M. Margonne from childhood, was constantly there. Whenever he was ill, or out of sorts, or out of spirits, or in debt, he rushed from Paris to Saché, and settled down there. He liked the place because he was looked on as a neighbour, a Tourangeau, not as a celebrity. But he wrote much there—*Louis Lambert*, *Maître Cornélius*, and *Illusions Perdues*. As to the last, he not only invented and composed the plot in eight days, but wrote a third of it. Then he fell down in the park in a fit. When at Saché, he paid some attention to a lady at Méré, near Ballan, and got a groom and horses to attract her—but nothing came of it. They show you the charming little room high up in the chateau where he wrote; his curtained bed in a recess, and an instrument which they call his *coupe-papier*. It looks as if it were meant to cut bread for a regiment. Old memories of him linger in the village; and the tailor who made clothes for him died only two or three years ago.

La Chevière (Clochegourde) crowns the valley proudly. Valesne (Frapesle) looks like a comfortable English manor under its coat of green ivy and amidst its smooth lawns. But Saché, as Balzac said, is for poets. It once housed a saint. An old grey, weather-beaten house—there are others in far-away Scotland its own sisters—resting on green slopes backed by great woods. A little stream lies below. Just where you cross it is the cave where the Blessed Marguerite de Rouxelly, a daughter of the house, saw the vision of Our Lady. Saché is a memory-haunted place. We saw it empty but not uncared for, awaiting a tenant.

Past Artannes, past Pont de Ruan and Monts, by the river all the way. Then a square black tower, with a finger-like spike pointing

to the sky. That is Montbazon, one of the Black Falcon's nests, though it did not rise to this height till the twelfth century. Probably Odo, his enemy, had a strong place there before him, and it seems certain it was the site of a Gallic camp. Below the ancient donjon are narrow labyrinthine passages, secret refuges from a foe with an older name than Angevin or Champenois. The tower stands proudly on its natural fortification, yet the town does not group with it as does Montrichard. And on nearer view the pointing finger, or spike, of some miles away, reveals itself in all its colossal incongruity as a gigantic, brand-new, black bronze Virgin and Child. The Virgin leans uncomfortably over the town as if to throw her child to it. The statue is heavy and characterless—artistically it is damnable. Yet I will not say but some blessing may descend to those reaches of the Indre from Madonna resting on Fulk Nerra's black tower, some whisper of pact and peace. And he who set it up there was a saint, l'Abbé Chauvin. He gave away his own money. He gave away his stipend. He gave his blankets. You thought he wore fine linen, said our informant : it was but his little *col romain* and his narrow wristbands, attached to the coarse garments he was content with. He had this Virgin made at Tours, and placed it on the strongest part of the old donjon. Well, he was poet if not artist. And now he is with the saints.

Through the one gateway left standing you reach the old castle. Little remains save Fulk Nerra's tower, an empty shell. The owner used to make his wine here. Outside on the terrace rose the fifteenth-century residential chateau, which is nearly all gone, along with its chapel of St. George ; and the stones have been used to build the houses below. Vines grow in the roofless halls, and madonna lilies. Through the *meurtrières* peep cherry-trees laden with fruit. But the tameness has not affected the lady cicerone. She is a born romantic ; and that the annals of Montbazon are mostly military does not matter : her imagination is a fertile field. She might have brought Berengaria

into her tale, for Berengaria owned the place. But she does not know Berengaria. It is on Catherine de Medicis her mind has fastened—Catherine is always a possible and a favourite villainess in Touraine—Catherine keeping prisoners here, making them perform hard labour, consigning them to *oubliettes*, whence they were raked out with a fork from below! Catherine disporting herself with René d'Anjou—a bold time-defying touch! Catherine running to and fro along an underground passage between here and Couzières—a good kilometre off—on dark errands! And her tales and terrors are not all of the past. She lives near by in a safe, comfortable cottage; but she takes the atmosphere of the donjon home with her. As we looked down from the castle walls on the old Paris-Bordeaux road, she shuddered and moaned: “C'est terrible ici la nuit! On vous vole; on vous dévalise. C'est terrible!” The screech-owls, indeed, cry drearily to your fancy in old Fulk Nerra's tower.

In the fifteenth century it fell into the hands of the great Rohan family—the Rohan Guémené branch. In the first half of the seventeenth century its lord was Hercule de Rohan, Duc de Montbazon, “grand veneur de France” and governor of Paris. But Hercule did not live in the gloomy place. He built the seventeenth-century portions of the chateau of Couzières, his *maison de plaisance*, about a mile away. Very white and clumsy Couzières stands in its gardens, backed by woods, on the slope of the hill on the right bank of the Indre. After the death of his first wife, the mother of the famous Madame de Chevreuse, he married Marie de Bretagne. She was sixteen—twelve years younger than her step-daughter—he was sixty. Marie, Duchess of Montbazon was one of the most celebrated and witty women of her day. Beautiful or not—Talleyrand des Réaux calls her not beautiful, but a *colosse*—her attractions did not fade as she grew older; and her house became a meeting-place of the *beaux esprits*. High-spirited, audacious, and a consummate cynic, she had many lovers, among them Beaufort,







THE MILL, SACHÉ.

the *roi des halles*. But the most romantic was Armand Bouthillier de Rancé, abbé, *bon vivant*, scholar, wit, swordsman, knight-errant, epicurean, Cardinal Richelieu's godson, the favourite of Marie de Medicis, one of the most brilliant men of his time, one of the most interesting of any time. He fell heir to many livings, but he took his ecclesiastical state lightly, flaunting it in violet velvet, in long curls, in lace and emeralds. He was lord of Vêretz on the Cher, which we know. A fury of energy possessed him whatever he did. He would hunt all night and sustain a thesis at the Sorbonne brilliantly next morning. Yet he was so luxurious that he had the wood of his bed warmed as well as his sheets. He is quite the story-book hero. Two friends were discussing one day with him how best to kill time. "Let us each," said Rancé, "take a thousand pistoles in his purse; and then so long as the thirty-thousand last, let us go wandering in search of adventures, by sea and land, wherever the wind may carry us." Armand de Rance, near neighbour, and *enfant de la maison* at Couzières, fifteen years younger than the Duchess, became her lover, but discreetly. Their meetings were secret.

Every one knows the ghastly legend of Couzières. He had not seen her for some time. When he came back, he made his way through a silent house to her room. There he found his lady dead, in her coffin, with her head severed from her body! She had died of a fever. The coffin was too short; and they had taken this barbaric method of making things fit, says one. It was the result of a *post-mortem* examination, say others. Choose between two wild stories. Nay, add others, she was murdered by her jealous lover Beaufort! Armand de Rancé, his heart and his life all broken, left the world for ever; retired to silence, and became the great reformer-abbot of La Trappe. In his cell there was a skull. Could they help calling it Marie de Montbazon's?

Of course, the tale has been hotly denied, both the circumstance and the scene, which has been transferred to Paris. They even say

he was present at her death-bed bringing her ghostly consolation. But her sudden death and his break with the world are certain, though six years passed ere he retired to La Trappe. During the six years he lived mostly at Véretz. His pleasure-house became a silent, austere cell. He wandered about the woods alone, in meditation. "Je n'y trouvais pas ce que je cherchais," was all he said about his renunciation of the world. Such hard living was not enough. La Trappe was his own abbey. He retired to it, began its reform according to the Strict Observance, and lived there, testing in his own person every kind of human endurance for thirty-seven years. He died in 1700.

To the same epoch of Hercule de Rohan's occupation of Couzières, belongs the other well-known incident connected with the chateau—the meeting and reconciliation of Louis XIII. with his mother, Marie de Medicis. "My son has grown a deal taller since I saw him last," she said to him, not without malice. "Only for your service, madame," he replied.

And now on to Esvres, thence past the mills, and up to the high ground looking down on the winding river. On the steep and sheltered banks, if you desire to linger within sight of a lovely valley, know that some old haunting spirit is moving you. Here and all along the Indre hermits have dwelt. At Vontes we see the remains of a priory and a tithe barn. They cover the site of the cell of the blessed Leotheric, another gay knight who gave up the world to woo solitude for ever more. We are coming down to a cheerful place which owes its existence to a little band of solitaries. Corméry, a modest market-town, had once a great name. In the eighth century it was a wilderness, lonely enough to attract the pious Ithier, Abbot of St. Martin of Tours, in need of a retreat. He came with two or three brothers; and their primitive settlement was called the Celle Saint Paul. Ithier gave the place lands; Charlemagne took it under his protection; and the great Alcuin, who loved Touraine well, loved this

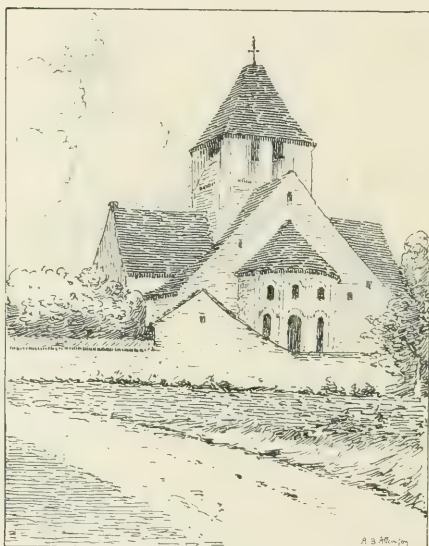
place best of all. He called more brothers to it ; and twenty monks came singing through France to abide here under the Benedictine Rule. Alcuin, tired of court life, tired of the world, would fain have never gone back ; but his school of St. Martin's called him ; and his bones were laid to rest not here but at Tours. When he went away from Corméry he left this tender lament for its beauty and its quiet :—

“Sweet and beloved home of mine, farewell, my cell, now and for ever ! You stand in the shade, and the branches whisper round you in the little wood with the flower-laden trees. All about you still shall the meadows bloom, and the herbs ever grow, which the physician's knowing hand culls for health. The waters ring you round, their banks starred with flowers, and here the happy fisher casts his nets. To the cloister comes the scent from the gardens, mingled scent of apples, of white lily and red rose. And every kind of bird sings morning songs aloud, and praises the Creator with his song.”

Another Englishman, Fridegise, was the next abbot of Corméry. Soon houses were grouped around the abbey. The abbey nourished the town ; established the Thursday markets, which exist still, and its annual fairs ; and in the twelfth century the monks built the beautiful church of Notre Dame de Fougeray, standing on the outskirts, on the road to Courçay. Corméry suffered from the Northmen, of course, in 853 ; was pillaged and burnt, perhaps in revenge for its having sheltered for a time the body and the treasure of St. Martin. The English also were particularly active in burning and sacking this neighbourhood ; but in spite of all, the abbey steadily rose, vast and noble. It was finished about the reign of Charles VIII. And it remained till the Revolution famous for its wealth and at some periods for its learning and its local beneficence. The abbots, ecclesiastically subordinate to St. Martin's of Tours, were lords spiritual and temporal of Corméry town. What remains now ? Some crumbling ruins, a vast refectory made into tenement houses ; a few graceful cloister arches which shelter chickens and rubbish ; a broken

deformed tower—and a recipe, which the town bakers have inherited—for macaroons!

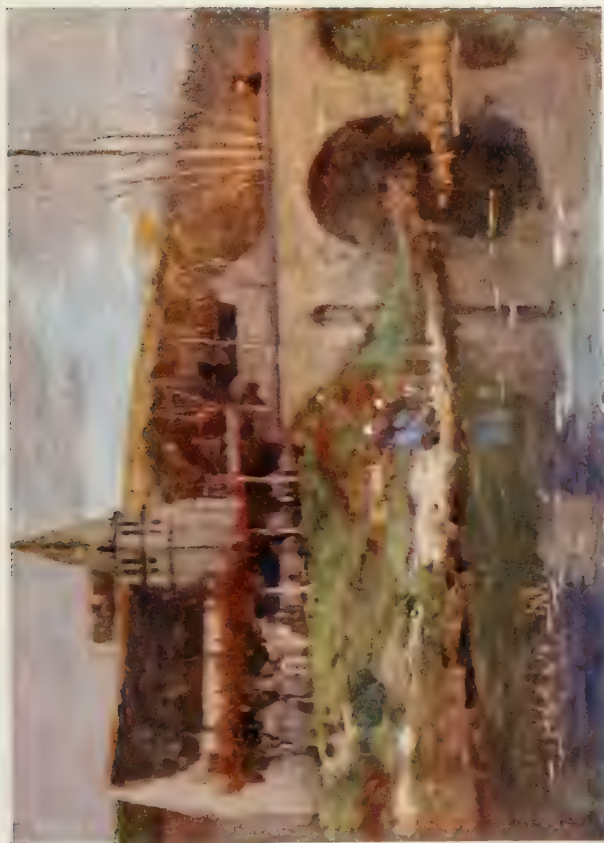
Between Corméry and Reignac lies one of the most picturesque portions of the Indre. The north bank, from near Truyes, is steep and rocky. Here you



NOTRE DAME DE FOUGERAY

do not find the soft tufa out of which dwellings are scooped with ease, but rugged boulders, hurled by giants in a game of bowls, or by the devil when out of temper with Corméry hermits. Nay, giants, giants' children, devils and imps are there now, but under a spell; and the birches and the alders, the broom, the eglantine and moss have no fear, but climb and cling about the monsters, and make a gay mock of their

grimness. Up on the top are great wind-swept, carefully tilled plains; to the north the Champagne running over to the Cher; to the south the plateau of Sainte Maure. But down here in the green, secret, sheltered happy valley, the Indre laughs and sings to itself, and to you, if you be companionable. The old Romans built villas along the glen; and to-day everyone at Tours knows Courçay, certainly every fisher. Courçay is crowded on



George W. Barrett.





holidays. The *Cheval Blanc* is full of stir and business, and the bright-eyed, vivacious host grows more genial with every new demand upon him. But call up no Bank Holiday picture. A crowd at Courçay sends no terror along the secret valley. I doubt if the wood spirits are shyer that day. There are only a few more children in the woods; some discreet families spread their meal under the trees. A solitary youth scrambles up the rocks to wake the echoes, and stands listening. The little boats are gliding down to Le Doué; and you count perhaps a score of fishers at the river's edge, but so silent that the water-rats and water-hens treat them with contempt. There is a whizzing sound above, or on the road over the valley. The motors scud along to "do" the chateaux. But the Indre and its water-spirits smile to themselves, safe and quiet under the rocks.

On to Reignac—Bray in the old days. The much restored chateau at the entrance of its great park, was once the home of the D'Argensons. The old and sleepy village spreading about among its water-meadows and under its poplars, saw Jeanne d'Arc cross the river on her way to St. Catherine de Fierbois. Then Azay—Azay-sur-Indre, Azay-le-Chétif (Azay the Puny), to distinguish it from others of the name. Azay le Brûlé, it is also called, but that name belongs to Azay-le-Rideau; though the story is probably true that tells how this little place, threatened by the Black Prince, the scourge of the valleys of Touraine, was burnt by order of its captain; and how the Church, having regard to the poor, who suffered for this patriotic ruthlessness, excommunicated all who took part in the burning. At little Azay the Indre receives the Indrois, a thin stream trickling through the grass yonder. If we followed its course, along the north side of the forest of Loches, under the high plateau of St. Quentin, it would lead us to Montrésor. But Montrésor we shall reach by another road; and after Azay there is little to stop us till Loches.

We have come here down the Indre. But I know a better

approach, pictorially considered. There is a high place on the edge of the forest of Loches where its towers first come into sight, dark and majestic. Beaulieu lies beneath you, with the high spire of Fulk Nerra's abbey church. Beyond on the height is his great donjon. In front the mass and the towers of the royal castle, the two towers of St. Ours; and climbing up from the town, the belfry of St. Antoine. There is another view on the upland road to Chanceaux, showing the donjon and St. Ours in their setting of green country. But to see town and castle together, climb to the gardens above the Rue Bourdillet. Or there is a little outlook wall, to be reached through the vineyards facing the end of the street running north from St. Antoine's tower. There St. Antoine rises to your view, free, high, and graceful. The chateau shows its ragged northern edge, St. Ours its brown peaked towers behind the green. An old grey wall carries the eye on to the great crenelated gate. Above it rises the square sturdy bulk of the donjon, and to the right the round front of the Mantelet. Just below, in terraces, crowd the houses, the roofs ruddy and brown and blue, huddling close under the castle walls. You see Loches then as a fantasia of terraces and towers and gardens, placed on little hills, mounds in a great wide cup. To see the wide edge of the cup, mount to the top of the round tower of the donjon.

Along the Indre, below the castle ridge, was the first nucleus of Loches. This at least is suggested by the name, from the Breton *lock*, marshland, which was extended to the hill above when a strong place was made there for defence against the Romans. In time the Gallic became a Gallo-Roman camp. Where now the Collegial stands, a chapel was built to St. Mary Magdalen; but a solitary from Cahors, St. Ours, had probably built one before, down below. A serviceable man this St. Ours, in spite of his grisly name; and he built a bridge and a mill for the folk about him. His name has gone up the hill, and is now given to the great Collegial, though its formal dedication was to Our Lady.

For long the place was counted as in Aquitaine ; but it became an Angevin fort when Fulk the Red got it as Roscilla's dowry. Geoffrey Greygown built the Collegial in 962 ; and some of his church still remains—the lower part of the entrance tower, part of a transept, part of a crypt. The rest is due to Thomas Pactius, who rebuilt it in 1180, in the transition style. His are the arches ; the towers ; his the great cone-like domes, the *dubes*, mysterious and unfamiliar. Fulk Nerra built the square keep, warning to the Counts of Blois, outlook and signal tower to master the country round. He knew the military worth of the place ; and it seems as if he liked it better than any other. His son, Geoffrey Martel, was brought up there, a blacksmith his foster-father ; and when remorse and religious terror and exaltation stirred him to build a great abbey for the glory of God and the salvation of his own parlous soul, he chose Beaulieu as the site—Beaulieu, the place of battle, *belli locus*. A vast and magnificent place he built, in honour of the Celestial Virtues, and as a resting-place for his own bones. Here, in 1040, he was buried under a great vaulted monument ; and they said masses for his particular soul for ages. After the Revolution Fulk's tomb was not only ruined, it was lost. In 1870 they dug and found it at the south-east angle of the south transept under a walled-up door. After many ages men looked on the great fighter's skull.

Loches fell to the Plantagenets with the rest of Touraine. With Montbazou it formed Berengaria's dowry from Cœur de Lion. After the murder of Arthur it was one of the few places in the province that held out for John, under its valiant, low-born captain, Girard d'Athée. Philip Augustus won it at last, and Girard expiated his unfortunate devotion by a long imprisonment. Fortress, Collegial, Abbey, made vast strides under independent governors ; and in the middle of the thirteenth century, when it was sold to St. Louis, it was a place of wealth and dignity. During the Hundred Years' War the English bands devastated the country round, burnt Beaulieu, and

threatened Loches. Beaulieu, always their camp, suffered most, and in 1419 it was a mere heap of ruins, its great abbey a desolation. Twenty years passed before it could hold up its head again. Meanwhile Loches was covering its old donjon with new defences, the Round Tower (called Louis XI.'s, though he did not build it), and the Martelet, or Mantelet. Already the kings had sought other shelter during their stay there than the gloomy donjon. At the end of the hill overlooking the Indre had risen the "Vieilles Salles." The builder is not identified; but this older portion of the *logis du roi*, the *château royal* of Loches, is always associated with Charles VII., who made it his home frequently; for Loches and Chinon were his principal strongholds in his days of adversity.

The Maid roused him at Chinon. After her triumph at Orleans she had to rouse him again, and she came to Loches. By the fire of her spirit and the magic of her tongue she sent him out to the campaign of the Loire. But the romance of the Vieilles Salles is not that of Jeanne the Maid, but of Agnes Sorel, Dame de Beauté, fair and frail, the meek lamb—of all kings' mistresses her who has left the least tainted fame. She was queen at Loches, and queen at Chinon. Marie d'Anjou, discreetest of women, never, it seems, contested her rights; and Agnes was gracious in her power. They have tried to take away her old fame as the friend of France. Some part of it she has got back again. The dates are changed, that is all. She did not see Jeanne at Chinon; she was not her advocate before the king. But Charles needed someone ever at his hand to give him hope and an impulse. Agnes was there years after the fires lit by Jeanne had died down. We know her friends, all of them patriots, among the nobler of the king's ministers.

*Picarde* by family, Agnes was Tourangelle by birth—born at the little chateau of Fromenteau, on the confines of Touraine and Berri. She became maid of honour to Isabelle, Queen of Sicily, thence passing to the service of Marie d'Anjou. The king singled her out

for favour, and almost to her death she reigned supreme over his heart. There was nothing secret about her power. The first king's mistress who was given royal state, she wielded it without arrogance and enjoyed it without rapacity. Through all the west and south of Touraine you see castles and manors proud of the unfounded tradition that they were built for Agnes Sorel by Charles. But, indeed, she was châtelaine of many great places, of Beauté-sur-Marne, of Roquerrière, of Vernou and Issoudun in Touraine, and of Mesnil near Jumièges. She built for the Church, was the patron of artists, and attracted to herself such friends as de Brézé, Etienne Chevalier, and Jacques Cœur. She was a woman of spirit, too, the "simple, mild dove" (*simplex mitisque columba*). So think of her in her tower-lodging of the Vieilles Salles, where her tomb now rests, not as holding the king in silken strings, and lulling him to soft, safe ease. From the platform there you overlook a fair country. Agnes looked down on Beaulieu sacked and desolate, and bade Charles be up and off to harry the enemy out of France.

Says Brantôme: "Agnes seeing the king of a poor spirit, indolent, and little recking of the affairs of his kingdom, or of the victories which the English gained over him, told him one day that when she was a very young girl, an astrologer had foretold she should be loved by one of the bravest and most valiant kings of Christendom; and that when the king honoured her with his love, she had thought it was he who had been foretold; but seeing him so poor of spirit and so careless of his affairs, so little inclined to resist the English and their King Henry (who took towns from him under his very nose), she saw she had been deceived, and that the martial monarch was the king of England. 'Therefore,' said she, 'I am going now to find him, for it was he the astrologer meant.'"

Brantôme was telling a tale of a long dead lady. Time had clouded some facts, and shifted the years. The Henry of Agnes Sorel's day was not the mighty victor of Agincourt, but the incapable

ward of Bedford. Yet the tale has sound foundations. Charles, the most unwarlike of men, was brave in her presence. He threw off his lethargy for her, and made a kingly show in tournaments to win her praise; and of that energy which at last did drive the enemy out Agnes kindled some part of the fire. "Je vais combattre, Agnès l'ordonne." In spite of iconoclastic historians, we may go on singing Béranger's song.

Hear this time a contemporary speak of her, Jean de Bueil, admiral of France, "the scourge of the English," and author of the *Jouvencel*. The scene is Loches, the Vieilles Salles: "After dinner the king rose from table, and withdrew to his chamber; then came the queen, and with her ladies and damsels, and they made great cheer, and diverted themselves finely, as was their wont. Amongst the others was one very fair dame [Agnes], who spoke and said thus to the king, 'Sire, I have heard that you have had good news. God be praised. Now take us to the war. You will be the more valiant, you and all your company. Our fortune will bring you better luck than you can dream of.'

"The king answered: 'If all were not already won, it would be a good thing to bring you there, for I know well that nothing might resist you and the other fair ladies here. But the Jouvencel has conquered everywhere and all. What honour would be left to us?'"

"And the lady answered, 'Have no care for that. Do you think to be a do-nothing king? Nenny! Never was there such. Great kings have great affairs. You will find use enough still for the virtue of us fair ladies when you desire it.'"

She reigned graciously fifteen years, say some, five, say others. Her last days were heavy with care. The Dauphin hated her. And, to her own hurt, she had brought a younger and a very fair cousin of her own to court, the fascinating and unscrupulous Antoinette de Maignelais. Antoinette won the king's favour, and she was not one to hide it. In 1450 Agnes made a hurried journey from

Touraine northward to see the king, who was at the siege of Harfleur. Her child was about to be born; but the business admitted of no delay. One had come to her at Loches, and disclosed a plot for delivering her lord into the hands of the English. Was the Dauphin the plotter? Charles laughed at her warning. Perhaps he took it, nevertheless. Seized with illness, she retired to her manor of Ménil, near Jumièges, and gave birth to a daughter. Later she was attacked by dysentery—or she was poisoned, according to another tale—and at Ménil she died, 9th February 1450. Her reflections at the end were full of heavy sadness. To the Seneschale of Poitou, the Dame de Brézé, and to her damsels, she said of life that it was “a little thing and unclean, and tainted by our fragility.”

Her body was brought to Loches. The king mourned her, and loved her again after her death—though with no exclusive devotion. A fine tomb was made for her, and placed in the choir of the Collegial, to which she had been very munificent. In the next reign the canons bethought themselves how unfitting it was the holy place should be defiled by the monument of a king's mistress. “Very well,” said Louis, whose hatred for Agnes had not outlived her; “remove it, and give back the gifts she enriched your church with.” The canons said no more about desecration. The Revolutionists were hard on the poor “lamb's” tomb; broke it ruthlessly, and thrust out the fragments into the cemetery. One of them disinterred the body to steal the fine blonde hair! Pity and romance had their way some eight years later, when the monument was mended, restored as we see it now, with the lambs at her feet, and the angels at her head, and placed in “Agnes's tower.” “Je suis Agnès. Vive France et l'amour!” was the inscription first proposed for the restored tomb.

We know her portrait in all likelihood. As Fouquet painted her in Etienne Chevalier's Melun diptych, we do not call her lovely. A little rustic—vivacious perhaps, and kindly. “Piteux envers toutes

gens," ran one of the legends on her tomb. And so, "Priez Dieu pour l'âme d'elle."

Loches very early gained unhappy fame as a place of strong prisons. Perhaps it had never been empty from Fulk Rechin's time till the day when Charles VII. shut up the Duc d'Alençon there, partisan of the Dauphin in his rebellion. But it was Louis XI. first gave it the fame it has borne ever since. Only a few names have come down to us from the long sad procession of prisoners in this and the next reigns—Pierre de Brézé, the grand seneschal, Philippe de Savoie, Charles de Melun, the Cardinal de Balue, Philippe de Commines, Geoffrey de Pompadour, George d'Amboise, Bishop of Montauban, Ludovic Sforza, Pierre de Navarre, Jean St. Vallier, father of Diane de Poitiers. In many tongues, in many moods, fiery, sardonic, abjectly patient, the prisoners have written their record on the walls. The first chapter is dated 1417. Till then silence. The last, 1786.

When you entered by the crenelated gate of the great fortress, and mounted the rocky road—to-day the Rue Foulques Nerra—fate had a store of alternatives for you. To-day a gay gallant or a weighty statesman, business or luck took you leftward to the *logis du roi*, overlooking the meadows and Beaulieu and the forest. There was great diversion when the court was in residence, and among the queen's ladies might be those who should make your fortune, or mar it. And there was a little breath of liberty from the presence of the king's jester. The way was short between this scene of fine diversions and the gloomy donjon over there; but the king of mistresses and merry fools was not given to changing the lodging of his guests in a sensational fashion. Such quick transference, however, was one of his son's favourite jests, and popular imagination has gloated over Louis XI, wandering by night through a labyrinth of underground passages running between donjon and palace, diverting his solitude in







PORTE PICOYS, LOCHES.

the one by a sight of his victims in the other. "Entrez, messieurs, chez le Roy nostre mestre," ran the sardonic invitation. The place is formidable enough in its decay. It shelters vagabonds in winter-time now. One would have thought the coldest ditch in the open would have been so preferable as to keep vagabonds well outside the commune of Loches. In old days there were infinite varieties in chance. You rotted there and left your bones. Or a king's mood changed, and you were free ere the bloom was off your cheek. Charles VII. was content the walls should be thick. Under Louis XI. your lodging was deep and dark. And lest stretching your limbs might suggest to your spirit to live yet and work, there were wooden cages, iron-barred. But there is a kind of tough humanity that nothing save old age will kill. Balue, after eleven years of prison at Montbazou and Loches, and in the cage, too, came out to an adventurous after-career, and died Bishop of Albano and Palestine. Commynes tested the possibilities of human endurance in one for eight months. Certain persons who have conceived fanciful notions of the literary life, say he wrote his *Memoirs* there. The real literary curiosity is that his *Memoirs*, written in ease and at leisure, slide over these eight months. Commynes, with an admirable gift of expression, had a still more wonderful one of silence. Perhaps that is why the inscription on a wall at Loches is attributed to him—"Dixisse me aliquanto penituit, tacuisse nunquam." "I went down into the depths of the sea, and the waters overwhelmed me" was his comment, outside the walls, outside his *Memoirs*, on his errors and misfortunes.

Louis XII., Father of his People, did not destroy the cages. But his prisoners knew the advantage of a humaner jailer and a humaner time. Perhaps they thought these advantages trifling. Very likely the Duke of Milan did, Lodovico Sforza, Il Moro. Sforza had drunk deep enough himself of the wine of absolute power to appreciate to the full the vintage which the king of France dispensed

to his fallen but still dangerous enemies. He lived nine years here, mostly in the place which we now stare at so curiously, signed all over with his marks. It is not very dark. It is not very cramped. The bishops' prison and St. Vallier's are far more terrible. In the last years of his imprisonment he had leave to range, under due guard, within a radius of twelve miles from Loches. Once, it is said, he tried to escape, hidden under a waggon-load of straw. But when he got out of the waggon, he was ignorant of the roads, and while he lurked in doubt, he was discovered. Hungering for employment, he set his hands to make those curious decorations on the ceiling and walls, naïf designs of primitive man or child, stars and *pennae*, to signify the pains he underwent—"Je porte ce prison pour ma devise que je m'arme de patience par force de peine que l'on me fait porter"—also his own portrait, helmeted, with the vizor up, and the Sforza beaked nose. But sorrow had made him poet; and in verse his expression was apt. In the inscriptions on the prison walls of Loches the note is never forced. The loudest complaints come from modern prisoners, who have had a dream of liberty. Even Sforza's, which are not impersonal, breathe a noble reserved sadness. Remembering so many things there, he remembered Dante, and wrote this paraphrase of well-known lines—

"Il n'y a au monde plus grande destresse  
Du bon tempts soy souvenir en la tristesse."

There are verses, with the diction of a love-song, whose appeal goes straight to the heart. "Je m'en repens, cela ne vault rien." They are said to be addressed to the king of France. If so, the old ruler and warrior tells how he strove harder to see but once the face of his jailer than in the old days he had striven to bear the victory over a foe. When, at last, they opened the gates, he died immediately.

And how many years did that other wait who wrote this supreme wisdom on finite human life and endeavour?

“Qui vaut mieux amour ou justice ?  
Et se tousjours amour estoit,  
Da point justice ne faudroit.  
Pour ce que amour est folle,  
Et loin justice établie, Responce,  
Amour vaut mieux.”

Of all the tales of the dungeons of Loches the eeriest is this. There are many subterranean passages under the castle. Some have always been known. Some have been opened lately. Some are still walled up. A governor in the eighteenth century broke down one of the walls, and found himself in a great gallery. Making his way along, he saw a very tall man sitting bent, hiding his head in his hands, exhausted or in grief. A chest was at his feet. The governor went up to him, and put his hand on his shoulder. The figure crumbled away at his touch. The chest was found to be full of white, neatly folded linen, which at the breath of the air turned to powdery shreds.

Enough of the nether side of glory and power. It is foul down here and fetid. We long for the upper air, and chafe at the patience of the prisoners. No glory that ever was was worth it. There is only one bearable inscription: “Sous peu, nous détruirons ces hautes murailles, briserons ces chaînes, et ferons disparaître ces tortures inventées par les rois, trop faibles pour arrêter un peuple qui veut la liberté, 1785.”

They broke up the cages at the Revolution. The wood of them was given as fuel to some poor persons, but a few bits were saved to make a bonfire.

They have put a modern face on the domestic architecture of Loches in the opener streets; but its modernness is only skin-deep. The place is stamped with the mark of that old time when beauty of site and strong defence were the only considerations in making a house.

Hence the gardens hanging in the air ; the shady outlook terraces, whence you look down a neighbour's chimney, or pick the irises growing on his roof, he free to take the like liberties with the next tier below. Make your way by the Rue St. Ours, or the Rue des Fossés St. Ours, the twisted dilapidated streets about the castle, where relics of decayed magnificence keep company with the makeshifts of poverty to-day. Apart from castle and Collegial, the destroyer has left bits of all the ages. There is the Porte des Cordeliers, through which you pass to Beaulieu ; and the Porte Picoys, to which is joined the dainty Renaissance Hôtel de Ville, finished in 1543. On your way to the chateau gate is the old house known as the Chancellerie, with its frieze and the group of Hercules and Nessus—once, however, on a chimney-piece. The next house, less ornate, may have been Chicot's. At least the arms on it are his arms. At Loches he was *lieutenant du roi*, his real name Antoine de la Roche d'Anglerays. At Loches he married his wife, a noble Tourangelle, Renée Baret, and he did active service against the Protestants in the neighbourhood. He wished to be buried in the church of the Cordeliers at Loches. This was not done ; but his portrait was there as late as 1634. Then, hidden away in a courtyard behind the Tour St. Antoine, and hopelessly decayed, is the Hôtel Nau. Its light open loggias, its pillars and medallions, proclaim its debt to Italy. Twenty years or so ago, the interior was rich with carving and tapestries.

I have spoken of the dearth of pictures in Touraine. Do not leave Loches without seeing the triptych in St. Antoine's church. It came here from the Chartreuse de Liget in the forest. Its authorship has been much disputed, especially since it hung in the exhibition of the "Primitifs" in Paris. But it is an authentic and interesting specimen of the school of Tours of the great days. It might be by Fouquet, or his son. It is generally given to Bourdichon, though the F.I.B in the right-hand panel is probably not *Fecit Jehan Bourdichon*, but the name of the donor, Frater I.B., a brother of Liget. There is real por-



Saint-Omer, France.





traiture and a fine decorative sense in it. It wants the terrible intensity of the Flemish pictures with which it is natural to compare it ; but likewise it presents none of their hideous types. The refined spirituality of the kneeling Magdalen with the dark red hair, has something that recalls Filippino.

But on to Beaulieu. Through the Porte des Cordeliers the road is straight, past the Hospital and Sansac. (Sansac, a fine old manor, backed by the *prairie du roi*, built by a companion of Francis I., used to have a contemporary bust of the king on its façade. The present bust is a copy). There is no division nowadays between the places, but the inhabitants are still Lochois or Beau-loc(h)ois. The old rivalries of the time when Beaulieu wielded a wide spiritual power and Loches had a royal château, have not all died out. Beaulieu cannot assert itself now it has lost its abbey ; but it refuses to be overawed on the strength of a *sous-préfecture* in the *logis du roi*. It keeps itself well apart. This time at least I am on the side of the stronger, the more prosperous, for Beaulieu depressed me too often. They are building up the great church again, by help of M. Meunier and the State. Indeed, there are magnificent remains, worthy of restoration. But what will Beaulieu do with it, when once it is finished, if ever it be finished? Poor melancholy Beaulieu ! It is but a slow current of life flows through its veins. The place is too big for its people. Its past is too big for the people of to-day. As you wander about its dilapidated streets, you meet at every turn some mark of a time when life was lived stormily, largely, when there was need for stout defence and demand for splendour. Now life is safe and poor and nothing happens. The bright spirit of Loches and the Lochois is nowhere to be seen. You feel resentfulness in the air.

Of all the churches that grouped themselves round the abbey hardly anything remains. St. Laurent, an exquisite bit of Romanesque, is all but a ruin. St. Catherine exists, in the name of a back



lane. St. André is a tumble-down farmhouse. There is the "Queen's house," called so from a visit of Catherine de Medicis, when she was supervising the *Traité de Monsieur*. But tradition says Agnes Sorel lived in it long before Catherine's day. Go this way or that, each street is a picture; but Beaulieu is not a picturesque town to which tourists come cheerfully and support the inhabitants. Few visitors ever come near it. It has a shabby, independent life of its own—for industries, some ill-smelling tanneries and a mill. But you find the Indre at Beaulieu, and one reach of it of great beauty, like a Bruges canal—red gable ends, green gardens abutting on the water, a feathery fringe of poplars, and little boats out of which fathers of families fish for the household dinner at their own back door. The great tower of the abbey church tops all. Watching there we lost the sense of desolation. It was Beaulieu's hour. Depression was soothed into peace as the bells of Beaulieu chimed the Angelus across the stream.

From Beaulieu it is but a short way into the forest of Loches, a real forest of great extent and fine trees, where you can lose your way and gain a delectable thrill of adventurous anxiety, if the shades of night are falling. It lies nearly parallel with the course of the Indre, that is, north-west and south-east. Spurs of it reach nearly to Reignac one way, and almost to the borders of Berri on the other. Three chief roads traverse it, to St. Quentin, whereby you can regain the Cher valley, to Genillé, and to Montrésor. In old days it gave cover to the English, to the Huguenots, to the Leaguers, to every enemy aiming at the sack of Beaulieu or the storming of Loches. But from the Tour Chevalon, the little tower at the back of Beaulieu, the watch looked out, and gave warning. And legend older far than history clings about the forest. Near Ferrière, at Orfon, where later a king's hunting lodge rose, was in olden times the palace of an evil enchanter, Orfon by name, degenerate inheritor of the science and

the wealth of the Druids. In his cavern he kept heaps of gold ; and on Christmas Eve he counted aloud and chinked his treasure, and turned men's minds from holy things to envy and greed. He is heard still, they say, but deeper down, where he lies buried and powerless. I doubt his fall. Orfon has only gone elsewhere.

The road due east through Beaulieu leads on to Montrésor. Rather more than half-way, about ten kilometres from Loches, is the tiny chapel of St. Jean de Liget—which need detain none but the hardy enthusiast for antiquities. At the *garde's* house near the pyramid you may, or may not, find the key. Those who ask for it are not numerous. The chapel lies off the road, and you reach it by a narrow forest walk on the right, which leads down to a cornfield, in the middle of which the chapel stands. It is far from impressive : you will be apt to liken it to a tin canister with a peaked lid. Restorers have lately scraped off the antique hue, but a closer examination will show a certain daintiness of proportion and detail. It was never meant to be seen in isolation. Here we are at the beginning of the lands of Liget, which Henry II. of England transferred from the Benedictines of Villeloin to a small band of Cistercians. This little chapel is all that remains of the first buildings, raised soon after 1170, in expiation of the murder of Thomas à Becket. Recent visitors have been discouraged by the deplorable condition of the frescoes inside—its chief interest. They are now, I believe, in process of restoration ; what I saw needed the interpretation of M. l'Abbé Bossebœuf to reveal them as Saints Stephen and Laurence, Hilary and Nicholas, Peter and Paul, the Nativity, the Death of the Virgin, the Holy Women at the Tomb, Christ in the Temple, etc. Rude and rough, but naïvely vigorous are those paintings, done in the solitude of the forest by lonely Carthusians, working perhaps a century before Giotto.

Back to the high road and onward to the Chartreuse, of which

the little chapel in the cornfield represents the germ. On an eighteenth-century gate you read—

“Anglorum Henricus rex Thomæ cæde cruentus  
Ligeticos fundat Cartusia monachos.”

No one hinders your entering. In the farm-buildings beyond are some remains of the old communes of the Cistercians. The little separate cells and gardens have all gone; but you can trace the cloister still; and the church walls stand, now open to the sky. It was very rich in its day. Royal favour followed it from the twelfth century to the reign of Louis XIV. Among its treasures dispersed at its suppression was the triptych now in St. Antoine's, Loches. The prior's house, rebuilt in the eighteenth century, is a modest chateau, and the fish pond is turned into a garden. I have one memory of old and broken Liget, which has penetrated and scattered many a fog since—of a green grass walk fringed by a wealth of red roses hanging in clusters on an old grey wall.

Still journeying on to Montrésor, as the road swings round one sees to the right a pond, to the left what looks like a fortified farm. We are still in the domain of the Chartreuse. The fortified place, once Crassay, now known as the Courroirie, has an interesting history. It was the parchment factory of the monks of Liget—as its name indicates. But it was also the fortress of Liget, where the monks retired in times of danger, which were frequent enough. It had its moat, its drawbridge, its battlements, and its meurtrières. In 1361, the Carthusians held out stoutly here against the English, though they were at last reduced by famine. Later, they were given a garrison and a captain. The remains of the church are still to be seen, and, above it, the room for drying the parchment. La Courroirie has seen stirring events. Leaguers and Huguenots strove for this important outpost of Loches. In 1589 it fell into the hands of the terrible Huguenot captain Lignou. The king's lieutenant at





Braville.

Loches, Antoine d'Anglerays, better known as Chicot, offered him two thousand crowns if he would give it up. For answer, Lignou seized Chicot and locked him in the Courroirie; whereupon the jesting lieutenant "renaque, bouffe, deteste, grince les dents, et crie"; "for," says the austere monk who tells the tale, "*simia semper simia*, and he repeated all the follies by which he was wont to entertain his master, and which are unworthy to come to our pure ears." He consigned his master Henry to every devil, pouring curses on his head; and he tried to get out by an infinity of tricks and stratagems. One of these nearly succeeded. He and his guard played cards together. Chicot's stakes were high and reckless, and he roused the other to such a fury of gambling that he played away his doublet, his plumed hat, his sword, and all his arms and equipage. Chicot won every time. Then he put on his winnings, and paraded up and down in them till the loser was in despair. "Never mind," said Chicot, "you shall have them back again. Only let me go by myself to Captain Lignou just like this, and make him laugh." The guard let him go; and Chicot with lowered head passed safely through the soldiers, wearing his Huguenot livery. All would have gone well, for the last door was kept by some rollicking soldiers, too much taken up with their jesting and laughter to notice him. But as ill luck would have it, the cannons of Loches roared out at that moment. The roisterers started up, rushed to bar the door against some companies of soldiers passing then, and seeing the outgoing Chicot, challenged him, seized him, and locked him up safer than before.

There is one terrible memory of the same time. A great treasure lay hidden at La Courroirie, it was reported. This was the pretext for the gross brutality of Lignou. When the monks resisted him, his men plunged them into the nearest pond up to the throat, then to the lips, "whereupon, inserting the point of their murderous blades, opened their mouths and their teeth, that the water might flow in. And so bit by bit were they drowned."

We have left the valley of the Indre. We are moving down into the valley of the little Indrois, a thin stream, born outside the department, which gives its waters up at Azay, as we saw. We fall gently down to Montrésor, a tiny town nestling under its chateau and its church. The river winds along grassy, poplar-fringed meadows, now and again widening out into a pool where boats lie moored among the reeds, or kneeling housewives beat their linen rhythmically while the water-birds and wild things look on. From the river the narrow, twisting streets of the little brown bourg climb up to the platform where chateau and church are poised. At Montrésor every thing is very old and very tranquil. A russet-coloured place, fast asleep, but smiling in its sleep. There are no shops where you can buy anything ; yet there are too many, for most of them seem closed. You enter the courtyard of the chateau between great old towers, remains of the ancient fortress, the only stern things looking down on the happy valley. The Renaissance chateau has a genial, debonair, protecting look. At the back the bastions fall down, steep, bulky, very strong, but they are clad with friendly ivy. At least they do not threaten any more. Unexpected vestiges of old time are met at every turn about the town. Were the Montrésoriens once a wandering race that they honoured so markedly the pilgrim saints? Here on the wall of a poor house, once a chapel, is a rough coloured statue of St. Roch and his dog. Nearly opposite is a head of St. Jacques, with the cockle-shell in his cap. And there is John the Baptist on another wall. A fine young gallant, with flowing black curls, black moustaches, and ruddy countenance. A lamb is climbing up on him, heedless of his attitude of strenuous vigour and his evident haste to set out on a journey, cross in hand. A bouquet lies at his feet, fresh still, for yesterday was his *fête*, and they made a fire last night in his honour in the place behind the chateau.

The archæologists will tell you that once upon a time the little place was a dependence of the Treasurer of Tours Cathedral. Thence its







MONTRESOR FROM THE INDOIS.

name, *Mons Thesauri*. Very likely. But the folks hereabouts do not believe it; and, captive of the intimate charm of the place, you listen at least to their more imaginative legendary explanation. "Gontran, the king, having fallen asleep by the side of a rippling stream (the Indrois), his head resting on the knees of his gentle squire, dreamt of a grotto which contained a treasure. Soon the squire saw a little lizard coming out of the prince's mouth. It glided to the neighbouring hill, and came back all shining like gold. When the king heard of this vision, he made haste to dig in the hillside, and there was discovered an immense pile of treasure." As for the history of the bourg, you have only to look at its situation to know that, according to their habits, the old Gauls had a town there, and the Romans a camp; and that in the eleventh century Fulk Nerra looked at it and beheld its strategic importance. Evidently he did not need to seize it, for its lord, Roger the Devil, was one of his allies. But he strengthened and transformed it. Henry II. held it. Philip Augustus took it. It was threatened by Richard. Then for long its history is purely local. At last the famous family of de Bueil made the fortress into a chateau-fort; and under their reign, under the reign, in fact, of the author of *Le Journal*, Montrésor served as prison to La Tremouille, Charles VII.'s favourite. Later, the Villequiers of La Guerche had it—a family that owed their fortune to the facile beauty of the ladies and the complacent temper of the men.

It was under Louis XI. that the place grew to power and fame, when it became the principal seat of the Bastarnays, lords also of Bridoré. Imbert de Bastarnay, minister of Louis XI., Charles VIII., and Louis XII., was a man of brains and of such special qualities as made him intimate and confidant of all three kings. For Louis XI. he seems to have borne as close an attachment as did Commines. To Louis XII. he was particularly useful in his marriage affairs, helping him in his divorce from Jeanne, and being the gallant ambassador who went to meet Mary at Boulogne. Imbert made the chateau-fort of

the de Buëils into a dwelling worthy of the site and of housing the captain of Mont St. Michel and the trusted minister of kings. But his most notable work was the building of the Collegial of Montrésor, begun by him in 1519, and continued by his grandson René. It is one of the most remarkable churches in Touraine; at least it is the most perfect specimen of Renaissance art as applied to ecclesiastical architecture. Light, graceful, bold in all its lines, the church of Montrésor is a flower of the time when French artists were seeking something new, after the ages of Gothic, and when as yet they knew nothing of the heavy burden of the pseudo-classic. The decoration had its inspiration in Italy, but the hand is French. In it are mingled in friendly fashion, arabesques, grotesques, and religious story, the Bastarnay shield, saints and secular persons—none of them too insistent, each helping in the gracious embroidered fantasy. The façade, broken and crumbling, is still a fine book of sculptured miniatures. Look at the exquisite little Flight into Egypt to the right of the doorway.

Inside the church the chief interest attaches to the Bastarnay tombs, erected by René. They were once in the choir. The Revolutionary vandals smashed them; and, alas! the industrious Gaignières omitted drawings of them from his collection. But they have been restored with great intelligence; and now near the entrance you see the white marble figures of the Seigneur Imbert, his wife Georgette, and their young son François, lying on a black marble slab. Imbert, who wears the collar of St. Michael, is a fine austere figure. The strong lines of his face, the wrinkles about his eyes, suggest a real portrait. Georgette wears a large, nun-like coiffe, a fur-trimmed mantle and a tasselled girdle. Unfortunately, the face of the young soldier François is broken. The surrounding figures on the pedestal, the Evangelists and the Apostles, have been plausibly restored. We are distinctly in presence of work from the hands of masters—pupils probably of Michel Colombe or his nephews in

the school of Tours. There are other treasures in the church, notably the windows made out of fine sixteenth-century fragments. Step aside to a little passage leading out on the south side, to see a little gem of glass. A woman kneels in a wine-coloured dress, with a blue coiffe and a blue girdle. A figure in green, with purple sleeves, stands behind. Only a great lady and her confidante, perhaps. Maybe the lady kneels by the tomb of her son. Nothing holier. It is beautiful enough.

The chateau has had many illustrious occupants since the days of the Bastarnays—the Guises, the Bourdeilles (of the family of Brantôme), Monsieur, Louis XIV.'s brother, and the Beauvilliers. Of late years chateau and collegial have been faithfully cared for by the Polish family of Branicki ; and the objects in their collection recall not only the Renaissance Bastarnays, but John Sobieski.





La Grande.





## CHAPTER XVI

### THE PLATEAU OF STE. MAURE—THE VALLEYS OF THE CREUSE AND CLAISE

*The Isolation of the Plain—The Shrine of St. Catherine de Vierbis—Port de Piles—La Haye-Descartes—La Guerche—Le Grand Pressigny—A Happy Valley—Preuilley-sur-Claise.*

FROM the heights above Montbazou and Esvres you see the first stretches of the great central plain of Touraine, the plateau of Ste. Maure. Or you cross it in the train from Tours to Port de Piles. Very monotonous is this country between the Indre and the Vienne, and life is prosperous here, but very bald. Nothing is sacrificed to beauty. Man is born to labour is a philosophy accepted as a matter of course, with contentment if no joy. The land yields wealth, at the cost of unremitting patience. In certain parts, indeed, it has great natural wealth; for about Bossée, La Chapelle Blanche, Mantelan, Louans, and Ste. Maure, are the fertile and fertilising *salunières*, rich marine deposits of shells and animals. The great plain was once the floor of the sea. In the blazing shadeless summer, in the dark winter, melancholy strikes into the traveller: and yet it is a place where he can make discoveries. The isolated villages, cut off from each other by villainous roads, have no picturesqueness of site. Nevertheless, the chime of a church-bell over the flat cornfields may draw him to a hamlet church, a worthy goal of pilgrimage. And the outward lack of beauty or charm, which has kept the townsfolk away, has also kept some embers of an older life alive, which is dead in the green shady valley below. In the field the steam threshing-

machine is puffing away. The outhouses in the yard have been scraped, and roofed with newest slate. The gaunt farmhouse is frankly ugly. But old beliefs, old past guessing, linger within in the chimney corner—for a little while. The old language, the last relics of old dress, find their last home on these bare upland plains.

The most definite point of interest in the whole plateau, far surpassing Ste. Maure with its donjon fragments, is in the little village of St. Catherine de Fierbois. The railway is not very serviceable; but at Villeperdue or Ste. Maure, you are within six or seven kilometres of it. Once it was a noted place of pilgrimage, with a special blessing for such as fought the enemies of France. That was why the soldiers of the Scots Guard haunted it. To this shrine, legend says, Charles Martel came to give thanks for his victory over the Saracens—even depositing here his triumphant sword. A Crusader brought relics of St. Catherine of Alexandria from Mt. Sinai, says another story. But though the Charles Martel legend does not seem to have been written down before the seventeenth century, the cult was probably older than the Crusades; and the tale that obstinately connects Charlemagne's father with the place need not be despised. By the end of the fourteenth century pilgrims had ceased to come; and the chapel in the middle of a wood had fallen to ruins. Then a man of the neighbourhood, Jehan Godefroi by name, blind and paralytic, bethought him of the ancient hidden shrine; and bade his people carry him through the thick brushwood there. Ere nine days' meditations were over, he was healed. The cult revived, and the chapel was rebuilt. Pilgrims flocked thither, and among them many released or escaped prisoners, soldiers who had seen death close, and not fallen. They hung their chains up as ex-votos, or the arrows and the balls which had grazed but not wounded them.

There are many records of St. Catherine's kindness. One Michael



MONTESSON.



Hamilton, a Scot, esquire of the company of John Stewart, tells how in Holy Week, 1429, he and several foot-soldiers were at Clisson, in Brittany ; and ere they left they hanged a spy. When the Bretons came up they took vengeance on all whom they found ; and Hamilton who could not escape for the weight of his armour, was hanged from a gibbet in his shirt on Maundy Thursday. As soon as he was taken, he prayed to Madame St. Catherine. That night a voice bade the curé of Clisson up and cut down Hamilton. He paid no attention, till Good Friday after Mass, when he sent a messenger who "turned and spun the Scotsman about, and knew not whether he was dead or alive." So to find out, he slit his little toe. Hamilton afterwards swore he felt no harm so long as he was hanging, but at this wound "he drew up his leg and stirred." The terrified messenger fled. The curé said it was a miracle ; and he and the other clergy put on their vestments, went to the gibbet, and cut down the Scot, whereupon he stirred. As soon as he had sufficiently recovered he was set on a horse ; and was cared for tenderly by the Abbess of La Regrepierre. Between Easter Day and Easter Monday a voice said to Hamilton : "Deliver thee, deliver thee ! Bethink thee to accomplish thy vow in my chapel of Fierboys ; and I will aid and guard thee." For fifteen days he could not walk ; and when at last he set off, his progress was very slow. He found in the fields some men of his own company, with whom he abode several days. But the voice roused him again, and this time "gave him a great buffet and a sore on the cheek." So he "came hither in his shirt, bringing the halter wherewith he was hanged ; and praised, thanked, and glorified the Glorious Virgin and Madame Saint Catherine for the grace which she had done him."

Earlier in the same year had come Jeanne d'Arc on her way to Chinon. She had crossed the Indre at Corméry or Reignac, climbed the steep left bank and made her way by Tauxigny or Louans. At Fierbois she heard three masses. Maybe St. Catherine, whom she

loved, showed her face to the Maid in the chapel. Did they show her the holy relics? The ring inscribed with *Jhesus Marie* had touched, she believed, the body of St. Catherine. When Jeanne was being armed at Tours for the campaign, she refused the sword they offered her. Voices had bidden her "bear an ancient weapon with five crosses on the blade, which was to be found under the earth behind the altar of St. Catherine." Charles Martel's sword, it was said. She did not call it so. An armourer of Tours came here to find it; and she bore it victoriously in the campaign. What became of it she refused to tell. It was broken, and the armourers could not mend it.

From Jeanne's time onward for ages the shrine was a goal of national pilgrimage. Charles VIII. and Anne de Bretagne built a great church, which still remains, one of the most perfect specimens of late Gothic in Touraine.

At Port de Piles we have reached the Creuse near its entry into the Vienne, from which point it forms the south-western boundary of Touraine. But its most picturesque reaches are outside the province, in Berri, and there George Sand is its laureate. About La Haye, and La Guerche, and Barrou, it is a broad, dark, placid-looking stream, overshadowed on one side by steep wooded banks, on the other lying open to a valley without much incident. Its placidity is deceptive. The Creuse is secret and sinister. It is working unseen. There is a Creuse far underground, below and about the Creuse you see; and it mines and mines, till suddenly the ground falls, and houses and trees fall through without warning. You hear such tales about Barrou, and the Barrou that has survived seems sadly to remember the catastrophes.

Port de Piles is but a railway junction to-day; but it has had its romance. Eleanor of Aquitaine had an anxious time there. After her divorce from the king of France she was making her way to her own dominions, with a well-purposed scheme in her head. Geoffrey of Anjou, who still thought of himself as Count of Touraine, had his

scheme, too, which was to carry off the divorced lady and great heiress, and make her his wife. Aquitaine would have been a strong support to him in his unequal struggle against his ambitious brother Henry. At Port de Piles she was to be seized and wooed. But warning came to Eleanor, and her halt here was of the briefest. In her flight she matured her plan. Geoffrey's wooing scorned, Henry's had no need to be very determined. Indeed, she fell into his arms. Eleanor got the stronger man—and perhaps she regretted it, and wished she had made a longer halt at Port de Piles.

Here we are on the border of Touraine, a fact well marked by the old saying that virtue stopped at Port de Piles. Beyond—the tradition is of later Valois times—was the court county (Touraine), and all which that implied. "So that, in our Guyenne," says Brantôme, "I have heard many noblemen say—nay I have heard them swear—that they would never marry a maid or a woman who should have passed Port de Piles on their way into France."

Few travellers stop at the quiet little town of La Haye-Descartes; and, indeed, homage paid here by the passing tourist to one of the greatest minds of Europe seems futile enough. Glory of Touraine he is, but not as Rabelais, whose genius was made out of the very soil of his country. You cannot know Rabelais unless you know the valley of the Vienne. But the great remote thinker, who justified and proved existence by thought, what ties has he to this place or to that? *Cache ta vie*, he says in his proud solitude. He thought, and widened the horizon of life. There is no local mark on him. Nevertheless, in this shabby dull little town he was born, his birth-place a narrow, modernised house in the Grande Rue. And the register of St. George's, that patched, nondescript church near the river, records the fact that René Descartes was christened on Nov. 9, 1604. He was Tourangeau by long descent on his father's side, Breton on his mother's. His paternal grandfather, Gilles Descartes, was mayor of Tours, seigneur of Châtillon, near Courçay. But Descartes

wandered far from Touraine, which knew only his early youth ; Holland and Sweden had his fruitful years ; Paris has his bones. His statue, a poor thing, is in front of the Hôtel de Ville here. I wonder what the good folks of La Haye think of him. You cannot buy his *Discours de la méthode* in the shops. Indeed, La Haye looks for all the world as if his influence had been too remote to have touched it, but also as if it had refused to be influenced by any one lower, and so has remained particularly characterless.

From the good broad road that runs south from La Haye along the valley of the Creuse it is worth while turning off to see La Guerche. I saw it in dank mid-winter. Perhaps a summer veil of green would hide a little of its ruin. Roofs, walls, and chimneys are in a state of utter collapse ; and how it keeps its rags together is difficult to make out. This Rip Van Winkle among villages has fallen asleep, and the wind and weather have worked havoc ; and it has not yet opened its eyes wide enough to see how battered it is. Or perhaps La Guerche is so proud of its castle, it feels it need make no effort. A fine castle it is, rising straight out of the water ; but it has known better days. It was sadly damaged during the Revolution, and at its restoration they docked it of a storey, so that now on the water-side it is rather squat. And the quite modern bridge, though it is convenient, if your way lies towards Poitou, hinders the view which its builders planned.

An obstinate tradition connects the castle with Agnes Sorel. The venerable butler of the old school who showed us round, clung to the tale. In a corridor of an upper floor he showed us "Agnes's monument"—the figure of a lady, which once lay in the parish church. There are many tales of Agnes hunting with the king in the forest of La Guerche. Now Charles hunted there very often—but, alas ! Agnes was not the lady by his side.

An older castle stood on this site, attractive, indeed, to all romantic souls—and to greedy ones as well, for John seized it. But



let that pass : John Lackland means John the ineffectual land-grabber. About 1448, this earlier castle was bought from the Malestroits by Nicolas Chambes, of the Scots Guard. He may have bought it on his own account. It is more likely Charles VII., of whom he was a devoted servant, used him to veil his own purchase of the place. The fair and gentle Agnes died in 1450. She had a successor quite as fair but not so gentle—her own cousin, Antoinette de Maignelais. According to one story, Antoinette, an old love of the king's, brought Agnes to the court, and was supplanted by her for years. But the truth seems to be that it was Agnes who introduced Antoinette, and before her death had reason to regret it. Agnes had never sought to cover her position as king's mistress by a hollow marriage. Antoinette, who was of another stamp, married, in 1450, André de Villequier. The honours showered on the husband were numerous, sudden, and magnificent. From a mediocre position in the king's service he rose to be governor of La Rochelle ; was given lands and castles and baronies—"by reason of his marriage." The new castle of La Guerche was built for him by the king ; and Charles made such frequent visits there that one of the old gates of Loches, La Porte Poitevine, used to be known familiarly as La Porte de la Guerche. La Guerche is a romantic place for secret wooing. André, be it said, did not look on at the amours. He was generally on active service ; and when he died it was at Preuilly.

Antoinette was beautiful and fascinating, but not romantic. To keep a hold over the wayward king, she stooped very low to serve him. And she scattered her favours pretty freely, between the king, the Duke of Brittany, and lesser folk. The lady in the gallery of the chateau is neither she nor her gentle cousin, but a certain Jacqueline, wife of Jean Baptiste de Villequier, who died in 1518.

The Villequiers of the sixteenth century were turbulent Leaguers, and war made havoc in the nest of love. The castle was stormed, the village sacked. Now it has fallen asleep. Once or twice a year

the hunting horns ring out, and a stag is driven down to the water. The villagers crowd to see the merry hunters and the panting beast. The hunters pass. La Guerche sleeps again.

Near Abilly, beyond La Haye-Descartes and La Guerche, the Creuse receives the Claise, a little river with some twenty miles of its course in our province. That its valley is unsung I cannot believe. That the songs are not written down is a trifling thing. The battered chateaux at Le Grand Pressigny and Preuilly attract no foreigners; and the travelling natives think you must have strayed from the baths of La Roche Posay across the Creuse into their midst. La Roche Posay has "scenery," on a grand scale. There is nothing on a grand scale in the Claise valley, save the history of its two ruined fortresses. Or you may be accounted for as a strayed picker-up of flint implements, the *livres de beurre* strewn over the ground and under the ground between Le Grand Pressigny and Abilly. Not that the inhabitants would own themselves out of the world. A railway runs along the little vale; and now and then trains run along the railroad. But it shoots out few folk from your world, and has its own standard of frequency and speed, arranged, I believe, with due deference to the water spirits, and to ensure not too much discordance with the songs of the shepherdesses. The railway horn did not hoot along the valley for us. We came over the high ground from Ligueil, by way of Paulmy, and met the Claise at Le Grand Pressigny.

Le Grand Pressigny had once good reason to be proud of itself. That is clear, look at it from whatever side you may; but from the road to Barrou you will be most impressed. It looks now happy enough in a very humble present. Long ages ago a great builder seized on the site as a place for the defence and command of the open valley. The town is topped by two towers, strangely companioned. One a dark donjon, square and bulky still, with buttresses, the remains of machicolations, and some rugged broken towers and bastions on a grassy mound. The other, a tall graceful shaft, shoots





LE GRAND PRESSON.

into the air like a flowering reed, an exotic evidently. A skilled eye will say at once, Italian, before it has seen the *château d'habitation* (now the *gendarmerie*) of which it forms a part. This *château d'habitation* is in the late Italian style, classic, rather severe. Haphazard houses are attached, made out of scraps of old grandeur. A lonely widow, who had been out all day getting grass for her cow, took us into her lofty, sumptuously panelled dwelling in one of these. You must mount the tower to know how Le Grand Pressigny stands—not the surly donjon, but the slender Italian shaft, built at the time when machicolations had become a mere pretext for carving a frieze. From the top you see the little brown-roofed town running up and down its own hill, which lies in a wide cup in the midst of other little hills. Roads bound off in all directions, and the Claise and the little Egronne shine clear through a mist of young poplars.

Donjon and Italian tower and the Italian well that lies at the foot of the donjon, mark the different stages of the place. The mediæval fortress, with roots in an unknown past, was battered and sacked by a score of wars and a hundred local feuds. It rises still some thirty metres. All save the upper part is very ancient—of the twelfth century at latest, built not long after Fulk Nerra, on his model, and to keep his own immediate descendants at bay. In 1523 the place fell into the hands of René, Comte de Villars, the bastard of Savoy. He and his son, Honorat de Savoie, were the builders of the graceful cold pleasure-house and the lily-like tower, for which they brought architects from Italy. The church in the pretty Place below owes them a charming piscina. But the paintings in the sacristy—once the seigneurial chapel—are from a French hand. The description of an archæologist sent us in search of these with some eagerness, but we had to take the accuracy of his description on trust. Neglect and damp have made them indecipherable. The church, however, will charm all save purists. The colour outside is delicious, the tower of dark blue slate, the roof of purple tiles, the walls soft ochre. Inside

it is a simple villagers' church—originally Romanesque, with a barrel roof. Down one side they have most reprehensibly run a row of arches to make an aisle. A poor place, but venerable. The Savoie



LE GRAND PRESSIGNY CHURCH

gifts, save the piscina, have all been stolen doubtless ; and it has had no modern ones.

It is a new country this that divides the valleys of the Claise and the Creuse in South Touraine, between Le Grand Pressigny and Barrou. We are away from the vineyards and the gardens, on a high ridge, not too cultivated. Lonely brown farms and hamlets nestle in

the hollows. Long miles of heath and pinewood take us back to the borders of Surrey and Sussex—with a higher sky above.

From Le Grand Pressigny make your way to Etableaux. You cannot miss the striking ruins of the old fortress on the hillside above the river. From it a little brown and pink and ochre village runs steep down to the Claise. Slim straight poplars rise from the meadows. It is a patch of hillside to arrest the eye of the decorative artist. Cross the bridge here and the railway line ; and on from this point to Chaumussay the road sings. At least it sang on the last day of November ; so what must it do in spring ? On one side of the wandering stream are ranged low round hills, soft grey or russet this winter day, fringed with woods, topped with old turreted manors ; on the other, low brown slopes where the oxen are ploughing. The meadows at their feet are wide and flat. Every now and then a narrow glen cuts a passage through the little hills. A land of pastorals and lovers, where every blink of sun calls all the folks outside to tend their herds of cattle, sheep, and goats. And the cow-herds and the goat-herds and the shepherdesses come down to the water, to knit, or to laugh, or make love, or to gossip with the merry older folks dabbling their clothes in the water blue as June. Just outside Chaumussay we sat down in the middle of half a dozen pastorals. The little hills laughed and clapped their hands.

Chaumussay is very small. Its charms are very intimate and hold the heart. Just its brown length, from the beginning of the poplar walk to the old water-mill, would be range enough for an idyllic poet's muse. Perhaps there is a too insistently obvious piety about. The shrines are blatantly new ; and the interior of the charming and original old church has been too much scraped and cleansed. But gratitude here might persuade one even to "do the stations" up to the Calvaire on the steep hillside.

Preuilly is five miles on. A turn in the road, and it stands out

bold on the horizon, red and blue in the sunlight, crowned by the ruined Château du Lion. A substantial market town of nearly two thousand inhabitants, set on a hill, with the Claise winding at its feet. Its comfortable present has not hustled all the past away. There are bits left of all the ages, nests for fancy to home in, or to fly off from. If it were anywhere save in this forgotten corner of South Touraine, it would be famous for its site, its ruins, and its magnificent church. Preuilly was once the first barony of all Touraine; and five *châtellenies*, thirteen fortresses and many fiefs depended on it. All the neighbourhood bowed before it. Its Lion Castle has a proud site. Little is left—only a square building, which they call the prison, some fragments of walls and ramparts, a crumbling tower, and a round donjon. But even the fragments are impressive, and from the castle mound you have a magnificent view of the surrounding hills and the Claise winding among its meadows. Lion Castle was built before Fulk Nerra's time, about 930, and Fulk knocked a great part of it down. Its lord, Pierre de Montrabé, built it up again. One of its eleventh-century lords, Geoffroi de Preuilly, had a European fame. He it was first drew up the code of chivalry. During the Hundred Years' War it was a special target for the English, commanding as it did all South Touraine. They took it twice, were always at it, and never rested till it was dismantled. It was a certain Pierre Frotier who rebuilt it after them—of whom more hereafter. In the Wars of Religion its history was no less stormy. By treachery at last, after a long siege, it fell into Huguenot hands. But its defenders did not give in: the Sieur du Tremblais and the Sieur de Rouvray died captive but unbroken in spirit in its dungeon. In the seventeenth century it regained some of its old strength under Henry IV.'s illegitimate son, César de Vendôme. Since then it has mouldered and dwindled; but till the last tower falls Preuilly must keep its ancient pride.

Below, on the banks of the Claise, stands the great church. They





PORECIA-SUR-CLAIRE.

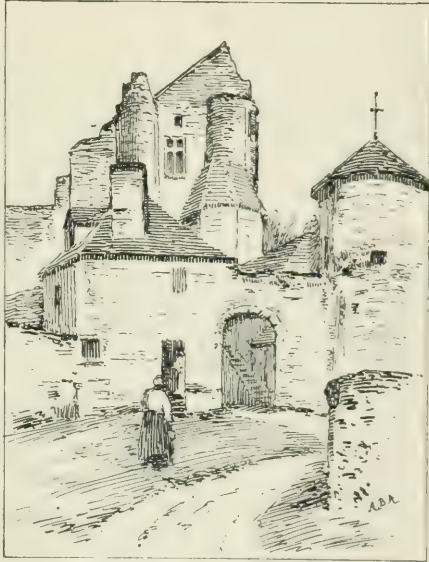


have restored it lately, with much skill, so far as the interior goes ; but it will take a hundred years to mellow the crude new tiles of roof and steeple to the warm russet that the landscape needs. The great church of Preuilly, founded by Effroy, lord of Preuilly and La Roche Posay in the year 1000, is, therefore,

contemporary with Fulk Nerra's abbey church of Beaulieu, and is one of the most remarkable examples of Romano-Byzantine architecture in France.

It is in the shape of a Latin cross, with collateral naves, and an ambulatory with three chapels round the apse. "Perhaps it is the first example," says Monseigneur Chevalier, "of this curious arrangement, which exercised so profound an influence on the succeeding

modifications of ecclesiastical edifices, and which, later, was constantly adopted in churches of great dimension." There is ugly glass inside, as everywhere throughout Touraine, where the modern ateliers of Lobin are held in most lamentable honour. But the place is so vast that an ugly window or two cannot spoil the essential beauty and unity of the architecture, and there are



RUINS OF THE CHÂTEAU DU LION

delightful details in the carved capitols and the arcades of the triforium. Preuilly abbey-church is, indeed, a glorious place. Turn away your thoughts from the mystic shadows of Gothic. Bathe your eyes and soul in the mystic glory of light. No darkness here. No hidden corners. It springs up, noble and perfect, like a great white thought on its way to the Throne. It should be dedicated to the Glory of God.

The abbey of Preuilly was rich and great enough to defy the lords of the castle up there sometimes, when they were insolent. But once at least the monks repented of their resistance. It was when Pierre Frotier ruled in the chateau. Pierre was an awful man—with a constitutional incapacity for peace. Charles VII. gave him a good deal to do in his wars against the English; but when he had an hour or two to spare at home, then it was always the monks he would be at. He was adding to his castle, and needed stones. He used the abbey as his quarry, and coolly carried bits of it up the hill. The monks objected. They were dragged from their beds at night by his men. The holy water was poured out on their heads, and the abbot was made to dance along the street. In Charles's youth Frotier had been one of his evil geniuses. If he was not among Burgundy's actual murderers, he was at least one of the bravos about the King when the Duke was killed at Montereau. Later, he used to brave the King himself at Preuilly, saying he was "Pope and emperor and King in his own land." But, in spite of his persecution of the monks, Pierre was a very good Churchman. Before his death he arranged a neat and pretty reconciliation, and chose his burying-place in the sanctuary of the abbey-church. And masses were sung for his soul when his mischievous spirit was at peace.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE VIENNE

*A generous land—CHINON—Ancient Cainon—St. Mexme—St. Radegonde—The Plantagenets—The Knights Templars—Charles V II. at Chinon—Jeanne d'Arc—Louis XI. at Forges—The Wars of Religion—Richelieu the Wrecker—RABELAIS in Chinon and the Chinonais—Coudray—Montpensier—The Wars of Gargantua—The Road to Candes—The Veron—Turpenay—Champigny—The church architecture of the Vienne—N. D. de Rivière, etc.—Les Sibylles de Panzoult.*

Soft and mellow is the valley of the Vienne, oozing rich juices to feed cattle and fruit-trees and vines ; yet it has none of the fat, close, hemmed-in look of many fertile valleys. Its lines are bounding and noble. Life is easeful here, but generous, not sluggish. You might expect adventure ; and failing that, you would certainly find laughter. Rabelais is its own child—*enfant prodigue, enfant terrible* ; but there is no denying the paternity. The wide open river is too proud to be a serviceable highway ; but it scatters largesse carelessly.

“ Kings loved it, and sought Heaven and cleans'd their guilt  
In the dark crypts and lofty choirs they built  
Upon its banks. But pagan is its heart ;  
Great Pan and Bacchus claim a greater part  
Than any Virgin lean. It mocks at Lent ;  
'Drink deep and sing, till all my vats be spent !' ”

Only a small part of its long course is in Touraine ; and once it ran as far as Saumur. But the Loire, leaving the valley which is now the Authion's, stole its bed.

The interest and the beauty of the valley converge at Chinon,



the most unspoilt of the towns of Touraine, the most full of character.

“Chinon, Chinon,  
Petite ville, grand renom,  
Assise sur pierre ancienne  
Au haut le bois, au pied la Vienne.”

Its site is magnificent. In its great days houses reflected the romance and adventure that thrilled in and about them; and Chinon still keeps rich relics of the time ‘où se faisait tout ce qu’ a dit l’histoire.’ The broken castle wears yet a proud face, and will wear it while a single tower stands; for castle and rock are one. Better than at Loches; better far than at Tours you can here read story written in stone. It is alive and stirring to-day; but Chinon does not grow fast, and overflows hardly at all into commonplace suburbs. The country is about you on every hand, and the town is constantly invaded by the country folk from the rich and pleasant valley, a ruddy, cheery host on market days. Markets are decaying in Touraine, killed by the travelling merchants; but Chinon markets are famous still, and a great sight under the castle and round the Jeanne d’Arc statue.

Caino, the Gaulish oppidum, was a natural camp. The ridge of rock was spacious and strong; and from it they could command the river and its fords and overlook all the country to south and west. In vain did the Gauls of Caino struggle against the Romans, and hide in their rocky refuges on the hillside. The legions found the site was good, and they stayed to win it. In the chateau enclosure their marks are to be seen still, in the foundations of walls, and of a tower, and the traces of a *crematorium*. But the natives were not at once subdued and never entirely amalgamated; and when, in 445, they leagued themselves with the other Celts in Touraine, Anjou, and Le Mans—the Tractus Armoricanus—and formed the Armorican Republic, a long stubborn war ensued. At last the Gauls of Caino were driven

within their rocky camp, where they were besieged by the Roman general Ægidius. He could not take the place either by force or famine ; but he diverted the various streams which fed the one well in the castle. Now with the besieged Gauls was St. Mexme (Maximus), the first of Chinon's recorded heroes. A native of Aquitaine, who had come to make himself a solitude here among the rocks—near where his church stands to-day—he was a man to draw other men to him ; his solitude did not last long ; and he threw himself heart and soul into the national cause. When he saw the people in the camp dying around him of thirst he said, "Set out all your vessels ; and cry unto the Lord. He will hear and give you water in your need." Hardly had he spoken when the sky darkened, the thunder rolled ; soon rain was falling, and the vessels were filled. Nay, so terrible was the storm that the besiegers were struck with terror, and fled as from the wrath of the Divine.

On the site of St. Mexme's little monastery rose successive churches, or rather one church added to and transformed from age to age. The nave of the existing building—now the communal school—and the façade, are very old. They were there before the Northmen sacked the place. One of the two towers, conspicuous features of the town, is of the eleventh century ; the other was rebuilt in the fifteenth. The remarkable frescoes of the baptistery, beautiful in colour and design, and not over-restored, are of Louis XI.'s time. The interesting old church has long been secularised ; and now instead of the legends of the saints you read on the walls of the nave the Declaration of the Rights of Man ; instead of Ave Marias, such moral maxims as, "La porte du cabaret conduit a l'hôpital." So much for old and new St. Mexme.

Another holy man of Chinon shines out of the dark of this early time—Jean le Reclus. The rocky Quartier St. Jean to the east of the town takes its name from his cell. Mount by one of the narrow twisting ladder-like streets to the curious region of primitive dwellings, in-

habited still, and many of them doubtless hollowed out by companions of John. John was a Briton perhaps—one of those who, to escape the Saxon rule, set sail under the guidance of Breton monks for Armorica at different times during the fifth century. “Urged by the love of God, and moved by the desire of living in complete solitude, he retired to a little cell not far from the church of Caino.” You can see his cell to-day, can sit down in it, and be entertained by good Mère Mazard, who keeps the key of the rock-chapel next door, once his oratory, where he was buried. His bones no longer rest there, having been scattered by the Huguenots in 1562. This chapel is a twelfth-century enlargement of Jean’s humble oratory, lately much restored. It is dedicated not to the blessed John but to his famous visitor, Radegonde, Queen and Saint. Radegonde was the most remarkable woman of her age. A Thuringian princess, when her family were slaughtered by the Carling Clotaire, she was saved, educated as a Christian, and married to him at eighteen. The slaughter of her kinsfolk she never forgot. Years later in the cloister she uttered her wild longings, her homesickness ; and Fortunatus, her friend, put them into verse. “When my tears cease to flow, when my sighs are not heard, my sorrow is still speaking within me. When the wind murmurs I listen, lest it bring me some news. But the shades of none of my kindred come to me.” Even the elegant Latinity of Fortunatus could not stifle the pathos. Her education, which had bred in her real piety and learning, made the life at Clotaire’s court impossible ; and she left it to pilgrim to St. Martin’s, St. Médard’s and St. Hilary’s shrines. She heard of Jean ; sent him a wonderful jewelled cup, and begged for a hair-cloth garment instead ; then she came to Chinon, and took him for her spiritual guide for a time, ere she went to Poitiers to found her great monastery, which she administered with consummate ability. Meanwhile Jean lived up here and prayed and dug his garden and sat under the laurels he had planted on the wild hillside. It is not very different now, nearly fourteen hundred years later : the



primitive dwellings in the yellow rock, tier above tier, the tufts of garden stuff beneath ; and below and beyond, the river and the blue valley, make a picture that changes little from age to age.

Chinon was a somewhat important place under the last of the Carolings, yet the castle was in a ruinous state when about 938 it fell to Theobald the Trickster, Count of Blois. He was the first of the great military builders at Chinon since the Romans. Part of his walls still exist, from the Tour du Moulin to the remnant of the small round tower above the old cemetery of St. Maurice on the western side. Probably Fulk Nerra never owned the place, which fell definitely into Angevin hands as part ransom for another Theobald, whom Geoffrey Martel routed at the battle of St. Martin le Beau. Fulk Rechin used it as a prison for his brother Geoffrey, who stayed there thirty years till he became a dotard. Hugues, Archbishop of Lyons, charged by the Pope to inquire into his case, reported he had become so imbecile he was not worth releasing. Released however he was, to live seven years in a world that had lost all meaning for him. The Trickster's real successor was Henry Plantagenet, who found it so desirable that he stole it from his brother Geoffrey. Geoffrey retired with a pension, and the Nantais made him their Count.

Chinon was the best-loved town in all Henry II.'s wide domains. He lived there by preference, and made it a strong and formidable place. His principal additions to the castle were to the eastern portion, where he built the Fort St. Georges, throwing up its towers after the pattern of Dover Castle, to protect the Château du Milieu. Within it he built also the church of St. Georges. All has vanished : only the plan of this portion can be traced to-day. He made Chinon a royal town with many fiefs dependent on it, l'Île Bouchard, Ste. Maure, Candes, Azay-le-Rideau, La Haye, Champigny, St. Epain and Bourgueil. He built the Pont des Nonnains—so called because the ladies of Fontevrault owned its tolls—over the marshy land between

the suburbs of St. Jacques and St. Lazare ; and so joined Chinon effectively to the south. He built the church of St. Maurice below the castle—still, in spite of fifteenth-century restoration, an excellent specimen of Plantagenet architecture. The lands of one of his ex-piatory abbeys, Pommiers-Aigre, were cut out of the forest of Chinon. Here he held his court, a court of stormy barons, whom he kept in check by a garrison in each of their castles. But Chinon was to see him a bitter, sorrowful man at the end, when one after another his sons rebelled or turned traitor. The league of Richard and Philip Augustus lost him Tours and Le Mans ; and, old and weary, he consented to the treaty of Colombiers. The bitter humiliation, joined to the knowledge that his son John was among the rebels, killed him. On his death-bed in Chinon Castle he cursed Richard and John. His bastard Geoffrey gave him some care ; otherwise he was alone. Made for striving and fighting, he did not attract in his hours of weakness. Feeling his last hours come, he had himself carried to the chapel of St. Mélaïne, which he had built in the Château du Milieu. Laid on ashes in front of the altar, he confessed his sins and was shriven ere he died there on 3rd July 1189. His body, stripped by his thieving attendants, was left lying naked in St. Mélaïne till a page covered it with his own cloak. When he was being dressed for his burial, the guardians of the royal treasure refused all ornaments asked of them ; and his people bound his brows with a bit of gold fringe off a woman's dress ! Richard came on to Chinon in hot haste at the news ; and met the funeral procession on its way to Fontevrault on the Pont des Nonnains. Full of sorrow and remorse, he flung himself down before the body. The blood oozed from the nostrils of the dead man, as if it cried to God. Richard wept aloud, and followed in deep contrition the funeral train to Fontevrault. Henry's death released his wife Eleanor from prison : and she came to Chinon to taste what remained of the sweets of freedom. In the Rue Haute St. Maurice (Rue Voltaire), they will point out to you the house where Cœur de Lion

died—an ancient grey house with a slender tourelle, opposite the Rue du Grand Carroi. Perhaps after his death at Chaluz his body may have lain at Chinon ere it was taken on to Fontevrault. Portions of the house are certainly of his date.

John seized the place in defiance of Arthur's rights; captured Arthur at Mirebeau, and imprisoned him at Chinon before he carried him off to Rouen to his death. After the sentence on John, pronounced by the peers of France, which Philip carried out with much advantage to himself, Chinon still gave the French king trouble. Roger de Lacy, the English captain, held out for more than a year, while the surrounding country, as well as Loches, was kept by "the fierce Girard d'Athée, serf himself and son of serfs." The garrison forced Lacy to give in at last; and the chateau, "which boasts of being in no way inferior to Château Gaillard," became part of the heritage of the crown of France, a strong defence for all West Touraine and Poitou. It housed kings now and then, or served as prison for their enemies, without any incident of striking interest till the Templars, falling ill on their way to Poitiers for examination by Pope Clement V., in 1307, were lodged there. Jacques Molay, Grand Master of the Order, Hugues de Peraldo, and the other chiefs were interrogated at Chinon, under torture. Of course they confessed. "I said what they wanted me to say. I would have said more had they asked me," was the testimony of one of them. And on their confession they were despatched to Paris and the stake. Chinon castle bears still what is probably a trace of their sad sojourn. In the donjon of Coudray is a rough carving cut in the stone of three knights kneeling before crosses, the tallest clad in a long black robe, and holding a sword; above him in Gothic letters, "Je requiers a Dieu pardon." Is this a curt page of history written by some one who looked on at the suffering of Jacques Molay and his friends?

Ere Chinon had forgotten the torture of these great lords within the walls of Coudray fort, it saw worse horrors perpetrated under its

very eyes. In all the ugly history of the Judenhetze there is no uglier tale. That long green island of the Vienne, to the right of the bridge as you face the town, was the scene. There a hundred and sixty Jews were burnt ; and to these were added some lepers. The pretext—that the Jews of Chinon and other cities had conspired to poison the wells and springs, incited thereto by the kings of Tunis and Granada, who believed Philippe le Long was about to equip another Crusade !

St. Louis was here, and though but a boy, left a long memory. He had come with his mother to face and quell the discontent in Poitou ; and here he held a twenty days' parliament at the chateau gate. For ages a hall in the portion reserved for royal lodgings was known as the "Chambre de St. Louis."

The Chinon folk first seriously realised the Hundred Years' War when they looked over to the Faubourg St. Jacques, the suburb across the Vienne, and saw it burnt and ravaged by the English bands. The town hastily threw up new fortifications, which made it a place of importance in the struggle to come. Burgundy seized it in 1413, and was not easily dislodged. In 1416, by the death of his brother Jean, Charles, the son of the mad king, got the Duchy of Touraine. He was then but thirteen ; but only a few years passed ere he was chief of the national party, regent, king in name, with an actual sway over only a little portion of Central France, of which Chinon was one of the most important fortresses. None of his other towns save Loches had so much of his favour ; and on Chinon he left the more lasting mark. Such power as he owned, had here its centre ; and many of the towered and turreted houses left still under the chateau, were built by the lords who gathered round him in the little court that represented France. Chinon, as one of the best things he possessed, he gave to Douglas, who, he hoped, was to win back all the kingdom for him. But Douglas—"Tyneman" as ever—fell at Verneuil. Then a better helper than Douglas came to Chinon and did homage to Charles. In





CHINOS FROM THE QUAY.

the meadows between St. Mexme and the river a great ceremony took place on 7th March 1425, when Arthus de Bretagne, Comte de Richemont, laid his sword at the Dauphin's service and was made Constable of France. Richemont had valour and wealth to offer. In return, he asked confidence and steadfastness from his master, and the banishment of certain favourites. Charles was slow to send away men who amused him more than the austere Breton. Whereupon De Giac, by Richemont's orders, was seized and drowned; and Camus de Beaulieu was killed at Poitiers. The Count, who denied none of these acts, looked the king in the face, and demanded that La Trémouille and himself should be Charles's councillors. Charles gave in and wished him joy of his colleague. La Trémouille and Richemont quarrelled, and Richemont was banished from the court. But he had his revenge two years later, when Jean de Bueil, Pierre de Brézé, and a band of Richemont's Bretons entered Chinon castle at dead of night, stole to the fort of Coudray, were let in by the governor and seized La Trémouille in his bed. Bueil carried him off to his donjon of Montrésor.



IN THE RUE-HAUTE-ST.-MAURICE

When Orleans was besieged by the English, Charles stayed at Chinon in a piteous condition. Clamorous appeals came to him for help; and he was fully conscious of the sore need. But he had quarrelled with some of his best helpers, and his treasury was empty. In fact, before the States met and came to his aid, he was in dire poverty. When he lived at Razilly and other chateaux in the neigh-

bourhood, it was not for sport and diversion alone. The heir of France was glad to be assured of his dinner. Says the Monk of Fife, "The Dauphin could seldom abide long at one place, for he was so much better known than trusted that the very cordwainer would not let him march off in a new pair of boots without seeing his money, and, as the song said, he even greased his old clouted shoon and made them last as long as he might. For head-gear he was as ill provided, seeing that he had pawned the fleurons of his crown. There were days when his treasurer at Tours (as I myself have heard him say) did not reckon three ducats in his coffers, and the heir of France borrowed money from his very cook."

It was just after his welcome relief by the States that news came of the wonderful Maid from Lorraine, who was making her way to Chinon to have audience of the Dauphin. About mid-day on Sunday, 6th March 1429, Jeanne with her small band got down from their horses. In a little Place nearly opposite the Rue du Grand Carroi, there stands against the wall of the old Boule d'Or the ugliest and commonest of pumps. Once a well stood there, with a stone curb, by which the Maid dismounted to enter the house of the *bonne femme* who was to lodge her till the castle gates should open to her. The house, identified by M. de Cougny, is a few steps farther, forming the north side of the tiny Place. Now it has a distinctly eighteenth-century façade, which hides, however, an original building of the fifteenth century and earlier. The *bonne femme* was the wife or widow of Roger de la Barre, magistrate of Chinon. Here Jeanne stayed two days, and then the Comte de Vendôme came to lead her to the king. The whole court were assembled to see the meeting. The lighted hall was crowded, and the torches showed faces mocking, wondering, expectant. Charles, poorly dressed, stood in the midst of the throng, but Jeanne picked him out, bowed her head, and kneeling a lance-length from him, said: "God give you good life, gentle king." "I am not the king," said Charles. "In God's name," she answered,



"it is you, and none other." Then she told her mission, and the mockers were silent. All the folk about the chateau, lords and henchmen, knew that night that a great one was amongst them. During her stay she was lodged in the Tour du Coudray, and the king saw her very often. He was slow to decide. "There were divers opinions and imaginations." He listened to all. Jeanne pointed straight to Rheims. He doubted still. She told him "secret things." In particular she convinced him of his legitimacy, of which he had been in doubt, though he had whispered the doubt to none. Meanwhile she waited and prayed in the little chapel of St. Martin near the Tour du Coudray. Only the site can be pointed out to-day of the place where St. Catherine and St. Margaret appeared and said to her, "Va hardiment." She made many friends. The knights and nobles were drawn to her by her brave, frank bearing, and for her skill in horsemanship and arms. The Duc d'Alençon gave her a horse. The king still lingered. "Why do you not believe me?" asked the Maid. "I tell you, God has pity on you. St. Louis and Charlemagne are on their knees before Him, praying for you." But the task of decision was too hard, and he sent her to Poitiers to face learned doctors, who pronounced her full of "humilité, virginité, dévotion, honnêteté, et simplesse." They had also found her quick-witted and sharp-tongued. She went to Saumur, too, where d'Alençon's mother lived, and promised to bring the "beau duc" safe home from the war. She had been a month at Chinon ere she and her company set out for Tours to be equipped for the march to Orleans.

In the story of Loches we have spoken of Agnes Sorel's hold over the king. The Dame de Beauté had sway here too. Apparently she did not live within the chateau enclosure. Charles gave her the park of Roberdeau, conveniently near to the north-east walls, and built her there a little manor, connected by an underground passage, it is

said, with the castle. Only a few stones of it are left to-day ; and the park has gone as well, cut through by the Tours road in the eighteenth century. Agnes has left many memories in the country round. From Bonnaventure, near Huismes, ruined now and utterly deserted, they say she went hunting with the king. But then every old hunting-lodge and manor on the borders of the forest would fain be hers.

A good deal of Charles's time was spent in his chamberlain's castle at Razilly in the Véron. There he hunted, or made love, or received ambassadors, or his lords revived the days of chivalry to amuse themselves, the court, and the countryside. During the peace of 1446, four of his knights, spoiling for fight, set up a high pole at the crossroads near Razilly, to which they attached a painted dragon, which guarded their shields. Their heralds proclaimed that no dame nor damsel should pass, save accompanied by a knight, who should be bound to break two lances for love of her. If by chance a noble dame came alone, she had to leave a gage, which was only returned to her when she came back with a knight, who had to redeem it in the lists. A great tournament followed ; all the noble Chinonais looked on ; and René d'Anjou was one of the most valiant and brilliant of the knights that took part in this *Emprise de la Gueule du Dragon*.

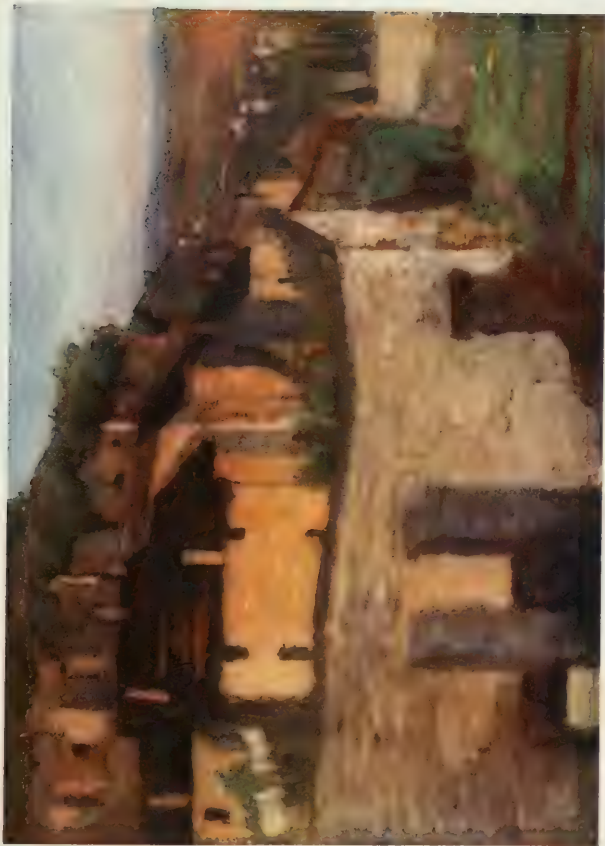
With the passing of Charles go all the gaiety and brilliance of Chinon. The gloomy, brooding Louis had no desire for idle jousts about him. He hunted in the forest and ran the hart to death tirelessly. But his court was neither chivalrous nor merry ; and Chinon castle he did not like as a residence. Perhaps he bore it some ill-will because it was from there he had been banished to Dauphiné, when he was little more than a child, for attempting, and not all unsuccessfully, to form a party for himself by detaching some of his father's best friends and corrupting the Scots Guard. Two or three of these, accused of adhesion to the Dauphin, suffered death ;

but their general staunch and haughty resistance to his overtures procured them signal favour when he was king. In later life, however, Louis came from time to time to Chinon, which he had given into the keeping of his faithful Philippe de Commines, of whose connection with the town we are reminded by his coat of arms on the door of the church of St. Etienne. This church, one of the most remarkable of the fifteenth-century monuments in Touraine, was built in the main by Charles VII., but completed by the Seigneur d'Argenton.

On Louis's visits to the neighbourhood his favourite residence was the little chateau of Forges on the edge of the forest, in the commune of St. Benoît-du-Lac-Mort. You look in vain to-day for any traces of former grandeur in the humble farm of the same name. But even at Forges he was full of suspicion; he was uneasy in the lonely place, and he sought to defend it, as he defended great Plessis, by man-traps in the surrounding fields and woods. There is a record of his ordering two hundred of these for Forges. He was staying here when he was seized with the first attack of the illness that three years after carried him off. "For he began now," says Commines, "to waxe old and sickely; so far foorth that once being at dinner at Forges neere to Chinon, he was suddenly taken in all parts of his body and lost his speech; he was lifted up from the table and held to the fire, and the windowes shut; to the which notwithstanding that he desired to go, yet some of his friends held him and would not suffer him so to do, meaning all for the best. . . . He laie altogither speechlesse, he knew no man, and his memorie was wholly taken away." When he recovered somewhat, his memory came back, and he banished all those who had dared take hold of him. He was like a wild beast in his den till Commines came, to be his councillor, his nurse, his valet for fourteen days.

Charles VII. and his court gone, and Louis XI. caring only to

hunt in the forest, or brood at Forges, Chinon became merely a military station. As such it knew a stormy time in the Wars of Religion. The Huguenots were strong in the Vienne valley. They seized Chinon in the absence of the governor, La Roche du Maine. "Tête Dieu pleine de reliques!" he cried when he heard the news, "faut-il que Père Eternel gagne Pater Noster? Je les en chasserai bien!" And he did; but his hard blows knocked no Latin into them, nor submission; for they besieged Chinon again, and they took reprisals for all they suffered in the valley by rifling and pillaging churches and shrines, and scattering the ashes of St. Mexme and Jean le Reclus. The plague scourge and the League ravaged the town; and in 1575 the castle narrowly escaped being razed by royal command. Fearing another attack of the Reformers, the governor, at his wits' end how to garrison and provision it, asked leave to knock it down. Catherine de Medicis was indifferent, but Henry III. refused. It was only reprieved, however. It passed from hand to hand. When peace was made, Condé got it as a guarantee of the treaty, and lost it when the king and he fell out again. Marie de Medicis owned the place for a time. Then for its sins it fell to Richelieu. Richelieu's paternal acres were few, his hereditary seigneurship covered but the little village of Braye in South Touraine—hardly enough to make a duchy out of. So he bought the baronies and lordships of L'Ile Boucharde, Faye-la-Vineuse, and Chapelle Belloin. Still not enough: so he added the domain of Chinon, purchased for 60,000 livres tournois from the Princesse de Conti, to whom it had been lately allotted by the king. No sooner was Richelieu its master than he determined to knock it down. The historic sense was not strong in the Cardinal-Duke; and he was jealous of its memories and its venerable dignity, which made his own brand-new, colossal chateau of Richelieu seem but a vulgar mushroom. There were protests, but he had the town well in hand. He did not however demolish it to the condition of to-day



OLDEST CHINESE.



—when in the inside it is but a rough, stony garden with high towered walls. It could still house a garrison till the end of the seventeenth century, the date of the demolition of the Great Hall built by Charles VII. where he received the Maid. Bit by bit since then it has crumbled or been knocked down, a convenient quarry out of which to dig stones. By the middle of the eighteenth century it was an empty shell.

A cheery town by day is Chinon, where it is easy to live well and at ease. But in the twilight the mists rise from the Vienne and shut out the easeful present. Men upon the quays are gliding shadows; and the only things of substance are, up there the roofless, broken castle, and down here the river. But if you climb to the twisting lanes of primitive dwellings in the rock, there is a further blotting of the picture. France is yet to be lost and won by Charles. Nay, the Plantagenets are yet to come. There is no France; but a group of watching Gauls, the hermit Mexme in the midst of them, listening to the tramp of the oncoming legions.

But we have got far without a word of Rabelais. You cannot know the Vienne country without Rabelais. You can hardly know Rabelais without this rich exuberant valley. He sits on his pedestal to-day on the quay, his face to the market-place, in his scholar's gown, with his tablets—yet no student in a cell. Wide-eyed is he, an embodiment of genial intelligence, with mankind for his book. So, and not as the grinning satyr of legend, is he presented in his own Chinon. It is usual to preface any remarks on Rabelais by an apology. You might as well apologise for the flood, or any other force of nature. You take him, with a wry face now and then, and gratitude—or you leave him. Leave him and you still have your Gaulish Chinon, your Chinon of saints and recluses, your feudal and chivalric Chinon. He has nothing to say about any of these. He

was vaguely proud of the antiquity of the place. "Which is the oldest city in the world?" asked Pantagruel. "'Tis Chinon, sir, or Cainon in Touraine," said I. . . . "I have found it in sacred writ that Cain was the first that built a town. Likely enough is it then that he gave his own name to the first." But Rabelais is a man of the new time, looking out even to the ends of the earth, eager for knowledge, thirsty for it, and when he is slaked for a moment, crying, "Drink—drink, for the thirst to come!" There is nothing venerable to Rabelais save what he can venerate by the light of his reason, a reason, however, warmed by a great imagination. Everything in the world must stand the test of laughter. There is nothing common or unclean, save what darkens the world, the hypocrites, the kill-joys, the million-headed beast stupidity. He is the spirit incarnate of the intelligence of the Renaissance; and that his intelligence has nothing acrid, is because he was born and bred in this good mellow valley of the Vienne. His town he loved not because it was antique, but because of all the old neighbours he hobnobbed with there, folks ready with jests, and good stuff for his own laughter.

Chinon is his town; but here he was not born. We shall visit his birth-place soon, at Seully, five miles off. Chinon is sore on this point; and in the Rue de la Lamproie you will have two houses pointed out as his birth-place. One of these with a plaque on its outer wall bearing,  *Ici s'élevait au 16<sup>e</sup> siècle la maison Rabelais*, looks very modern; and was in fact completely transformed a century after his date. It was his father's house, and, later, his own; but then it was not the Lamprey Inn, as has been constantly asserted. His father, Antoine Rabelais, was not an inn-keeper but a lawyer, a *licencié-ès-lois*. And the street was in his time the Rue des Potaires. After his death the house was turned into the hostelry of the Lamprey, from which the street took its later name. A very gay place it became, as if



the cheerful spirit of Rabelais clung to it. They made rhymes about its *fêtes* :—

“Là chacun dit sa chansonnette,  
Là le plus sage est le plus fou,  
Et danse au son de la musette  
Les plus gaies danses du Poitou.”

The ghost of Rabelais did not damp the feast. Mine host, indeed, made a good thing of the dead Rabelais. A room in a little tower, which may have been his study when the house was his, was turned into a wine-cellar, and above the door was written with witty ambiguity, “La véritable estude de Rabelais.” A more serious owner made the tower-chamber into a little museum of Rabelais relics. Relics, tower and all have gone. The Lamprey Inn fell from prosperity, and moved to No. 2 of the same street, the little corner Renaissance house on the other side, which accounts somewhat for the tradition believed in by most of the townfolk, against all evidence, that here was the great man really born. He was neither born at Chinon, nor did he go to school there; but the house with the plaque was his father's town residence. And Rabelais the younger knew every cobble-stone, every peak and gable, every twisting ladder-lane of the old town. It is not of the Plantagenets nor of Charles the Victorious we hear from him. He tells of Innocent le Patissier, with fond memories of his toothsome cakes. Twenty years ago Innocent's house still stood at the beginning of the Rue Haute St. Maurice, and opposite the Painted Wine-Vault, where Rabelais drank the good “vin de Breton.” The Cave Peinte has not vanished; you will find it just past the new savings-bank. No tavern was it, but a cellar, or a series of cellars, where the connoisseurs of good wine came out of the summer glare to drink in the cool dark shade. Originally it was a *carrière*, from which had been extracted the stone for the building of the chateau. Above the Cave climb the houses of the

town up to Henry II's Fort St. Georges. There were paintings once in the vault; André Duchesne saw them in the beginning of the seventeenth century. They were those that suggested to Rabelais the painted scenes of the Temple de la Dive Bouteille. Indeed, the vault below—there is no access now—was actually the origin of the famous Temple. The Caves Vaslin in the Rue Jean Jacques Rousseau, through which adventurous persons wander by torch or candlelight, once communicated with the Cave Peinte.

But dearer to him than the cobble-stones of Chinon were the fields and hillsides and vineyards of the Chinonais. He was a country lad, and he kept every plot of garden, every highroad, every byroad, every castle, every hamlet, in his eye, in his memory, in his heart all his life. The best guide-book to the Chinonais is his *Gargantua*. His topography is exact. He never misplaces a brook; he never veils a name. While you read the tale in its own scenery, following Gargantua and Friar John and Picrochole through the immortal campaign, you forget its world-meaning. Then when you wake up to it, the humour of the thing is better than ever. Rabelais knew Paris and Rome, and the houses of great lords, and the universities, and coteries of savants. But what of space, and distance, and great names? Mankind is one. The king of all France and Antoine Rabelais, sieur de la Devinière, are interchangeable. The Wars of the Powers follow the same rules as the squabbling of country neighbours. One's native place is a microcosm, if only one has eyes to see.

So then to Seully. It is but some five miles off. Cross Chinon bridge; pass through the Faubourgs St. Jacques and St. Lazare; turn to the right along the Candes and Saumur road; then sharp to the left where the finger-post points to Loudun. Of the two right-hand roads that branch off at La Roche Clermault take the upper one, crossing the Négron. You are in a green undulating land of long fields and vine-clad slopes, with walnut-tree shade by the waysides.





CHIGNON FROM THE CASTLE.

The great world is very far. On the slope to the north stands a modest little group of farm-buildings, with vineyards all round. It is La Devinière. As you approach, the group divides itself into several humble dwellings. In the largest house to the left, the one with the covered stairway, François Rabelais was born about 1490. His father, Antoine the lawyer, was a considerable landowner. He was Sieur de la Devinière, a little manor with rich vineyards, which have not much deteriorated since. He was seigneur of Chavigny-en-Vallée, in the commune of Varennes-sur-Loire, nearly opposite Montsoreau. He had other farms, orchards, and vineyards—at Gravot, near Benais, La Pomardière, south-west of Seuilly, and on the outskirts of Chinon. His son boasted of the good wine of their *clos*—"C'est de la Devinière ; c'est vin pineau." Probably he stored it in the vaulted "cave" in the rocks, which will certainly be pointed out to you, at la Petite Devinière, to the right, as "Rabelais's chapel." His piety is never questioned at his birth-place. Rabelais's or not, it possibly may have been a chapel, perhaps some hermit's, before La Devinière came into being. Johanneau, who visited the place in 1821, was told by the owner of that day, that the great man haunted the vaulted "cave." "J'y entend encore son âme rabater toutes les nuits."

Half a mile westward is the Abbey of Seuilly, where he went to school with the good sleepy Benedictines, ere he went off to be a friar of the Observance at Fontenay-le-Comte. The rich sunny slopes of the monks' vineyards and gardens are there still ; but what remains of the abbey is utterly transformed since the days when the boy Rabelais conned his Latin, and still more diligently studied Brother Buinart, the immortal Freer Jhon of his tale. Two quiet ladies are now the guardians of the place where the unforgettable fight took place, when Freer Jhon kept the *clos* against the men of Picrochole.

Now what the boy's eyes looked out on daily, from La Devinière

and from the abbey, was stamped for ever after on his memory and imagination, and became the very stuff of his tales. A score of keys to Rabelais have been invented. We have heard how Grandgousier is Louis XII., and Gargantua Francis I., and Picrochole one or other of the Italian potentates whom Francis warred with. Doubtless his allegory had an even wider world-significance. But here in his own home we are not concerned with anything so vast. The quarrels of the shepherds of Cinais and Seully with the cake-bakers of Lerné, is the finest farce in the world, taken in its most restricted sense, with Grandgousier as his own father; Picrochole, Doctor Sainte-Marthe, physician to the ladies of Fontevrault, a fussy, autocratic neighbour, and, professionally, the laughing-stock of the learned doctor Rabelais; Gargantua himself playing the "beau rôle," and all Grandgousier's vast domains—which he divides with such royal prodigality in reward of valour at the close of the war—just Antoine Rabelais's farms and vineyards, with a few trifles thrown in, such as the great castles of La Roche-Clermault and Coudray.

These castles were the two outstanding objects to be seen from La Devinière. Only a few fragments of La Roche-Clermault chateau are left now. The site is magnificent, and commands the whole country. But Coudray stands, proud still and mighty, one of the great chateaux of Touraine. We saw it empty, and the grass growing in its huge courtyard, not a beast in its stalls, the flowers hanging in tatters in the terraced garden. The spirit of its past came to us and moaned, in the shape of a very old woman, who had known the place in her youth. "Ah, si vous l'aviez connu autrefois! Ah, comme, c'est triste! Et c'était gai. Ah, comme madame la comtesse était belle! Ah, les beaux chasseurs! Ah, les palefreniers! Ah, les dames de Paris!" These moans were for recent glories; but the history of Coudray goes back at least to the tenth century. At the end of the fourteenth it was a fortified house with towers and a moat, when it was bought by Louis, Duke of Anjou and Touraine, son of Louis I., king of

Jerusalem and Sicily. His wife, Marie de Châtillon, called queen by courtesy, built the low wing on the left of the inner court, with the fleur-de-lis and the M's strewn about it. It was the home of Queen Mary and her son, Louis II. of Anjou, for about twenty years, at the end of which time they sold it to Pierre de Bournan, Louis's master of the horse, already lord of the manor of Montpensier, about two miles south-west of Coudray. The Bournans reconstructed Coudray almost as we see it now, about the time Langeais was built, and somewhat on the same model. Pierre's son, Louis, was a trusted councillor of René d'Anjou. One of the Bournan women, Jeanne, beautiful and famous, became the mistress of Charles, Duc de Bourbon et d'Auvergne. Their son was the famous Bastard of Bourbon, Comte de Rousillon and Admiral of France, who married Jeanne, Louis XI.'s natural daughter by Marguerite de Sassenage. Both were legitimised; and Louis de Bourbon became one of the most brilliant men at the court, and a great patron of art. He looked with an envious eye on Coudray; and as a preliminary, he bought Montpensier from the Bournans. There he built a chateau, and blazoned its walls with the fleur-de-lis barred, and the collar of the Order of St. Michael. All save the central portion of Montpensier is now demolished. A fine chimney-piece stands open to the sky. The winding stairs have great gaps in them. The halls and galleries are barns and store-houses. The spacious court is a humble farmyard; and the place, which we reached by rough paths from Lerné, stands in the fields, isolated and forgotten, a melancholy relic of past splendour. The Bourbons bought Coudray after they were masters of Montpensier. Jeanne, legitimised into a princess, held a court there: she did not like other courts. At Coudray she ruled, a great lady of the Renaissance, good neighbour of the simple folks about, and good friend of artists. Her son-in-law, Boulainvilliers, deep in debt, sold the place to a lawyer of Angers, who rose to high rank, and was honoured by the enmity of the Duchesse d'Estampes and by the Bastille. His release cost him a

fine which he could only pay by giving Coudray to Francis I. But Francis never lived there; and the later history of the castle, though not tame—its present owner is a descendant of Breton Crusaders—includes too frequent a change of lords to be recorded here. There is a tradition of the Maid at Coudray, and sober historians support it. You are shown the “chambre de Jeanne d’Arc.” It is quite possible that she might have ridden over from Chinon and lodged here. But probably the tradition arises from a double confusion between this Coudray and the Tour du Coudray, within Chinon castle, which had been assigned to her for lodging, and between Jeanne the châtelaine and Jeanne the Maid. This is a long digression from Rabelais; but the chateau of Coudray, generally called now Coudray-Montpensier, deserves to be better known, for its site, its imposing architecture, and its romantic memories.

So, with these three great castles in his mind’s eye, and his father’s fields and vines, Rabelais conceives the campaign. The shepherds of Seully and Cinais fall out with the cake-bakers of Lerné; and so arises the war between the rival monarchs, Grandgousier, whose seat is at La Devinière, and Picrochole, king of Lerné. Now, as I have said, Lerné’s lord was in real life Gaucher de Sainte-Marthe, doctor to the ladies of Fontevrault, *parvenu*, and quarrelsome neighbour. He went to law with the monks of Seully, seized their goods, seized their *clos*, which he farmed out. Just before vintage time the farmers were about to step in, but Brother Buinart forbade their entry. Such is the foundation of the famous defence of the *clos*.

“There was then in the abbey a claustral Monk, called Freer Jhon of the funnels and gobbets, young, gallant, frisk, lustie, nimble, quick, active, bold, adventurous, resolute, tall, lean, wide-mouthed, long-nosed, a fair dispatcher of morning prayers, unbridler of masses, and runner over of vigils; and to conclude summarily in a word, a right Monk, if ever there was any, since the monking world monked



a Monkerie : for the rest a Clerk even to the teeth in matter of breviary."

Friar John sees the ravage by Picrochole's men, calls to the monks singing in church, "Heark you, my masters, you that love the wine, Cops body, follow me ; for Sanct Antoine burn me freely as a fagot if they get leave to taste one drop of the liquor, that will not now come and fight for relief of the Vine."

Then he goes out "in a faire long-skirted jacket, putting his frock scarfeways athwart his breast," and with his "staffe, shaft or truncheon of the crosse," begins the famous combat. None greater has been recorded save by Homer. "If any of his old acquaintance happened to cry out, 'Ha, Fryar Jhon my friend, Fryar Jhon, quarter, quarter, I yield myself to you.' 'So thou shalt (said he), and must whether thou wouldst or no' . . . then suddenly gave them dronos, that is, so many knocks, thumps, raps, dints, thwacks and bangs, as sufficed to warne Pluto of their coming, and dispatch them agoing. Some died without speaking, others spoke without dying ; some died in speaking, others spoke in dying . . . When those that had been shriven would have gone out at the gap of the said breach, the sturdy monk quash't and fell'd them with blowes, saying, 'These men have had confession and are penitent soules, they have got their absolution, and gained the pardons : they go into Paradise as straight as a sickle, or as the way is to Faye.'"

The return of Gargantua, to be his father's general ; the parleyings and embassies ; the destruction of the chateau of Vede and the passing of the ford ; the capture and escape of Friar John ; the immortal attack on La Roche-Clermault ; the utter defeat of Picrochole ; and how he fled away to L'île Bouchard, doubled on his tracks, and, crossing the Loire near Port Huault, was told he should regain his kingdom at the coming of the Cocklicranes—is it not all written in the book of the Chronicles of Gargantua ? Read the Chronicle on the spot, and see hillocks grow to mountains, brooklets

swell to mighty rivers, a hamlet become a great capital, a field or two give space to marshal armies, rustics turn to valiant captains, and the lord of a dozen vineyards be the defender of nations, the dispenser of peace to vast regions of the earth. The little familiar hamlets of the Chinonais become as Agincourt, as Pavia, as Waterloo. Nay, as battlefields of the gods.

And what of Thelema, the noble abbey of his dreams? When Friar John asked the means of building an abbey after his own heart, "the demand pleased Gargantua, who offered him all his land of Thelema near the river Loire, two leagues from the great forest of Port Huault." Build it then to your fantasy near Rupuanne.

Aiming at Seuilly, Cinais and Lerné, the centre of the Rabelais country, we left the Saumur road. Turning back, we find a pleasant shady highway to Candes and Montsoreau along the Vienne. On the left above you is the great camp of Cinais, locally known as the Camp des Romains. Below lies the quietest land in the world; soft, rich, sheltered. Mild-eyed husbandmen raise easy frequent crops; and the green meadows by the river are possessed by armies of geese. It is an afternoon land, containing nothing for the tourist; but the antiquary will be gently led on to the primitive bourg of St. Germain with its eleventh-century church; and Candes is but a step farther on.

Chinon is a delightful place to saunter from, on foot or on wheel. Faring north-west, past old St. Louand's monastery, now a convent, sitting on the hill where the hermit built his cell thirteen hundred years ago, we can take one of the roads through the Véron, between Vienne and Loire, a district of extraordinary fertility—"ce bon pays de Verron," where the good "vin de Breton" comes from. Its orchards and cornfields are the richest in Touraine. Among the people of the Véron they say there is a race apart. Tradition calls them Saracens—remnants of Abderrahman's hordes. Ethnologists say



THE GUARDIAN OF ST. RAUL'S.



they are more likely remains of the prehistoric race that built the megalithic monuments.

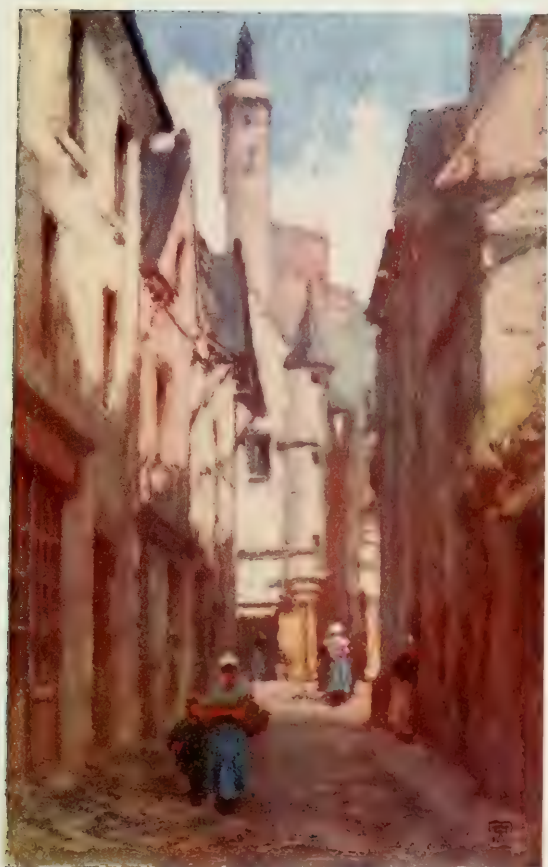
Or, north-east through the forest of Chinon. Let it be on an autumn day, and you will rejoice in a great region of joyous gold and ruddy fire. The high-road runs straight as an arrow to Azay-le-Rideau. If you would wander into the by-paths, and desire an object, Turpenay will do, the old abbey of Turpenay, founded by Fulk the Good at the end of the eleventh century. But before Fulk's gift, Robert, a hermit, had retired there, to dwell with the wild things of the woods and with shepherds. Long before there was any great place of stone and lime, there was a community of hunters and shepherds, who lived here in huts made of branches. It has nearly gone back to that now. Turpenay lies about three miles north-east of St. Benoît-du-Lac-Mort, lost altogether in a sheltered hollow, ringed in by the forest. What little remains of the great place now houses humble farm-folk and a few sheep and kine. The world is very, very far. Once it was near—when the rich Lord Abbot sent eleven wild boars for Grandgousier's feast; and in the days which furnished Balzac with highly spiced material for his *Contes Drolatiques*.

Or, south-east along the little river Veude to reach Champigny. The Veude, sometimes hardly wider than a ditch, sometimes like a canal, was once the boundary of Touraine. Champigny, save on market-days, is like a village of the dead. It wakes up when a stranger appears, to point to the park gates as if within there all outside shortcomings would be made up for. In the park once rose the great castle of the Dukes of Bourbon-Montpensier, a magnificent palace of the early sixteenth century. Only the communes and two towers remain, transformed into a pretty manor. The place had fallen in course of time to Gaston d'Orleans. Richelieu bought it from him, and demolished it. No great shadow of royal Bourbon must fall on him! Armand Duplessis must be the biggest, and his

brand-new chateau of Richelieu the finest of all. The churchman in him would not even have spared the chapel, but Pope Urbain IV. intervened, and the Sainte Chapelle of Champigny is here still—flamboyant, late Gothic, degraded if you will, but splendid of its kind. The flying buttresses, pinnacled, turreted, and gargoyleed, form cloisters at their base. The porch, of a later date, is heavier and out of tune, but in the interior fine in proportion and detail. On walls and doors you see repeated the crowned L of the founder, Louis de Bourbon, the winged stag, with the motto *Esperance*, and the fleur-de-lis barred—so that while you sing to the glory of God you may not forget that of Bourbon-Montpensier. The chief interest, however, is within, in the twelve splendid Renaissance windows, each divided into three tiers, the top representing a scene of the Passion, the middle an incident in the life of St. Louis, and the lowest containing portraits of the family. They have not the simple effectiveness of the best thirteenth-century glass. This is art at a sophisticated stage, but very magnificent in colour and noble in execution, a precious remnant of the many vanished glories of its kind. They are probably due to artists of the Pinaigrier atelier. The date is 1540.

The persevering traveller will make his way to the valley of the Amable to see Richelieu, or what remains of Richelieu, the mushroom town built by the Cardinal on a rectangular plan like an American city. Of the cold, regular, gigantic chateau, a prodigious exotic, crammed with artistic *chef-d'œuvres* gathered for display, nothing remains at all. It was doomed before it was built. Its master never saw it completed. It had no roots in the soil, and it withered.

There is no pleasanter length of the Vienne than that between Chinon and L'Ile Bouchard. Moreover, if the traveller have an interest in old churches, let him set out by Rivière and return by Cravant, and he will find a group of extraordinary interest. Rivière lies far away from the high-road, utterly isolated, hanging over the



RUE DU GRAND CARRIOL, CHISON.





water. A very ancient place. Here was the passage of the Vienne in old days by a bridge of boats, till Henry II. built a bridge at Chinon. A late stronghold of paganism, St. Martin eyed it jealously and built here a church to Our Lady; and it is a place of pilgrimage to this day. The present church, built about 1080, belonged to the abbey of Marmoutier. Hence its surprising wealth and beauty. The façade is dark and overshadowed by trees, the porch like a cavern mouth. But the apse, in a farmyard, is so exquisite that, as Monseigneur Chevalier says, until you have examined it very near, you would be apt to attribute it to some subtle craftsman of the Renaissance. Enter, and you will find a survival of the time when there were no dull churches, when priests might drone or drivel, but the eye would be diverted by a picture-book on the walls, gay and profitable. As at Tavant and Faye la Vineuse, the choir is built high above the crypt, every corner of it, every pillar, painted with stories or symbols, barbaric in effect. All the walls are covered with frescoes. M. le Comte de Galembert wrote a very learned account of these in the *Memoirs of the Archæological Society* (vols. 5 and 17). Alas! his account is now mainly of historical interest; for the paintings have been restored beyond recognition. And among the restorers was a boy of thirteen or fourteen, a pensionnaire of the curé, about 1860, who was given a free hand with the frescoes as a relaxation from Latin grammar! Monstrous! we say. But they might have been so much worse. If it was the lad who put life again into the Baptism of Christ and the "Domine, salve nos, perimus," he should have been another Puvis de Chavannes. Probably it was not; for the boy who was given three walls of a Church and a paint-box to play with, is now an eminent ecclesiastic with no itch to be meddling with art. The original frescoes were of two dates, the eleventh century and the fifteenth—the earlier very much the finer, according to M. de Galembert.

Some pious antiquary has written on the walls the curious rhymed

legend from the life of St. Mexme, a legend by no means creditable to our good St. Martin. St. Martin on his way to Rome, begs St. Mexme to accompany him ; but St. Mexme, who is busy building his church at Chinon, refuses—and is punished. The interview takes place at

“ la Rivière de Vienne  
Où est l'église ancienne  
De Dame et Vierge Marie  
Au milieu de la prairie.”

St. Mexme sets off in his boat back to his church ; but a storm rises, and his bark is upset. The old Gauls, lately converted, seeing the catastrophe, run to St. Martin for help. He comes, but his help is conditional. He calls from the bank to his drowning friend—

“ A Rome veux-tu venir,  
Ou bien là sous l'eau mourir ? ”

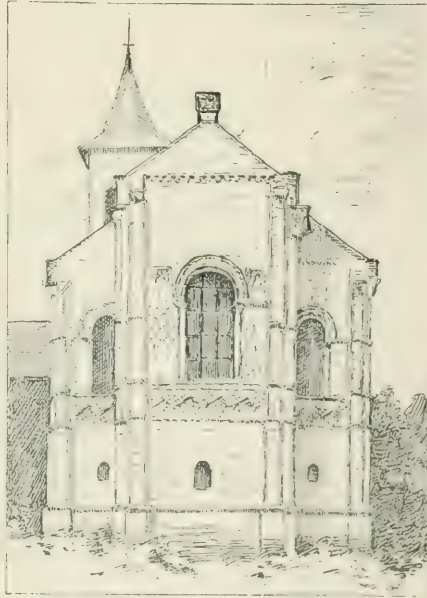
Of course, St. Mexme, from the bottom of the river, replies that he will do whatever Martin likes. He is saved, and the Gauls are “ ébahis . . . qu'il n'était ni mort ni mouillé.”

The most interesting part of the church is the crypt, though more from sentiment than architecturally. It is very small and low, and painted with the Virgin's colours. How old it is nobody knows. Tradition says St. Gatien built it. But did St. Gatien ever build? St. Martin, however, and St. Mexme and the other Chinon hermits knelt there, like the pilgrims of the Vienne hamlets to-day. An inscription runs :—

“ Ici pieux pelerins vinrent s'agenouiller, S. Gatien, S. Martin, S. Mexme, S. Radegonde, et la pieuse Jeanne d'Arc.

“ Cette crypte abritant l'autel de la t. s. Vierge selon les documents eut été batie par S. Gatien dans le but d'obtenir la conversion des vieux Gaulois dont les réunions païennes avaient pour centre la Rivière.”

At Anché and Sazilly along the river there are good specimens of the Plantagenet village church, worth a glance. Tavant church is famous, one of the finest Romanesque monuments in the valley of the Vienne, built on the same plan as Rivière, but on a larger scale. The beautiful stone carving on its west door and the grotesques of the capitols inside, are surpassed in interest by the extraordinary paintings of the crypt, which no restorer has meddled with. Twelfth century or not, they are mostly pagan. True, there are some saints; there is the Christ enthroned; there is St. Peter crucified. But the archer shooting the wild creature; the dancing woman; the woman in green charm-



NOTRE DAME DE RIVIÈRE

ing the snake; the woman ending in a snake, with a stretched bow in her hand; the cross-legged minstrel—what are they doing here? Down in the dark, below the altar, the artists were free to work out their secret imaginations, to give shape to furtive memories of creatures banished by the Christ.

L'Ile Bouchard is built on a large island in the Vienne. It was

called L'Île till the eleventh century, when it was owned by a great fighting lord, Bouchard, whose name was henceforth attached to it. Its castle has utterly vanished ; and in spite of its beautiful situation, it contrives to be a dull and shabby place. But it is not one to be missed—and this less for the fine doors of Romanesque St. Gilles and the spire of Gothic St. Maurice, than for the ruins of St. Leonard's priory. Only the apse and the ambulatory remain, and they are fast going to rack and ruin in a farmyard, where they serve to store old carts and straw and rubbish. Such as it is, the remnant is one of the most charming specimens of eleventh-century architecture in the province. The proportions of the columns and of the blind arcade are exquisite ; and the carvings, rich in imagination and of a rare dexterity, are fascinating pages out of a wonderful vanished volume of stories in stone.

There are Crouzilles, Parçay-sur-Vienne, Panzoult, and Cravant to be seen in the neighbourhood. Perhaps old disused Cravant church is the most curious, from the antiquary's point of view, for the examples it presents of different styles and ages of stonework. To call it Merovingian, as has been done, is to exaggerate its age by several centuries ; but, indeed, it is a venerable relic. Made out of the yellow Chinon stone, it has turned to a rich old gold hue. The "vieux bourg" where it lies is set in a lovely wooded valley, itself reward enough for the traveller who has been tempted thus far from the high road.

Still lovelier is the valley of Panzoult, which we have left behind some miles. The little Croulay stream leads you up to the greenest, wildest forest place you could desire, full of unscared beasts and birds, though the peasants on the outskirts warn you of the snakes on the rocky heights and of lurking wild boars. We found the glen very friendly. A place for hermits ; and hermits came here to build the old abbey of Croulay, ruined now. Much nearer the road, too, you find their traces, at the Sibylles of Panzoult, a cluster of rock-dwell-





CRAVANT OLD CHURCH.

ings hanging on the hillside. Panurge went to consult the Sibyl there, and found her in a grotto, an old hag of evil manners and ambiguous counsel. Her grotto is still there, empty now, but inhabited not long ago. We made friends with a hale old man who had been born in it. There are still traces of colour on the walls, marks of old paintings, as in the Cave Peinte at Chinon. The next grotto by its side owns a staircase elaborately cut out of the rock, which leads you to an upper floor. The view over the billowy forest is superb. You rest above the birds. The isolation, the carefully fashioned stair to the watch-chamber above, and the remains of the paintings, all point to a solitary or solitaires having chosen the spot for a hermitage. And a tradition almost confirms this. The old fellow who had been born here, told us confidently that Rabelais had lived at the Sibylles. And who was Rabelais? He was a professor, a *savant*. And he gave lessons here! Some man of holiness or learning, both equally mysterious, made the caves on the wooded hillside, and was confused at a later day with Rabelais who made the place famous. In Rabelais's day an old witch lived there; and perhaps he came to jest with her. But note the Rabelais legend. In his own Seuilly, among the peasants, we heard of him always as a "great healer." They do not read him, and so his grossness is unknown to them. They merely repeat a tradition handed down by their fathers, a tradition in which the toper and the debauchee have no part. Ronsard's "bon Rabelais qui boivoit toujours ce pendant qu'il vivoit," is not theirs.

Out of the shady valley into the open country by the Vienne. A broad wave of sunlight flows over the land, over the clean and the unclean. It is like laughter. A pleasant land this, and it takes some of the fretful fastidiousness out of us. Echoing through it still after three hundred years have done their best to age the world, you hear the greeting of its son,

VIVEZ JOYEUX.





## CHAPTER XVIII

### FRIENDS: TOURANGEAUX AND TOURANGELLES.

*A grande dame—Balzac and his compatriots—The Tourainer's philosophy—La Vieille Touraine—An articulate race—A Touraine village—Love of the soil—Old faiths and new—St. Vincent as Bacchus—Vanished legends—A mother: old style—Passing of the handicrafts—A prophetess—Greeting.*

IN the few remaining pages I would leave the story of past history and say something of the people of Touraine to-day as we found them. I will set down no solemn judgment—only the impressions of two passers-by who saw something of the townsfolk, something more of the villagers off the great roads. They showed us very friendly faces. Happy themselves, they have the secret of conveying not a little of their happiness to strangers of goodwill through their charming and tireless courtesy. There may be greater demonstrativeness in the south: courtesy in Touraine is simple, deep-rooted, dignified, self-respecting. It is of no special class or age; and even the hobbledehoy—or the nearest approach to him to be found—has a pretty standard of manners. The rough carter who apologises for drawing his horse and waggon for a moment across your line of vision, is astonishing at first. After a few months, the rare discourtesy is the surprising thing. Is it that the court has sojourned here, and left a tradition of fine breeding? It is native rather, a thing of the air, the soil, the race.

Their courtesy is joined to a real desire to be serviceable; and if, outside the regular tourist places, you would reward such services in the usual tourist coin, it may happen you have hurt a more sensitive spirit than your own, or you may be judged haughtily as a barbarian.

It is joined also to a simple-hearted, genuine hospitality. Whatever they have they are glad to share. "Je vous le donne de bon cœur," they say, with the smile which is the best gift of all. We bear in our memories many happy hours spent in farmhouse, presbytery, manor and rock-dwelling, with hosts glad to hear our tale, with good tales of their own. There was always leisure for hearing and telling.

Their stories have salt in them, but they are never ill-natured. The most terrible tale of the Prussians we heard was of one who after dining with the village curé, came every evening to the inn and ordered an omelette of twelve eggs! In the horrified tones one uses in speaking of cannibalism, the narrator added, "And he ate it *without bread!*"

The *grande dame* has passed, they say. We met her in Touraine in a hut cut out of the rocks, far away from neighbours, looking down on a sea of trees, a spur of the great forest of Chinon. She was guardian of the grotto of Panzout, *la grotte des Sibylles* of Rabelais fame—she herself a wiser, more gracious Sibyl. Indeed, she was very wise, well worth consulting. Looking back over a life hard and lonely, she declared it a good thing; and with sweet confidence gave us counsels out of the heart. Out of doors she was but a frail old peasant; within, she was a queen, small in stature, but beautiful and stately. We bent before her instinctively, told our tale at her command, heard her comment on it, and accepted her judgment. Her rosy-cheeked husband, younger than herself, was her loyal servitor. They made a pretty, not a little solemn, ceremony out of our visit. The rosy old man poured out for us the wine they drink only on feast-days. He served the queen first in their silver cup, the wedding timbale; and they drank to the health of travellers on perilous journeys, who fared out of strange lands as far as the Sibylles of Panzout. Indeed, the path to the rocky hut above the forest is a long way off the broad track to church and market. We had followed it, thinking to reach the wilds, and had arrived at civilisation. The

rosy patriarch convoyed us on our way. The *grande dame* at the door sped us with her blessing. We had been to some simple, stately court of the olden time, detached from our world, asking nothing from it, yet receiving its ambassadors with a kindly dignity whose secret is lost elsewhere.

Patriotic Tourangeaux complain they have been slandered by history and tradition, which has accounted them indolent. It all began, they say, with a misreading of Tacitus. Not *imbelles Turoni*, but *rebelles Turoni*, of course. And unfortunately Tasso slavishly repeated the misreading of the historian in his *non e gente robusta o faticosa*. It has been refuted again and again, quite conclusively. But they love a jest even when directed against themselves; and they bear Balzac no malice for his mockery of them. "The inhabitant of Tours, so striking a person outside his boundaries, dwells at home like the Indian on his mat, like the Turk on his divan. He spends his time in making fun of his neighbour, in enjoying himself, and he reaches the end of life happy. . . . As for his indolence, it is sublime, and admirably expressed by the old saying: 'Tourangeau, would you like some soup?'—'Yes.'—'Bring me your bowl then.'—'I am not hungry now.'" There is no sting in this. It is a testimony of success. "They reach the end of life happy."

Mellow philosophers, they think life good, not evil. They do not work for work's sake, nor to drown care, nor to keep themselves out of mischief, but to gain well-being and the leisure to enjoy the sun and air and good fellowship. Their ambitions are not often restless. Happiness is better than power in Touraine. But the word indolence, however genially applied, should never be heard on a stranger's lips, and least of all from a Briton. In a vine country no real indolence is possible. All the seasons bring their daily tasks, and in a land where so much of the soil is owned by peasants, industry is almost universal. Only, it is not brutal. It is a curious fact, too, that

so far as the genius of Touraine has found expression in literature and thought, it has been specially strenuous. Rabelais, Descartes, Balzac, are teeming worlds of activity. There was nothing particularly soft and languid about Paul-Louis the Hellenist and pamphleteer, was there?

But among the majority serious and incessant striving is a thing to be respected rather than imitated. Such a striver would hardly be good company. And their ideals are largely social. Of a social favourite they say, *Il est rigolo*. So they sum up all that makes a good fellow, one who turns the lights up in a company, loosens tongues, and calls out laughter. But their good spirits stand hard tests. The old are brave and merry; and the bravest and blithest of all are the old women. Mère C. now. Seventy-eight winters have passed over her head. You would say they had all been kindly springs. Her life has been a toiling one. She lives by herself, barely if decently housed. She is very poor; but she does not know it. Up with the sun every day, she drives her grandson's sheep to the hill, and keeps them under the nut-trees, not often alone, for children and dogs and neighbours and passers along the road are drawn to her by the life that flows fast in her old veins, and the jests on her merry lips. She makes a gay spot on the landscape in her blue apron and her mauve "thérèse." The winter day must be tempestuous that would hinder her from washing her children and grand-children's clothes in the Indre, kneeling on the wet stones at the water's edge, as if she had never heard of rheumatism. You would not please her to lessen her toil. At seventy-eight she is the strong one of her family; and it gladdens her to be still the protector. On Sunday she goes to mass in the black hooded cloak she got at her wedding, more than half a century ago. Comely, kindly, valiant, not a little *moqueuse*, she is younger in heart than the youngest; and her wit and laughter catch everyone's mood. She goes with one fear at her heart—of the day when her hands will be feeble and useless. "Je ne veux pas être encombrante," she says in her low hours. Yet her children love and cherish her. Honour to *la Vieille Touraine*, valiant and gay!



LE DIVERSE DE VIGILANCE



A quick-witted, articulate race, even the country-folks give one the impression of considerable mental cultivation, without any visible signs of striving after mental improvement. Where, outside Tours, are the libraries, the lecture societies, the literary societies, the penny readings, and all our desperate agencies for spreading light in rural centres? Nowhere at all. But they converse rationally in excellent French, are quick to understand and to respond. Their natural gifts are evidently good, but after schooldays are over, they are left to take care of themselves. Books are very rare. I think I saw none at all in the country. They can use their eyes, even on unfamiliar things; and their artistic susceptibilities are keen. A peasant, more especially a peasant woman, will seize on an indication, an intention, in a half-finished sketch with quicker intelligence than three-fourths of the haunters of London picture galleries. But the idea of their cultivating the arts would seem to them ridiculous and presumptuous. They profoundly respect them, have a simple, instinctive and unconscious understanding of certain essentials, how far cultivable I have no means of judging. There is only too little danger of their mistaking these instincts of theirs, even should they recognise them, for talent.

The southerners are doubtless still more articulate, more dramatic; but the Tourainers' talents in this way are striking enough. Once we listened to what seemed the best adventure story in the world from our friend P., the landlord of the Cheval Blanc. It was thrilling; it was artistically planned, the interest mounting with quick certain steps towards the climax. The background was vividly realised, the circumstance telling. The description of his sensations from moment to moment gave the thing a great intensity; and we were excited as we have rarely been by travellers' tales. And what did it all amount to? Only that one autumn day when he was out with his gun in a hollow copse near by, he saw two snakes side by side, fixing him with their beady eyes!

This making the most of their own sensations and experiences accounts for the general content with a life which is narrow indeed, and which to other races might be dull enough to brutalise. I have little C—in my mind. The village climbs up the hill from the bridge, happy, self-contained, content with a life made out of the simplest elements. Work in the fields, in garden-patch, or at the mill. For relaxation, a hand at cards in the *café* of the Cheval Blanc, or at the sign of *Le Doux Jus de la Grappe Vermeille*. (For C—is not without its conscious poetry.) A dance at the St. Eloi (1st December). A *partie de chasse* on a clear winter morning—total bag for three, a hare, and on lucky days a red partridge. In summer, long hanging over the water with a patient line. It has no lectures, no dramatic or choral societies, no reading-rooms. There is nobody specially concerned with its improvement. There is no landlord. There are no gentry. And it remains happy and vivacious. Needs be that offences come. How often one hears—“Ah, la politique, ça gâte tout !” But resentments are not long. The curé leaves it alone—save on Sundays, when he dispenses stern doctrine (he is not a Tourangeau), to which nobody listens, in the old bare grey church, a veritable church of peasants. On week-days he digs in his garden, in a big blue apron, like the rest of them. And the mayor, a splendid-looking peasant in corduroys and blouse, with an eye that would command a multitude, administers the commune while he works among his vines, or looking up from a hand at *manie* in the *café*, or as he strides, gun on shoulder, to the woods, or up on the plain, his dogs trooping after him.

Greeting to C—! The sun rose and set on many happy days there.

Tours has, doubtless, its problems of poverty like other large towns. But there is little real poverty in the country places. At C—the mayor is trustee for a relief fund bequeathed by a former inhabitant. There have been years when he has not paid a penny out. The soil is



kindly and facile, and it is mostly the peasants' own. Their needs are small ; and hardly anything goes in display. Calculated by francs, their incomes may be meagre ; but they have other counters ; and they are very poor indeed if they think themselves poor. The people are sturdily, proudly independent. There are no beggars. The Tourangeaux are essentially tillers of the soil, essentially rural by long habit and tradition and inclination. The desire for land and the interest in its working run through every class, and have always done so. Racan, the seventeenth-century poet, Malesherbes' pupil, and lord of La Roche-Racan in North Touraine, wrote for courtiers. But the theme of his *Bergeries* was "Back to the land!" Two and a half centuries ago he lauded the simple life in the most approved artificial style of his epoch, and with perfect sincerity :—

"Heureux qui vit en paix du lait de ses brébis,  
Et que de leur toison voit filer ses habits."

Racan, who left the army, the court, and the wits, to till his fields and raise his flocks, wrote out of his own experience.

This strong love of the land prevents any general desire on the part of the villagers to enter the *bourgeoisie*. They make no desperate efforts to rise above their class. On the contrary, it is impossible for a stranger to guess a peasant's wealth or poverty by his outward show. When Père F. drives into market in his donkey-cart, you would not give sixpence for his whole turn-out. Poor old man! you say, with a pitiful eye on his garments, ancient, original, and grotesque. But Père F. is rich. He could buy us all up with ease : nay more, he is rich and merry, which is rare. Not long ago he was a famous dancer ; and now at seventy-six he is still a famous singer—the best at the St. Eloi. His "Vin(t)et L'Eau" ("Le Vin et l'Eau," a dialogue between wine and water on their respective virtues) is called for and wins loud applause every year ; and the banqueters are roused to a joyous frenzy when he leads off the "Marseillaise."

The good Tourangeaux are not pious. Old *dévotés* swarm in Tours of course, and perhaps in the other towns; but the peasants are on the whole inclined to a genial scepticism, which does not hinder most of them from being, in their own words, "bons catholiques." Common sense, sunny temper, preserve them from disorders and keep them courteously respectful as a rule to priest and church and festival. Life is gentle rather than intense. Where piety exists, it is characterised by a sweet-natured acquiescence in life's daily dole. An old fellow, who needs the sun, apologised for grumbling about the weather. "Why should I call it bad?" he said. "Only above there do they know whether it be bad weather or good." The Protestant nose, prying for superstitions, will find them, of course; but in the main lightly worn. Père B. is a freethinker, at least he is so on Sunday after a discussion in the *café*. On Tuesday he says grandiloquently, "I am of the religion of Victor Hugo." But when his infant has the colic, at his wife's request he obligingly sends six sous by post to the curé of St. Fiacre, three miles off. (St. Fiacre is good against colics). "To please the mistress," he says, apologetically. But madame defends herself: "If it doesn't do any good, it can't do any harm; and if the child were to die without my having 'had his little journey made for him,' the neighbours would blame me. I should blame myself." "Faire faire le voyage au bébé," by post is a degenerate remnant indeed of the old pilgrimage on foot to the saint's shrine. On one occasion the sous were entrusted to D. to deliver over to the curé. It was a hot day, D. was thirsty, and he drank the six sous in good white wine on the road. The child got better. St. Fiacre is a fair-dealing saint. He wouldn't visit D.'s sin on the infant—not he! Rather he would be the loser without complaint, like the gentleman he is!

The priest is tolerated, and sometimes he is loved for his personal qualities, if he be one of themselves, and good-tempered, and know how to jest becomingly with the women and smile to the children.





LE JOUR DES MORTS

No mysterious awe hangs round him. Separation of Church and State was imminent when we were in Touraine ; yet the question roused no particular excitement except among old ladies. The priests looked anxious ; but I think few of them were bitter. One day in the train going to Tours, I listened to a little sharp-nosed *rentier*, for all the world like a jerky jack-in-the-box, condoling with his curé on the terrible affair, in a fashion which looked very like incitement to resistance. The curé was an old man, shivering in the shabbiest *soutane*, with a keen, delicate face, very poor and very gay.

" Ah, the villains ! " cried jack-in-the-box, " ah, the cursed government ! But have no fear, my father, have no fear ! "

" I have no fear, " said the curé. " In everything, my son, one must look to the end. "

" Have no fear, " ran on Jack, excitedly. " Do not tremble ! "

" I do not tremble, " said the thin, shabby curé. " *I live too near the sun.* "

L. is a rich peasant and a terrible free-thinker. He quarrels with all the priests round about, or teases them unmercifully. But L. drives his wife to mass on Sunday. He lives in an uncommonly fine house, and if he gives a beggar or any poor wandering creature charity, it is not churlishly or patronisingly at his door. The poor wanderer sits down with L. at his table. A priest would never venture over his threshold ; but if he did, he would be apt to mistake the terrible blaspheming L. for an early Christian.

The village festivals, however, still bring Church and people together in friendly fashion. The great human events of birth and death demand ceremony, and the Church, they hold, is good for dignifying these. You hear young folks talk of giving their children " civil baptism, " whatever that may mean ; but they would miss the carillon at the christenings and weddings. Above all I think they would miss the consecration of their loyalty to their dead on the *Jour des Morts*. After mass on All Souls' Day the black cloaks and the

blouses climb the wintry hill, in solemn procession, all heads bowed, followed by the curé and the precentor, chanting in dirge-like tones, and the acolytes with the censer and the cross. In the cemetery they disperse, each group to pray by the mound of their own dead, where they laid flowers yesterday, while the priest walks round and scatters the holy water, the blessing, and the "Rest in Peace."

Polytheism is not dead. Is it dead anywhere save in dried-up pedants' hearts? Only, the rustic gods have changed their names. The peasants and *vignerons* need the old protectors of the soil. As in the early days it was St. Martin, so now it is St. Vincent—the young deacon, who never dug or delved or trained a vine—who has been metamorphosed into a rustic deity. A slim, pale, austere young Bacchus he is, with his black robe, his martyr's palm, and his bunch of grapes. But he is invoked with fervour; and his *fête* in January is a great event in many parishes. All the men go to church, which is fuller than at Easter. As the jovial curé of L. said to me: "If we lost *le bon Dieu*, we should still have St. Vincent." Nevertheless, in other parts his is but a twilight fame. The phylloxera of twenty years ago and too many successive bad vintages, have tried his votaries. At C—for instance—but C—is not entirely *vignoble*—he has given place to St. Eloi. Once St. Eloi was the blacksmiths', the ironworkers' saint: now he takes the tillers of the soil as well under his protection. At the St. Eloi, all C—goes to church. C—dances and sings and dines. But C—is practical—it does not do to put too much responsibility on the saint, who helps those that help themselves. So the men folk listen to a lecture—the only one in all the year—from an agricultural professor, and hand in their subscriptions to the mayor for the co-operative society of St. Eloi, through which they can buy with advantage all their manure and soil-foods for the coming year.

An old land this, with a lost history far older than we have recorded here. Baffling vestiges of it lie scattered about the hills and

fields, dolmens, menhirs, cromlechs, and tumuli, some imposing still, most of them broken, many even displaced. Names suggestive of legend attach to them still. There are scores of "grottes des fées." There are "palets de Gargantua." There are "Pas de St. Martin" and "Pas de St. Brice." It is difficult to gather the legends now. M. Bousrez of Tours, who has made the completest study of these megalithic monuments, says : "The legends are not numerous in the department. The peasants of Touraine are more sceptic and less simple than those of Brittany or La Vendée." And M. Sébillot, who collected the legends of Gargantua, says he found fewer of them in Touraine than in any other field of his investigation. True, the Tourangeaux have laughed more than they have brooded ; and the loss of the legends doubtless accounts for the destruction of so many of the monuments. But the legends have not all gone ; and you will catch their echo still, if you have the ear for such things. Only, the history of Touraine since the coming of the Romans has been so full as to absorb the energies of all the antiquaries. Archæologists are numerous and folk-lorists rare in the province.

The old passes swiftly ; and much has gone irrevocably, of good and bad. There is some lingering regret in the hearts of those who yet are content and happy with their lot, and who welcome all the new that comes to them. Of their grandparents they say : "They were finer men and women than we, the old folks." If all tales be true, the life of the old folks was meagre enough ; and they had to be giants to survive it. You need not be anxious about the physical condition of some ruddy and brown, clear-eyed son or daughter of the soil, picture of sane, wholesome well-being, who sighs : "We are not what we were in Touraine. Health is gone!" They are thinking of traditions of their fathers' time of a primitive strength, which perhaps the modern world has no use for. There are survivals of these giants and giantesses. Marie-Thérèse, the famous farmer up

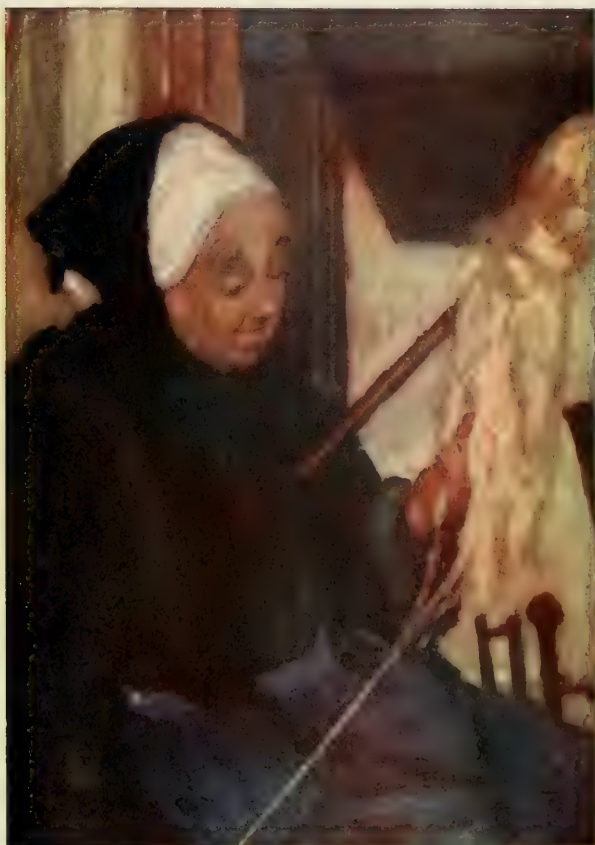
in the plateau of Ste. Maure, is one of them. Her *vacherie* is a sight to be seen. She is a widow, very rich, even judged by *bourgeois* standards. But she would scorn to be a *bourgeoise*. I have seen her out in the fields in mid-winter working as none of her labourers would do, and she is sixty. Her bearing and breeding of children have been but details in a life of toil. The day's work was not to be interrupted for a trifle. Some thirty years ago a *bonhomme* from the next village found her in the stable at four o'clock in the morning. Says he: "Eh bien, la maîtresse, comment ça va-t-il aujourd'hui?" "Pas trop bien," answers Maria-Thérèse, continuing her labours, "J'ai fait un drôle hier au soir!"

The *drôle* survives, a rather poor thing of a man from all accounts.

Costume goes, has all gone save the blouse, the bonnet, and the black cloak. In a remote upland farm in the Lochois we saw probably the last *cahut* worn. The *cahut* is the most formidable head-dress I have ever seen. It binds the forehead with a broad white band, covering all the hair, and rises stiff and erect for half a foot or more upon the head. It gave an air of stern implacable dignity to the octogenarian we saw wearing it; yet she was but a soft-faced chit of seventeen when first she put it on.

And the old crafts are going fast. Spinning is now only a survival. The weavers have disappeared. The old women regret it; and when they bring out a dusty wheel from the *grenier* they touch it with emotion, and tell you that life to them is duller. The winter evenings were never long round the hearth when a group of friends, young and old, chatted, told tales, and sang to the hum of their wheels. The men have still their gatherings; but life to the women is less gay. *Tous les beaux métiers s'en vont.* Now and then you surprise an ancient dame at her spinning by a cottage door, or she takes her distaff with her to the fields. At Chinon, on the rocky path near St. Radegonde's chapel, we found an old woman on the edge of the





Spinning



hill with her wheel. Sitting alone, backed by the blue valley of the Vienne and the cliff, plying her old trade, she seemed a strangely isolated thing. We said we had not heard many wheels humming in Touraine. She turned to us an old, old face, with a curious detached look in her eyes. "Ça reviendra ! Ça reviendra," she said. So might a prophetess look.

Meanwhile, this greeting from two strangers to *la Touraine qui passe*, to *la Touraine qui reste*.

30th June 1906.



## NOTES

A BIBLIOGRAPHY, even passably full, of works concerning Touraine would be very lengthy. Besides, such is unnecessary in a book which is not addressed to students. Names of books illustrating special points will be found in the Notes to the various chapters.

The best history of the chateaux, in English, is Mr. T. A. Cook's *Old Touraine*. Mr. Henry James has written of some of them with lightness and charm in *A Little Tour in France*. For the general history of the province, see Chalmel's *Histoire de Touraine*, 1828; Bellanger's *Touraine Ancienne et Moderne*, 1849; Touchard-Lafosse, *La Loire Historique*, 1851; Chevalier's *Promenades pittoresques en Touraine*, 1869—this last a popularisation of the results of life-long research. The *Mémoires* (begun in 1842) and *Bulletins* of the Société Archéologique de Touraine are a vast mine of information for the curious and studious reader. There are no good guide-books. Monseigneur Chevalier's excellent *Guide pittoresque du voyageur en Touraine*, now out of print, should be brought up to date and re-issued.

The library of Tours is famous; and all readers are welcomed. Elsewhere in the province there seem to be no books. Not without difficulty I penetrated to the municipal library of Chinon. Apart from MSS., it contained three printed volumes—at least, that was the number shown to me—and one of these was not about Touraine! The "Société des Amis de Chinon" should look to this.

Chap. I. p. 1, l. 20. "Outside the province—" The boundaries of Touraine were often altered. Under its hereditary counts it extended from Chaumont to the Thouët, at Saumur; and from the Veude to the Loir (Maine). Later, it was somewhat smaller. Roughly speaking, the boundaries were: N. Maine and the Vendômois; E. the Blésois and Berri; S. Poitou; W. Anjou. The present department of INDRE-ET-LOIRE—though it includes also part of the Blésois, of Poitou, Maine, and Anjou—is nearly co-extensive with the old province of Touraine.

p. 8, l. 27. Tacitus, *Annals*, iii. 46.

p. 12, l. 29. Francesco Florio, author of *De commendatione Urbis Turonicæ*, lived in Tours in Louis XI.'s reign. See "Mémoires de la Soc. Archéol.," vol. 7.

p. 13, l. 1. Alfred de Vigny, born at Loches, Mar. 27, 1797.

Chap. II. The best authorities for the town of Tours are, Giraudet's *Histoire de la Ville de Tours*, 1873, and Grandmaison's *Tours Archéologique*, 1879.

Chap. III. For a full account of the life and cult of the saint, see *St. Martin*, by M. Lecoy de la Marche, 1881.

p. 24, l. 19. Sulpicius Severus, *De vita B. Martini*, ed. Dübner, 1859. French transl. by R. Viot, 1861.

p. 24, l. 21. Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers, author of *De vita S. Martini*, and much other Latin verse. See Life by Nisard, and Thierry's *Récits Mérovingiens*.

p. 24, l. 22. Péan Gastineau, *Vie de Monseigneur St. Martin* (Soc. des Bibliophiles de Touraine, 1860).

p. 29, l. 9. From Veillat's *Pieuses Légendes de Berry*, 1861.

p. 34, l. 20. "Merlin." Another explanation is, not that there was any confusion between them, but that the people beatified Merlin, and that the legends attach to the enchanter, not to the saint. This is less probable.

p. 38, l. 18. Le Blant, *Inscriptions Chrétiennes de la Gaule*. 1856.

Chap. IV. p. 42, l. 10. The most brilliant account of Touraine under the Merovings will be found in Augustin Thierry's *Récits des temps Mérovingiens*. 1840.

p. 47, l. 28. "roi feu Hugon." *Mém. de la Soc. Archéol.*, vol. 17.

Chap. V. p. 55, l. 20. A. de Salies, *Histoire de Foulques Nerra*, 1874. (N.B. The dates and even the order of the episodes in Fulk's career are extremely uncertain.)

Chap. VI. p. 70, l. 2. To the main type of twelfth-century architecture in Touraine the name of Plantagent or Ligerian has been given. Some excellent specimens are to be found in the valley of the Vienne, notably St. Maurice, Chinon. Churches of the Plantagenet type generally consist of a single nave terminated by a rectangular apse. They serve as transition between Romanesque and Gothic. In the earlier specimens, while the windows and doors are round-arched, the vaults are pointed, the intersections being decorated with richly carved pendentives. But the two elements are found in the vaulting.

p. 81, l. 13. *Le Livre des Faictz de Boucicaut*. Michaud et Poujoulat, Nouvelle Collect. des Mémoires, I. 2. 1850.

For even more fantastic adventures of a young Tourangeau knight-errant of nearly the same period, see *L'Histoire de Petit Jehan de Saintré*. Ed. Guichard, 1843.

p. 83, l. 10. See Vallet de Virville's and Du Fresne de Beaucourt's *Histoire de Charles VII*.

p. 84, l. 8. See Francisque Michel, *Les Ecossais en France*, 1862.

p. 93, l. 32. Agnes Sorel. See pp. 264-268 and note p. 348.

Chap. VIII. p. 97, l. 4. For Louis XI. at Plessis the one great authority is Commynes' Memoirs. I have used Danett's translation. Tudor Translations, vols. 17, 18.

p. 106, l. 18. See "Charles VIII. en Touraine," Mém. de la Soc. Archéol., vol. 3.

p. 110, l. 27. Among the host of books dealing with the art and architecture of the French Renaissance, the following will be found useful by the traveller in Touraine.

Müntz, *La Renaissance en Italie et en France*, 1885. (But Müntz exaggerates the Italian influence.) Lady Dilke's *Renaissance of Art in France*, 1879. La Borde, *La Renaissance à la Cour de France*, 1850-55. Giraudet, *Les Artistes Tourangeaux*, 1885. Grandmaison, *Document inédits pour servir à l'histoire des arts en Touraine*, 1870.

p. 111, l. 27. See Petit (J. L.), *Architectural Studies in France*, new ed.

p. 112, l. 4. Here, in brief, is the history of the CATHEDRAL OF TOURS :—

St. Lidorius, successor of St. Gatien, founded the first church about A.D. 340, transforming the house of a senator into a little basilica.

St. Martin called this church—the only one in his day, but which he probably enlarged—ST. MAURICE (a name the various churches built on the site retained till the 14th century), giving it relics of the Thebean martyrs. It was destroyed by fire in 559.

St. Gregory of Tours rebuilt it. His church, a more ambitious building, with mural paintings and scenes from the life of St. Martin, was dedicated in 590. It lasted till the 12th century. Several Councils of the Church were held in it, and here Fulk the Young received the cross from Archbishop Hildebert before he left to be King of Jerusalem.

Hildebert, a man of extraordinary culture and feeling for ancient art, built a new church in the 12th century. This was the one burnt during the quarrels between Henry II. and Philip. The lower part of the towers remain still.

The next church, begun under Archbishop Joscion, was a Gothic edifice. It was the beginning of the one we know now. The foundation stone was laid by 1170. The choir, the sanctuary, and 15 chapels of the apse, were completed by 1267. Some of the glass in the choir bears that date.

By 1300 the transept and the first two bays of the nave were built. Then ardour was cooled, and money was lacking. The faithful were offered Indulgences for liberal donations; and the Confraternity of St. Gatien was revived in order to raise funds. So powerful did this body become that the name of the church was changed. St. Maurice became ST. GATIEN. The

great western façade was finished in 1440; but it was not all brought to completion till the 16th century. Hence the two Renaissance towers (1507 and 1547) on a Gothic edifice. Of these Henry IV. said, "Voilà deux beaux bijoux; il n'y manque que des étuis." The long delay gave rise to a saying; "C'est interminable, comme l'œuvre de S. Maurice."

The splendid glass is of different periods. That in the choir is of the 13th century, 1260-1270, the artist, Richard a craftsman of Tours. The subjects, the Passion, the Tree of Jesse, the Creation, the legends of SS. Martin, Maurice, Nicholas, Denis, etc., have been described by MM. Bourassé and Manceau. The windows of the chapels of the apse are of the 13th and 14th centuries. (There is said to be also some 12th century glass there.)

The tombs were mostly destroyed at the Revolution. The monument of the two children of Charles VIII. was erected, in 1506, in the choir of St. Martin's. It was transferred here in 1815. As to its sculptors, see p. 115.

p. 115. See p. 172 for the specimens of sculpture at St. Denis-Hors, Amboise. Travellers of leisure should also visit the little church of Limeray, where a collection, very bizarre as a whole, but with good things in it, was made by the late Abbé Blaive. This village curé was a man of fine artistic sensibility, if an artist *manqué*, a rare soul of exalted spirituality, whose life, at once exquisite and tragic, should have found a Balzac for interpreter.

p. 115, l. 31. See M. Paul Vitry's monumental work on *Michel Colombe*, 1904, which contains an interesting general survey of the art of the School of the Loire.

p. 117, l. 5. On the early French school of painting the full and excellent *Catalogue de l'Exposition des Primitifs*, Paris, 1904, is well worth consulting.

p. 121, l. 16. See H. Bouchot, *Les Clouets*.

Chap. IX. p. 133, l. 25. Tallemant des Réaux (1619-1692). *Historiettes*, ed. P. Paris, 1854-58.

p. 135, l. 3. The history of Protestantism in Touraine has been written in various *brochures* by M. Dupin de Saint-André.

p. 140, l. 21. See Chevalier, *Tours Capitale*, 1896.

p. 141, l. 27. See p. 205.

p. 144, l. 4. Balzac, *Contes Drolatiques*, "L'Apostrophe."

p. 145, l. 18. "Maitre Cornelius."

p. 145, l. 22. Béroalde de Verville (1538-1612), author of *Le Moyen de Parvenir*. Jacob, the bibliophile and critic, suggests, however, that V. stole it from a lost book of Rabelais. He was a canon of St. Gatien's.

p. 145, l. 26. Balzac, "Curé de Tours."



p. 145, l. 31. The Life of this extraordinary latter-day saint, M. Papin-Dupont, has been written by R. P. Janvier. Eng. transl. 1881.

p. 146, l. 9. See M. René Boylesve's charming novel, *Mademoiselle Cécile*. Other novels of the same author, with Touraine backgrounds, are *La Bequoise* and *L'Enfant à la Balustrade*.

Chap. X. p. 148, l. 11. See J. J. Ampère, *Hist. Litt. de la France*, vol. 8.

p. 150, l. 7. *Chronique de Jean de Troye*. Ed. Vitu, 1873.

p. 150, l. 27. See *Bulletin de la Soc. Archéol.*, vol. 2.

p. 152, l. 4. But, indeed, epitaph-making for himself was one of his favourite pastimes. Compare his "Amelette Ronsardelette."

Chap. XI. p. 156, l. 4. At St. Symphorien diverge the great roads into N. Touraine—N.W. to Château-La-Vallière and Neuillé-Pont-Pierre; N.E. to Chateaurenault. As the general history of Touraine has dictated the plan of the book, and as history has mostly concentrated itself along the Loire and south of it, my references to N. Touraine are necessarily few. But the traveller need not neglect it. The little valleys of the Brenne, the Choisille, and the Bresme, are worth exploring. Lovers of art and architecture should visit Saint-Paterne, Bueil, and Neuillé-Pont-Pierre, and those interested in philanthropy the colony of Mettray.

p. 158, l. 4. See *Amboise*, by J. J. Bossebœuf, 1897.

p. 164, ll. 7 and 13. Fleuranges, *Le Jeune Aventuroux*, Michaud et Poujoulat I. 5. Louise de Savoie's Journal is in the same volume.

p. 167, l. 14. Arsène Houssaye, *Léonard de Vinci*, 1869.

p. 174, l. 30. L. C. de Saint-Martin. See Studies of him by Caro (1852); Franck (1866); and, in English, by A. E. Waite, 1901.

Chap. XII. p. 177, l. 15. De Vigny, *Cinq Mars*, ed. 1856.

p. 180, l. 10. *Les Devotes Epistres de Katherine d'Amboise*. Ed. Bourassé, 1861.

p. 182, l. 8. Blennerhasset, *Mad. de Staël et son temps* (transl.), 1890.

p. 183, l. 8. Fougères. This romantic old castle, with architectural, historical, and legendary interest, fast falling to pieces in full sight of its owner's ugly new place, is now let out in tenements to the poorest folk of a poor village.

p. 184, l. 13. See De la Saussave, *Histoire de la Ville de Blois*, 1836; *Histoire du Château de Blois*, 1862; *Blois et ses Environs*, 1873.

p. 185, l. 31. Champollion-Figeac, *Louis et Charles d'Orleans*, 1844. Charles d'Orleans. *Poésies Complètes*. Ed. d'Hericaud, 1874.

p. 186, l. 9. R. L. Stevenson, *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*, 1882.

p. 193, l. 11. Saint-Gelais, *Histoire de Louis XII*. For the general history of the French Renaissance consult Michelet and Henri Martin. Sainte-

Beuve's *Causeries* for the literary side. Miss Sichel's *Men and Women of the French Renaissance*, and her *Catherine de Medicis* contain many references to authorities, contemporary and other. Balzac's brilliant *Catherine de Medicis* has far more in it than its title promises, and yet a good deal less than he purposed, so far as Catherine is concerned. Then there is the immortal gossip Brantôme, most undependable, and quite indispensable.

Chap. XIII. p. 206, l. 26. Béranger's *Correspondance*, vols. 2 and 3.

p. 211, l. 27. For its history see *Langeais et son Chateau*, by Bossebœuf.

p. 216, l. 6. From Port-Boulet the traveller can go north by rail to see the fine church at Bourgueil, and the interesting tombs of the Du Bellays at Gizeux.

p. 217, l. 23. See *La Verite Historique sur la Dame et le Sire de Montsoreau et le Buffon Chicot*, J. de Château-Chalons, 1888.

p. 217, l. 24. Fontevrault (outside Touraine) is full of interest both historically and for its architecture. The abbey-church, now being restored, is magnificent. But the prison is a great weight on town and abbey. It is impossible to examine the latter adequately, and enjoyment is out of the question.

See Bossebœuf, *Fontevrault*.

Chap. XIV. p. 221, l. 2. Rancé. See p. 257.

p. 223, l. 1. P. L. Courier, *Oeuvres*. Ed. Sarcey. 3 vols. 1876-77.

p. 227, l. 9. *Histoire de Chenonceau*; also, *Le Château de Chenonceau* (1882), and other works by Mgr. C. Chevalier.

p. 234, l. 6. For Madame Dupin and her guests, see Rousseau's *Confessions*, pt. 2; *La Portefeuille de Mme. Dupin*, ed. le Comte de Villeneuve-Guibert, 1884; and G. Sand, *Histoire de ma Vie*, vol. 1.

Chap. XV. p. 257, l. 1. See Châteaubriand's *Vie de Rancé*, 1844; and Abbé Dubois's *Hist. de l'Abbé de Rancé*, 1866.

p. 261, l. 30. E. Gautier, *Histoire du Donjon de Loches*, 1881; E. Hat, *Hist. de la Ville de Loches*.

p. 266, l. 10. *Le Jourvenel*, a chronicle of De Bueil's exploits during the Hundred Years' War. The chief personages of the time figure under fictitious names. See Favre & Lecestre's edition, *Soc. de l'Hist. de France*, 1887.

p. 266, l. 27. In support of their theory that Agnes's reign was short, M. de Cougny and others quote Olivier de la Marche, ch. xiii. p. 406 (ed. Michaud et Poujoulat). "En cette saison (qui fut l'an 1444) le roi avait nouvellement élevé une pauvre damoiselle, genti-femme, nomme Agnès du Soret." But though "nouvellement" could hardly cover ten years, does it necessarily only refer to the year 1444?

p. 272, l. 19. Chicot's portrait bore the following inscription:—"D'Antoine

d'Anglerey icy est le pourtraict, qui ayant à trois roys de France fait service, mourust l'espee au poing. Dieu lui soit propice qui de ses vertus sa noblesse a extract.

p. 277. These tales of La Courroirie are told in a letter written by one of the monks to a brother in Paris, first printed in 1589 under the title of *Les inhumanitez du Capitaine Lignou*.

p. 278, l. 4. See Bossebœuf, *Montrésor et ses Environs*, 1897.

Chap. XVI. p. 284, ll. 11 and 12. *Les Miracles de St. Katherine de Fierboys*, ed. Bourassé, 1858. English translation, with introduction, by Andrew Lang, 1897.

p. 288, l. 4. Balzac caricatures the popular conception of the philosopher in the *Contes Drolatiques*—Prologue. "The Sieur Descartes, a melancholy genius, who devoted himself more to brown studies than to drinks and dainties, a man of whom all the cooks and confectioners of Tours have a wise horror, whom they despise, and will not hear spoken of, and say 'Where does he live?' if his name be mentioned." But the Tourangeaux did him great honour in 1897. See *Bulletins de la Soc. Archéol.*, vol. 11.

p. 294, l. 32. *L'Eglise de Preuilly-s-Claise*, by L'Abbé Picardat, 1895.

Chap. XVII. p. 297, l. 18. See *Chinon et ses Monuments*, 1889, and *Chinon et ses Environs*, 1898, both by M. de Cougny.

p. 300, l. 22. Fortunatus. See p. 24 and note.

p. 306, l. 2. *A Monk of Fijé*. By Andrew Lang. 1896.

p. 311, l. 20. The results of the most recent researches on the biography and topography of Rabelais have not yet been popularised. I have derived much help and information from *Notes historiques sur Chinon*, by H. Grimaud, 1898, from the same writer's notes and articles in the *Bulletin de la Soc. Archéol.*, 1900, and in the *Revue des Etudes Rabelaisiennes*, 1904; from *Les Rabelais de Huet*, by T. Baudement, 1867; from *La Famille de Rabelais*, by F. Audiger in the Annual of the *Société des Amis de Rabelais*, 1887; and from the excellent article on the Chateau de Coudray-Montpensier in the *Mémoires de la Soc. Archéol.*, 1899.

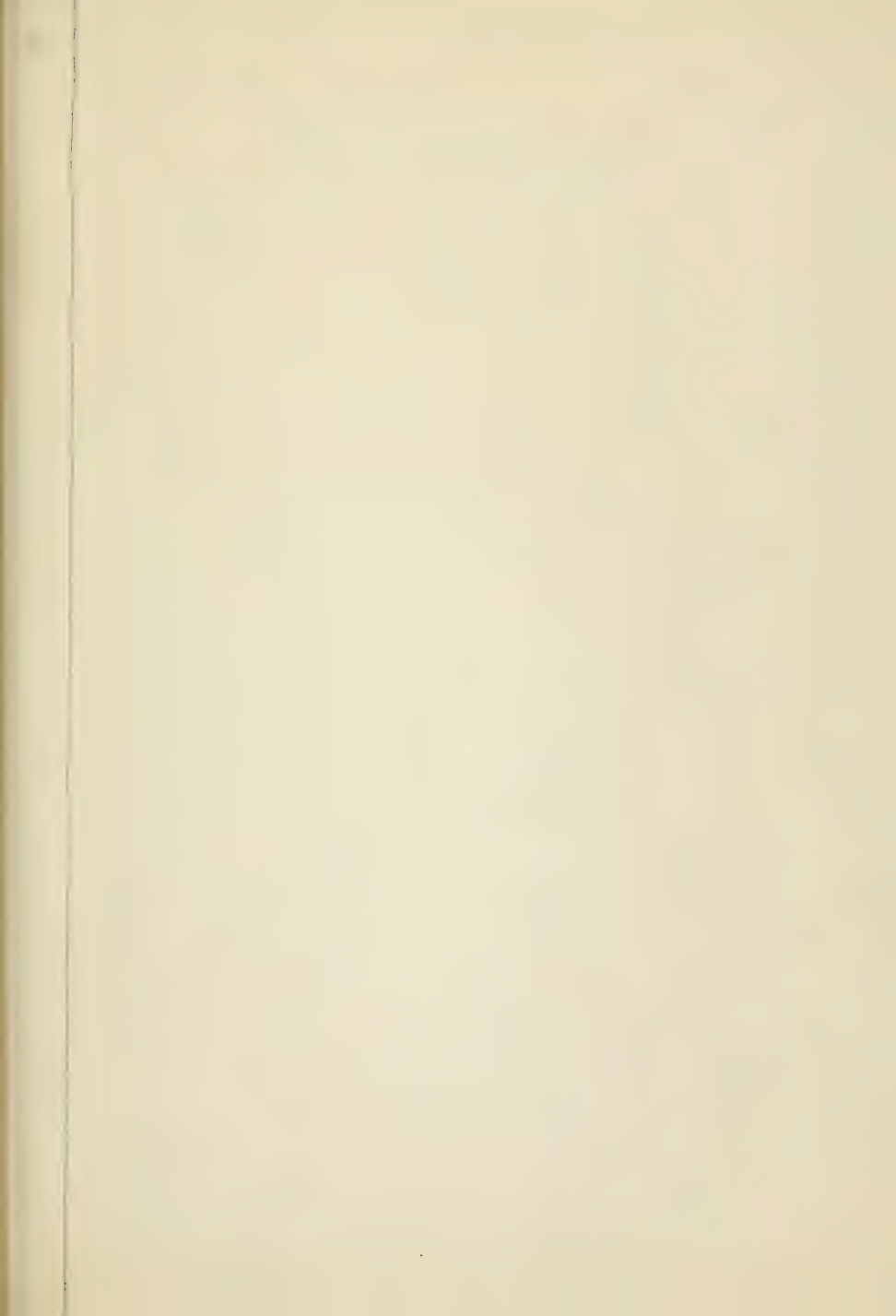
p. 314, l. 14. "His topography is exact." So much do I believe this to be the case that I cannot allow the R. Vede of the *Gargantua* to be the R. Veude. Rabelais's Vede must be the Négron, under an old name, or some brook, tributary of the Négron, below the Devinière.

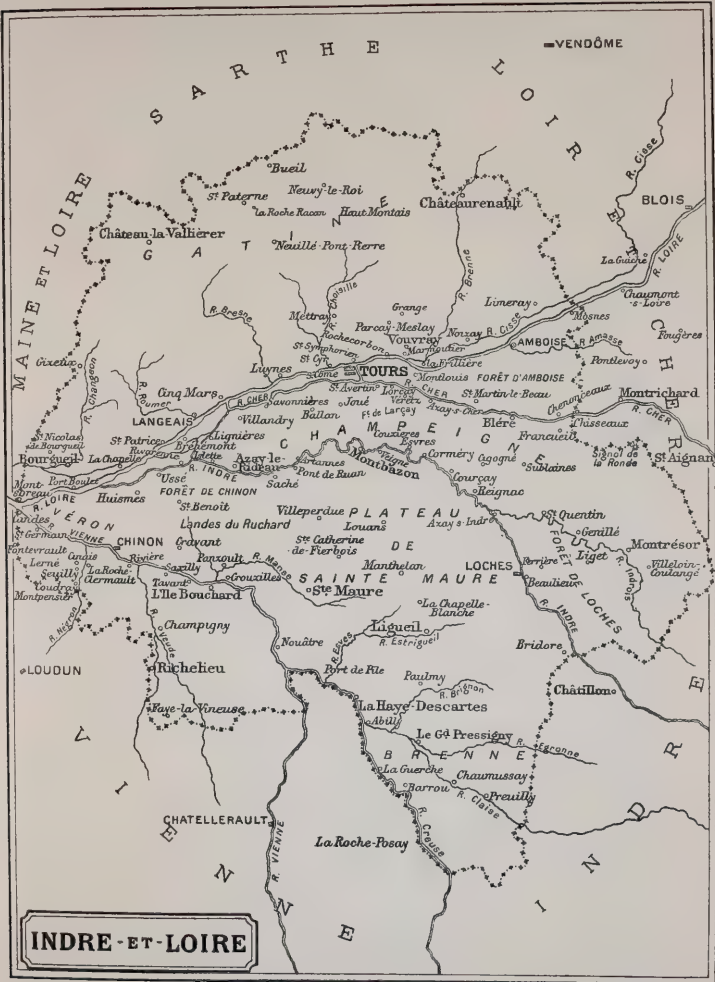
Chap. XVIII. p. 335, l. 9. Honorat de Bueil, Marquis de Racan, *Oeuvres Complètes*, ed. Arnould, 1901.

p. 338, l. 10. M. Laisnel de La Salle in his *Croyances et Légendes du Centre de la France*, 1870, ingeniously accounts for St. Vincent being the patron of the vine-growing industry, by the consonance of "vin" et Vincent.

p. 339, l. 6. L. Bousrez, *Les Monuments mégalithiques de la Touraine*, 1894.







## INDEX

### A

ABD-EL-KADER, 171, 237  
 Abderrahman, 45, 243, 320  
 Abilly-sur-Claise, 290  
 Adalbert de Périgieux, 56, 57  
 Adrian, Emperor, 18  
 Aegidius, Roman general, 299  
 Aeneas, 17  
 Agaunum, 219  
 Agincourt, battle of, 83, 186, 265, 320  
 Aigues Vives, 70  
 Aiguillon, Duc d', 224  
 Alaric, 39, 40, 158  
 Albany, Duke of, 85  
 Albert, les d', 133  
     Charles, *see* Duc de Luynes  
 Alençon, Ducs d', Charles VI., 165 ;  
     François, 129, 216, 232 ; Jean V., 268,  
     307  
 Alexander III., Pope, 69  
 Alexander VI., Pope, 110  
 Alexandre de Vendôme, 171  
 Alexandria, 33  
 Amable, R., 322  
 Amasse, R., 161, 166, 174  
 AMBOISE, 1, 2, 4, 11, 18, 39, 54, 60, 62, 63,  
     68, 71, 89, 105, 108, 110, 114, 123,  
     125, 155, 156, 157-176, 179, 183,  
     191, 195, 197, 213, 228, 232, 235, 237,  
     347  
     Enterprise of, 126, 197  
     Massacre of, 11, 145, 168-171  
     Forest of, 51, 169, 225  
     Denise d', 179 ; Hugues, 159 ; Lisois,  
     60, 61, 65, 159, 179  
     Chaumont branch :—  
     Cardinal d', 108, 116, 118, 268 ;  
     Catherine d', 180, 182, 347 ;  
     Charles I., 179, 180 ; Charles II.,  
     178, 180 ; B. Françoise, 180 ;  
     Louis, 93 ; Pierre, 179

Amiens, 25  
 Ampère, J.J., 148, 347  
 Anché, 325  
 Ancre, Maréchal d', 134  
 Anet, 232  
 Angers, 48, 54, 59, 113, 148, 212, 215  
 Angevin Chronicles, 67  
 Angevins, 62, 63, 255  
 Anglerays, Antoine de la Roche d' (Chicot  
     the Jester), 272, 277, 348  
 Angoulême, Charles, Comte d', 195 ;  
     François, *see* Francis I.  
 Anjou, 27, 58, 63, 67, 68, 216, 217, 244,  
     298, 343  
     House of, 9, 53, 54-67, 159, 240,  
     301  
     Counts of, under respective names  
     Dukes of, Louis III., 87 ; François,  
     *see* d'Alençon ; Marie d', 317  
 Anne of Bavaria, 233  
 Anne de Beaujeu, 105-109  
 Anne de Bretagne, Queen, 90, 109, 110,  
     116, 120, 161, 162, 163, 164, 180, 194,  
     195, 196, 213, 241, 250  
 Annonciades, Order of the, 110, 241  
 Antwerp, 99, 117  
 Aquitaine, 10, 39, 65, 68, 263, 287, 299  
 Archaeological Society of Touraine, 19, 73,  
     115, 151, 323, 343, 344, 345, 347, 349  
 Argenson les d', 261  
 Argenton, *see* Commines  
 Argy, 29  
 Armagnac, Bertrand d', 82, 186  
 Armorica, 300  
 Arragon, Cardinal d', 166  
 Arras, Treaty of, 93  
 Artannes, 4, 254  
 Arthur of Brittany, 72, 263, 303  
 Aubigné, Agrippa d', 170, 171  
 Authion, R., 297  
 Auvergne, 12, 41, 50  
 Auxerre, 50, 215

- Avician, 26, 27, 158  
 AZAY-LE-RIDEAU, 1, 2, 10, 113, 114, 117, 128, 142, 242, 247-250, 251, 301, 321  
 Azay-sur-Cher, 223  
 Azay-sur-Indre, 261, 278
- B
- BABOU, PHILIBERT, 173, 224, 225, 230;  
 Marie, 173; Françoise, 225  
 Baldwin II. of Jerusalem, 67  
 Ballan, 45, 116, 241, 242, 243, 248, 254  
 Baluc, Cardinal de, 99, 268, 269  
 BALZAC, Honoré de, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 140, 141-145, 205, 206, 252-254, 321, 331, 332, 346, 348, 349  
 Bar, 64  
 Barante, Baron de, 182  
 Baret, Renée, 272  
 Barre, Roger de la, 306  
 Barri, Godefroy de (la Renaudie), 168, 169, 197  
 Barrou, 286, 290, 292  
 Bassompierre, Maréchal de, 181  
 Bastarnay, Imbert de, 279, 280; François, 280; René, 280  
 Baugé, Battle of, 84, 85, 86  
 Baugerais, 70  
 Béarn, 125, 133, 134  
 Beauce, la, 191  
 Beaufort, Duc de, 256, 257  
 Beaulieu, 57, 61, 64, 75, 159, 262, 263, 265, 268, 273, 274, 275, 295; Camus de, 88, 305; Treaty of, 129, 274  
 Beaune, les, 95; Jacques de, 80, 123-125, 229, 242, 250  
 Beauregard, 203  
 Beauté-sur-Marne, 264, 265  
 Beauvilliers, les, 281  
 Becket, Thomas, 69, 179, 221, 222, 275, 276  
 Bede, 46  
 Bedford, Duke of, 84, 86, 87, 190, 266  
 Béllanger, S., 343  
 Belle-Isle, 210  
 Benais, 315  
 Bentivoglio, Cardinal, 12
- Béranger, Pierre Jean de, 145, 206, 207, 266, 348  
 Berengaria, Q., 255, 256, 263  
 Bérenger, hérésiarque, 148-150, 347  
*Bergeries* (Racan's), 335  
 Berri, 7, 24, 29, 82, 83, 84, 88, 264, 274, 286  
 Berthe, Countess of Blois and Queen, 59, 61  
 Berthelot, les, 250  
 Bertrada de Montfort, Countess of Anjou and Queen, 66, 67  
 Biencourt, Marquis de, 249  
 Bièvre, R., 190  
 Biotteau, Abbé, 143, 145; César, 142  
 Black Prince, The, 79, 228, 261  
 Blaive, Abbé, 346  
 Blanche of Castile, Queen, 77, 78, 304  
 Blennerhasset, Lady, 347  
 Bléré, 225-227, 235  
 Blésois, the, 62, 117, 150, 159, 183, 185, 244, 343  
 BLOIS, 1, 10, 11, 68, 82, 92, 105, 114, 121, 123, 133, 150, 163, 164, 166, 168, 181, 183-203, 209, 233, 347.  
 Counts of, 9, 10, 263, *see also under* respective names  
 Forest of, 190  
 States General of, 199, 200  
 Boccaccio, 120  
 Boehme, Jacob, 175  
 Bohiers, les, 95, 228, 229-231, 235, 250  
 Bois-Pâtaud, 226  
 Bois-Rahier, 221, 222  
 Bois-Ramé, 226  
 Bolingbroke, 186  
 Bondésir, 172, 173  
 Bonnaventure, 308  
 Bordeaux, Duc de, 223. Councils of, 30, 148, 149  
 Borgia, César, 110  
 Bosseboeuf, J. J., 275, 348, 349  
 Bossée, 283  
 Botero, Rodolphe, 151  
 Bouchard de l'Île, 326  
 " Vendôme, 59  
 Bouchot, H., 121, 346  
 Boucicaut (Jean le Meingre) (I.), 6, 80, 228, (II.) 80-82, 83, 125, 224. *Livre des Faictz* de, 81, 344



Boulainvilliers, 317  
 Bourassé, Abbé, 347, 349  
 Bourbons, The, 11  
 Bourbon, Pierre de, 105  
   Charles, Duc de, 317; Louis, 233  
   Jeanne de, 317  
   Louis, Bastard of, 317, 322  
 Bourdailles, les, 281  
 Bourdichon, Jehan, 109, 117, 120, 121,  
 122, 162, 272  
 Bourges, 83, 86, 108, 109, 110, 132, 241  
   roi de (Charles VII.), 3, 84, 94, 138,  
 237  
 Bourgueil, 150, 217, 301, 348  
 Bournan, Jeanne de, 317; Louis de, 317;  
   Pierre de, 317  
 Bourré, Jean, 213  
 Bousrez, L., 338, 349  
 Bouthillier, Armand de, *see* Rancé  
 Boylesve, René, 347  
 Brabant, 129  
 Bragelonne, Vicomte de, 202  
 Branicki, les, 281  
 Brantôme, 108, 194, 196, 197, 198, 199,  
 248, 265, 281, 287, 348  
 Bray (later Reignac) 89  
 Braye, 310  
 Bréhémont, 215, 244  
 Brenne, Comte de, 201  
 Brenne, R., 347  
 Bresme, R. 4, 347  
 Brétigny, Treaty of, 79, 213  
 Bretons, 55, 77, 194, 300, 305  
 Brézé, la Dame de, 267; Louis de, 230;  
   Pierre de, 268, 305  
 Briçonnet, les, 95, 250; Cardinal, 229;  
   Catherine, 229  
 Bridoré, 247  
 Brisacier, Abbé, 245  
 Brittany, 18, 55, 72, 285, 339  
   Dukes of, Jean IV, 80; Francis I.,  
 289; Francis II., 116, 191  
 Brou, 116  
 Bruce, Robert, 160  
 Brunehilde, 43  
 Brunet, Jacques, 127  
 Buch. de (Jean de Grailly) 80  
 Buchan, Earl of, 85, 87, 88  
 Budé, Catherine, 119

Bueil, 347  
 Bueil, les, 279, 280; Jean de, 80, 93, 266,  
 279, 305, 348; Pierre de, 80  
 Buffon, G. L., 234  
 Buinart, Brother, of Seully, 315, 318  
 Burgundy, 24  
   Dukes of, Charles le Téméraire, 36,  
 99, 104, 191; Jean Sans Peur, 82,  
 83, 84, 145, 185, 249, 296, 304;  
   Philippe le Bon, 84, 93, 187  
 Bury, 185, 203; forest of, 188, 190  
 Bussy d'Amboise, 217

## C

CÆSAR, JULIUS, 8, 17, 18, 158, 174  
 Cæsarodunum, *see* Tours.  
 Cahors, 262  
 Calabria, 103, 161  
 Calais, 94  
 Calvin, Jean, 195  
 Candé, 67  
 Candes, 5, 18, 21, 32, 33, 115, 207, 209,  
 217-220, 301, 314, 320  
 Cangé, 222  
 Cardillac, 201  
 Carolings, the, 45, 300, 301  
 Cassandra (Ronsard's), 150, 197  
 Castelnau, le sieur de, 169, 170  
 Catherine de France, 84  
 Catherine de Medicis, 10, 126, 129, 130,  
 165, 168, 169, 172, 180, 181, 182, 196,  
 197, 199, 200, 201, 203, 228, 231-233,  
 236, 248, 256, 274, 310  
*Catherine de Medicis* (Balzac's), 142, 348  
 César de Vendôme, 171, 233, 294  
 Chablis, 50  
 Chalmel, J. L., 343  
 Chaluz, 72, 303  
 Chambes, Nicolas, 85, 289  
 Chambord, 1, 10, 117, 123, 133, 185, 195,  
 203, 223  
 Chamisso, A. de, 182  
 Champagne, 56, 62  
 Champagne, 60, 89, 225, 227, 260  
 Champigny-sur-Veude, 70, 301, 321, 322  
 Champollion-Figeac, A., 347

- Chanceaux, 262  
 Chanteloup, 171, 225  
 Chantilly, 117, 119, 121  
 Chapelle-Bellain, 310  
 Charlemagne, 9, 45, 46, 47, 48, 75, 108,  
 112, 160, 212, 258, 284, 307  
 Charlemagne, landes de, 45, 252  
 Charles II., the Bald, 53, 75  
     V., 109  
     VI., 80, 82, 84, 185, 186, 228  
 CHARLES VII., 10, 79, 82-94, 98, 113, 118,  
 119, 133, 159, 186, 187, 188, 228, 237,  
 250, 264-267, 268, 269, 289, 296, 304-  
 308, 311, 313  
 Charles VIII., 90, 104, 105, 106, 108, 109,  
 110, 114, 115, 118, 120, 160-163, 165,  
 191, 194, 213, 229, 241, 259, 279, 286,  
 345  
 Charles IX., 10, 151, 198, 214  
     II. (Stuart), 202  
     Martel, 45, 243, 284, 286  
     Orland (Dauphin), 109, 120, 161,  
     162  
 Chartier, Alain, 98  
 Chartres, 56, 108; le Chartrois, 62  
 Châteaudun, 59, 62, 190  
 Château-la-Vallière, 136, 140, 216, 347  
 Châteaubriand, F. R. de, 146, 348  
 Châteauneuf, *see* Tours.  
 Châteaurenault, 169, 347  
 Château Robin, 9  
 Châtillon, les, of Blois, 185, Marie de,  
 317  
 Châtillon, les, (Cardinal de C, d'Anelot,  
 and Coligny) 169  
     sur-Indre, 86, 87  
 Chaumont, 1, 13, 68, 71, 89, 93, 114, 117,  
 177-183, 190, 207, 232, 343  
 Chaumussay, 293  
 Chauvin, Abbé, 255  
 Chavannes, Puy de, 323  
 Chavigny-en-Vallée, 315  
 CHENONCEAUX, 1, 2, 10, 51, 114, 117, 126,  
 129, 181, 223, 227-237, 248, 249, 250,  
 348  
 CHER, R., 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18, 21,  
 39, 46, 50, 51, 54, 60, 71, 79, 89, 98,  
 99, 100, 129, 132, 137, 138, 155, 221-  
 245, 247, 260, 274  
 Chevalier, Monseigneur, 227, 230, 231,  
 295, 323, 346, 348  
 Chevalier, Etienne, 119, 265, 267  
 Cheverny, 117, 203  
 Chevreuse, Mad. de, 134, 256  
 Chicot the Jester, *see* Anglerays  
 Chilperic, 43, 44  
 CHINON, 1, 2, 6, 7, 10, 16, 18, 55, 58, 64,  
 65, 66, 68, 70, 71, 73, 78, 86, 87, 89,  
 113, 138, 142, 192, 216, 242, 249, 252,  
 264, 285, 297-314, 318, 320, 322, 326,  
 327, 340, 343, 344, 349  
 Chinon, forest of, 250, 302, 308, 309, 310,  
 321  
 Chinoisais, the, 13, 314-320  
 Chissay, 237  
 Chisseaux, 236, 237  
 Choiseul, Duc de, 171, 225  
 Choisille, R., 4, 63, 347  
 Chouans, the, 140  
 Chouzé-sur-Loire, 216  
 Chouzy, 183  
 Cinais, 316, 318, 320  
 Cinq Mars-le-Pile, 209-211, 243  
     Marquis de, 133, 181, 182, 210, 211,  
     214  
*Cinq Mars* (De Vigny's), 13, 181  
 Civray-sur-Cher, 227, 236  
 Clair, disciple of St. Martin, 32  
 Claise, R., 5, 8, 80, 290-296  
 Clarence, Duke of, 84, 87  
 Claude, Queen, 110, 166, 195, 250  
 Clément, Jacques, 131  
 Clément V., Pope, 79, 303  
 Clermont, Louis de, *see* Bussy d'Amboise  
 Cléry, 104, 238  
 Cleves, Duke of, 125, Marie de, 187  
 Clisson, 285  
 Clochegourde, 253  
 Clos Lucé, 113, 161, 165, 166, 173, 174  
 Clotaire, 300  
 Clotilde, (Q and St.), 40  
 Clouets, the, 10, 121, 122, 249; Jamet  
     (Jehannet) 121, Francois, (Janet) 121  
 Clovis, 9, 25, 39, 40, 47, 158  
 Cœur, Jacques, 94, 119, 265  
 Coitier, Jacques, 102, 103, 104, 106  
 Colin d'Amiens, 121  
 Colletet, G., 151

- COLOMBE, MICHEL, 10, 115, 116, 117, 118  
161, 172, 220, 280, 346  
François, 116
- Colombiers, Treaty of, 71, 242, 243, 302
- Comédie Humaine*, la, 141, 142, 143
- Commines, Philippe de, Sieur d'Argenton,  
97, 99, 100, 103, 104, 108, 163, 268,  
269, 309, 345
- Conan of Rennes, 56
- Condé, Louis I., 126, 127, 168, 169, 170;  
Louis II. (le Grand), 310
- Conquereux, Battle of, 56
- Constance of Brittany, 72
- Constance of Toulouse, Queen, 59, 61
- Constant, Benjamin, 182
- Constantine, Emperor, 24
- Constantinople, 103
- Contes drolatiques*, les, 142, 321, 346, 349
- Conti, Princesse de, 310
- Conygham, Sir John, 85, 222
- Cook, Mr T. A., 214, 343
- Cordelière, Ordre de la, 90
- Corméry, 47, 49, 75, 76, 89, 128, 258-260,  
285
- Coudray, 4, 113, 316, 317, 318, 349  
donjon of (Chinon), 303, 305, 307
- Couigny, G. de, 306, 348, 349
- Courçay, 259, 260, 261, 287
- Courier, Paul Louis, 140, 223, 224, 332,  
348
- Courtenays, the, 224
- Courtigis, Général, 19
- Couzières, 134, 256-258
- Crassay, 276
- Cravant, 322, 326
- Crawford of the Scots Guard, 85
- Creuse, R., 5, 7, 80, 286-292
- Crillon, Louis de, 131
- Croulay, R., 326; Abbey of, 326
- Crouzilles, 76, 326
- Curé de Tours*, le, 143, 346
- D
- DANETT, T., 345
- Dante, 270
- Dauphiné, 308
- De Limay, architect, 137
- De Salies, A., 59, 344
- DESCARTES, RENÉ, 138, 144, 287, 288, 332,  
349; Gilles, 287
- Decius, Emperor, 19
- Diane de Poitiers, 181, 196, 228, 230-232,  
235, 248, 268
- Dilke, Lady, 345
- Dionysus, 158
- Domremy, 89
- Douglas, Archibald, Duke of Touraine, 85-  
87, 304
- Douglas, Archibald, Duke of Touraine,  
(titular), 87
- Douglas, James, 87
- Dover Castle, 301
- Du Bellay, les, 215, 348; Joachim, 197
- Duchesne, André, 314
- Duclaux, Madame, 241
- Ducos, Roger, 167, 171
- Du Fresne de Beaucourt, G., 344
- Du Guesclin, Bertrand, 6, 80, 160, 213, 228
- Du Guy, Ph., 127
- Dumas, Alexandre, 216
- Dunois (Bastard of Orleans), 95, 125, 186,  
190, 213
- Dupin, Claude, 233, 234; Madame, 234,  
235, 348  
de Chenonceaux, 234, 235; de Fran-  
cueil, 235  
St. André, 346
- Duplessis, Armand, *see* Richelieu
- Duplessis-Mornay, 130, 201
- Dupont, L. (Holy man of Tours), 37, 145,  
146, 347
- Du Puy, Jehan, 89, 90, 91; Marguerite,  
90; Pierre, 90
- Du Vigent, 127
- E
- EDINBURGH, 100
- Edward III, 79
- Effiat, Henri d', *see* Cinq-Mars
- Égronne, R., 291
- Eleanor of Aquitaine, 68, 70, 72, 217, 286,  
287, 302
- Elbœuf, Duc d', 200
- Elizabeth of Vendôme, 59, 60
- Eltham, 186
- Emile*, 235

English in Touraine, the, 77, 79-94, 140,  
228, 259, 263, 264, 274, 276, 294, 304  
Erigena, John Scot, 148  
Espinau, les d', 251  
Estampes, Duchesse d', 317  
Estrées, Antoine d', 225; Gabrielle d', 171,  
225  
Esvres, 258, 283  
Etableaux, 293  
Eugenius IV., Pope, 118  
Evelyn, John, 136, 137  
Evodius, 31

## F

FALAISE, 72  
Falaiseau, Maître, 127  
Faye-la-Vineuse, 310, 319, 323  
Félibien, André, 181  
Felix (de Vandenesse), 13, 252, 253  
Ferrière, 274  
*Fields of France*, The, 241  
Fleuranges (Robert de la Mark), 164, 347  
Florio, F., 12, 343  
Fontainebleau, 11, 123, 133, 166, 195, 197  
Fontenay (Lignières), 244  
Fontenay-le-Comte, 315  
Fontenelle, B. de, 234  
Fontevrault, 76, 217, 301, 302, 303, 316,  
318, 348  
Forges, 309, 310  
Fortunatus, Bp. of Poitiers, 23, 300, 344  
Fossé, 182  
Fougères-sur-Bièvre, 183  
Foulques, *see* Fulk  
Fouquet, Nicolas, 171  
FOUQUET JEHAN, 10, 75, 118-120, 121, 145,  
267, 272  
Fouquet, François, 118; Louis, 118  
France, Dukes of, 53, 54, 55  
Francis I., 10, 16, 36, 80, 105, 110, 114,  
120, 121, 123, 124, 125, 132, 164, 165,  
166, 167, 173, 195, 201, 203, 225, 226,  
227, 230, 231, 250, 273, 316, 318  
Francis II., 126, 168, 169, 170, 197, 198,  
232  
François, Bastien, 116  
Francueil, 231, 233, 236  
Franks, 9, 39, 41, 42, 45, 49

Frapesle, 252, 253  
Fredegonde, 43, 44  
Frederick I. (Barbarossa), 69  
Friar John, 314, 315-318, 319, 320  
Fridegise, Abbot, 259  
Fromenteau, 264  
Frotier, Pierre, 294, 296  
Fulbert of Chartres, 148  
Fulk the Good, 54, 55, 321  
FULK NERRA, 9, 10, 53-64, 66, 67, 70, 75,  
113, 145, 159, 179, 185, 212, 225, 239,  
230, 255, 256, 262, 263, 279, 291, 294,  
295, 301, 344  
Fulk Rechin, 66, 67, 267, 301  
Fulk the Red, 54, 263  
Fulk the Young, 67, 345

## G

GAIGNIÈRES, R., 280  
Gaillon, 116  
Galembert, Comte de, 323  
Gallant, Jehan, 99  
Gallo-Romans, 4, 9, 20, 24, 39, 41, 42,  
44, 45, 208, 262  
Gamard, Mademoiselle, 143, 145, 146  
Gargantua, 244, 314, 316, 319, 320, 337,  
349  
Gascons, 77; Gascony, 199  
Gastineau Péan, 24, 344  
Gaston, Duke of Orleans, *see* Orleans  
Gâtine, Th., 7  
Gaudin, Marie, 173  
Gauls, the, 24, 174, 279, 298, 299, 324  
Gautier, Th., 151  
Gelduin of Saumur, 60, 63, 179, 208, 240  
Genillé, 274  
Geoffrey of Anjou, 68, 206, 287, 301  
natural son of Henry II., 302  
the Bearded, 66, 301  
of Brittany, 70, 72  
Greygown, 55, 56, 263  
the Maiden (of Chaumont), 179  
Martel, 56, 59, 60, 63, 64, 65, 66,  
225, 263, 301  
Martel II., 66, 67  
Plantagenet, 67, 68  
Giac, Pierre de, 88, 305

Giotto, 275  
 Girard d' Athée, 73, 263, 303  
 Giraudet, E., 139, 344, 345  
 Gizeux, 348  
 Godefroi, Jehan, 284  
 Godfrey de Bouillon, 159  
 Gohyer, Lieut., 127  
 Gontran, Duke, 43  
     K., 279  
 Goths, 9, 24, 39, 49, 174  
 Goujon, Jean, 236  
 Grammont, 70, 137, 144, 221, 222  
 Grandgousier, 316, 318, 321  
 Grandmaison, L. de, 136  
 Grande Mademoiselle, la (Duchesse de Montpensier), 202  
 Grand Moulin, 241  
 Guienne, 94, 95, 287  
 Guise, les, 130, 168, 169, 197, 281;  
     Cardinal de, 200; Henri Duc de, 11,  
     105, 130, 131, 170, 185, 200, 201,  
     203; Duchesse de, 169, 170  
 Guy d'Anjou, 55

## H

HAMILTON, MICHAEL, 285  
 Harcourt, les, 238  
 Harfleur, Siege of, 267  
 Hasting, 49, 50  
 Haut-Montais, le, 7  
 Helena, Empress, 30  
 HENRY II. (Plantagenet), 10, 55, 68-71,  
     98, 179, 217, 221, 222, 241, 243, 275,  
     276, 279, 287, 301, 302, 314, 323,  
     345  
 Henry III., (Plantagenet), 73, 77  
     V., (Lancaster), 84  
     VI., " 192, 265, 266  
     II., (Valois), 10, 180, 181, 195, 196,  
     230, 231  
     III., (Valois), 10, 105, 129-131, 138,  
     181, 199, 200, 201, 232, 233, 277,  
     310  
     IV., (Bourbon), 16, 105, 123, 130,  
     131, 132, 133, 134, 136, 137, 171,  
     181, 198, 201, 225, 294  
 Prince, 70

Herbert of Maine, 62  
 Héroard, Jean, 151  
 Hervé, Treasurer, 75, 147, 148  
 Hildebert, Archbp., 67  
 Hildegard, Empress, 46  
     of Poitiers, 59  
*Historia Francorum*, 44  
 Homildon, Battle of, 87  
 Houdry, Procurator, 127  
 Houssaye, Arsène, 167, 347  
 Hug, 33  
 Hugh Capet, 55, 57, 58, 59  
     of Beauvais, 61  
 Huguenots, 3, 11, 27, 36, 52, 125-129,  
     132, 145, 151, 168-171, 213, 214, 216,  
     275, 276, 294, 300, 310, 346  
 Hugues (and Hugon), Comte, 47, 48  
     Archbp., 301  
     des Roches, Abbot, 157  
 Hugon, feu roi, 16, 17, 48, 126, 344  
 Huismes, 135, 308  
 Hundred Years' War, 79-95, 97, 113, 118,  
     212, 213, 263, 294, 304-306, 348

## I

INACUS, 2  
 Ile Boiret, 220  
     St. Jean, 158, 170  
*Illusions Perdues*, 254  
 INDRE, R., 5, 7, 8, 9, 47, 49, 57, 60, 63,  
     79, 89, 134, 141, 225, 244, 247-281,  
     283, 285, 332  
 Indre-et-Loire, 138, 236, 278, 279,  
     343  
 Indrois, R., 57, 208, 261  
 Ingelger, 54  
 Innocent le Pâtissier, 313  
 Institute of France, 211  
 Isabeau of Bavaria, 82, 83, 145, 249  
 Isabelle of Sicily, 264  
 Isabelle, wife of John, 217  
 Isola d'Albenga, 25  
 Issoudun, 265  
 Italy (influence of on French Renaissance),  
     110, 111, 114, 117  
 Ithacus, Ithacans, 30, 31, 32  
 Ithier, Abbot, 258

## J

- JAMES I. OF SCOTLAND, 85, 98  
 James, Henry, 343  
 Jarrow, 46  
 Jean de Chartres, 116  
 Jean de Troye, 150, 347  
 Jean le Reclus, 299, 300, 310  
 Jeanne d'Albret, 105, 125, 198  
 JEANNE D'ARC, 10, 34, 88, 89-93, 113, 118,  
 145, 160, 186, 187, 191, 192, 261, 264,  
 285, 286, 298, 306, 307, 311, 318, 324  
 B. Jeanne de France, 109, 110, 240, 241  
 Jenson, Nicolas, 99  
 Jerome of Fiesole, 115  
 Jerusalem, 35, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 67  
 Jews, at Chinon, 304  
 John (Lackland), 10, 70, 71, 72, 73, 77,  
 242, 288, 289, 302, 303  
 Joinville, Prince de, 131, 132, 201  
 Joscion, Archbishop, 345  
*Jouvencel*, le, 266, 279, 348  
 Judenhetze, the, 304  
 Jumièges, 265, 267  
 Justina, Empress, 30  
 Justi, the brothers, 10, 115, 116, 117, 230

## K

KNOLL, ROBERT, 80

## L

- LA BALUE, CARD., 99, 108  
 La Baume-le-Blanc, family, 136  
 Le Blant, E., 344  
 La Borde, L. de, 345  
 La Bourdaisière, 173, 224, 225, 230  
 La Carte, 116, 242  
 La Chapelle Blanche, 283  
 " sur-Loire, 33, 215, 216  
 " aux-Naux, 135, 245  
 La Charité, battle, 232  
 La Châtardie, J. de la, 151  
 La Chevière, 253, 254  
 La Coutancière, 217  
 La Courroirie, 276, 277, 349

- Lacy, Roger de, 73, 303  
 La Devinière, 314, 315, 316, 318, 349  
*La Femme de Trente Ans*, 142  
 La Frillière, Pont de, 158  
 La Grenadière, 141, 205, 206  
 La Guerche, 113, 279, 286, 288, 289, 290  
 La Guiche, 183  
 La Haye (afterwards La Haye-Descartes),  
 70, 286, 287, 288, 290, 301  
 Laisnel de la Salle, 349  
 La Hire, 3  
*L'Allemagne*, 182  
 Lancelot, sword of, 160  
 Lanfranc, Archbishop, 149  
 Lang, Andrew, 349  
 LANGEAIS, 1, 2, 4, 8, 18, 33, 58, 59, 79,  
 109, 113, 117, 128, 209, 211-215, 228,  
 245, 317, 348  
 Langey, 215  
 Languedoc, 12, 141, 229  
*La Peau de Chagrin*, 205  
*L'Apostrophe*, 15  
 Larçay, 222, 224  
 La Regépière, 285  
 La Roche, 107  
 Roche-Clermault, 314, 316, 319  
 Rochefoucauld, Comte de, 127  
 Roche du Maine, governor, 310  
 Rochejaquelin, les, 138, 252  
 Rochelle, 289  
 Roche-Posay, 80, 290  
 Roche-Racan, 335  
 Trappe, 221, 257, 258  
 Tremouille, 3, 88, 93, 193, 279, 305  
 Lautrec, Maréchal, 124  
 Lauzun, Duc de, 171  
 Laval, Guy de, 93  
 La Vallière, Louise de, 136, 202  
 La Vendée, 138, 140, 339  
 League, The, 11, 130, 131, 138, 156, 200,  
 274, 276, 289, 310  
 Leconte, Abbé, 235  
 Lecoy de la Marche, A., 344  
 Le Grand Pre signy, 8, 290-293  
*Le Curé de Tours*, 143  
 Le Loup, Et., 165  
*Le Lys dans la Vallée*, 142, 252-254  
 Le Mans, 58, 65, 71, 298, 302  
 Le Meingre, *see* Boucicaut

- Leo, Brother, 33  
 LEONARDO DA VINCI, 159, 165-168, 347  
 B. Leatheric, 258  
 Lerne, 316, 317, 318  
 Léré, 49, 50  
 Le Roy, of Chaumont, 181, 182  
*Les Paysans*, 143  
 Leudastus, 41, 44  
 Levroux, 28, 29  
 Liechtenstein gallery, 119  
 Lièvre, M., 210  
 Liget, Chartreuse, 70, 272, 275, 276  
 „ St. Jean de, 76, 275  
 Lignières, 241, 243-245, 247  
 „ Capitaine, 168  
 Lignou, Capitaine, 276, 277, 349  
 Ligue du Bien Publique, 179  
 Liguil, 18, 290  
 Ligugé, 25  
 L'île Bouchard, 58, 79, 128, 130, 301, 310,  
 319, 322, 325, 326  
 Limeray, 115, 128, 346  
 Listomere, Mad., 145  
 Lobin, atelier, 112, 295  
 Loché, 70  
 LOCHES, 1, 2, 6, 16, 54, 57, 60, 61, 64, 65,  
 66, 70, 73, 86, 87, 92, 108, 113, 114,  
 115, 119, 120, 128, 129, 143, 158, 183,  
 247, 261-273, 274, 343; forest of, 261,  
 262, 268, 274  
 Lochois, the, 340  
 Lognac, Capitaine, 200  
 Loir, R., 197, 343  
 LOIRE, R., 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16,  
 17, 21, 29, 33, 47, 48, 58, 69, 71, 79,  
 85, 89, 92, 93, 98, 112, 114, 115, 121,  
 126, 128, 129, 131, 135, 138, 141, 144,  
 147, 151, 157, 166, 169, 173, 177, 178,  
 183, 192, 200, 205, 206, 208, 209, 215,  
 216, 218, 220, 243, 244, 247, 252, 297,  
 320  
 Loir-et-Cher, 7  
 London, Brit. Mus., 117, 120; Tower, 186  
 Lorraine, 306; Cardinal of, 200  
 Louans, 283, 285  
 Loudun, 55, 58, 68, 128, 130, 134, 314  
 Louis IV., d'Outremer, 54, 55  
 Louis VII., 68, 69  
 Louis VIII., 77  
 Louis IX., 77, 78, 160, 263, 304, 307, 322  
 Louis XI., 10, 11, 36, 55, 85, 94, 97-105,  
 106, 108, 109, 110, 113, 116, 118, 120,  
 121, 123, 133, 142, 145, 159, 165, 172,  
 179, 191, 193, 197, 208, 212, 213, 238,  
 264, 266, 267, 268, 269, 279, 299, 308-  
 310, 317, 345  
 Louis XII., 10, 105, 109, 110, 114, 116,  
 163, 164, 165, 180, 185, 190, 191, 192-  
 195, 200, 201, 202, 241, 269, 270, 279,  
 317  
 Louis XIII., 133, 134, 201, 211, 248, 258  
 Louis XIV., 35, 134-136, 171, 202, 276,  
 281  
 Louis XVI., 13, 139, 141  
 Louis I. of Sicily, 316, 317  
*Louis Lambert*, 254  
 Louise de Lorraine, Q., 233  
 Louise de Savoie, 124, 125, 163-165, 250,  
 347  
 Lucca, 35  
 Luitgarde, Empress, 46  
 Luther, Martin, 127, 139  
 Luynes, 2, 134, 141, 207-209, 212, 224  
 Charles, Duc de, 133, 134, 208  
 Lyonnais, Third, 18  
 Lyons, 18, 140, 162

## M

- MACHIAVELLI, 104  
*Mademoiselle Cloque*, 146  
 Maignelai, Antoinette de, 113, 266, 289  
 Maillé, 33, 128, *see also* Luynes  
 Gosbert de, 208  
 Hadouin de, 98, 208, 209  
 B. Jeanne de, 208  
 Maine, 27, 62, 68  
 Mainz, 99  
 Maisonneuve, Etienne de, 197  
*Maitre Cornélius*, 142, 254, 346  
 Malesherbes, C. G. de, 335  
 Malestroit, les, 289  
 Malta, Knights of, 242  
 Manthelan, 89, 283  
 Marat, J. P., 139  
 Margaret, of Anjou, 2, 159, 191  
 Margaret of Austria, 109, 116

- Margaret of Scotland, 98, 160  
 Margonne, M., 141, 254  
 Marguerite de Navarre, 125, 164, 165  
 B. Marguerite de Rouxelly, 254  
 Marguerite de Valois (La Reine Margot),  
 198, 199, 225  
 Maridor, Françoise (La Dame de Mont-  
 soreau), 216, 217  
 Marie d'Anjou, Q., 86, 90, 264  
 Marie de Bretagne, *see* Montbazou.  
 Marie de Châtillon, *see* Anjou  
 Marie de Cleves, 187, 188, 191, 193  
 Marie de Gonzague, 181, 211  
 Marie de Medicis, 133, 134, 136, 201, 225,  
 257, 258, 310  
 Marie (Ronsard's), 150  
 Marques, les, 228-230  
 Marmoutier, 20, 26, 28, 31, 32, 37, 49,  
 59, 67, 74, 75, 79, 82, 126, 137, 148,  
 156, 209, 212, 218, 323  
 Marot, Clément, 170, 195  
 Marsat, 50  
 Martin IV., Pope, 242, 243  
 Martin, Henri, 347  
 Martinopolis, *see* Tours  
 Mary of England, 195  
 Mary, Queen of Scots, *see* Stuart  
 Matilda, Empress, 67  
 Maximus, Emperor, 30, 31  
 Mayenne, Duc de, 130, 131, 132  
 Mazères, Huguenot chief, 170  
 Medici. For Catherine and Marie, *see* under  
 these names; Julian de, 166  
 Melisande, Q., 67  
 Me'un, 119, 267; Charles de, 268  
 Melzi, F., 165, 167  
 Ménars, 203  
 Mercœur, Duchesse de, 233  
 Merlin, 34  
 Merovings, 9, 42, 45  
 Merowig, 43  
 Meslay, 157; Battle of, 140  
 Mésnil, 265, 267  
 Metray, 347  
 Metz, 64  
 Meung-sur-Yèvre, 94  
 Michael Angelo, 203  
 Michel, Francisque, 344  
 Michelet, Jules, 347  
 Milan, 165, 168, 229, 230; Duke of, *see*  
 Sforza  
 Minimes, 103, 109, 161  
 Miré, 243, 254  
 Mirebeau, 58, 68, 72, 303  
 Miroménil, H. de, 135  
 Mocenigo, 131  
 Molay, Jacques, 303  
 Molière, 111  
 Moncontour, Battle of, 128  
*Monk of Fife*, A, 306, 349  
 Montaigne, 111  
 Montauban, 108, 134  
 Montalais, Mdlle. de, 202  
 Montbazou, 57, 58, 59, 63, 64, 113, 134,  
 247, 252, 254-256, 263, 269, 283; Duc  
 de, 134, 239, 256; Marie, Duchesse de,  
 256, 257  
 Montboyau, 62, 63, 64  
 Montereau, 83, 296  
 Montfaucon, 124  
 Montfort, Bertrada de, 66, 67; Simon de,  
 66  
 Montils-lès-Tours, 79, 98, 99, 208  
 Montgomery, G. de, 231  
 Montlouis, 11, 70, 158, 172, 173; Battle  
 of, 65, 66, 225  
 Montpensier, 4, 113, 317; Duchess of, 200  
 Montpoupon, 129  
 Montrabé, P. de, 294  
 Montrésor, 58, 70, 93, 116, 261, 274, 275,  
 276, 278-281, 305, 349; Roger de, 60,  
 61, 279  
 Montrichard, 60, 61, 62, 64, 70, 109, 113,  
 128, 201, 235, 238-241, 255  
 Montriveau, 60  
 Monts, 252, 254  
 Montsoreau, 11, 58, 216, 217, 320; Comtes  
 de, 216, 217  
 Mont St. Michel, 160, 280  
 Mosnes, 89  
 Müntz, Eug., 345

## N

- NANTES, 56, 68, 116, 216, 301  
 „ Edict of, 132  
 „ „ Revocation of, 11, 135,  
 208



Nantueil, 60, 238  
 Naples, 103  
 Napoleon, 139, 140, 167  
 Narbonne, 229  
 Navarre, 170  
     " Pierre de, 268  
 Négron, R., 314, 349  
 Nemours, Duc de, 169, 200  
 Neuillé-Pont-Pierre, 115  
 Neuville-le-Roi, 140  
 Nikar, 47  
 Nîmes, 18, 99, 229  
 Noizay, 169  
 Normandy, 10, 67, 94, 230  
 Northmen, the, 9, 36, 48-51, 52, 53, 63,  
     66, 68, 75, 159, 215, 225, 259, 299  
 Nostradamus, 181

## O

ODIN, 33, 47  
 Odo of Blois I., 53-59  
     " II., 60-65  
 Olivier de la Marche, 348  
 Olivier le Daim, 102, 103, 105, 106  
 Orfon, 274, 275  
 Orleans, 48, 49, 88, 92, 93, 118, 192, 264,  
     305, 307  
 Orleans, House of, 4, 190, 195; (later),  
     171, 172  
 Orleans, Duchess of, *see* B. Jeanne de  
     France  
 Orleans, Duchess of, *see* Marie de Cleves  
 Orleans, Duchess of, Valentine, 120, 185,  
     186, 192  
 Orleans, Dukes of, CHARLES, 83, 185-192,  
     193, 194, 202, 347  
     Gaston, 201, 202, 211, 321  
     Louis, 82, 84, 185, 186, 187, 190,  
     192  
     Louis (afterwards Louis XII.), 108,  
     109, 162, 213, 241  
 Orme, Philibert de l', 231, 233  
 Ouchamps, 190

## P

FACTIUS, THOMAS, 263  
 Palissy, Bernard, 233, 235

Pantagruel, 312  
 Panzoult, 326, 327, 330  
 Parçay, 157  
 Parçay-sur-Vienne, 327  
 Pardaillan, 169  
 Paris, 3, 11, 28, 42, 78, 83, 93, 105, 117,  
     121, 123, 124, 130, 131, 140, 141, 142,  
     143, 145, 160, 166, 186, 192, 201, 206,  
     210, 250, 288, 303, 314  
 Paris, Bibl. Nat., 75, 120, 190; Louvre, 116,  
     119, 120, 197, 228  
 Pascello da Macogliano, 161  
 Pasqualis, Martinez de, 175  
 Pasquerel, Brother, 192  
 Pasquier, Etienne, 126, 150; Nicole, 180  
 Pau, Eleonore de la, 90  
 Paulmy, 259  
 Pavia, Battle of, 36, 123, 180, 320  
 Pelouze, Mad., 236  
 Peraldo, Hugues de, 303  
 Penthicèvre, Duc de, 171  
 Perche, le, 87  
 Périgord, 168  
 Périgueux, 108  
 Péréreal, Jehan, 116, 120, 121  
 Petit, J. L., 345  
*Petit Jehan de Saintré*, 344  
 Philip I., 67  
 Philip II., Augustus, 70, 71, 72, 240, 242,  
     243, 263, 279, 302, 303  
 Philip IV., le Bel, 78, 79  
 Philip V., le Long, 304  
 Picardy, 25, 225  
 Picrochole, 314, 315, 316, 318, 319  
 Pinaigriers, les, 10, 20, 118, 322  
 Plantagenets, 10, 65-73, 76, 217, 240, 263,  
     311, 313.  
 Plantagenet architecture, 302, 325, 344  
 Plantin, Christopher, 99  
 Plessis-lès-Tours, 10, 54, 90, 97-105, 108,  
     109, 110, 113, 123, 125, 129, 130, 133,  
     134, 137, 159, 161, 162, 193, 208, 212,  
     309  
 Poitevins, 33, 34, 218  
 Poitiers, 25, 39, 58, 78, 128, 243, 300,  
     305, 307  
 Poitiers, Battles of, 44, 79  
 Poitou, 24, 78, 82, 83, 145, 151, 244, 288,  
     303, 343

Polwarth (Puloir or Poulnoir), James, 91,  
118  
Polwarth, Henriette, 91  
Pommiers-Aigre, 70, 302  
Pompadour, Geoffrey de, 268; Madame  
203  
Poncher, 252; family, 230  
Pont-de-Ruan, 18, 253, 254  
Pont-du-Cher, 69  
Pontlevoy, 60, 92, 179, 183  
    Battle of, 62, 240; College, 175  
Porc-Epic, Ordre du, 185  
Port-Boulet, 216, 348  
Port Cordon, 54  
Port-de-Piles, 68, 210, 283, 286, 287  
Port-Huault, 319, 320  
Posthumianus, 33  
Pot, Philippe, 107  
Poyet, Jehan, 120  
Praguerie, the, 94  
Pretextat, Bp., 43  
Preuilly-sur-Claise, 4, 70, 80, 212, 218,  
239, 289, 290, 293-296, 349; Effroy de,  
295; Geoffrey de, 294  
Pric, René de, 129  
Primaticcio, 173, 232  
Primitifs, Exposition des, 272, 346  
Priscillian, 30, 31  
Protestants, *see* Huguenots  
Prussians in Touraine, 140, 330

## Q

*Quentin Durward*, 8, 85, 99, 100, 142  
Quintus Curtius, 108

## R

RABELAIS, FRANÇOIS, 6, 13, 111, 138, 142,  
144, 145, 191, 214, 215, 287, 297, 311-  
320, 327, 332, 349; Antoine, 312, 313,  
314, 315, 316  
Racan, Marquis de, 335, 349  
Rahel, 239  
Rancé, Abbe de, 221, 224, 257, 258, 348  
Raunay, 170  
Razilly, 305, 308

Récamier, Mad., 182  
Regnault, Guillaume, 116  
Reignac, 89, 260, 261, 274, 285  
Renaissance in Touraine, 10, 110-122  
Renaudie, *see* Barri  
René d'Anjou, 256, 308, 317  
Renée, Duchess of Ferrara, 170, 195  
Revolution in Touraine, 105, 230, 267, 280,  
288  
*Reynard the Fox*, 172  
Rheims, 93, 103, 132, 192, 229, 307  
Richard Cœur de Lion, 59, 67, 70, 71, 72,  
145, 179, 217, 240, 263, 279, 302, 303  
Richard of Tours, 346  
Richelieu, 322  
Richelieu, Card., 134, 171, 181, 210, 211,  
257, 310, 321, 322  
Richemont, Comte de, 88, 93, 305  
Ridel, Hugues, 249  
Rigny-Ussé, 250  
Rivarenes, 244  
Rivière, 76, 322-324, 325  
Roberdeau, 307  
Robert, Friar, *see* St. François de Paule  
Robert, K., 58, 59, 61  
Robert of Turpenay, 321  
Robertet, Florimond, 203  
Robespierre, 175  
Roccolena, 43, 57  
Rochechouart, 7, 126, 142, 157, 208  
Roger the Devil, *see* Montrésor.  
Rohan, *see* Montbazou, Duc de, Françoise  
de, 125  
Roland, 108, 160  
Romans, 4, 8, 9, 17, 18, 20, 57, 228, 260,  
279, 299, 301  
Rome, 9, 19, 35, 61, 69, 118, 125, 148,  
314  
Romorantin, 166  
Ronsard, Pierre de, 11, 129, 147, 150-153,  
197, 327, 347  
Roquerrière, 265  
Rosamond, Fair, 69  
Roscella of Loches, 54, 263  
Rouen, 116, 303  
Roumer, R., 212  
Rousseau, J. J., 234, 235, 348  
Rouvray, Sieur de, 294  
Ruggieri, 180, 181, 196

Ruperich-Robert, M., 171  
 Rupuanne, 320  
 Russy, 190  
 Rusticus, 26

## S

SABARIA, 24  
 Saché, 4, 141, 142, 253, 254  
 Sand, George, 7, 235, 236, 286, 348  
 Saône, R., 166  
 Saracens, 9, 44, 284, 320  
 Saragossa, Council of, 30  
 Sassenage, Marguerite de, 317  
 Saumur, 55, 56, 63, 179, 216, 297, 307,  
 315, 320, 343  
 Savoie, Honorat de, 291; Philibert de, 116;  
 Philippe de, 268; René de, 291  
 Savonnières, 241, 243  
 „ (Loir et Cher), 190.  
 Saxe. Maréchal de, 235; Aurore de, 235  
 Sazilly, 325  
 Schlegel, A. G., 182  
 Scots Guard, 101, 194, 222, 284, 289,  
 309, 310  
 Scots in Touraine, 8, 84-87, 118  
 Scott, Sir Walter, 99, 100, 142  
 Sedan, 164  
 Seigne, Guillaume de, 226, 229  
 Seine, R., 11, 158, 143  
 Selles, 93  
 Semblançay, 58, 64, 124, *see also* de  
 Beane  
 Seully, 312, 314-316, 318, 320, 327  
 Seven Sleepers, The, 25, 37, 156  
 Sforza, Ludovic, 268, 269, 270  
 Siegfried, M., 211  
 Signal de la Ronde, 7  
 Sixtus V., Pope, 103  
 Skene, James, 100  
 Sobieski, John, 281  
 Sologne, The, 166, 191, 203  
 Sorel, Agnes, 6, 93, 94, 115, 119, 264-  
 268, 288, 289, 307, 348  
 Staël, Mad. de, 181, 182, 347  
 Stevenson, R. L., 186, 189, 347  
 Stewart, John, of the Scots Guard, 285  
 Strasburg, 175

Stuart, Mary, Q., 126, 150, 169, 170, 197,  
 198, 232, 248  
 Sublaines, danges de, 158  
 Sulpicius Severus, 24, 32, 33, 344  
 St. Austreimoine, 19  
 St. Avertin, 222  
 St. Blaise, 159, 163  
 St. Brice, 21, 29, 32, 33, 37, 73, 127, 157,  
 253, 339  
 St. Catherine, 89, 284, 286  
 St. Claude, 163  
 St. Denis, 19, 23, 158, 172  
 St. Eloi, 35, 74, 338  
 St. Fiacre, 336  
 St. Florent, 63  
 St. Francis, 33  
 St. François de Paule, 103, 109, 120, 145,  
 160, 161  
 St. Gatien, 18, 19, 20, 26, 41, 324  
 St. Germain-l'Auxerrois, 50  
 St. GREORY OF TOURS, 24, 35, 40, 42-45,  
 73, 74, 345  
 St. Hilary, 25, 218, 300  
 St. John, knights of, 79  
 St. Lidorius, 20, 345  
 St. Louand, 320  
 St. Louis, *see* LOUIS IX.  
 St. Martial, 19  
 St. MARTIN, 6, 9, 20, 21, 22, 24-39, 40,  
 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 48, 49, 50, 51,  
 54, 63, 65, 66, 73, 123, 127, 128, 139,  
 156, 158, 212, 215, 216, 218, 219, 225,  
 256, 300, 323, 324, 338, 339, 344, 345  
 St. Maurice, 20, 48, 219  
 St. Maximin, 25  
 St. Médard, 210, 300  
 St. Mexme, 299, 310, 311, 324  
 St. Michael, Order of, 159, 160, 280,  
 317  
 St. Ninian, 26  
 St. Ours, 262  
 St. Patrick, 26, 215  
 St. Paul of Narbonne, 19  
 St. Perpetuus, 21, 33, 44, 73, 242, 243  
 Ste. Radegonde, 300, 324  
 St. Saturnin, 19  
 St. Solenne, 209  
 St. Trophimus, 19  
 St. Vincent, 35, 338, 349

*Place Names.*

- St. Aignan, 60, 64  
 St. Avertin, 99, 128, 132  
 St. Benoît-du-Lac-Mort, 309, 321  
 Ste. Catherine-de-Fierbois, 89-91, 112, 115, 191, 261, 284-286  
 St. Côme, 62, 75-79, 129, 145, 147-153  
 St. Cyr, 16, 17, 63, 71, 130, 141, 205  
 St. Epain, 301  
 St. Genoulph, 241  
 St. Georges-sur-Loire, 125, 156  
 St. Germain-en-Laye, 166, 167  
 St. Germain-sur-Vienne, 320  
 St. Jacques, suburb of Chinon, 302, 304, 314  
 St. Lazare, " " 302, 314  
 St. Malo, 229  
 St. Martin-le-Beau, 51, 89, 225  
 " Battles of, 51, 66, 301  
 Ste. Maure, 58, 283, 284, 301  
 " plateau, 7, 89, 260, 283-286  
 St. Paterne, 347  
 St. Patrice, 215  
 St. Pol-de-Léon, 116  
 St. Quentin, 208, 261, 274  
 St. Symphorien, 17, 130, 131, 137, 156  
 St. Sauveur, Pont de, 69, 241, 252  
 St. Venant, 75, 208, 209

*Surnames.*

- Saint-Gelais, Jean de, 193  
 Saint-Pierre, Abbé de, 234  
 Saint-Martin, Louis Claude de, 174-176  
 Saint-Vallier, Jean de, 145, 230, 268, 270  
 Sainte-Beuve, C. A., 348  
 Sainte-Marthe, Gaucher de, 316, 318

## T

- TABARETIER, R., 5  
 Tacitus, 8, 343  
 Tallemant des Réaux, 133, 256, 346  
 Tasso, 159  
 Tauxigny, 285  
 Tavant, 76, 323, 325

- Templars, Order of the Knights, 78, 79, 241, 303  
 Thebaïd, the, 33  
 Theban Martyrs, 19, 219, 345  
 Thelema, Abbey of, 215, 320  
 Theobald. See Thibaut  
 Theodoric the Ostrogoth, 38, 158  
 Thibaut le Tricheur, 53, 185, 301  
 " III. of Blois, 65, 66  
 " VI., 78  
 Thierry, Augustin, 344  
 Thouët, R., 63, 343  
 Ticino, 24  
 Torquat, or Tortulf, 53, 54  
 Touchard-Lafosse, G., 343  
 Touchet, Marie, 214  
 Toulouse, Count of, 70  
 Tourangeaux, 13, 15, 33, 47, 71, 79, 140, 142, 159, 223, 329-341  
 Tour Chevalon, 274  
 Tour des Brandons, 225  
 TOURAINE, Boundaries, 343; art and architecture of, 73-76, 110-122; landscape of, a land of rivers, 4-7; panegyrist of, 12, 13; early inhabitants, 8, 9, 17; Gallo-Roman Touraine, 9, 18-21; under the Franks, 39-48; under Counts of Blois and Anjou, 53-67; under the Plantagenets, 67-73; united to the French crown, 73; refuge for Charles VII., 82-94; the court province, 97-131; the court leaves, 133; French Revolution, 138, 139; becomes Indre-et-Loire, 138; historians of, 343; rural Touraine to-day, 329-341  
 TOURS, 9, 10, 11, 15-146, 147, 148, 151, 155, 191, 192, 206, 207, 208, 209, 216, 218, 222, 229, 240, 241, 247, 249, 250, 259, 260, 283, 286, 287, 298, 302, 306, 307, 308, 333. *Ancient divisions*: Caesarodunum, 18, 19, 21, 73; Martinopolis; 21, 22, 33, 40, 43, 45, 47, 48, 49, 50, 52, 74; Châteauneuf, 22, 59, 65, 71, 72, 78, 79, 123, 137, 145; l'Echellerie, 41; Villeneuve, 123. *Events*: Battle of, 45, 243; Councils, 69, 78, 110, 148; States General, 106-108, 110, 130; Sieges, 50, 51, 65, 83, 159. *Monuments, etc.*: Amphitheatre, 18, 20, 21; archevêché, 19, 20, 106, 135; Cathedral, 10,

16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 37, 38, 39, 40, 42, 45, 67, 69, 71, 74, 76, 86, 87, 109, 127, 130, 132, 139, 142, 145, 218, 278, 345, 346; St. Denis, 91, 92; Chapelle St. Jean, 66; St. Julien, 16, 41, 75, 78, 115, 128, 130, 218; St. Martin's (old), 9, 11, 16, 21, 33, 36, 37, 40, 41, 43, 45, 46, 47, 49, 52, 54, 55, 57, 59, 60, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 78, 79, 86, 99, 109, 123, 258; (New) 36, 146, 258; St. Martin's School, 46, 74, 148, 259; la Psalette, 127; St. Martin's de la Basoche, 50; N. Dame la Riche, 20, 41, 86, 98, 116, 128; St. Saturnin (old), 136, 230; Chateau, 95, 98, 131; Fontaine de Beaune, 116, 125; fortifications, 136, 137; Hôtel de Ville, 138, 140; Hôtel Gouin, 94; Library, 15, 75, 343; Maison Tristan (so called), 90; Musée, 117, 138; Plessis, *See* under Plessis-lès-Tours; Rue Nationale, 15, 135, 137, 138, 141, 144, 221; Tour Charlemagne, 46; Tour de Guise, 69, 131; Historians of Tours, 344

*Tractus Armoricanus*, 298

Tremblais, Sieur du, 294

Treves, 30, 31

Tristan l'Hermite, 90, 102, 105, 145

Troubet, Abbé, 143

Truyes, 260

Turnus, 16

Turon, 8, 9, 17, 18, 20

Turpenay, 4, 142, 321

## U

*Une ténébreuse affaire*, 143

Urbain IV., Pope, 322

Urbino, Duke of, 165

Ursins, Jouvenel des, 119

Ussé, 4, 114, 117, 247, 249, 252-252

## V

VALENTINAY, les, 252

Valentinian, Emperor, 30

Valesne, 253, 254

Vallet de Virville, A., 344

Valois, the, 4, 10, 11, 196, 197, 287

Van Eycks, the, 120

Varennes, 220, 315

Vasari, G., 118

Vauban, 11, 252

Vede, R. (*of Gargantua*), 349  
chateau, 319

Veigné, 18

Vençay (St. Avertin), 222

Vendôme, 141, 150, 151; Comte de, 306;

Duc de, 85

Vercelli, Council of, 148

Vercingetorix, 9, 18

Véretz, 221, 223-225, 257, 258

Verneuil, battle of, 87, 88, 304

Vernou, 265

Véron, the, 216, 220, 308, 320

Versailles, 11

Verville, Béroalde de, 142, 145, 346

Veude, R., 321, 343, 349

VIENNE, R., 1, 5, 33, 58, 64, 69, 113, 128,

141, 216, 217, 218, 220, 247, 283, 286,

297-327, 341, 344

Vienne, (suburb of Blois), 201

Vigelli, 230

VIGNY, ALFRED DE, 13, 177, 181, 210, 343,  
347

Villandry, 241, 242, 243, 248

Villanis, 165

Villeloin-Coulangé, 70, 275

Villemongis, 170

Villeneuve, les, 235, 236, 348

Villeperdue, 284

Villequiers, les, 273, 289

Villiers, 70

Villon, François, 189, 190

Visconti, the, 187; Valentine, *see* Orleans

Vitellius Varro, 18

Viterbo, Bishop of, 61

Vitry, Paul, 115, 116, 346

Voltaire, 234, 252

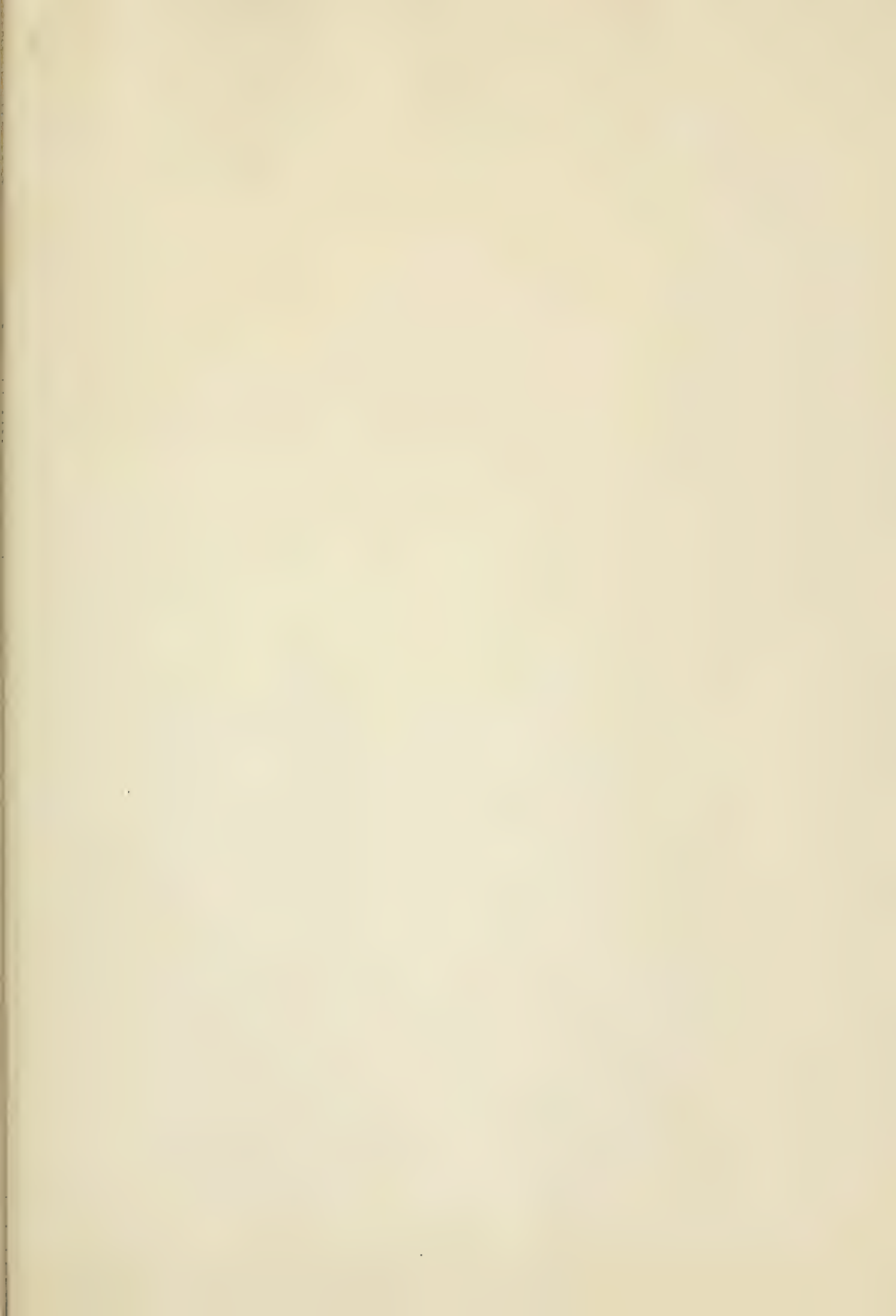
Vonnes, 4

Vontes, 258

Vouilly, Battle of, 39

Vouvray, 142, 157

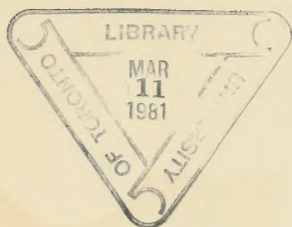
W	
WALLACE, SIR RICHARD, 186	Wilson, Daniel, 236
Wars of Religion, 105, 125-129, 130, 131 294, 310	Windsor, 186
White Lady of the Green Shield, Order of, 82	X
William the Conqueror, 55, 65, 179	XAINCOING, JEHAN, 94











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