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UNDER THE GERMAN BAN
IN ALSACE AND LORRAINE

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À MONSIEUR MAURICE BARRÈS
DE L'ACADÉMIE FRANÇAISE

MONSIEUR ET TRÈS HONORÉ CONFRÈRE,

À plusieurs reprises vous m'avez exprimé votre appréciation de mes études sur l'Alsace et la Lorraine. Permettez-moi de dédier ce petit volume à l'auteur illustre de *Colette Baudoche*, dont chaque page exquise retrace toute la tragédie et tout le crime de l'annexion.

MATILDA BETHAM-EDWARDS,
Officier de l'Instruction Publique de France.

HASTINGS, *Octobre*, 1914.



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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

I HAVE thought it well to put together these impressions of three separate and leisurely visits, paid at considerable intervals, to Alsace and the annexed portion of Lorraine. If any remarks of mine appear exaggerated I beg the reader to turn to the final chapter in which I cite from most accredited French authors, who, like myself, have visited, revisited, and revisited again the annexed provinces. All tell the same tale. From the days of Edmond About down to our own, here there is no divergence. Alike the late lamented and genial administrator of the Comédie Française, M. Jules Claretie, M. Maurice Barrès, and M. A. Hallays, exactly bear out my own conviction based upon experiences among the French subjects of the German Emperor—with every year of annexation detestation of Prussian tyranny has but grown deeper and deeper.

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A long life allows an observer to read page after page of history at first hand—as a spectator. Thus it comes about that I am enabled to look at the crime of 1871 from three separate points of view, here stated in the fewest possible words.

From August, 1875, to August, 1876, without a break, I was the guest of a distinguished Frenchwoman at Nantes. Under this roof—my hostess was the widow of a former Préfet of the Loire Inférieure—I learned by word of mouth the history of a campaign that would be called barbarous but for the present methods of German warfare. And somewhat later I paid a visit to the magnificently situated town of Avallon, in Upper Burgundy, at that time editing *Murray's Guide to France* by the request of my friend, the late Mr. John Murray. Here are three lines in Part II., page 59, written by me after having listened to detailed accounts of victims then living:—

“ Avallon was given up to two hours' pillage in the bitter January of 1871 by the German general Werder.”

What I had no place for in a tourists' guide was the story of that ferocious raid, not only blankets, bedding, and articles of mere money's worth being carried off, but clocks, valuables, curios, any and everything of intrinsic value; not even family relics and heirlooms were spared. I mention this

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fact because it was not common, the Avallonois had tried to defend themselves, hence the pillage. Ruthless as was Prussian warfare two generations ago, they were civilised compared to the horrors witnessed to-day.

I now come to my second point, which only adds weight to the first.

I have shown that during the first years of annexation it was light by comparison with that inaugurated by William II. Alsace and the conquered portion of Lorraine remained under a state of siege, but plain as day was the fact that Germanisation would never be anything but official. So gradually, and by unimaginably mean and exasperating measures, the life of the conquered people was rendered intolerable, hence the appalling indictment of Alsatian literature. It may be asked—Why does not every French subject of the emperor emigrate? Ah! one must know the French through and through to understand their support of bondage.

In the annexed provinces, as in France, the people possess the soil. These rich proprietors—farmers and peasants—stay on in their ancestral homes hoping, ever hoping, that their children or children's children will regain their birthright.

And now I come to my third and perhaps saddest point of all.

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In 1860, 1861, and 1863, I spent many months, first in the proud free city of Frankfort on the Maine next at Stuttgart,¹ then the capital of a happy, homely, friendly people, thirdly, among highly accomplished Austrian friends at Vienna. At the period I speak of militarism, anti-English, anti-French, feeling could not be said to exist, at least within the domestic circle. How has German character deteriorated under the imperialism inaugurated by Bismarck, and the system slavishly submitted to by the nations forming the German Empire! Three quarters of a century ago the great Balzac wrote:—

“There is one instrument which the Germans have never learned to play—that instrument is Liberty.”

And to-day, amid crimes unequalled in the earliest history of the world, not a protest is raised from the land so-called of culture. Not a man, not a woman, German born and bred, but is either cowed by fear or approves of crimes that will brand their country with undying infamy.

Alike philosophers, poets, novelists, ministers of religion, captains of industry, and sons of labour are silent, a silence hardly less appalling than the cause for speech.

¹ Hence my novels *Dr. Jacob* (1864-1900) and *John and I* (1863-1894).

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Will no court chaplain venture to read these words at one of the *so-called* "religious services" held by the Kaiser?—

"Thou has consulted shame to thy house by cutting off many people, and hast sinned against thy soul. For the stone shall cry out of the wall and the beam out of the timber shall answer it."

CHAPTER I

ON THE ROAD

IN visiting Alsace-Lorraine we reverse the experiences of Christian in the *Pilgrim's Progress*. The Delectable Mountains, Immanuel's Land, and the country of Beulah are passed first, the Slough of Despond, Giant Despair, and Doubting Castle coming after.

Let us "solace ourselves for a season" in the Seine and Marne, the first department entered by the traveller bound for the Vosges, Mulhouse, and Strasburg. Formed from the ancient Champagne and Comté de Brie, this region, whilst in some degree materialised by wealth, is yet dear as any to the artist. Alternating with sweeps of corn and vine are lovely prospects of most rural kind: little rivers and canals running straight as arrows amid lofty lines of poplar, rich woods, sunny glades, homely villages with quaint church spire. Just such pictures French artists have given us again and again, and we can never have too many. The very simplicity of these landscapes constitutes their charm.

Mr. Barham Zincke, in his wonderful cabinet

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picture of the peasants of the Limagne,¹ does not conceal his unmeasured admiration of the French peasant and the system of peasant proprietorship generally. What would he say to the condition of things round about here?

The addition of the following merely descriptive chapters needs no apology. It will be seen that to-day's war maps include not only richly fertile and beautiful regions, but many supremely magnificent architectural and artistic glories of France.

We are in one of the wealthiest and best-cultivated regions of France, also one of the most enlightened. Cleanliness and order prevail with a diffusion of well-being hardly matched, I should say, in any country. Wealth is the portion of many, sufficiency the general portion; want, vagrancy, drunkenness very rare—I am tempted to aver, unknown. In most of the larger villages are found hot and cold baths, and on Sundays and holidays the blue cotton blouse and cotton gown are exchanged for broadcloth and Parisian costumes. Comfort is not disdained, luxury indulged in. The sordid side of the French husbandman does not come to the surface here, nor perhaps the spiritual. Church-going has long been almost a survival among these rich farmers,

¹ Published in the *Fortnightly Review* many years ago.

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market-gardeners, and dairymen. The extreme fertility of the soil accounts for the variety of produce on a single acre of ground; we may see potatoes, vines, Indian corn, clover, mangel-wurzel, patches of the medicinal poppy—an article of local commerce—wheat, barley, oats, and rye, with fruit-trees and bushes planted between. Black currants, used in the manufacture of *cassis*, Alpine strawberries, honey, are also specialities, the staple product of the country being the celebrated Brie cheese. The dairy-farmers, often tenants possessing small freeholds, are very rich. On week-days they work as hard as their labourers, although able to retire if they chose and give their daughters a dowry of several thousand pounds.

Scattered throughout these fertile and prosperous regions are ancient towns, some of which are reached by separate little lines of railway, others are accessible by road only. Coulommiers is one of these, and though there is nothing attractive about it, except a most picturesque old church and a very pretty public walk by the winding river, it is worth making the two hours' drive across country for the sake of the scenery. As there was no direct communication with Couilly, my summer quarters, and no possibility of hiring a carriage in a busy season, I gladly accepted a

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neighbour's offer of a seat in his "trap," a light spring-cart with capital horse. He was a tradesman of the village, and, like the rest of the world here, wore the convenient and cleanly blue cotton trousers and blue blouse of the country. The third spare seat was occupied by a neighbouring notary, the two men discussing metaphysics, literature, and the origin of things, on their way.

We started at seven o'clock in the morning, and lovely indeed looked the wide landscape in the tender light—valley, and winding river, and wooded ridge being soon exchanged for wide open spaces covered with corn and autumn crops. Farming here is carried on extensively, some of these rich farms numbering several hundred acres. The farm-house and buildings, surrounded with a high stone wall, are few and far between, and the separate crops cover much larger tracts than here. It was market-day at Coulommiers, and we passed by many farmers and farmeresses jogging to market, the latter with their fruit and vegetables, eggs, and butter, in comfortable covered carts.

Going to market in France means, indeed, what it did with us a hundred years ago; the farmers and farmers' wives looked the picture of prosperity. In some cases, fashion had so far got the better of tradition, that the reins were handled by a smart-looking lady in hat and feathers and fashionable

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dress, but for the most part by toil-embrowned homely women, with a coloured handkerchief twisted round their heads and no pretension to gentility. The men, one and all, wore blue blouses, and were evidently accustomed to hard work, but for all that it was easy to see that they were possessed both of means and intelligence. Like the rest of the Briard population, they are fine fellows, tall, with regular features and frank good-humoured countenances.

Many a farmer, tenant-farmer, too, who toils with his men, has, irrespective of his earnings as a farmer, capital bringing in several thousand francs yearly; in fact, some of them are in receipt of what is considered a fair income for an English curate or vicar, but they work all the same.

At Coulommiers, there is nothing to see but a fine old church with an imposing tower, rising from the centre of the town. I went inside, and, though the doors stood wide open, found it empty, except for a little market-girl, who, having deposited her basket, was bent, not on prayer, but on counting her money. In Brittany, on market-days, there is never a lack of pious worshippers; here it is not so, the good folks of Seine et Marne evidently being inclined to materialism. The interior of this picturesque church is very quaintly coloured, and, as a whole, it is well worth seeing.

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Like many other towns in these parts, Coulommiers dates from an ancient period, and long belonged to the English crown. Ravaged during the Hundred Years' War, the religious wars and the troubles of the League, nothing to speak of remains of its old walls and towers of defence. Indeed, except for the drive thither across country, and the fruit and cheese markets, it possesses no temptations for the traveller. Market-day is a sight for a painter. The show of melons alone makes a subject; the weather-beaten market-women, with gay coloured handkerchief twisted round their heads, their blue gowns, the delicious colour and lovely form of the fruit, all this must be seen. Here and there were large pumpkins, cut open to show the ripe red pulp, with abundance of purple plums, apples, and pears just ripening, and bright yellow apricots. At Coulommiers, as elsewhere, you may search in vain for rags, dirt, or a sign of beggary. Every one is rich, independent, and happy.

Next to fishing on the banks of the Marne, the favourite pastime is swimming, also indulged in largely by the gentler sex. The pedestrian, in his ramble along winding river and canal, will be sure to surprise a group of water-nymphs sporting in the water, their bathing costumes being considered quite a sufficient guarantee against ill-

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natured comment. The men are more careless of appearance, and, if they can get a good bathing place tolerably hidden from the world, take their bath or swim in nature's dress. In all these river-side towns and villages are public baths, swimming schools, and doubtless the prevailing love of water in these parts may partly account for the healthful looks and fine physiques of the population. The blue linen clothes, invariably worn by the men, are constantly in the wash, and are as cool, comfortable, and cleanly as it is possible to conceive. English folks have yet to learn how to dress themselves healthfully and appropriately in hot weather, and here they might take a hint.

But no matter how enamoured of green fields and woodland walks, we must tear ourselves away for a day to see the famous "Chocolate city" of M. Menier,¹ the modern marvel *par*

¹"German officers raided the château here of M. Menier, the famous chocolate millionaire. M. Menier was from home, and some of the servants ministered to the wants of the uninvited guests. They first used up the best brand of champagne. A servant who then told them that the supply was exhausted was led to the wine cellar with a revolver at his head. He was able to convince the gallant connoisseurs that the brand was 'off.'

"For nine days the officers held a wild carouse in the château. Every particle of food, every chicken, duck, turkey, and goose on the property was consumed. What wine was left was taken away by the 'guests' in M. Menier's motor-cars, together with silver, cutlery, saddlery,

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excellence of the county, and a piece of the most perfect organisation it is possible to conceive. M. Menier has undoubtedly arrived at making the best chocolate that ever rejoiced the palate; he has achieved far greater things than this, in giving us one of the happiest and most delightful social pictures that ever charmed the heart. Such things must be seen to be realised, but I will as briefly as possible give an account of what I saw.

We make the pretty little town of Lagny our starting point, and, having passed a succession of scattered farm-houses and wide corn-fields, we come gradually upon a miniature town, built in red and white; so coquettishly, airily, daintily placed is the City of Chocolate amid orchards and gardens, that, at first sight, a spectator is inclined to take it rather for a settlement of such dreamers as assembled together at Hawthorne's Brook Farm to poetise, philosophise, and make love, than of artisans engaged in the practical business of life. This long street of charming mattresses, rugs, overcoats, waterproofs, bicycles, and the most famous collection of antique clocks and ornaments in France, equalling those at the Wallace Collection in London.

"Nothing was overlooked. Even the pet canaries were carried off. Not content with the spoils, the 'gentlemen' turned out the wardrobes, drawers, and presses, and tore up the ladies' hats and dresses."—*Daily Chronicle*, September 21, 1914.

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cottages, having gardens around and on either side, is planted with trees, so that it forms as pleasant a promenade as the Parisian boulevards. We pass along, admiring the abundance of flowers everywhere, and finally reach a large open square around which are a congeries of handsome buildings, all like the dwelling houses, new, cheerful, and having trees and benches in front. This is the heart of the "Cité," to be described by-and-by, consisting of Co-operative Stores, Schools, Libraries, etc.; beyond, stands the château of M. Menier, surrounded by gardens, and before us the manufactory. The air is here fragrant, not with roses and jessamine, but with the grateful aroma of chocolate, reminding us that we are indeed in a city, if not literally a pile of cocoa, yet owing its origin to the products of that wonderful tree, or rather to the ingenuity by which its resources have been turned to such account.

The works are built on the river Marne, and, having seen two vast hydraulic machines, we enter a lift with the intelligent foreman deputed to act as guide, and ascend to the topmost top of the many storied, enormous building in which the cocoa berry is metamorphosed into the delicious compound known as Chocolate Menier. This is a curious experience, and the reverse of most other intellectual processes, since here, instead of

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mounting the ladder of knowledge gradually, we find ourselves placed on a pinnacle of ignorance, from which we descend by degrees, finding ourselves enlightened when we at last touch the ground.

Our aërial voyage accomplished, we see process the first, namely, the baking of the berry, this, of course, occupying a vast number of hands, all men, on account of the heat and laboriousness required in the operation. Descending a storey, we find the cocoa berry already in a fair way to become edible, and giving out an odour something like chocolate; here the process consists in sorting and preparing the vast masses for grinding. Lower still, we find M. Menier's great adjunct in the fabrication of chocolate, namely, sugar, coming into play, and no sooner are sugar and cocoa put together than the compound becomes chocolate in reality. Lower still, we find processes of refining and drying going on, an infinite number being required before the necessary firmness is attained. Lower still, we come to a very hot place indeed, but, like all the other vast compartments of the manufactory, as well ventilated, spacious, and airy as possible, the workman's inconvenience from the heat being thereby reduced to a minimum.

Here it is highly amusing to watch the apparently intelligent machines which divide the chocolate

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into half-pound lumps, the process being accomplished with incredible swiftness. Huge masses of chocolate in this stage awaiting the final preparation are seen here and there, all destined at last to be put half a pound at a time into a little baking tin, and to be baked like a hot cross bun, the name of Menier being stamped on at the same time. A good deal of manipulation is necessary in this process; but we must go down a stage lower to see the dexterity and swiftness with which the chief manual tasks in the fabrication of chocolate are performed.

Here women are chiefly employed, and their occupation is to envelope the half-pound cakes of chocolate in three papers, first silver, next white, and finally sealing it up in the well-known yellow cover familiar to all of us. These feminine fingers work so fast, and with such marvellous precision, that, if the intricate pieces of machinery we have just witnessed seemed gifted with human intelligence and docility, on the other hand the women at work in this department appeared like animated machines; no blundering, no halting, no alteration of working pace. Their fluttering fingers, indeed, worked with beautiful promptitude and regularity, and as everybody in M. Menier's City of Chocolate is well dressed and cheerful, there was nothing painful in the monotony of their toil or unremitting application.

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On the same floor are the packing departments, where we see the cases destined for all parts of the world.

Thus quickly and easily we have descended the ladder of learning, and have acquired some faint notion of the way in which the hard, brown, tasteless cocoa berry is transformed into one of the most agreeable and wholesome compounds as yet invented for delectation and nourishment. Of course, many intermediate processes have had to be passed by, also many interesting features in the organisation of the various departments; these, to be realised, must be seen.

There are one or two points, however, I will mention. In the first place, when we consider the enormous duty on sugar, and the fact that chocolate, like jam, is composed half of sugar and half of berry, we are at first at a loss to understand how chocolate-making can bring in such large returns as it must do—in the first place, to have made M. Menier a millionaire, in the second, to enable him to carry out his philanthropic schemes utterly regardless of cost. But we must remember that there is but one Chocolate Menier in the world, and that in spite of the enormous machinery at work, night and day, working day and Sunday, supply can barely keep pace with demand. A staff of nightworkers are always at rest in the day-time, in

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order to keep the machinery going at work. By far the larger portion of the Chocolate Menier is consumed in France, where, as in England and America, it stands unrivalled. M. Menier may therefore be said to possess a monopoly, and, seeing how largely he lavishes his ample wealth on others, none can grudge him such good fortune.

Having witnessed the transformation of one of the most unpromising looking berries imaginable into the choicest of condiments, the richest of the cups "that cheer but not inebriate;" lastly, one of the best and most nourishing of the lighter kinds of food—we have to witness a transformation more magical still, namely, the hard life of toil made easy, the drudgery of mechanical labour lightened, the existence of the human machine made hopeful, healthful, reasonable, and happy. Want, squalor, disease, and drunkenness have been banished from the City of Chocolate, and thrift, health, and prosperity reign in their stead.

Last of all, ignorance has vanished also, a thorough education being the happy portion of every child born within its precincts. Our first visit was to what is called the "École Gardienne," or infant school—like the rest kept up entirely at M. Menier's expense—and herein, the grandest gift of organisation is seen, perhaps, more strikingly than anywhere. These children, little trotting

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things from three to five years old, have a large playground, open in summer and covered in winter, and a spacious school-room, in which they receive little lessons in singing, A B C, and so on. Instead of being perched on high benches without backs, and their legs dangling, as is the case in convent schools for the poor, they have delightful little low easy-chairs and tables accommodated to their size, each wooden chair, with backs, having seats for two, so that, instead of being crowded and disturbing each other, the children sit in couples with plenty of room and air, and in perfect physical comfort. No hollow chests, no bent backs, no crookedness here. Happy and comfortable as princes these children sit in their chairs, having their feet on the floor, and their backs where they ought to be, namely, as a support.

Leading out^{of} the school-room are two small rooms, where we saw a pleasant sight; a dozen cots, clean and cosy as it is possible to conceive, on which rosy, sturdy boys and girls of a year old were taking their midday sleep. We next went into the girls' school, which is under the charge of a certificated mistress, and where children remain till thirteen or fourteen years of age, receiving exactly the same education as the boys, and without a fraction of cost to the parents. The course of study embraces all branches of elemen-

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tary knowledge, with needlework, drawing, history, singing, and book-keeping. Examinations are held and certificates of progress awarded. We found the girls taking a lesson in needlework—the only point in which their education differs from that of the boys—and the boys at their drawing class; the school-rooms are lofty, well-aired, and admirably arranged.

Adjoining the schools is the library, open to all members of the community, and where many helps to adult study are afforded. On the other side of the pleasant green square, so invitingly planted with trees, stand the Co-operative Stores, which are, of course, an important feature in the organisation of the community. Here meat, groceries, and other articles of daily domestic consumption are sold at low prices, and of the best possible quality: the membership, of course, being the privilege of the thrifty and the self-denying, who belong to the Association by payment. I did not ask if intoxicating drinks were sold on the premises, for such an inquiry would have been gratuitous. The cheerful, tidy, healthful looks of the population proclaimed their sobriety, and some excellent *siróp de groseille* offered me in the cottage of the foreman who acted as guide, showed that such delicious drinks are made at home as to necessitate no purchases abroad.

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There is also a Savings' Bank, which all are invited to patronise; six and a half per cent. being the incentive held out to those economisers on a small scale. But neither the school, nor the Co-operative Store, nor the Savings' Bank can make the working man's life what it should be without the home, and it is with the home that alike M. Menier's philanthropy and organisation attain the acmé. These dwellings, each block containing two, are admirably arranged, with two rooms on the ground-floor, two above, a capital cellar and office, and last, but not least, a garden. The workman pays a hundred and twenty francs, rather less than five pounds, a year for this accommodation, which it is hardly necessary to say is the portion of very few artisans in France, or elsewhere. The *Cité*, as it is called, being close to the works, they can go home to meals, and, though the women are largely employed in the manufactory, the home need not be neglected. It was delightful to witness my cicerone's pleasure in his home. He was a workman of superior order, and though, as he informed me, of no great education, yet possessed of literary and artistic tastes. The little parlour was as comfortable a room as any reasonable person could desire. There were books on the shelves, and pictures over the mantelpiece. Among these, were portraits of

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Thiers, Gambetta, and M. Menier, for all of whom their owner expressed great admiration.

“ Ah! ” he said, “ I read the newspaper and I know a little history, but in my time education was not thought of. These children here have now the chance of being whatever they like.”

He showed me his garden, every inch of which was made use of—fruit, flowers, and vegetables growing luxuriantly on this well-selected site. The abundance of flowers was particularly striking, especially to those familiar with certain districts in France, where the luxury of a flower is never indulged in; the founder must have had as strong a passion for gardening as for philanthropy, judging from the enormous gardens adjoining his handsome château, and perhaps his love of flowers—always a most humanising taste—has set the example. These brilliant *parterres*, whether seen in the vast domains of the master or the humble homesteads of the men, delightfully break the red and white uniformity of the City of Chocolate, flowers above, around, on every side. There is also a profusion of fruit and vegetables, land quite recently laid under cultivation soon yielding returns in this favoured spot.

Before quitting Noisiel we must remark that M. Menier and his successor possess cocoa and sugar plantations in the Southern States of America, and

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are thus enabled to fabricate the best possible chocolate at the lowest possible price. The cocoa-berry, sugar, and essence of vanilla alone form the ingredients of this delicious compound, which for the most part is made of one quality only. The amount of water power used daily, the quantity of material consumed and chocolate manufactured, the entire consumption throughout France, all these are interesting statistics, and are found elsewhere—my object being a graphic description of M. Menier's "Chocolaterie," and nothing further. The interest to general readers and writers consists not so much in such facts as these as in the astonishing completeness of the manufactory as a piece of organisation, and the great social and moral well-being of which it is made the channel. Something more than mere business talent and philanthropy is necessary to combine the material and moral forces we find at work here. M. Menier must have gone into every practical detail, not only of hygiene and domestic economy, but of education, to have put into working order so admirable a scheme as his; and by living among his work-people he is enabled to watch the result of his efforts. The handsome château, with its magnificent garden in close proximity to the "Cité," preaches a daily text, which we may be sure is more effective than any amount of words. By his own capacity

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and exertions M. Menier realised the splendid fortune he used so philanthropically, and equally by this same capacity and exertion only do his working men lift themselves in the social scale. The children educated at Noisiel will have their fortune in their own hands, since in France fortune and the highest social distinctions are within reach of all; and, in thus educating her future citizens, the great chocolate manufacturer is fulfilling the part not only of a philanthropist but of a true patriot.

Wherever I go, I said to myself, in whatever corner of the world I henceforth taste the renowned Chocolate Menier, I shall be reminded of something which will lend additional sweetness and flavour. I shall recall a community of working people whose toil is lightened and elevated, whose daily portion is made hopeful, reasonable, and happy, by an ever-active sympathy and benevolence rarely found allied. More lessons than one will be carried away by the least and most instructed visitor of the flourishing little City of Chocolate on the banks of the Marne.

CHAPTER II

MEAUX AND RHEIMS

MEAUX, former capital of La Brie, was bishopric of the famous Bossuet, and one of the early strongholds of the Reformation. The neighbouring country, *pays Meldois* as it is called, is a vast fruit and vegetable garden, bringing in enormous returns. From our vantage ground, for, of course, we get outside the vehicle, we survey the shifting landscape, wood and valley and plain, soon seeing the city with its imposing Cathedral, flashing like marble, high above the winding river and fields of green and gold on either side. I know nothing that gives the mind an idea of fertility and wealth more than this scene, and it is no wonder that the Prussians, in 1871, here levied a heavy toll; their sojourn at Meaux having cost the inhabitants not less than a million and a half of francs. All now was peace and prosperity, and here, as in the neighbouring towns, rags, want, and beggary are not found. The evident well-being of all classes is delightful to behold.

Meaux, with its shady boulevards and pleasant public gardens, must be an agreeable place to

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live in, nor would intellectual resources be wanting. We strolled into the spacious town library, open, of course, to all strangers, and could wish for no better occupation than to con the curious old books and the manuscripts that it contains. One incident amused me greatly. The employé, having shown me the busts adorning the walls of the principal rooms, took me into a side closet, where, ignominiously put out of sight, were the busts of Charles the Tenth and Louis-Philippe.

“But,” said our informant, “we have more busts in the garret. The Emperor Napoleon III., the Empress and the Prince Imperial!”

Naturally enough, on the proclamation of the Republic, these busts were considered at least supererogatory, and it is to be hoped they will stay where they are. The Evêché, or Bishop's Palace, is the principal sight at Meaux. It is full of historic associations, besides being very curious in itself. Here have slept many noteworthy personages, Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette when on their return from Varennes, June 24, 1791, Napoleon in 1814, Charles X. in 1828, later, General Moltke in 1870, who said upon that occasion:

“In three days, or a week at most, we shall be in Paris;” not counting on the possibilities of a siege.

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The room occupied by the unfortunate Louis XVI. and his little son, still bears the name of "La Chambre du Roi," and cannot be entered without sadness. The gardens, designed by Le Nôtre, are magnificent and very quaint, as quaint and characteristic, perhaps, as any of the same period; a broad, open, sunny flower-garden below; above, terraced walks so shaded with closely-planted plane trees that the sun can hardly penetrate them on this July day. These green walks, where the nightingale and the oriole were singing, were otherwise as quiet as the Evêché itself; but the acmé of quiet and solitude was only to be found in the avenue of yews, called Bossuet's Walk. Here it is said the great preacher used to pace backwards and forwards when composing his famous orations.

Meaux, if one of the most prosperous, is also one of the most liberal of French cities, and has been renowned for its charity from early times. In the thirteenth century there were no fewer than sixty Hôtels-Dieu, as well as hospitals for lepers in the diocese, and at the present day it is true to its ancient traditions, being abundantly supplied with hospitals, etc.

Half-an-hour from Meaux by railway is the pretty little town of La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, coquettishly perched on the Marne, and not yet

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rendered unpoetic by the hum and bustle of commerce. Here, even more than at Meaux, the material well-being of all classes is especially striking. You see the women sitting in their little gardens at needle-work, the children trotting off to school, the men busied in their respective callings but all as it should be, no poverty, no dirt, no drunkenness, no discontent; cheerfulness, cleanliness, and good clothes are evidently everybody's portion. Yet it is eminently a working population; there are no fashionable ladies in the streets, no nursery-maids with over-dressed charges on the public walks; the men wear blue blouses, the women cotton gowns, all belonging to one class, and have no need to envy any others.

Close to the railway-station is a little house, where I saw an instance of the comfort enjoyed by these unpretentious citizens of this thrifty little town. The landlord, a particularly intelligent and well-mannered person, was waiting upon his customers in a blue cotton coat, and the landlady was as busy as could be in the kitchen. Both were evidently accustomed to plenty of hard work, yet when she took me over the house in order to show her accommodation for tourists, I found their own rooms furnished with Parisian elegance. There were velvet sofas and chairs, white-lace curtains, polished floors, mirrors, hang-

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ing wardrobes, a sumptuous little bassinette for baby, and adjoining, as charming a room for their elder daughter—a teacher in a day-school—as any heiress to a large fortune could desire. This love of good furniture and in-door comfort generally, seemed to me to speak much, not only for the taste, but the moral tone of the family. Evidently to these good people the home meant everything dearest to their hearts. You would not find extravagance in food or dress among them, or most likely any other but this: they work hard, they live frugally, but, when the day's toil is done, they like to have pretty things around them, and not only to repose but to enjoy.

La Ferté-sous-Jouarre is the seat of a large manufacture of millstones, which are exported to all parts of the world, and it is a very thriving little place. Large numbers of Germans were brought hither by commerce, and were now living again among their French neighbours as peacefully as before the war of '70-1. The attraction for tourists is, however, the twin-town of Jouarre, reached by a lovely drive of about an hour from the little town.

Leaving the river, you ascend gradually, gaining at every step a richer and wider prospect; below the blue river, winding between green banks, above a lofty ridge of wooded hill, with hamlets dotted here and there amid the yellow corn and

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luxuriant foliage. It is a bit of Switzerland, and has often been painted by French artists. I can fancy no more attractive field for a landscape-painter than this, who, provided he could endure the perpetual noise of the stoneyards, would find no lack of creature comforts.

The love of flowers and flower-gardens, so painfully absent in the West of France, is here conspicuous. Flowers are everywhere, and some of the little gardens give evidence of great skill and care. Jouarre is perched upon an airy green eminence, a quiet old-world town, with an enormous convent in the centre, where some scores of cloistered nuns have shut themselves up for the glory of God.

The grandest of all the grand cathedrals in France—and crowning infamy of Germany—has been so fully described elsewhere, that I will not attempt it. During one of my numerous visits to Rheims, however, it was my good fortune to enjoy a very rare experience. On the occasion of President Faure's funeral, the great *bourdon* or bell, formerly only tolled for the death of monarchs, was now heard for the second time during the Third Republic. Standing under the shadow of that vast minster the sound seemed to come from east and west, from above and below, dwarfing the hum of the city to nothingness, as if echoing from the remotest corners of France. It was no heroic

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figure now knelled by the deepest-voiced bell in the country, but in the person of the Havre tanner raised to the dignity of a ruler, was embodied a magnificent idea, the sovereignty of the people and the overthrow of privilege. Never as long as I live shall I forget the boom of that great bell, and long the solemn sound lingered on my ears.

A few days later the interior of the vast Cathedral echoed with sounds almost as overwhelming in its force and solemnity. A grand mass was given in honour of the dead President.

In front of the high altar stood a lofty catafalque, the rich purple drapery blazing with gold. The nave was filled with dazzling uniforms and embroidered vestments. In especially reserved seats sat the officers of the Legion of Honour, among these in civilian dress figuring the honoured citizen of Rheims who has ever retained English nationality, the late Mr. Jonathan Holden.

What with beating drums, clashing cymbals, blaring trumpets and pealing organ, the tremendous vault seemed hardly capacious enough for the deafening combination of sound. As a relief came the funeral march of Chopin, the more subdued strains seeming almost inaudible after the tumult of the moment before. Never surely had plebeian requiem so imperial!

The rich, artistic and archæological treasures of

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Rheims are well known. I will now describe one or two sights which do not come in the way of the tourist.

I had the privilege of visiting for over forty years a citizen of Rheims. This city has been for centuries one of the foremost seats of industry in France. Mr. Holden's chimneys are kept going night and day, Sundays excepted, with alternating shifts of workmen. All the hands employed are of French nationality and—a fact speaking volumes—no strike has ever disturbed the amicable relations of English employer and French employed. The great drawback to an inspection of these workshops is the din of the machinery and the odour of the skins. But there is something that takes hold of the imagination in the perfection to which machinery has been carried. As we gaze upon these huge engines, only occasionally touched by a woman's hand, we are reminded of man, the pigmy guiding an elephant. We seem conscious, moreover, of what almost approaches human intelligence, so much of the work achieved appearing voluntary rather than automatic. The skins reach Rheims direct from Australia and are here dressed, cleaned and prepared for working up into cloth. If machinery is brought almost to the perfection of manual dexterousness, human beings attain the precision of machinery.

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I saw a neatly dressed girl at work whose sole occupation it was to tie up the wool, now white as snow and soft as silk, into small parcels. The wool already weighed came down by a little trough, and as swiftly and methodically as wheels set in motion, the girl's fingers folded the paper and tied the string. I should not like to guess how many of these parcels she turned off in half a minute.

Yet another uncommon recollection of Rheims must here be recorded. In the year 1900 I witnessed such a spectacle as my military friends assured me had never before been afforded to the marvel-loving; in other words, the sight of a hundred and sixty thousand men—a host perhaps more numerous than any ever commanded by Napoleon—performing evolutions within range of vision.

By half-past five in the morning I was off from Paris with my host—a deputy—and hostess in their motor car for the Northern railway station. The day of the great review broke dull and grey, and deserted indeed looked the usually gay and lively Paris streets. We reached the station at five minutes to six, *i.e.* five minutes before the starting of our train, and at once realised the neatness with which the day's programme had been arranged, both by the railway companies and the Government. The tens of thousands of

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sightseers had been despatched to Rheims by relays of trains during the night, and the station was now kept clear for the numerous specials conveying members of the Senate, the Chamber, and the Press. Here, therefore, was no crowding whatever, only a quiet stream of deputies, wearing their tricolour badges, accompanied by their ladies, each deputy having the privilege of taking two.

Precisely on the stroke of six, our long and well-filled train consisting of first-class carriages steamed out of the station, taking the northern route and only making a short halt at Soissons. No sooner had we joined the Compiègne line than we realised the tremendous precautions necessary in the case of visitors so august; double rows of soldiers were placed at short intervals on either side of the railway and detachments of mounted troops stationed at a distance guarded the route. The arrangements for our own comfort were perfect. Our train set us down, not at Rheims, but at Bétheny itself, the scene of the review, a temporary station having been erected there. We were, therefore, within a hundred yards or so of our tribune, or raised stage, and of the luncheon tents, roads having been laid down to each by the Génie or engineering body. Numbered indications conspicuously placed quite prevented any confusion whatever, and, indeed, it was literally

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impossible for any one to miss his way. The only eventuality that could have spoiled everything, wet weather, fortunately held off until the show was over. The review itself was a magnificent spectacle, surely not without irony when we consider that this great military display, one of the greatest on record, was got up in honour of the first sovereign in the world who had dared to propose a general disarmament! Another line of thought was awakened by the fact of our isolation. The specially invited guests of the French Government upon this occasion numbered three thousand persons, and it seemed that for the Czar, his train, and these, the great show was got up. The thousands of outsiders, sightseers, and excursionists, brought to Rheims by cheap trains from all parts of France, were nowhere; in other words, invisible.

Whether or no such spectators got anything like a view of the evolutions I do not know. I should be inclined to think that from the distance at which they were kept, the moving masses were mere blurs and nothing more. From our own tribune, adjoining that of the Presidential party, we commanded a view of the entire forces covering the vast plain, surrounded by rising ground.

Amazing it was to see the dark immovable lines slowly break up, and as if set in motion

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by machinery, deploy according to orders. The vast plain before us was a veritable sea of men, an army, one would think, sufficient for the military needs of all Europe.

One striking feature of these superb regiments, cavalry as well as infantry, was the excellence of the bands. Never before had I realised the inspiriting thing that martial music might be. Another interesting point was that afforded by the cyclists, several regiments having these newly-formed companies. Whenever a flag was borne past, whether by foot or mounted soldier, the cheering was tremendous, but it was reserved for a regiment of Lorrainers to receive a veritable ovation. Still so fondly yearns the heart of France after her lost and mutilated provinces! On the whole, and speaking as a naïve amateur, I should say that no country in the world could show a grander military spectacle. Enthusiasm reigned amongst all beholders, but there was no display of political bias or any discordant note. Cries of "Vive la France!" were as frequent as those of "Vive l'armée!"

Not a policeman was to be seen anywhere, the deputies keeping order for themselves. And not always without an effort! People would rise from their seats, even stand on benches, despite the thundered out "Remain seated!" on all sides.

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On the whole, and with this exception, nothing could surpass the general good humour. And when the splendid cortège filed by at the close, delight and satisfaction beamed on every face.

The luncheon was superabundant, consisting of wines, cold meat, and bread in plenty. The task of finding refreshment for three thousand people had been satisfactorily solved. The only thing wanting was water. It seems that upon such an occasion no one was expected to drink anything short of Bordeaux, Burgundy, or pale ale.

All the special trains were crowded for the return journey, made by way of Meaux, but every one made way for every one, and we reached Paris at eight o'clock, almost as fresh and quite as good-humoured as we had quitted it at dawn. If this great review was interesting from one point more than another, it was from the manner in which it displayed the wonderful organising faculty of the French mind. The most trifling details no more than the largest combinations can disconcert this pre-eminently national aptitude.

The journey from Châlons-sur-Marne eastward may be described as a succession of gastronomic delectations. At Épernay, travellers by express are allowed just sufficient time to drink a glass of excellent champagne at the buffet. Farther on, at Bar-le-Duc, neatly-packed jars of the raspberry

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jam for which this town is famous are brought to the doors of your compartment. At Commercy, one is enticed to regale on the delicious little *madeleines*, or cakes, made there; not a halting-place is without its special dainty.

As will be seen in the following pages, I have entered the "God-blessed, man-cursed land" by various routes, each journey strongly bringing out the contrast between happy France and thrice unhappy Alsace and Lorraine.

CHAPTER III

PROVINS AND TROYES

FEW tourists in Eastern France turn off the main railway line to visit the ancient towns of Provins and Troyes. None worthier of a visit, and both lead to the frontier.

Airily, coquettishly perched on its sunny green eminence, and still possessed of antique stateliness, in striking contrast with the trim little town at its feet, Provins captivates the beholder by virtue alike of uniqueness and poetic charm. I can think of nothing in my various travels at all like this little capital of Brie and Champagne, whether seen in a distance from the railway, or from the ramparts that still encircle it as in the olden time. It is indeed a gem; miniature Athens of a mediæval principedom, that although on a small scale boasted of great power and splendour; tiny Granada of these Eastern provinces, bearing ample evidence of past literary and artistic glories!

You quit the main line at Longueville, and in a quarter of an hour come upon a vast panorama, crowned by the towers and dome of the still proud, defiant looking little city of Provins, according to

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some writers the Agedincum of Cæsar's Commentaries, according to others more ancient still. It is mentioned in the capitularies of Charlemagne, and in the Middle Ages was the important and flourishing capital of Basse-Brie and residence of the Counts of Champagne. Under Thibault VI., called Le Chansonnier, Provins reached its apogee of prosperity, numbering at that epoch 80,000 souls. Like most other towns in these parts, it suffered greatly in the Hundred Years' War, being taken by the English in 1432, and retaken from them in the following year. It took part in the League, but submitted to Henry IV. in 1590, and from that time gradually declined; at present it numbers about 7000 inhabitants only.

The rich red rose, commonly called Provence rose, is in reality the rose of Provins, having been introduced here by the Crusaders from the Holy Land. Gardens of the Provins rose may still be found, though they are little cultivated now for commercial purpose; Provence, the land of the Troubadours, has therefore no claim whatever upon rose lovers, who are indebted instead to the airy Acropolis of Champagne. Thus much for the history of the place, which has been chronicled by two gifted citizens of modern time, Opoix and Bourquelot.

It is difficult to give any idea of the citadel, so

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imposingly commanding the wide valleys and curling rivers at its foot. Leaving the Ville Basse, we climb for a quarter of an hour to find all the remarkable monuments of Provins within a stone's throw—the College, formerly Palace of the Counts of Champagne, the imposing Tour de César, the Basilica of St. Quiriace with its cupola, the famous *Grange aux Dîmes*, the ancient fountain, lastly, the ruined city and gates and walls, called the Ville Haute. All these are close together, but conspicuously towering over the rest are the dome of St. Quiriace, and the picturesque, many pinnacled stronghold vulgarly known as Cæsar's Tower. These two crown, not only the ruins, but the entire landscape, for miles around with magnificent effect. The tower itself, in reality having nothing to do with its popular name whatever, but the stronghold of the place built by one of the Counts of Champagne, is a picturesque object, with graceful little pinnacles connected by flying buttresses at each corner, and pointed tower surmounting all, from which waves proudly the Tricolour flag of the French Republic. A deaf and dumb girl leads visitors through a little flower-garden into the interior, and takes them up the winding stone staircase to see the cells in which Louis d'Outremer and others are said to have been confined. For my own part, I prefer neither to go to the top and

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bottom of things, neither to climb the Pyramids nor to penetrate into the Mammoth caves of Kentucky. It is much more agreeable, and much less fatiguing, to view everything from the level, and this fine old structure, called Cæsar's Tower, is no exception to the rule. Nothing can be more picturesque than its appearance from the broken ground around, above, and below, and no less imposing is the quaint straggling indescribable old church of St. Quiriace close by, now a mere patchwork of different epochs, but in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries one of the most remarkable religious monuments in Brie and Champagne. Here was baptised Thibault VI., the song-maker, the lover of art, the patron of letters, and the importer into Europe of the famous Provence rose; of Thibault's poetic creations an old chronicler wrote:—

“ C'était les plus belles chansons, les plus délectables et mélodieuses qui oncques fussent ouïses en chansons et instruments, et il les fit écrire en la salle de Provins et en celle de Troyes.”

Close to this ancient church is the former palace of Thibault, now a “ Collège Communal,” for classic and secondary instruction. Unfortunately the director had gone off for his holiday taking the keys with him—travellers never being looked for here—so that we could not see the interior and

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chapel. It is superbly situated, commanding from the terrace a wide view of surrounding country. Perhaps, however, the most curious relics of ancient Provins are the vast and handsome subterranean chambers and passages which are not only found in the *Grange aux Dîmes* literally Tithe-Barn, but also under many private dwellings of ancient date.

Those who love to penetrate into the bowels of the earth may here visit cave after cave, and subterranean chamber after chamber; some of these were of course used for the storage and introduction of supplies in time of war and siege, others may have served as crypts, for purposes of religious ceremony, also a harbour of refuge for priests and monks, lastly as workshops. Provins may therefore be called not only a town but a triple city, consisting, first, of the old; secondly, of the new; lastly, of the underground. Captivating, from an artistic and antiquarian point of view, as are the first and last, all lovers of progress will not fail to give some time to the modern part, not, however, omitting the lovely walks round the ramparts, before quitting the region of romance for plain matter of fact. Here you have unbroken solitude and a wide expanse of open country; you also get a good idea of the commanding position of Provins.

A poetic halo still lingers round the rude times

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of Troubadour and Knight, but fortunately no such contrast can now be found—at least in France—as there existed between court and people, lord and vassal. The princelings of Brie and Champagne, who lived so jollily and regally in this capital of Provins, knew how to grind down the people to the uttermost, and levied toll-tax upon every imaginable pretext. The Jew had to pay them for his heresy, the assassin for his crime, the peasant for his produce, the artisan for his right to pursue a handicraft.

Nowadays all is good feeling, peace, and prosperity in this modern town, where alike are absent signs of great wealth or great poverty. I was in a region without a beggar!

Provins affords an excellent example of that spirit of decentralisation so usual in France, and unhappily so rare among ourselves. Here in a country town, numbering between seven and eight thousand inhabitants only, we find all the resources of a capital on a small scale; Public Library, Museum, Theatre, learned societies. The Library contains some curious MSS. and valuable books. The Theatre was built by one of the richest and most generous citizens of Provins, M. Garnier, who may be said to have consecrated his ample fortune to the embellishment and advancement of his native town. Space does

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not permit of an enumeration of the various acts of beneficence by which he has won the lasting gratitude of his fellow-townsmen; and on his death the charming villa he now inhabits, with its gardens, library, art and scientific collections, were to become the property of the town. The Rue Victor Garnier has been appropriately named after this public-spirited gentleman.

There are relics of antiquity to be found in the modern town also; nor have I given anything like a complete account of what is to be found in the old. No one who takes the trouble to diverge from the beaten track in order to visit this interesting little city—capital of the Troubadours—will be disappointed. I may add, by the way, that I found the *Hôtel de la Boule d'Or*, though homely, comfortable, and that in this out of the way corner the English traveller is invited to partake of our famous “Bière de Bass.”

From Provins to Troyes is a three hours' journey by rail; and at Troyes every traveller should halt. Here there is so much to see in the way of antiquities that several days might be spent profitably and pleasantly. The hasty may so arrange his journey as to reach Troyes at early morning, and start off again at night; though, of course, such an arrangement will only allow glimpses of the various treasures offered to him.

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Take the churches, for instance. Besides the Cathedral, there are six old churches, each of which has some especial interest, and all deserve to be seen in detail. Then there are picturesque mediæval houses, one of the first libraries in France, a museum, and picture-gallery.

The town itself is cheerful, with decorative bits of window-gardening, hanging dormers, abundance of flowers growing everywhere, and much life animating its old and new quarters. The Cathedral, which rises grandly from the monotonous fields of Champagne, just as Ely towers above the flat plains of our Eastern counties, is also seen to great advantage from the quays, though, when approached nearly, you find it hemmed in with narrow streets. Its noble towers—let us hope safe from the twentieth-century barbarians!—surmounted by airy pinnacles, and its splendid façade, delight the eye no less than the interior, gem of purest architecture blazing from end to end with rich old stained glass. No light here penetrates through the common medium, and the effect is magical; the superb rose and lancet windows, not dazzling, rather captivating the vision with the hues of the rainbow, being made up, as it seems, with no commoner materials than sapphire, emerald, ruby, topaz, amethyst, all these in the richest imaginable profusion. Other

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interiors are more magnificent in architectural display, none are lovelier than this, and there is nothing to mar the general harmony, no gilding or artificial flowers, no ecclesiastical trumpery, no meretricious decoration. We find here the art of painting on glass in its perfection, and some of the finest in the Cathedral, as well as in other churches here, are the work of a celebrated Troyen, Linard Gonthier.

A sacristan is always at hand to exhibit the treasury, worth, so it is said, some millions of francs, and which is to be commended to all lovers of jewels and old lace. The latter, richest old guipure, cannot be inspected by an amateur, or, indeed, a woman, without pangs. Such treasures as these, if not appropriated to their proper use, namely dress and decoration, should, however, be exhibited in the Town Museum, where they might be seen and studied by the artistic. There are dozens of yards of this matchless guipure, but, of course, few eyes are ever rejoiced by the sight of it; and as I turned from one treasure to another, gold and silver ecclesiastical ornaments, carved ivory coffers, enamels, cameos, embroideries, inlaid reliquaries and tapestries, I was reminded of a passage in Victor Hugo's poem—*Le Pape*—wherein the Pope of his imagination, thus makes appeal to the Cardinals and Bishops in conclave:

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“ Prêtre, à qui donc as-tu pris tes richesses? Aux
pauvres.

Quand l'or s'enfle dans ton sac, Dieu dans ton cœur
décroit;

Apprends qu'on est sans pain et sache qu'on a froid.”

The sacristan exhibited a tooth of St. Peter and skulls of the saints, but such treasures we can look on without envy. This little Museum—as, indeed, the Treasury may be called—contains the reliquary of St. Bernard and St. Malachi, a *chef-d'œuvre* of the twelfth century.

Close to the Cathedral are the Town Library, Museum, and Picture Gallery, the two first well worth careful inspection. Many exquisite specimens of binding, printing, and illuminating are here; whilst the windows are adorned with most curious and beautiful old glass paintings from the hand of the gifted Linard Gonthier before mentioned. It is hardly necessary to say that strangers are admitted to all the privileges of the reading-room without any form whatever. The library contains a hundred and some odd thousand volumes, besides between two and three thousand rare MSS.

The present population of Troyes is forty thousand; and I am not aware of any small town in England so well off in the matter of books. The Museum is divided into several sections, and, though of recent date, it possesses some interesting

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and valuable collections. Near the Library and Museum is the most beautiful old church in Troyes, St. Urbain, but at the time of my visit it was unfortunately in the hands of the restorer, we could see nothing of the interior, and the splendid Gothic façade was partly hidden by scaffolding. The traveller may next proceed on a voyage of discovery, coming upon the picturesque Hôtel de Ville; quaint relics of mediæval architecture, and half a dozen old churches, all noteworthy from some point of view.

It is impossible to do more than suggest the rewards that await such an explorer. Troyes, like Angers and Poitiers, abounds in architectural treasures and historical souvenirs; and all these cities cannot be visited too soon. Restoration and renovation are here, as elsewhere, the order of the day, and every year takes something from their character and charm. Two objects, particularly striking amongst so many, shall be mentioned only, as no mere description can convey any idea of the whole. The first is in the entrance hall of the Hôtel Vauluisant, the features of which should be photographed for the benefit of art-schools and art-decorators generally. One of these is a magnificent oak ceiling; another, a Renaissance chimney-piece in carved wood, no less magnificent. The solidity, richness of design, and workmanship of both

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ceiling and mantel-piece afford an invaluable lesson to artists, whilst beholders can but examine them without a feeling of sadness.

How little we have in modern art-furniture and decoration to be compared with such an achievement! Here we find that cost, labour, and display went for nothing, and artistic perfection alone was aimed at. Not far from the Hôtel Vauluisant is Ste. Madeleine, the most ancient church in Troyes, originally Gothic, but now, what with dilapidations and restorations, a curious medley of all various styles. To its architecture, however, the traveller will pay little heed, his whole attention being at once transferred to the world-famous jubé, or rood-loft, or what passes by that name. Rather let me call it a curtain of rare lace cut out in marble, a screen of transparent ivory, a light stalactite roof of some fairy grotto!

On entering, you see nothing but this airy piece of work, one of the dantiest, richest creations of the period, the achievement of Juan Gualde in the sixteenth century. The proportions of the interior seem to diminish, and we cannot help fancying that the church was built for the rood-loft, rather than the rood-loft for the church, so dwarfed is the latter by comparison. The centre aisle is indeed bridged over by a piece of stone-carving, so exquisite in design, so graceful in detail, so airy

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and fanciful in conception, that we are with difficulty brought to realise its size and solidity. This unique rood-loft measures over six yards in depth, is proportionately long, and is symmetrical in every part, yet it looks as if a breath were only needed to disperse its delicate galleries, hanging arcades, and miniature vaults, gorgeous painted windows forming the background—jewels flashing through a veil of guipure. English travellers may be reminded that Shakespeare's favourite hero, Henry V., was married to Katherine of France in the ancient church of St. Jean at Troyes, now the oddest congeries of different kinds of architecture. The betrothal took place before the high altar of Troyes Cathedral. Lovers of old stained glass must visit St. Nizier and other old churches here; all possess some peculiar interest either within or without.

Troyes—from the standard weight of which we have our Troy weight—is the birth-place of many illustrious men. Mignard the painter, Girardon, sculptor, whose monument to Richelieu in the church of the Sorbonne will not fail to be visited by English travellers, and of the famous painter on glass, Linard Gonthier, who had engraved on his tomb that he awaited the Last Day,

“ Sans peur d'être écrasé.”

Among minor accomplishments of the Troyen

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of to-day, it may be mentioned that nowhere throughout all France—land *par excellence* of good washing and clear-starching—is linen got up to such perfection as at Troyes. The *Blanchisserie Troyenne* is unhappily an art unknown in England. It is curious that, much as cleanliness is thought of among ourselves, we are content to wear linen washed and ironed so execrably as we do. Clean linen in England means one thing, in France another; and no French maid or waiter would put on the half-washed, half-ironed linen we aristocratic insulars wear so complacently. Here indeed is a field for female enterprise!

From Troyes to Belfort is a journey best made by night-mail express, as there is little to see on the way.

CHAPTER IV

ON THE FRONTIER

EASTERN France describes a rhomb or lozenge on the map, three separate lines of railway leading to her eastern frontiers.

Let us study one portion of this chart carefully. None perhaps in the world's history has been more stained with heroic blood or watered with bitterer tears. From end to end of a once rich, happy region have arisen, throughout nearly half a century, "curses, not loud but deep." One sullen, implacable thought has ever been present with the most generous, most gifted, and most light-hearted nation of Europe. That thought has never found fitter expression than in the words of a noble Victorian poetess:—

" A time there is for change and chance
Who next shall drink the trembling cup,
Wring out its dregs and suck them up,
After France? "

And " a God-blessed, man-cursed land " was the verdict of a well-known writer just twenty-five years ago.

In my own case nothing but a stern sense of duty

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would have induced me to cross the frontier, and in repeating my first visit by a second and yet a third, I was prompted by a desire to judge matters for myself.

Able as we are to rely on our silver streak, we can hardly realise the humiliation of diminished territory and altered frontiers. It was a lesson in geography that destroyed imperialism throughout France. As the late Henri Martin pointed out, the Bonapartes have been her map-makers to her cost. The halfpenny brochure of the historian before mentioned contained a map painted in black and white, except for two coloured portions representing the mutilations of the frontier brought about by the treaties of 1815 and 1871. Roughly speaking, the triangle thus indicated might enclose any other choice region of France; the position of Alsace and Lorraine made the two provinces invaluable. A glance will show why Dijon and Besançon should be strongly fortified. Odd as the statement may sound, Dijon is now a frontier town girt round with forts, all erected within ten years after the Franco-German war. Foreigners are not permitted within these forts, but the curious in such matters may gather some notion of the Dijon of to-day from Mont Afrique or any other of its "Golden Hills." The pretty little town of Auxonne on the Saône

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needed no extra defences, having successfully resisted German attacks in 1871. Besançon was also greatly strengthened and forts now command important positions between that city and Montbéliard. Belfort possesses a double enceinte, and additional forts cover the pass between the Vosges and the Jura known as the Trouée de Belfort. These works, pushed on with the utmost despatch, heavily taxed the national resources, but were inevitable. The exactions of Prussia were so adjusted as to lay bare the entire eastern frontier of France. In the fewest possible words, I will now state the precise partition that took place.

One of the first acts of the Assemblée Constituante was the division of the ancient provinces, so embarrassing from a fiscal and administrative point of view, into eighty-six departments. The Duchy of Lorraine formed four, namely, the Meuse, Meurthe, Moselle, and Vosges. With the first mentioned, bordering on Belgium, the Prussians did not meddle—it was not their affair: of the two following so large a portion was taken that of the remainder one department had to be formed, that of the Meurthe and Moselle, with Nancy for its *chef-lieu*. The picturesque Vosges lost one canton only: of Alsace, a mere fragment was left, precious in itself, but nothing in comparison with the forfeited portion. Alsace, united to the French

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crown in 1648, formed the two departments of the Upper and Lower Rhine, with Strasburg and Colmar for *chefs-lieux*. Of this vast and magnificent territory only Belfort was rescued; that is to say, the town and fort with six cantons, extending over 60,000 hectares, numbering a mixed rural and industrial population of 60,000 souls, and under the name of Territoirs de Belfort constituting a new department.

The annexed territory, therefore, comprised one entire department, the best portion of three parts of a fourth; furthermore, the French loss numbered over a million and a half of thrifty, enlightened, and patriotic inhabitants. "Nous sommes plus Français que les Français," are the first and last words greeting English ears in Germanised France.

My first sojourn in Alsace was made during the holiday season, when even Germanised French folks contrive to cast off care and make the best of things. In company of a friend, by way of Chalôns-sur-Marne, I approached the frontier.

The fair, the pensive city of Nancy! There is an indescribable charm in the sad, stately capital of ancient Lorraine: with little of life in its quiet streets or movement in its handsome squares, the *chef-lieu* of the Meurthe and Moselle is yet one of the wealthiest, most elegant cities of France. Hither after the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine

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flocked many rich Alsatian families, and perhaps its proximity to the lost provinces accounts for the subdued, dreamy aspect of the place. It is Rachel mourning for her children because they are not.

A strikingly beautiful city, with its splendid monuments, palace, churches, bronze gates, statues, fountains, worthy of a capital, Nancy is yet a busy industrial centre. The Alsatian exodus enriched it with upwards of 20,000 inhabitants, who, like the Huguenots of old, brought their money and commerce with them. Appropriately enough, the art of flower-making is a speciality of a town unsuited to grosser occupations. Its delicate printed cottons almost equal those of Mulhouse. Here, too, exists a School of Forestry, in which many young Englishmen prepare for Indian service. I was sorry that etiquette did not permit my acceptance of the hospitality offered by a worthy curé in this neighbourhood. Acquaintance begun at Dijon was followed by correspondence, and an invitation to regard the presbytère as my *pied à terre* when re-visiting Nancy!

After a halt at Épinal, we reach Gérardmer, in the very heart of the Vosges. And far and wide you may search for a more engaging scene when the sun shines—its verdant slopes sprinkled with white villas, its red-roofed village clustered about a rustic church tower, at its feet the loveliest little

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lake in the world, from which rise gently fir-clad heights.

Happy little Gérardmer (pronounced *Géramé!*) This pearl of Vosgien scenery just escaped being sliced into the Prussian map. The little mouse got clear of the cat! By the most fortuitous chance possible French *annexés* could easily cross the frontier, spending the long vacation in their beloved France, for a moment shaking off the nightmare of bondage. We settled down in a typical French hotel—managed of course by a woman—where prices were low, the table excellent, and sociability the order of the day.

The popularity of this holiday resort may be said to date from 1870-71. French tourists and valetudinarians naturally gave up Ems and Wiesbaden from patriotic motives, preferring to spend their money on native soil. Thus local enterprise was stimulated in every direction, and Gérardmer has long been crowded during the vacation. The place is, perhaps, more visited on account of its patriotic charm rather than for the curative properties of its springs. A chief attraction of the hotels is ever a large salon given up to music, dancing, and conversation. For the time being distinctions of rank are laid aside and fraternity reigns.

In our pleasant hostelry we found a most varied

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and animating company. Let me try to particularise. Firstly I may mention that one and all were French, not an English-speaking soul in the place excepting ourselves. Why it is I do not know, but the British tourist or valetudinarian as a rule ignore France excepting Brittany, Touraine, and the Riviera—all three to my thinking far less interesting than what may be called its *terra ignota*.

Foremost I should mention a bearer of two great names, being no other than the grandson of Ney, "the bravest of the brave," and the namesake of his chief head, M. Napoleon-Ney. He was an officer on leave, and wearing civilian dress. His young and elegant wife was an accomplished musician, and would occasionally play delightfully for the gratification of the rest. What thoughts that double name recalled! The super-human bravery displayed on the Beresina, the call of allegiance to his fallen head at Waterloo, the weary days in prison deprived by his ignoble Bourbon torturers of his sole distraction, the flute, and the last scene before the Place de l'Observatoire when, faced by the firing party, he shouted with his hand on his breast:

"Soldats, droit au cœur!" (Soldiers, straight to the heart.)

M. and Madame Napoleon - Ney represented the aristocratic element in the assemblage.

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Literature was represented by a well-known writer in the *Figaro*. Most of the guests indeed seemed acquaintances, and neither English nor American tourists, as I have said, kept myself and friend in company. There was nothing in the air just then to draw French and English together, and for the most part we were quiet lookers-on.

The *patronne* or mistress of the hotel—her husband, I fancy, supervised in the kitchen—was a charming, middle-aged, sober matron, Alsatian born and bred. The spirit of the place, she neglected nothing that could serve or interest her clients.

One evening a memorable scene took place. There had been the usual waltzing and country dances, when during an interval the door was flung wide, a momentary stupefying thrill was followed by clapping of hands, bravos, and ecstatic snatches of the Marseillaise.

Our landlady had entered wearing native costume, the picturesque costume of Alsace familiarised to all travellers in Paris by the marble figure facing the Place de la Concorde. Here was Madame, then, wearing the adorable head-dress, broad black ribbon bow with flowing streamers, richly embroidered silk bodice, full white muslin sleeves and chemisette, coquettish

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little apron, short black skirt bordered with blue white stockings and shoes with silver buckles. A visitor flew to the piano and struck a familiar note, the opening bar of an Alsatian dance, with equal promptitude, the white-haired head of the great commercial house before named, like his hostess an exile, stepped forward and offered his hand. Then ensued a scene of indescribable enthusiasm, the pair performed a native dance, when it was over, emotion knew no bounds, young and old shook hands, embraced each other, shed tears. The *soirée* begun so vivaciously ended in a demonstration of passionate sorrow. "By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion."

This moving incident more than prepared me for experiences to come.

Nowhere throughout France is patriotism more ardent, or the democratic spirit more firmly rooted than in the Vosges.

We are here on the borders of the two fair and fertile departments of the Upper and Lower Rhine, now effaced from the French map. That painful severance of a vast population from its nationality is ever present to the mind. Enormous as has been the exodus from the annexed provinces, large numbers by force of circumstances and family ties were compelled to remain, French

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at heart, German according to law. The bitterness and intensity of anti-German feeling, sometimes reined in, yet apparent, constitutes the one drawback of Vosges travel. There is, of course, a wide difference between the advocates of retaliation and quiet folks who detest war even more than foreign dominion. But the yearning towards the parent country is not to be overcome. No wonder that as soon as the long vacation begins there is a rush of French tourists across the frontier. From Strasburg, Mulhouse, Metz, Colmar they flock to Gérardmer and other resorts across the frontier.

But many and fascinating as are the attractions of Gérardmer itself, of woods, peaks, lakes, and vales, the magnetism is, above all, moral. French folks cross the frontier in order to hear native speech, to be able to trust their private correspondence to the post, to talk freely without fear of being hailed to prison for *lèse-majesté*. Last, not least, they can here indulge at will in French newspapers, a luxury denied them at home—if, indeed, they regard themselves as having a home!

A word now about the delightful little town which long ago won for itself the popular dictum:

“ Sans Gérardmer et un peu Nancy, que serait la Lorraine? ” The place is famous for its cheeses; turnery and the weaving of linen are

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also important local industries. Not a cottage hereabouts is without its handloom for winter use, weaving at home being done when the country is covered with snow. Embroidery also employs many hands. Very little land being suitable for tillage, it is chiefly upon these home manufactures, and the annual influx of tourists, that country-folks rely. To these peasants, isolated as they are from the outer world, the summer season is a moral as well as material boon, bringing with extra earnings, new ideas. Wherever we went we made friends. The women were especially confidential, inviting us into their homely yet not poverty-stricken kitchens, keeping us as long as possible, while they chatted about their own lives or put questions as to our own. Even the poorest met in our walks never dreamed of asking an alms. Poverty indeed seems unknown. The beauty, politeness, and clear, direct speech of the children are remarkable. One chief feature at Gérardmer is the congeries of handsome buildings of the communal schools. How stringently educational laws are enforced throughout France may be gathered from the spectacle of boys at drill. We saw here three squadrons, each under the charge of a separate master, and evidently made up of all classes of the community. Some of the boys were poorly, nay, wretchedly clad,

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others wore strong tidy clothes, a few were well dressed.

One curious feature here is the wooden casing of the houses. This is resorted to as a protection against the cold; the Vosges, with Auvergne and the Limousin, possessing the severest of the seven climates of France. Most of these cottages have their patch of clover, corn, and garden; the housewives possessing their tiny harvests at the door.

Wherever we turn we find forest gorges and park-like glades disturbed by mill-wheel and hammer, tall factory chimneys spoiling many a superb landscape. Beside turbulent river and glittering cascade, paper mills or linen manufactories have sprung up; around the modern villa of the employer are clustered the homes of his workpeople. More in harmony with the characteristic scenery of the Vosges are isolated dwellings of dalesfolk, and high above the herdsman's *châlet*: a busy scene now, but deserted during the eight winter months.

Once arrived the traveller will not care to hurry away from the fair broad valley of Gérardmer and its lovely little lake. No site in the Vosges is better suited for making excursions in all directions, and the place is full of quiet charm. There is wonderful sweetness and solace in these undulating hill-sides, clothed with brightest green,

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their little tossing streams and sunny glades, all framed by solemn hills, rather should I say, black with pine-woods. Far and wide you may search for a picture so engaging as Gérardmer when the sun shines, its gold-green slopes sprinkled with white châteaux, its red-roofed village clustered about a church tower, at its feet the sweetest, clearest little lake in the world, doubling, beautifying a little glen—but an Eden bordering on a “God-blessed, man-cursed land!”

CHAPTER V

ONE FOOT IN FRANCE PROPER, THE OTHER IN GERMANY—SO-CALLED

OUR first week at Gérardmer was wet and chilly. Fires and winter clothes would have been acceptable, but at last came warmth and sunshine, and we set off for the Col de la Schlucht and the Hoheneck, 4480 feet high, half standing in Germany, half in France. This is the highest summit of the Vosgien range, the grandest feature of the Vosges, and the goal of every traveller in these regions.

There is a strange contrast between the calm valley of Gérardmer, a little haven of tranquil loveliness and repose, and the awful solitude and austerity of the Schlucht, from which it is separated by a few hours only. Not even a cold grey day can turn Gérardmer into a dreary place, but in the most brilliant sunshine this mountain pass is none the less majestic and solemn. One obtains the sense of contrast by slow degrees, so that the mind is prepared for it and in the mood for it. The acme, the culminating point of

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Vosges scenery is thus reached by a gradually ascending scale of beauty and grandeur from the moment we quit Gérardmer till we stand on the loftiest summit of the Vosges chain, dominating the Schlucht. For the first half hour we skirt the alder-fringed banks of the tossing, foaming little river Vologne, as it winds amid lawny spaces, on either side the fir-clad ridges rising like ramparts. Here all is gentleness and golden calm, but soon we quit this warm, sunny region, and enter the dark forest road curling upwards to the airy pinnacle to which we are bound. More than once we have to halt on our way. One must stop to look at the cascade made by the Vologne, never surely fuller than now, one of the prettiest cascades in the world, masses of snow-white foam tumbling over a long, uneven stair of granite through the midst of a fairy glen. The sound of these rushing waters is long in our ears as we continue to climb the splendid mountain road that leads to the Schlucht, and nowhere else. From a giddy terrace cut in the sides of the shelving forest ridge we now get a prospect of the little lakes of Longuemer and Retournemer, twin gems of superlative loveliness in the wildest environment. Deep down they lie, the two silvery sheets of water with their verdant holms, making a little world of peace and beauty, a toy dropped

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amid Titanic awfulness and splendour. The vantage ground is on the edge of a dizzy precipice, but the picture thus sternly framed is too exquisite to be easily abandoned. We gaze and gaze in spite of the vast height from which we contemplate it; and when at last we tear ourselves away from the engaging scene, we are in a region all ruggedness and sublimity, on either side rocky scarps and gloomy forests, with reminders by the wayside that we are approaching an Alpine flora. Nothing can be wilder or more solitary than the scene. For the greater part, the forests through which our road is cut are unfrequented, except by the wild boar, deer, and wild cat, and in winter time the fine mountain roads are rendered impenetrable by the accumulation of snow.

This approach to the Col is by a tunnel cut in the granite, fit entrance to one of the wildest regions in France. The road now makes a sudden bend towards the ch[^]âlet cresting the Col, and we are able in a moment to realise its tremendous position.

From our little ch[^]âlet, we look upon what seems no mere cleft in a mountain chain, but in the vast globe itself. This huge hollow, brought about by some strange geological perturbation, is the valley of M[^]unster, no longer a part of French territory, but of Prussian Elsass. Twenty miles

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off lay the busy little cotton-printing town—a miniature Mulhouse. Hemmed in a narrow slit of hills, its factories set round with villas, gardens, and vineyards, but for the fact of the German custom-house we might well have been tempted thither. For the valley of Münster abounds in wild flowers and delicious walks. Joanne's *Guide to the Vosges*, Hachette, 1868, is sad reading. Several pages of that saddening volume are devoted to this little Protestant centre—Puritan, our historian calls it—yet owing its origin and ancient name, "the City of Münster," to a Benedictine foundation! Village communism existed here till 1847, one of the last to disappear.

The road we have come by lies behind us, but another as formidable winds under the upper mountain ridge towards Münster, whilst the pedestrian may follow a tiny green footpath that will lead him thither, right through the heart of the pass. Looking deep down we discern here and there scattered *châlets* amid green spaces far away. These are the homesteads or *chaumes* of the herdsmen, all smiling cheerfulness now, but deserted in winter. Except for such little dwellings, barely discernible, so distant are they, there is no break in the solitary scene, no sign of life at all.

The *châlet* is a fair hostelry for unfastidious

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travellers, its chief drawback being the propensity of tourists to get up at three o'clock in the morning in order to behold the sunrise from the Hoheneck. Good beds, good food, and from the windows one of the finest prospects in the world, might well tempt many to linger here in spite of the disturbance above mentioned. For the lover of flowers this halting-place would be delightful.

Next morning the day dawned fair, and by eight o'clock we set off with a guide for the ascent of the Hoheneck, rather, I should say, for a long ramble over gently undulating green and flowery ways. After climbing a little beechwood, all was smoothness under our feet, and the long *détour* we had to make in order to reach the summit was a series of the gentlest ascents, a wandering over fair meadow-land several thousand feet above the sea-level. Here we found the large yellow gentian, used in the fabrication of absinthe, and the bright yellow arnica, whilst instead of the snow-white flower of the Alpine anemone, the ground was now silvery with its feathery seed: the dark purple pansy of the Vosges was also rare. We were a month too late for the season of flowers, but the foxglove and the bright pink *Epilobium* still bloomed in great luxuriance.

It was a climb to remember. The air was brisk and genial, the blue sky lightly flecked with clouds,

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the turf fragrant with wild thyme, and before our eyes we had a panorama every moment gaining in extent and grandeur. As yet indeed the scene, the features of which we tried to make out, looked more like cloudland than solid reality. On clear days are discerned here, far beyond the rounded summits of the Vosges chain, the Rhine Valley, the Black Forest, the Jura range, and the snow-capped Alps. To-day we saw grand masses of mountains piled one above the other, and higher still a pageantry of azure and gold that seemed to belong to the clouds.

No morning could promise fairer, but hardly had we reached the goal of our walk when from far below came an ominous sound of thunder, and we saw heavy rain-clouds dropping upon the heights we had left behind.

All hope of a fine prospect was now at an end, but instead we had a compensating spectacle. For thick and fast the clouds came pouring into one chasm after another, drifting in all directions, here a mere transparent veil drawn across the violet hills, there a golden splendour as of some smaller sun shining on a green little world. At one moment the whole vast scene was blurred and blotted with chill winter mist; soon a break was visible, and far away we gazed on a span of serene amethystine sky, barred with lines of bright gold.

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Not one, but a dozen, horizons—a dozen heavens—seemed there, whilst the thunder that reached us from below seemed too remote to threaten. But at last the clouds gathered in form and volume, hiding the little firmaments of violet and amber; the bright blue sky, bending over the green oasis—all vanished as if by magic. We could see no more, and nothing remained but to go back, and the quicker the better. The storm, our guide said, was too far off to reach us yet, and we might reach the *châlet* without being drenched to the skin, as we fortunately did. No sooner, however, were we fairly under shelter than the rain poured down in torrents and the thunder pealed overhead. In no part of France are thunderstorms so frequent and so destructive as here, nowhere is the climate less to be depended on. A big umbrella, stout shoes, and a waterproof are as necessary in the Vosges as in our own Lake District.

We had, however, a fine afternoon for our drive back, a quick downhill journey along the edge of a tremendous precipice, clothed with beech-trees and brushwood. A most beautiful road it is, and the two little lakes looked lovely in the sunshine, encircled by gold-green swards and a delicate screen of alder branches. Through pastures white with meadow-sweet, the turbulent, crystal-clear little river *Vologne* flowed merrily, making dozens

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of tiny cascades, turning a dozen mill-wheels in its course. All the air was fragrant with newly turned hay, and never, we thought, had Gérardmer and its lake made a more captivating picture.

CHAPTER VI

THE SHRINE OF ST. ODILE

SINCE the accession of William II., a more rigid Prussian régime put in force throughout Alsace-Lorraine has only served one purpose, to render still more odious the nationality thrust upon a proud and patriotic people. Thus, up to 1883, travellers could drive from St. Dié to Ste. Marie-aux-Mines (Markirch in German) on the other side of the frontier without passports. No reminder of annexation has been spared by the present emperor.

Hiring a carriage we drove from the ancient bishopric in the valley of the Meurthe, with its picturesque old Romanesque cathedral, to the frontier.

We first traverse a fruitful, well-cultivated plain watered by the sluggish Meurthe, then slowly ascend a spur of the Vosges formerly dividing the departments of Upper and Lower Rhine, now marking the boundaries of France and annexed Alsace. Amid the orchards and hayfields below we were on French soil; the flagstaff on a green pinnacle before us marks the line of demarcation. The Prussian helmet immediately makes the fact

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patent. As surely as we set foot in the Reich, we see those glittering casques, so hateful in French eyes. They seem to spring from ground sown with dragon's teeth, as did Jason's warriors. This new frontier formerly divided the dominions of Alsace and Lorraine.

Alsace is here entered through a needle's eye, so narrow the pass in which the cotton-spinning town lies. The wonderful little town! Black pearl set in nickel casket! Its site is one of the most extraordinary in France. This collection of tiled houses, factory chimneys, and church towers, Protestant as well as Catholic, is hemmed in a narrow gorge, wedged between the hills, which are just parted so as to admit the intrusion, no more. The green convolutions of the mountain-sides are literally folded round the town; a pile of green velvet spread fan-like in a mercer's window has not neater, softer folds. As we descend we find just room for one carriage to wind between the river and hillside. But at the other end the charming valley of the Liepvrette opens, disclosing handsome country houses, scattered manufactories, and pastoral scenery.

Near is Gustave Doré's favourite haunt, Barr, a close, unsavoury little town in the midst of bewitching scenery. The narrow streets smell of tanneries and less wholesome nuisances, and

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not a breath of fresh air is to be had. No sooner are you beyond these than all is beauty, pastoralness, and romance. Every green peak is crested with ruined keep and rampart, at the foot of meeting hills lie picturesque villages, each with lofty spire, whilst every breeze is fragrant of newly-turned hay. These pine woods and frowning ruins, set like sentinels on every eminence, recall Doré's happiest efforts.

Barr is a town of between six and seven thousand inhabitants, a mere handful of whom at the time of my visit were Prussians. No pleasant position, certes, for these government officials. Alike the highest and the lowest were completely cut off from French intercourse. One sentiment, and one only, greeted our ears: "Nous sommes plus Français que les Français." Men, women, and children, rich and poor, wise and simple, gave utterance to the same expression of feeling. English visitors were taken into the general confidence, above all, were we Englishwomen confided in by Alsatian mothers. Alas! the maternal heart no longer, with Hannah of old, here leaps for joy that a man-child is born into the world. Rather the face of a new-born son awakens agonised foreboding and thoughts too painful for utterance. For this German-born child of French parents must be divided from them either in the literal or

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figurative sense; the first-named perhaps the least dreaded. He must either quit his home in early youth and become a French citizen at the sacrifice of every earthly tie, or remain, only able to acquire his mother-tongue by subterfuge, compelled to accept a German education, when manhood is reached to don the uniform of a Prussian soldier, pledged to shed the blood of father, brothers, friends, and fellow-citizens. No right of conquest can explain away a dilemma of this kind, no diplomacy excuse a crime only second to the partition of Poland. Wherever it is possible, boys are sent across the frontier, some destined for American citizenship, those of richer parents for re-enrolment among sons of France, but in each case the parting has to be borne. Nor must we suppose that annexation is less severely felt by the poor. During my sojourn in one Alsatian village after another, the peasant-folk complained bitterly of Prussian rule, more especially as it concerned the young. I shall never forget the pathetic face of an aged country-woman with whom I chatted near Barr. She was bringing up a little orphan grandson, and as he sported beside her, she sighed or rather moaned: "And now our children are not allowed to learn French at school!"

The glorious sites within reach of Barr make

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us for a time forget the gloom hanging over Alsace. The Hohwald, poetised by Edmond About, incomparable holiday-ground for pedestrians; the shrine of St. Odile, which a hundred years ago awakened the enthusiasm of Goethe; the terraced vineyards, magnificent forests, limestone crags, and feudal towers recalling Rhineland, may well drive away sombre associations. But when we once more betake ourselves to the railway hotel or boarding house, the whole hideous reality comes back again. We are indeed in a "God-blessed, man-cursed country."

Nothing struck me more forcibly during my first sojourn than the general outspokenness concerning Prussian rule. But then we were English! This candour to chance-made acquaintances was at the same time pathetic and diverting. No heed whatever seemed paid to possible German listeners. At the table d'hôte, over the shop counter, in the railway carriage, people would freely pour out their grievances. On expressing some surprise at such occurrences, an Alsatian assured me that were his countryfolks arrested for free speech, the whole community would be in prison!

Here we stayed, every day making long drives into the fresh, quiet, beautiful country. One of the sweet spots we discovered for the benefit of any English folks who may chance to stray

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in that region is the Hohwald, a *villegiatura* long in vogue with the inhabitants of Strasburg and neighbouring towns, but not mentioned in any English guide-book at the time of my visit.

We are reminded all the way of Rhineland. The same terraced vineyards, the same limestone crags, each with its feudal tower, the same fertility and richness everywhere. Our roads wind for miles amid avenues of fruit-trees, laden with pear and plum, whilst on every side are stretches of flax and corn, tobacco and hemp. What plenty and fruitfulness are suggested at every turn! Well might Goethe extol "this magnificent Alsace." We soon reach Andlau, a picturesque, but, it must be confessed, somewhat dirty village, lying amid vineyards and chestnut woods, with mediæval gables, archways, wells, and dormers. All these are to be found at Andlau, also one of the finest churches in these parts. I followed the curé and sacristan as they took a path that wound high above the village and the little river amid the vineyards, and obtained a beautiful picture; hill and dale, clustered village, lofty spire, and imposingly, confronting us at every turn, the fine façade of the castle of Andlau, built of grey granite, and flanked at either end with massive towers. More picturesque but less majestic are the neighbouring ruins of Spesburg, mere tumbling walls wreathed

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with greenery, and many another castled crag we see on our way. We are indeed in the land of old romance. Nothing imaginable more weird, fantastic, and sombre than these spectral castles and crumbling towers past counting! The wide landscape is peopled with them. They seem to rise as if by magic from the level landscape, and we fancy that they will disappear magically as they have come. And here again one wild scene after another reminds us that we are in the land of Doré's most original inspiration. There are bits of broken pine-wood, jagged peaks, and ghostly ruins that have been already made quite familiar to us in the pages of his *Dante* and *Don Quixote*.

The pretty rivulet Andlau accompanies us far on our way, and beautiful is the road; high above beech and pine woods, and sloping down to the road green banks starred with large blue and white campanula, with, darkling amid the alders, the noisy little river.

The Hohwald is the creation of a woman, that is to say, the Hohwald of holiday-makers, tourists, and tired brain-workers. "Can you imagine," wrote M. Edmond About, forty years ago, "an inn at the world's end that cost a hundred thousand francs in the building? I assure you the owner will soon have recouped her outlay. She had not

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a centime to begin with, this courageous lady, left a widow without resources, and a son to bring up. The happy thought occurred to her of a summer resort in the heart of these glorious woods, within easy reach of Strasburg." There are gardens and reception rooms in common, and here, as at Gérardmer, croquet, music, and the dance offer an extra attraction. It must be admitted that these big family hotels, in attractive country places with prices adapted to all travellers, have many advantages over our own seaside lodgings. People get much more for their money, better food, better accommodation, with agreeable society into the bargain, and a relief from the harass of house-keeping. The children, too, find companionship, to the great relief of parents and nursemaids.

The Hohwald proper is a tiny village numbering a few hundred souls, situated in the midst of magnificent forests at the foot of the famous Champ de Feu. This is a plateau on one of the loftiest summits of the Vosges, and very curious from a geological point of view. To explore it properly you must be a good pedestrian. Much, indeed, of the finest scenery of these regions is beyond reach of travellers who cannot walk five or six hours a day.

The shrine of St. Odile is the great excursion of Alsace, and the scene of Bazin's famous novel,

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Les Oberle. Who cares a straw for the saint and her story now? But all tourists must be grateful to the Bishop of Strasburg, who keeps a comfortable little inn at the top of the mountain, and, beyond the prohibition of meat on fast-days, smoking, noise, and levity of manner on all days, makes you very comfortable for next to nothing.

The fact is, this noble plateau, commanding as splendid a natural panorama as any in Europe, at the time I write of the property of Monseigneur of Strasburg, was once a famous shrine, and a convent of cloistered men and women vowed to sanctity and prayer. The convent was closed at the time of the French Revolution, and the entire property, convent, mountain, and prospect, remained in the hands of private possessors till 1853 when the prelate of that day repurchased the whole, restored the conventual building, put in some lay brethren to cultivate the soil, and some lay sisters, who wear the garb of nuns, but have taken no vows upon them except of piety, to keep the little inn and make tourists comfortable. No arrangement could be better, and I advise any one in want of pure air, superb scenery, and complete quiet to betake himself to St. Odile.

Here again I must intercalate. Since these lines were jotted down, many changes, and apparently none for the better, have taken place

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here. Intending tourists must take both M. Hallays' volume and Maurice Barrès' *Au Service d'Allemagne* for recent accounts of this holiday resort. The splendid natural features remain intact.

The way from Barr lies through prosperous villages, enriched by manufactories, yet abounding in pastoral graces. There are English-like parks and fine châteaux of rich manufacturers: but contrasted with these, nothing like abject poverty. The houses of working folks are clean, each with its flower-garden, the children are neatly dressed, no squalor or look of discontent to be seen anywhere. Every hamlet has its beautiful spire, whilst the country is the fairest, richest conceivable; in the woods is seen every variety of fir and pine, mingled with the lighter foliage of chestnut and acacia, whilst every orchard has its walnut and mulberry trees, not to speak of pear and plum. One of the chief manufactures of these parts is that of paints and colours; there are also ribbon and cotton factories. Rich as is the country naturally, its chief wealth arises from these industries. In every village you hear the hum of machinery.

You may lessen the distance from Barr to St. Odile by one half if you make the journey on foot, winding upwards amid the vine-clad hills, at every turn coming upon one of those grand old ruins, as

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plentiful here as in Rhineland, and quite as romantic and beautiful. The drive is a slow and toilsome ascent of three or four hours. As soon as we quit the villages and climb the mountain road cut amid the pines, we are in a superb and solitary scene. No sound of mill-wheels or steam-hammers is heard here, only the summer breeze stirring the lofty pine branches, the hum of insects, and the trickling of mountain streams. The dark-leaved henbane is in brilliant yellow flower, and the purple foxglove in striking contrast, but the wealth of summer flowers is over.

Who would choose to live on Ararat? Yet it is something to reach a pinnacle from whence you may survey more than one kingdom. The prospect from St. Odile is one to gaze on for a day, and to make us dizzy in dreams ever after. From the umbrageous terrace in front of the convent—cool and breezy on this, one of the hottest days of a hot season—we see, as from a balloon, a wonderful bit of the world spread out like a map at our feet. The vast plain of Alsace, the valley of the Rhine, the Swiss mountains, the Black Forest, Bâle, and Strasburg—all these we dominate from our airy pinnacle close, as it seems, under the blue vault of heaven. But though they were there, we did not see them; for the day, as so often happens on such occasions, was misty. We had none the less

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a novel and wonderful prospect. As we sit on this cool terrace, under the shady mulberry-trees, and look far beyond the richly-wooded mountain we have scaled on our way, we gradually make out some details of the vast panorama, one feature after another becoming visible as stars shining faintly in a misty heaven. Villages and little towns past counting, each with its conspicuous spire, break the monotony of the enormous plain. Here and there, miles away, a curl of white vapour indicates the passage of some railway train, whilst in this upper stillness sweet sounds of church bells reach us from hamlets close underneath the convent. Nothing can be more solid, fresher, or more brilliant than the rich beech and pine woods running sheer from our airy eminence to the level world below, nothing more visionary, slumberous, or dimmer than that wide expanse teeming, as we know, with busy human life, yet flat and motionless as a picture.

On clear nights the electric lights of the railway station at Strasburg are seen from this point; but far more attractive than the prospects from St. Odile is its prehistoric wall. Before the wall, however, came the dinner, which deserves mention. It was Friday, so, in company of priests, nuns, monks, and divers pious pilgrims, with a sprinkling of fashionable ladies from Strasburg, and tourists

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generally, we sat down to a very fair *menu* for a fast day, to wit: rice-soup, turnips, and potatoes, eggs, perch, macaroni-cheese, custard pudding, gruyère cheese, and fair *vin ordinaire*. Two shillings was charged per head, and I must say people got their money's worth, for appetites seem keen in these parts. The mother superior, a kindly old woman, evidently belonging to the working class, bustled about and shook hands with each of her guests. After dinner we were shown the bedrooms, which are very clean; for board and lodging you pay six francs a day, out of which, judging from the hunger of the company, the profit arising would be small except to clerical hotel-keepers. We must bear in mind that nuns work without pay, and that all the fish, game, dairy and garden produce the bishop gets for nothing. However, all tourists must be glad of such a hostelry, and the nuns are very obliging. One sister made us some afternoon tea very nicely (we always carry tea and teapot on these excursions) and everybody made us welcome. We found a delightful old Frenchman of Strasburg to conduct us to the Pagan Wall, as, for want of a better name, people designate this famous relic of prehistoric times. Fragments of stone fortifications similarly constructed have been found on other points of the Vosges not far from the promontory on which the convent stands,

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but none to be compared to this one in colossal proportions and completeness.

We dip deep down into the woods on quitting the convent gates, then climb for a little space and come suddenly upon the edge of the plateau, which the wall was evidently raised to defend. Never did a spot more easily lend itself to such rude defence by virtue of natural position, although where the construction begins the summit of the promontory is inaccessible from below. We are skirting dizzy precipices, feathered with light greenery and brightened with flowers, but awful notwithstanding, and in many places the stones have evidently been piled together rather for the sake of symmetry than from a sense of danger. The points thus protected were already impregnable. When we look more nearly we see that however much Nature may have aided these primitive constructors, the wall is mainly due to the agency of man. There is no doubt that in many places the stupendous masses of conglomerate have been hurled to their places by earthquake, but the entire girdle of stone, pyramidal in size and strength, shows much symmetrical arrangement and dexterity. The blocks have been selected according to size and shape, and in many places mortised together. We find no trace of cement, a fact disproving the hypothesis that the wall may have been of Roman origin. We

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must doubtless go much further back, and associate these primitive builders with such relics of prehistoric times as the stones of Carnac and Lokmariaker. And not to seek so wide for analogies, do we not see here the handiwork of the same rude architects I have witnessed in my Vosges rambles, who flung a stone bridge across the forest gorge above Remiremont, and raised in close proximity the stupendous monolith of Kirlinkin? The prehistoric stone monuments scattered about these regions are as yet new to the English archæologist, and form one of the most interesting features of Vosges and Alsatian travel.

We may follow these lightly superimposed blocks of stone for miles, and the enceinte has been traced round the entire plateau, which was thus defended from enemies on all sides. As we continue our walk on the inner side of the wall we get lovely views of the dim violet hills, the vast golden plains, and, close underneath, luxuriant forests. Eagles are flying hither and thither, and except for an occasional tourist or two, the scene is perfectly solitary. An hour's walk brings us to the Menelstein, a vast and lofty platform of stone, ascended by a stair, both untouched by the hand of man. Never was a more formidable redoubt raised by engineering skill. Nature here helped her primitive builders well. From a terrace due to the natural

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formation of the rock, we obtain another of those grand and varied panoramas so numerous in this part of the world, but the beauty nearer at hand is even more enticing. Nothing can exceed the freshness and charm of our homeward walk. We are now no longer following the wall, but free to enjoy the breezy, heather-scented plateau, and the broken, romantic outline of St. Odile, the Wartburg of Alsace, as the saint herself was its Holy Elizabeth, and with as romantic a story for those with a taste for such legends.

Here and there, on the remoter wooded peaks, are stately ruins of feudal castles, whilst all the way our path lies amid bright foliage of young forest trees, chestnut and oak, pine and acacia, and the ground is purple with heather. Blocks of the conglomerate, used in the construction of the so-called Pagan Wall, meet us at every turn, and as we gaze down the steep sides of the promontory we can trace its massive outline. A scene not soon to be forgotten! The still, solitary field of Carnac in Brittany, with its avenues of monoliths, is not more impressive than these Cyclopean walls, thrown as a girdle round the green slopes of St. Odile.

CHAPTER VII

MULHOUSE

WE travelled from Barr to Rothau with two charming sisters, as communicative as the rest. The women especially, these pretty girls explained, might say what they liked, their conversation, however treasonable, was not as yet interfered with. The young ladies corroborated what we had heard elsewhere. The Prussian inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine, consisting chiefly of government officials, were, they told us, under strictest boycott, completely shut off from French intercourse. The position of these functionaries could hardly be agreeable, although there was the compensation of higher pay and added material comfort. Alsace-Lorraine is, indeed, a land of Goshen. The vine ripens on these warm hillsides and artificial terraces, the rich plains produce every variety of fruit and vegetables, the streams abound with trout, the forests with game. What a spoliation on the part of Germany.

No wonder that enormous as was the Alsatian exodus, the immigration of Prussians has been on a much larger scale. The more severe processes

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of Germanisation had hardly come into force when I first visited the country. I found Alsace French in every respect but name. The prohibition of French in elementary and higher schools, conscription, the transference of official positions from French to German subjects, the closing of French clubs and literary associations, the interdiction of French newspapers, above all, passport regulations, soon changed the country into a vast military camp, cowering, or at least over-riding, an antagonistic civil population.

Nor does the woeful picture end here. Mr. Barker (*Wayfarings in France*, 1881) drew attention to that moral phylloxera threatening rural Alsace with universal bankruptcy—the Jewish usurer, into whose hands the once happy peasant was falling.

Rothau is a very pleasant halting-place in the midst of sweet pastoral scenery. Here are large factories, handsome chateaux of mill-owners, trim cottages with vineyard and garden. Laundries on a large scale, dye-works, and saw-mills employ the townsfolk. The principal building is the handsome Protestant church, for we were here among Protestants, although of less zealous temper than their Anabaptist forefathers. Pomegranates and oleanders are in full bloom, and the general aspect is of southern warmth

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and fertility. From the sweet fragrant valley of Rothau a road winds amid green hills and by tumbling river to Foudai, pastorate and burial-place of the good Oberlin. Here he toiled for sixty years, his career rather that of missionary among an uncivilised race than of a country priest amid his parishioners. It requires no lively imagination to picture this region before Oberlin's efforts. The soil is rocky and barren, the hillsides whitened with mountain streams, the more cultivable spots isolated and difficult of access. An elaborate system of irrigation has clothed the valleys with rich herbage, the river turns a dozen mill-wheels, every available inch of ground shows corn or vine. Waldersbach is another little Arcadia, where on Sunday afternoon we find young and old keeping outdoor holiday, the youths and maidens dancing, the children enjoying swings and peepshows. No acerbity has lingered among these descendants of Oberlin's austere congregation. Here the romance of Alsatian travels ends, and all is henceforth prose of a most painful kind.

The first object arresting my attention at Strasburg was the railway station of which we had already heard so much. Erected by the Prussian Government at an enormous cost, this handsome structure had just been opened. So great was the

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soreness of feeling excited by the bas-reliefs decorating the façade that for several days after the inauguration police officers in plain clothes watched the spectators. The sculptures in question give an ideal representation of the surrender of Strasburg to the German Emperor, and bear the inscription, *Im alten und im neuen Reich* ("In the old and new sovereignty"). A bystander, to the relish of the rest, improved it as follows: *Im alten reich, im neuen arm* ("Rich in the old, poor in the new"). The bombardment of their city, the destruction of public monuments, the loss of life and property, were yet fresh in the minds of the inhabitants, and it is hardly to be wondered at that they chafed at the fiction of a voluntary expatriation.

There was very little to see at Strasburg except the cathedral at this time. The library, with its 300,000 volumes and 1500 manuscripts—the priceless *Hortus Deliciarum* of the twelfth century, richly illuminated and ornamented with miniatures invaluable to the student of men and manners of the Middle Ages, the missal of Louis XII., bearing his arms, a *Recueil de Prières* of the eighth century—all these had been completely destroyed by the ruthless Prussian bombardment. The museum, rich in *chefs d'œuvre* of the French school, both of sculpture and painting, the hand-

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some Protestant church, the theatre, the Palais de Justice, all shared the same fate, not to speak of buildings of lesser importance, including four hundred private dwellings, and of the fifteen hundred civilians, men, women, and children, killed and wounded by the shells. The fine church of St. Thomas suffered greatly. Nor was the cathedral spared, and it would doubtless have perished altogether, too, but for the enforced surrender of the heroic city.

The next thing that attracted my attention was a picture of the funeral procession of Gambetta as it wound past the veiled statue of Strasburg on the Place de la Concorde. Such displays of patriotic feeling were forbidden, but they came to the fore all the same. And almost the first words I heard on entering a bookseller's shop were these: "Nous sommes plus Français que les Français!" Here as elsewhere the clinging to mother-country was pathetically, sometimes comically, apparent. A rough peasant girl employed in our hotel amused me not a little by her vehement tirades against the Prussians, spoken in a language that was neither French nor German, but an odd mixture of both. She doubtless gave many of them what in our school lingo is called a "what-for!" Strasburg had become a vast camp with that perpetual military parade so wearisome in Berlin.

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What a relief to get to the comparatively quiet and thoroughly French town of Mulhouse, despite all attempts to make it German! But for the imperial eagle placed over public buildings, and the sprinkling of Prussian helmets and physiognomies, I could hardly have realised annexation. The shops are French, French is the language of the educated classes, French and Jews make up the bulk of the population.

At Strasburg my companion had quitted me, and here I was warmly received by friends' friends—French of course—living in a pleasant suburb, and under their roof I remained some weeks. The household consisted of an elderly widower retired from business, and his two daughters, well-educated, agreeable women, both engaged in teaching, but at the time of my visit quite free owing to the vacation. The elder, more especially, became my cicerone and companion, and as all three had spent their lives in Mulhouse, I soon made many acquaintances.

I had also received an introduction from high quarters to the foremost citizen of the town, that famous "captain of industry," the late Jean Dollfuss. The career of such men forms part of contemporary history, and throughout his long life the great cotton-printer and enlightened philanthropist had devoted his fortune and his energies

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to the good of mankind. It is indeed impossible to write of Mulhouse without dedicating a page or two to his name.

Just before my arrival, and not long before his death, had been celebrated, with great splendour, the diamond wedding of the head of the Dollfuss house, the silver and the golden having been already kept in due form.

Mulhouse might well be proud of a unique fête. When the white-haired veteran looked out of his chamber window that morning, he found the familiar street transformed into a bright green avenue garlanded with flowers. The change had been effected, as at Dunsinane, by young fir-trees and boughs transplanted from the neighbouring forests. The day was a general holiday.

From an early hour the improvised avenue was thronged with visitors of all ranks, bearing cards, congratulatory addresses, gifts, and bouquets. The great Dollfuss manufactories were closed, and the five thousand and odd workmen, with their wives, children, and superannuated parents, were not only feasted but enriched. After the banquet, every man, woman, and child received a present in money, those who had worked longest for the firm having forty francs.

The crowning sight of the day was the board spread for the Dollfuss family, or the gathering of

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the clan, as it should properly be called. There was the head of the house, firm as a rock still in spite of his eighty-two years, every faculty alert as of old, beside him the beloved partner of his long life: on either side, placed according to age, their numerous sons and daughters, sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, next grandsons and granddaughters, great grandsons and great granddaughters: lastly, the babies of the fifth generation accompanied by their nurses in the picturesque costume of Alsace. This patriarchial assemblage numbered between one and two hundred souls. On the table were represented, in the artistic confectionery for which Mulhouse is famous, some of the leading events in M. Dollfuss' busy life. Here in sugar was a model of the achievement which will hand down his name to coming generations, the *cit  ouvri re*, or workman's city, of Mulhouse; and what was no less of a triumph of the confectioner's skill, the romantic ride of M. and Madame Dollfuss on camels to the border of the Algerian Sahara some twenty years before.

The incomparable f te is said to have cost at least half a million francs, a bagatelle in a career devoted to giving.

Mulhouse, although somewhat summarily dismissed by the guide-books, is a place of superlative

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interest. Even a stroll through these cheerful streets teems with instruction, but all who have at heart the well-being of the working classes will do well to spend some time here.

We realise as we study Mulhouse how the great cotton-printer and truly Christian Socialist set to work to solve the problem before him. The life of ease and the life of toil are here seen side by side, and all the brighter influences of the one are brought to bear upon the other. The tall factory chimneys are unsightly as elsewhere, and ugly steam tramways ply the streets. But close to the factories are cheerful villas and gardens of their owners, whilst near at hand the workmen's dwellings offer an exterior equally attractive. These *cités ouvrières*, humble garden cities they might be called, form indeed a suburb in themselves, and a very pleasant suburb too. Many middle-class families in England might be glad to own such a home, neat, well-built semi-detached cottage standing in its own garden, with flowers, trees, and plot of turf. Some of these little houses are models of trimness and order, others less so, a few looked neglected. The general appearance is of thrift and prosperity, and it must be borne in mind that each tenement and bit of ground belong to the occupier, have been gradually acquired by dint of self-help and aid from without.

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“It is by such means that we have combated Socialism,” remarked the veteran philanthropist to me; and this gradual transformation of the workman into a freeholder is but one of his numerous efforts to lighten the burden of toil.

These pleasant suburbs are very animated on Sundays, especially when a wholesale christening of babies takes place. The artisans are paid monthly or bi-monthly—note this!—such family celebrations usually occurring after pay-day. One Sunday afternoon we saw quite a procession of carriages returning from church; no one on such occasions going on foot. There were about a dozen parties, all well dressed, the infants in fine white muslin robes covered with embroidery. A large proportion of the community is Catholic, and as an instance of M. Dollfuss’s liberalism—the Dollfuss family, be it remembered, are staunch Protestants—I mention his gift of a piece of land on which now stands the handsome new Catholic church. We cannot take a turn here without being reminded of the noble spirit animating these princely manufacturers. It is impossible to enumerate the benevolent institutions of Mulhouse, and the inspection of all in a short time is equally beyond average capacity. Each quarter has its free dispensary under charge of a Protestant deaconess, no unenviable person, with her pretty cottage

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and garden. These sisters have learned to dispense medicine, and the doctor only attends twice a week. Goats are kept for the use of sickly children. There are also free libraries, technical schools, and adult classes for both sexes. I visited the Museum, which was then as French as French could be, no German element perceptible. Most conspicuous are the portraits of Thiers and Gambetta, also a fine De Neuville, representing one of those desperate hand-to-hand conflicts of the last war, which have so painful a hold on French imaginations. The bombardment of Strasburg was another subject on the walls.

Not actualities only render the place interesting. Its history, illustrated by a visit to the quaint old Hôtel de Ville, abounds in suggestive relics. The wheel that figures on the arms of the once free city tells its own story. The Ghent of Alsace has for centuries been a thriving seat of manufacture, and on the walls of the ancient council chamber, among the heraldic devices of its burgo-masters, figures the bare foot of the Doll-fuss (many-footed) family. What physical vigour and tenacity of character such armorial bearings suggest! An honoured name, calling, and family, handed down from generation to generation! It is indeed a pedigree to be proud of. Among other civic heirlooms is the document in which

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the free city of Mulhouse, of its own will, demanded incorporation into French territory.

That yellow parchment did not avert rough treatment at the hands of the victors in our own time. So exorbitant in 1870 was the requisite in money, clothes, and supplies, to be forthcoming within twenty-four hours, that M. Dollfuss interceded. When he found remonstrance vain, he tore off the Prussian decoration received some time before, and threw it to the ground. "Tell your master," he cried to the military authorities, "I should henceforth be as much ashamed of wearing his gift as hitherto I have been proud." A Prussian officer rushed forward as if to arrest him, whereupon the lion-hearted old civilian bared his breast, bidding any enemy to strike who would. Such at least is the popular version of an incident which in substance true, served still further to heighten M. Dollfuss's popularity.

When the terrible ordeal was over and the treaty concluded making Alsace Prussian, the head of the greatest commercial house in Eastern France seriously contemplated migration.

Amongst other places M. Dollfuss visited Dijon, hoping to find in the neighbourhood a suitable site for his large premises and numerous *personnel*. What he could not replace was the exquisite water of Mulhouse, and the scheme had to be abandoned.

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So admirable is this water that table-linen stained with wine or fruit has only to be steeped in it to become white as before. The beauty of the famous Alsatian prints and muslins depends firstly on this circumstance, secondly on the thorough training of the artisan. Just as Limoges, Lyons, and St. Etienne are art centres, the manufacture of ceramics, silk, and ribbons being respectively cultivated as fine arts, so here every process connected with cotton-printing is made a special subject of study. The schools of weaving, dyeing, printing, and design are celebrated throughout Europe.

“ Nous ne sommes pas heureux à Mulhouse ” (We are not happy at Mulhouse) were the first words addressed to me by the veteran patriot and social reformer. M. Dollfuss, as well as other Alsatian members of the Reichstag, had protested against annexation again and again. He stoutly pointed out the enormous cost to the Prussian Empire of the military forces necessary to maintain the provinces, the undying bitterness aroused, the moral, social, and material interests at stake. At last he remained silent or absented himself from Berlin altogether. Never shall I forget my interview with that “ old man eloquent,” as he poured out the horribleness of annexation. No other word conveys its meaning.

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Another pleasant and serviceable acquaintance was that of the French pastor and his wife, the former every day expecting to be replaced by a German. They had one child, a boy of twelve, and his mother would look sadly at him, doubtless counting the years when he must either become a Prussian soldier or quit his home for ever.

As we talked of these matters, she said to me:

“There will of course be deserters, youths who will endeavour to escape the shame and the dishonour of Prussian military service. I, for one, will be the first to shield and abet the runaways.”

I often took tea at the parsonage, and before departure Madame X. presented me with a keepsake, a cup and saucer of creamy white, on both, emblazoned in red and blue, being the arms of the old Free City that in 1798, of its own accord and to its great advantage, was incorporated into France.

As I glance to-day at the treasured souvenir, I wonder how soon it will for once and for all regain the forfeited privilege!

A third friend I made here, for indeed I may call her so, was a bright and thoroughly business-like elderly lady bookseller, Mademoiselle Z. Many and many a chat did we have in her back shop, and many a piquant story did I hear from her lips. Fierily patriotic, the little woman would have

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French books and nothing but French books in her window. Do what they would, the police were here powerless! If volumes of Daudet or Edmond About were removed one day, there they were the next. And as for her tongue! When was ever a Frenchwoman brow-beaten in this respect, and as her Prussian tormentors—I I dare say all good-natured, harmless husbands and fathers—knew very little if any French, they were overcome by an avalanche of words. And so, there they disappeared and re-appeared from day to day, the beloved volumes in yellow paper covers at three francs and a half. It was a tragicomic battle of the books.

Dear little Mademoiselle Z! Grieved indeed was I to find on my second visit to her city that she had gone the way of all.

The tenaciously French appearance of Mulhouse, accounted for in patriotic clinging to the mother-country, occasioned much vexation in high places. It was hardly perhaps to be wondered at that undignified reprisals should follow undignified exactions. Thus a law was passed forbidding signboards and names over shop-doors in French. From that time only the surname of shopkeepers appeared, which is of course the same in both languages. A good deal of unnecessary irritation is also caused at post offices and railway stations by the persis-

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tent use of German, with which many inhabitants are unfamiliar. "Speak German, and you will be promptly attended to," whispered a friend when I entered the post-office, having several matters to transact. As to manuscripts, they are regarded with so much suspicion that but for the help of a well-known resident, I should never have sent off my contribution to an English review at all. The bickering and bullying that goes on about this speaking of German recalls Lucian's witty piece, *Charon and Menippus*.

"You know I can't speak German, whilst you understand my own language perfectly well," cries an irate Frenchman.

"Do you suppose I am going to learn all the languages in Europe to oblige you?" retorts the German bully. "Just say what you have to say in German, or go about your business."

"But I tell you, I don't know a word of any tongue except my own. You can't make a man speak German who has never learned it—is as ignorant as a sucking-baby."

"You must come again when you do know it, then. That is all I can say."

And so the squabbling goes on, each speaking in his own language, each understanding the other perfectly well. In the end, Menippus—in other words, amid a storm of abuse, the Frenchman—

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gains his point: Charon goes without his fee—the German has to give in.

Painful as is the position of the annexed, the annexer does not lie on a bed of roses. I was told that when the theatre was hired by a German company, not a single French spectator patronised it; when the representation was given by a French troupe, every seat was occupied.

Mulhouse possesses a charming zoological garden, free to subscribers only, who have to be balloted for. At the time of my first visit, no Prussian had succeeded in obtaining membership.

The poorest contrive to show their patriotism. It is the rule of the German Government to send twenty marks (one pound) to every poor woman giving birth to twins. Just before my visit the wife of a French workman had borne three boys: but, although in very poor circumstances, she refused the donation. "My sons shall never be Prussians," she said, "and that gift would make them so."

One instance more of the small annoyances to which the French residents of Mulhouse are subject, a trifling one, yet sufficient to irritate. Eight months after the annexation, orders were sent round to the pastors and clergy generally to offer up prayers for the Emperor William every Sunday. The order was obeyed, for refusal would have been

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assuredly followed by dismissal, but the prayer is ungraciously performed. The French pastors have to invoke the blessing of heaven on "*l'Empereur qui nous gouverne.*" The pastors who perform the service in German, pray not for "our Emperor" as is the apparently loyal fashion in the Fatherland, but for "the Emperor." These things are trifling grievances, but, on the other hand, the Prussians have theirs also. Not even the officials of highest rank are received into any kind of society. A child may lead a horse to the water—a posse of Goliaths cannot make him drink!

The real thorn in the flesh of the annexed Alsatians is, however, as I have before pointed out, military service, and the enforced German education, or none at all, for this is what the law amounts to in the great majority of cases. Rich people, of course, and the well-to-do, can send their sons to the Lycée, opened at Belfort since the annexation, but the rest have to submit, or, by great sacrifices, obtain private French teaching. And, whilst even Alsatians are quite ready to render justice to the forbearance and tact often shown by officials, an inquisitorial and prying system is pursued, as vexatious to the patriotic as enforced vaccination to the Peculiar People, or school attendance to our own working folks. One lady was visited at seven o'clock in the morn-

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ing by a functionary charged with the unpleasant mission of finding out where her boy was educated. "Tell those who sent you," said the indignant mother, "that my son shall never belong to you. We will give up our home, our prospects, everything, but our children shall never be Prussians." True enough, the family emigrated. No one who has not stayed in Alsace again and again among Alsatians can realise the intense clinging to France among the people, nor the sacrifices made to retain their nationality. And it is well that the true state of feeling throughout the annexed territory should be known outside its limits. With a considerable knowledge of French life and character, I confess I visited Mulhouse little prepared to find there a ferment of feeling which years had not sufficed to calm down.

I will finish this chapter with a story:

In company of my elder hostess I visited the little town of Thann, lately raided by the Prussian invader, which possesses a superb Gothic church famous throughout France. We took train from Mulhouse, intending to drive to Wesserling, eight miles off, a little manufacturing "garden city," its factories and mills being surrounded by running streams and umbrageous woodland. Wesserling also boasts of a picturesque church with tapering spire.

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But after our lunch the weather became overcast. Big drops and thunder-clouds portended a storm. Soon torrents of rain fell, followed by flashes and deafening claps. There was nothing to do but await the next train to Mulhouse.

“How sorry I am that on my account you should thus lose a day!” I said to my companion as we sat by the window of the inn, a tedious inert hour or two before us.

“Have I not my thoughts?” was her answer, as the speaker sadly contemplated the long narrow street and glorious church spire.

“Have I not my thoughts?”

Those words are written on every Alsatian face when in repose. Needless to describe such reverie. Throughout the length and breadth of Germanised France, a sense of bondage is a nightmare, present alike in domestic weal and woe, among wise and simple, millionaires and the poorest; and, as all travellers can testify, time, instead of diminishing, has increased its force.

CHAPTER VIII

METZ

AFTER an interval of some years I decided to revisit the annexed provinces, reaching Alsace-Lorraine this time direct from Dijon, via Chalin-drey, Toul, and Nancy. Direct, did I say? Well, certainly we do not change carriages during the six hours' journey, but what would English "business men" say to forty minutes' halt at one little station without rhyme or reason, and twenty-five at another, a delay equally unaccountable. As the crow flies the distance between Dijon and Nancy is 222 kilometres, *i.e.* about 140 miles, and the journey often to be made by second class only. Competition, and a lively competition, is needed in France to bring railway communication up to date. As for the "flâneur," the time thus spent is not lost. We have leisure to make observations not possible by express train, to look about us, and note the changes of scenery and crops as we slowly quit Burgundy for Lorraine.

The reflection awakens a smile. At Dijon, that is to say, at the hotels offering good accommodation, we find crowds of English and American

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tourists, all bound to or from Switzerland. The well-known "Jura" and "Cloche" swarm with them. No sooner do we take our places in the train bound for Chalindrey than we as completely lose sight of English travellers as if plunged into the newly-annexed Timbuctoo. A graver thought is awakened ere we are far on our way. Nothing can be peacefuller, more pastoral than the villages and townlings dotting the richly-cultivated plain stretching between Is-sur-Tille in the Côte d'Or, and Toul in the Meurthe and Moselle.

But on reaching the German frontier at Novéant, what a change! First there was the ordeal of luggage being searched, a business transacted with remorseless scrutiny. New wearing apparel of any kind is liable to duty, also toys and trinkets, if of suspicious quantity. And next we here unfortunately picked up a troop of devotees under conduct of priests and nuns returning from Lourdes. The scene was one of indescribable confusion, and I must say the conduct of the "pilgrims," especially of the priests, left much to desire. I found myself hustled to and fro as unceremoniously as in a crowd of drunken trippers at Hastings, half-a-dozen priests forcing me back in a way that did little credit to their manners or good feeling. At last all were seated, and it was edifying to hear of the countless miracles wrought in favour of the lame,

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halt, and blind. A lady in our carriage boasted of having bathed in the piscina after victims of loathsome disease, and taken no harm. The water of these baths is only changed once a day, and the enthusiastic rejoice in the ordeal of a late dip when the water, as I remember, recalls that famous "pea soup" of our Amateur Casual. On the platform of Metz an enormous concourse awaited the pilgrims, friends, relatives, and well-wishers come to greet the miraculously healed. But as a lady pilgrim complacently remarked to myself, "Of course it may be the good pleasure of Notre Dame of Lourdes to heal me and let you or any other go. All cannot expect miracles." The words of Goethe's famous line come into one's mind: "Wie beseligt den Menschen ein falscher Begriff!" (How happy are folks made by an illusion!).

At Metz we rest our eyes and ask ourselves if we are not in turn subject to hallucination of a very different kind. Surely we are witnessing a performance of Schiller's *Wallenstein's Camp*, not spectators of real daily nineteenth-century existence? The civil element is almost invisible in these dirty, malodorous, ill-kept streets. Metz is an enormous fortified camp in which the vivandière and the cantinière would appear more in keeping with these martial surroundings than a couple of demure lady tourists. The glitter of

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helmets, the flash of swords, the perpetual roll of artillery waggons, tramping of conscripts, beating of drums, let us into the secret of military life during the Middle Ages. I suppose nowhere throughout Europe can be found a parallel, anything at all analagous to this vast city turned from end to end into a camp, the black coat of the civilian wholly an exception.

As we should expect where militarism rules supreme, little heed is paid to women. A young officer, who had just all but kissed the ground in prostrating himself before his superior officer, entered the salon where two ladies sat—English and French respectively—reading. Without a word he took a chair, having his back turned to us, and began to puff away at a cigar. At Metz the world belongs to the soldier, all the rest is “canaille.” I must note another aspect of Alsace-Lorraine under Prussian rule. This is the inordinate respect paid to the German, in other words, to the military element in hotels and elsewhere, and the indifference, nay, often want of courtesy, shown to tourists, especially of foreign nationality. The fact is, hotel-keepers, who have to live, take their cue from the powers that be, and if the entire staff, from master to boots, falls on its knees before a helmet and others must content themselves with the crumbs that fall from the

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wearer's table, we must blame circumstances, not individuals. Yet it is hard to be treated like "cold-meat company." The expression is German!

Our hotel told the same story. So absolute is the soldier here that none of his habits or fads, however disagreeable to others, must be interfered with. Thus, although we resorted to one of the first hotels in the place, not only did the dining-room and salon, indeed every part, reek with stale tobacco, but the bedchambers and beds also. Linen, of course, was clean and bedding of good quality, but all were literally saturated, to cite Cowper, with "the weed obnoxious to the fair." Little wonder that when German soldiers were billeted on French families, as M. Paul Margueritte tells us, each man was to be provided with five cigars daily or the equivalent in tobacco! It must be admitted that although here ladies are smoked to death and literally pushed off the pavement by German soldiers, the fault lies in the system, not in the individual. Ardent patriot and anti-German as is M. Maurice Barrès, he describes the German lover of his charming Messine, Colette Baudoche, as no unworthy type, no less so is the German spouse of a French bride in M. Paul Margueritte's powerful novel, *Les Frontières du cœur*. In themselves both men are shown as worthy of respect. Militarism and militarism

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alone has essentially vitiated honest, manly, affectionate natures. Nowhere is the blight of this upas-tree deadlier than at Metz.¹

The city is finely placed. From the Esplanade overlooking the Moselle, we gaze upon a rich and varied panorama, surpassed by none in the annexed portion of Lorraine. The bulwark of France, handed over to Germany by an incompetent, rather than by a perjured soldier—the unfortunate Bazaine²—lies in a fair, smiling vale set round with hills, at its feet two rivers meeting, the wide blue Moselle and its affluent, the Seille.

In part shaded by trees, and if put to its proper

¹ Miss Topham was with the royal family at Metz when the Emperor reviewed an army corps, and she writes:—

“ Their entry into this town must have seemed strange . . . accustomed as they are to smiling, shouting crowds. Here there was no welcome, no smile, not a single flag. The people who stood in the streets looked on idly, like spectators of a curious show. . . . Sometimes a lady remarked resentfully on the strange absence of enthusiasm. The names over the doors were French, the faces were French, there was an atmosphere of French hostility.”

The author attempts to explain the attitude of the people of Alsace-Lorraine, and says of the Prussian spirit that it is not conciliatory:—

“ It has a knack of letting the conquered drink to the dregs the cup of humiliation; its press is bombastic, and has none of the large-minded tolerance which enables it to appreciate the acute sufferings of a proud, humiliated people.”

² See the posthumous papers of the late Émile Ollivier in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1913-1914.

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uses, this recreation ground would be delightful. But here is seen in full force the system of that "respectable old drill-sergeant," as Professor Beesly aptly described William I., grandfather of the present emperor. Here all day long was going on military drill, French youth, as described in M. Barrès' novel, laboriously learning salute and step. What heart is put into these exercises may well be imagined, but German and French drill differ in this—throughout France, alike in schools, colleges, and barracks, the body, the person, is inviolate. No teacher is allowed to strike a pupil, and if a French officer so forgets himself as in a passion to hit a soldier, that soldier, be he the rawest recruit, has the right to hit back.

The rule inaugurated by the "respectable old drill-sergeant" and his successor is otherwise, and if it is hard for German lads born and bred to be cuffed, have their faces slapped, and their ears boxed in the exercise ground, how much harder comes the indignity to sons of French parents! For the nonce, submission is a matter of life and death, but all who, like myself, have witnessed recruits at drill on the Esplanade at Metz can understand the "curses not loud but deep" that for forty and odd years have been breathed throughout every corner of Germanised France.

Metz possesses many architectural and archæo-

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logical treasures, art collections, and a public library more especially of interest to ecclesiological bibliographers. All these are shown on certain days to visitors, who are courteously treated.

Metz, however, is no place for tourists, especially lady tourists. From morning to night the ears are assailed by beating of drums, rattling of artillery, the call to arms, and military bands. And not having enough of this sort of thing in the day-time, an ample regale is provided for amateurs in cafés and beer-houses, as M. Jules Claretie tells us, and whom I cite farther on.¹

With no little satisfaction we packed our portmanteaus on the third morning after arrival, determined never again to set foot within the "great entrenched camp of blood-stained memory." Was it not one of the desperate encounters near Metz that inspired Coventry Patmore's witty paraphrase of the Emperor William's letter to his spouse. No less pietistic than his grandson, the parody of his epistle, which duly appeared in *Punch*, 1870, greatly conduced to the gaiety of nations. It ran thus:—

" Thank the Lord, my dear Augusta,
We have fought the French a buster,
Ten thousand Frenchmen sent below,
Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

And grimly did my old friend, true poet and neighbour, chuckle over his hit!

¹ See chapter on Alsatian Literature.

CHAPTER IX

STRASBURG TO-DAY

IT can no longer be said—"There is nothing to see at Strasburg." Naturally the first care of the German Government was to repair the Vandalism of 1870, and set to work rebuilding public buildings, monuments, and streets, among the former being the Protestant church, the museum, and the beautiful octagonal tower of the cathedral. From end to end, at least outwardly and, artistically speaking, not in the best style, Strasburg has been Germanised. A new imperial quarter has sprung up at the northern end of the city, forming a vast and magnificent parallelogram. The palace, erected in 1889, and the university, begun two years earlier, face each other on opposite sides of the Ill, with beautifully laid-out gardens lying between, whilst on either side rise palatial villas, the new Chamber of Deputies, and magnificent annexes of the university, museum, library, hospital, etc. The whole covers what was formerly waste ground. The Strasburgers, alike those of German and of French nationalities, would perhaps more relish so-called improvements but for the

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fact that taxes and the cost of provisions and lodgings have more than doubled since the annexation. Alike palace and main building of the university are open to the public on Sunday afternoon, a great boon to tourists in wet weather. Externally the palace has a Byzantine appearance; over its central dome, although no Emperor is there, ever floats the imperial flag, and on every available part are conspicuous the Prussian crown and eagle. Indeed the building seems made for the insignia, not these for the building.

In company of peasants, the women wearing the huge black silk coif of Alsace, and a few others, about thirty in all, my friend and self put on felt over-shoes and glide over the beautiful polished floors of banqueting-hall, reception rooms, and studies of emperor and empress. Both have their "Arbeitszimmer" or study, although the Empress had as yet only been here upon one occasion, when, I believe, she, at the time of my second visit, spent just twenty-four hours in Strasburg. Brand-new palaces, such as a Pullman or an Astor could raise for himself to-morrow if he chose, are, however, totally uninteresting. Gilt candelabra, in which 180 wax candles flame at once, are very magnificent, no doubt, but the poetic or legendary element is needed. The splendid upholstery and prevailing glitter only impress the naïve. Rustics gaze

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open-mouthed, and giggle from sheer speechless wonder and delight. Millions of marks have been spent on this new imperial quarter, in addition to the sums necessitated by the damages of the bombardment, namely, the rebuilding of the totally wrecked Protestant church, the replacing of the splendid library, also destroyed, and other reparations. The university and its annexes are simpler in style than the palace and speak better for architect and decorator. There is far too much glitter of gold and dazzle of white within, but the handsome proportions and arrangement of the whole atone in some measure for errors of taste. A German girl—the French element, as I shall hereafter show, is being gradually “crowded out” of Alsace-Lorraine—takes possession of our umbrellas, and we are permitted to make the round of the art galleries alone. Here are casts of the most famous sculptures of classic and ancient times, all learnedly arranged. We are next shown the splendid hall in which degrees are awarded and councils held; in the centre, fronting the audience, of course, is the regulation portrait of Wilhelm the First.

Of Strasburg, visitors are disposed to exclaim with Hamlet’s mother—“Methinks the lady doth protest too much”—rather is the city made to protest. Everything is “Kaiserlich,” from the

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flower-beds in the public gardens forming the imperial arms, down to a penny bottle of ink. Many shopkeepers, in their excessive zeal, have the Prussian flag perpetually waving over their windows. Whilst on my first visit I only saw a portrait or two of William I., later I found photographs of the imperial family at every turn. Militarism knows no *via media*. It must be all or nothing. Thus post-office clerks wear semi-military dress, and carry a sword on occasions of ceremony! The custom-house officials not only have swords, but huge revolvers, at their girdles. The railways, all being state railways, are under the direction of military men. This perpetual reminder of armed forces shocks the moral sense and leads us to believe that civilisation is, after all, in certain countries, only veneer and pretence.

I will now say a few words about the new University Library of Strasburg, which contains a million volumes, and which may appropriately be called the library of expiation, for it replaces the famous collection utterly destroyed by the bombardment of 1870. The world of learning had then to lament a loss wholly irreparable, vast numbers of priceless manuscripts having been reduced to ashes. Many of these were of special value to the German historian, as they related to the history of Alsace and Lorraine. The two provinces, as I

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have explained, were only bracketed together after the annexation. Whilst the new university—surely, in aspect, the most sumptuous in Europe—owes its existence to the Emperor William and his successor, the library is mainly due to individual effort. As the Germans had destroyed the Strasburg library, *savants* found themselves bound to endow the university with another. The initiative of a learned director, a native of Baden, was enthusiastically responded to, gifts poured in from all parts of Germany. The library is now worthy of the school of learning to which it belongs.

My French travelling companion had meanwhile returned to her family at Dijon, and here, as at Mulhouse, I was received by friends' friends, French of course, with them being free to stay or go, and in every way treated as one of themselves.

I particularly wished to see something more of the library than is permitted to the general public on open days. So my host undertook to obtain a special permit for his guest, an English authoress.

“ Now,” I said, “ dear Monsieur B., there is one thing I must bargain for in my cicerone, that is, French speech. Nothing on earth will induce me to talk German in annexed France.”

With the best grace in the world, M. B., who had a sense of humour, accomplished his mission.

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I was most courteously received by a learned member of the staff, who spoke French much better than I could have spoken his mother-tongue, and seemed delighted at the opportunity.

Under the best possible guidance, therefore, I spent a whole forenoon in examining the various collections. Each language here represented has a room or rooms to itself—English works occupying several. France, Italy, Spain, have rooms. Talmudic literature fills one, Arabic another, Sanscrit a third, whilst the German collections are enormous. My learned cicerone let me handle a first copy of *Werther*, a fascinating little volume with woodcuts. I was surprised to learn that the market value of such a book was only five pounds, and still more astonished to learn that even first editions are lent out!

This great library is a lending library, and as such is distinguished from our own vast literary storehouse at Bloomsbury. I do not know where the line is drawn concerning the acceptance of works. I noticed a good many slim volumes in the "belles-lettres" section, and was told that they were poetical works of living or modern poets, of whom Germany at that time possessed four hundred! Indeed, every young man of intellectual promise brings out his volume of verse. Alas, how many for the ears of the next generation! English

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literature is very well represented, and gifts of historic works, travels, biography, are warmly welcomed. The method of cataloguing is very neat and handy. Catalogues here consist of small fly-leaves arranged in drawers labelled alphabetically, the leaves being placed upright so that they can be easily turned over. The advantage of this plan is that additions, no matter how numerous, cause no inconvenience, the number of little sheets being increased *ad lib.* The drawback is that reference can only be made under supervision. The leaves are not open to the readers indiscriminately. Let me now add a few facts concerning administration and endowment. The city of Strasburg, which possesses its own library, does not contribute one mark to the university collection. The state grant is 165,000 marks; 50,000 marks are annually laid out on books: 20,000 of these in the purchase of 500 reviews and journals. The remainder is devoted to salaries and other expenses.

Now for a few words about the university itself which I visited with my French host.

A thousand and odd students frequent this seat of learning, the professorial staff numbering a hundred. A noteworthy point is the excessive cheapness of a learned or scientific curriculum. Despotism emulates democratic France. I was assured by an Alsatian that a year's fees need

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not exceed ten pounds! Students board and lodge themselves outside the university, and, of course, as economically as they please. They consist chiefly of Germans, for sons of French parents of the middle and upper ranks when possible are sent over the frontier.

Alike within and without, the group of buildings forming the university is of showy splendour. Both architecture and decoration are on a costly scale: the vast corridors with tessellated marble floors, marble columns, domes covered with frescoes, statuary, stained glass and gilded panels, must impress the mind of the poorer students. Less agreeable is the reflection of the taxpayer. This new imperial quarter represents millions of marks, whilst the defences of Strasburg alone represent many millions more. One of the five *facultés* is devoted to natural science. The Museum of Natural History, the mineralogical collections, and the chemical laboratories, have each their separate building, whilst at the extreme end of the university gardens is the handsome new observatory, with covered way leading to the equally handsome residence of the astronomer in charge. Thus the learned star-gazer can reach his telescope under cover in wintry weather. In addition to the university library described above, the various class-rooms have each small separate libraries,

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sections of history, literature, etc., on which the students can immediately lay their hands. All the buildings are heated with gas or water.

Just beyond these precincts we come upon a striking contrast—row after row of brand-new barracks, military bakeries, foundries, and stores; piles of cannon balls, powder magazines, war material one would think sufficient to blow up all Europe. Incongruous, indeed, is this juxtaposition of a seat of learning and militarism only commensurate with barbaric times. A good way off is the School of Medicine. It is a vast group of buildings, one of which can only be glanced at with a shudder. My friend pointed out to me an annexe or "vivisection department." Here, as he expressed it, is maintained a menagerie of unhappy animals destined for the tortures of the vivisector's knife. The very thought sickened me, and I was glad to give up sight-seeing and drop in for half an hour's chat with a charming old Alsatian lady, French to the backbone, living under the mighty shadow of the cathedral. She entertained me as we sat on her balcony with her experiences during the bombardment, when cooped up with a hundred¹ persons, rich and poor, Jew and Gentile, all passing fifteen days in a dark, damp cellar. Many horrible stories

¹ See the brothers' Margueritte prose epic *Les Braves Gens*.

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she related, but somehow they seemed less horrible than the thought of tame, timid, and even affectionate and intelligent creatures herded together in order to be slowly and deliberately tortured to death, for the sake, forsooth, of what? Of this corporeal frame man himself has done his best to vitiate and dishonour, mere clayey envelope—so theologians tell us—of an immortal soul!

We took tea and supped several times with the delightful French lady living over against the balcony. Whether any French bookshops exist at Strasburg to-day I know not. A few years back there remained two to set against thirty-two German ones. And in earlier years of annexation four French newspapers were allowed to cross the frontier, the *Temps*, *Figaro*, *Débats*, and *Paix*.

As will be seen in a later chapter this privilege no longer exists. The first literary review in the world, *La Revue des deux Mondes*, I see, in 1914, is on sale by three booksellers in Strasburg, and by one at Mulhouse and Metz. But this is no act of grace. Educated Germans know well enough the value of French culture, and though it is quite impossible for them to assimilate it, they must here put patriotism, so-called, in their pockets and see to what perfection French criticism and literary style can attain.

Strasburg, like Metz, is one vast camp, forty

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thousand soldiers of the garrison being at the time of my second visit away for the manœuvres. In another week or two the city would swarm with them. All day long here the nerves are tried and the tympanums dulled by the music of the barracks and of the exercise ground. But one martial air, the air that changed the history of the world, you listen for in vain.

The cradle of the "Marseillaise," for nearly a century it has not been heard in these streets. In Strasburg the song was written and composed. When will those born and bred in bondage hear the immortal strains on native soil?

CHAPTER X

THE STORY OF THE "MARSEILLAISE"

ON April 25, 1792, Rouget de Lisle was a guest at the historic banquet given by Baron Friedrich Dietrich, first Mayor of Strasburg.

The brilliant young military engineer had already attained a certain notoriety as novelist, poet, musical composer, and dramatist. One of his pieces had even been produced at the Opéra Comique, and the celebrated musician Grétry had accepted his collaboration in several works now forgotten. As was the fashion among young men of the period, he had composed innumerable society verses, besides throwing off sentimental romances.

Rouget de Lisle's early ambitions would appear to have been by no means those of a soldier. Had success crowned such versatile efforts, his career would doubtless have been very different. France might perhaps have wanted her "Marseillaise," but the poet and musician of Lons-le-Saulnier might have fared after happier fashion.

A few words about this memorable dinner and the young captain's hosts and fellow-guests.

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The banquet, although unofficial, was eminently a patriotic manifestation. Some days before, the Legislative Assembly had declared war against Austria and Prussia, in other words, against the coalition of *émigrés* and foreign powers formed for the restoration of absolute monarchy. Threatened with the fate of Poland, France answered the summons to submission by a general call to arms.

In Strasburg, excitement was at fever pitch. Alike the king's oath—so soon forsworn—to maintain the constitution and the declaration of war had been enthusiastically acclaimed. A religious ceremony in the cathedral, a grand musical celebration in the open air, banquets to the aged poor and orphans, celebrated these events, the day winding up with Dietrich's great dinner of farewell. The unfortunate General Luckner had been named Commander of Alsatian forces; on the morrow, officers and volunteers would be on the march, many with little likelihood of meeting again.

The first Mayor of Strasburg, as he is known in history, is an ingratiating figure. A cultivated gentleman and high-minded citizen, the friend of Turgot and Condorcet, he had welcomed the Revolution, but from a monarchical point of view. With Arthur Young's friend, the amiable Duc de Liancourt, and many others, he believed

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in the possible establishment of constitutional monarchy. To Dietrich's cost he had trusted the lying word of Louis XVI. Hence his growing unpopularity among the more violent faction at Strasburg, hence the swift waning of his once well-deserved popularity, and tragic end.

Just now the Dietrich salon (early in 1792) was the centre of all that was most public-spirited and refined in the city. Both husband and wife were accomplished musicians, and the former possessed a magnificent tenor voice. Their two sons, Friedrich and Albert, volunteers in the army of defence, were present at the dinner. Among the guests were generals in command, among these Desaix, the future hero of Marengo, other officers, and a few leading citizens. The hostess and two young nieces seem to have been the only ladies present.

Little wonder that under the circumstances conversation took an entirely martial turn. Marches, battles, the chances and fruits of victory formed the sole topic of conversation. The words "Enfants de la patrie," a name given to the volunteers, "Aux armes, citoyens!" "Marchons," and other phrases were on every lip, emphasised many a sentence. Champagne circulated freely, voices became more impassioned and vociferous, and as it was then the fashion in France, as it is

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still, for ladies to remain at the table to the last, Madame Dietrich and her nieces interposed. Could not something else be discussed?—they had heard enough of campaigns and wars.

Then patriotic songs were mentioned. Might not some substitute be found for the jingling “*Ça ira, ça ira*”? Could not some one compose a hymn for the army of the Rhine, General Luckner’s brave followers? The host’s first notion was of a publicly advertised competition, of offering a prize for what should be not only a war-song, but become a national hymn. Then another thought having struck him, he turned to the young military engineer.

“But you, Monsieur de Lisle,” he said with charming insinuation and persuasiveness, “you who woo the Muses, why should not *you* try to give us what we want? Compose, then, a noble song for the French people, now a people of soldiers, and you will have deserved well of your country.”

Rouget de Lisle tried to excuse himself, but alike host and fellow-guests would not hear his deprecations. Again the champagne passed round, and just as at last, amid tears, smiles, and passionately patriotic farewells, the party broke up, a fellow-officer, about to quit Strasburg next day, begged de Lisle for a copy of his forthcoming song.

“I make the promise on behalf of your

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comrade," Dietrich replied, with affectionate authoritativeness.

In a state of tremendous surexcitation Rouget de Lisle reached his lodging close by, but not to sleep. His violin lay on the table. Taking it up, he struck a few chords. Soon a melody seemed to grow under his fingers, harmonising with the words that had been reiterated throughout the evening, "Aux armes, aux armes, citoyens, marchons, formez vos bataillons!" No sooner had he gripped his air, and put down the notes on paper, than he dashed off the words. Then having in a brief hour secured for himself an undying name, he threw himself upon his bed and slumbered heavily. He had composed the most famous song in the world!

In his declining years, Rouget de Lisle would oft-time narrate the genesis of the "Marseillaise" to friends and acquaintances, memory sometimes playing him false in immaterial particulars. Again and again he told the story, among his listeners once being the celebrated painter, David d'Angers.

The following version is now accepted as substantially correct. On awakening next morning his eye immediately rested on the composition of a few hours before. After glancing at verse and melody, early as was the morning, the clock had

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just struck six, he hurried off to a fellow-officer and guest of the night before, who in turn hurried him off to the mayor's. The young men found Dietrich strolling in his garden.

"Let us go indoors," he said. "I will try the air on the claveçin, and shall be able to tell you at once if it is very good or very bad."

Dietrich, true musician as he was, unhesitatingly anticipated the verdict of posterity. All the available guests of yesterday were again invited to dinner; he had an important communication in store for them, he said. During the banquet the secret was carefully withheld. The party having adjourned to the salon, one of the young ladies opened the claveçin, and the mayor's magnificent voice thundered forth—

"Allons, enfants de la patrie,
Le jour de gloire est arrivé!"

The audience was electrified. Forthwith copied and distributed to local bands and musical societies, the song acted like a charm. Hitherto enrolling themselves by twos and threes, the youth of Alsace now donned the tricolour by hundreds and thousands.

As yet, however, the composition was only known by the name of "Le Chant de Guerre de l'Armée du Rhin," and for a brief space its fame

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remained local. One interesting feature of this history is the part played in it by a woman.

Although a prolific musical composer, Rouget de Lisle possessed only an imperfect knowledge of harmony and counterpoint. It was his host's wife, the accomplished and public-spirited Madame Dietrich, who now set to work, not only correcting technical errors and arranging the piece for part singing and orchestration, but making numerous copies. In a charming letter to her brother at Basle, she wrote in May: "Rouget de Lisle, a captain in the Engineers and an agreeable poet and musician, at the suggestion of my husband, has composed a song suited to present events (*un chant de circonstance*), which we find very spirited and not without a certain originality. It is something after the manner of Glück, but livelier and more stirring. I have put my knowledge of orchestration to use, arranging the song for different instruments, and am therefore very busy."

It was not till the following August that Rouget de Lisle's composition reached Paris, henceforth to be known as the "Marseillaise."

CHAPTER XI

SAVERNE, *i.e.* ZABERN, AND SESENHEIM

WHO would quit Alsace without a pilgrimage to Saverne and the country home in which Edmond About wrote his most delightful pages, and in which he dispensed such princely hospitality? The author of *Le Fellah* was forced to forsake his beloved retreat after the events of 1870-71, the experiences of this awful time being given in his volume *Alsace*. Here also I felt myself in France. At the date of my visit About's property was for sale. French people, however, are loth to purchase estates in the country they are allowed to inhabit on sufferance only, while rich Germans prefer to build palatial villas within the triple fortifications and thirteen newly constructed forts, which are supposed to render Strasburg impregnable.

The railway takes us from Strasburg in an hour to the picturesque old town of Saverne beautifully placed above the Zorn. Turning our backs upon the one long street winding upwards to the château, we follow a road leading into the farthest recesses of the valley, from which rise on either side

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the wooded spurs of the lower Vosges. Here in a natural *cul-de-sac*, wedged in between pine-clad slopes, is as delightful a retreat as genius or a literary worker could desire. On the superb September day of my visit the place looked its best, and warm was the welcome we received from the occupiers, a cultivated and distinguished French Protestant family, formerly living at Strasbourg, but who since the events of 1870-71 had removed to Nancy. They hired this beautiful place from year to year, merely spending a few weeks here during the long vacation. The intellectual atmosphere still recalled bygone days, when Edmond About used to gather round him literary brethren, alike French and foreign. Pleasant it was to find here English-speaking, England-loving, French people. Nothing can be simpler than the house itself, in spite of its somewhat rococo tower, of which About wrote so fondly. His study is a small, low-pitched room, not too well lighted, but having a lovely outlook; beyond, the long, narrow gardens—fruit, flower, and vegetable—one leading out of another, rising pine woods and the lofty peaks of the Vosges. So remote is this spot that wild deer venture into the garden, whilst squirrels make themselves at home close to the house doors. Our host gave me much information about the peasants. Although not nearly so prosperous as

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before the annexation, they are doing fairly well. Some, indeed, are well off, possessing capital to the amount of several thousand pounds, whilst a millionaire, that is, the possessor of a million francs, or forty thousand pounds, is found here and there. The severance from France entailed, however, one enormous loss on the farmer. This was the withdrawal of tobacco culture, a monopoly of the French state which afforded maximum profits to the cultivator. With regard to the indebtedness of the peasant owner, my informant said that it certainly existed, but not to any great extent, usury having been prohibited by the local Reichstag a few years before. Thus again I found myself among French surroundings, French traditions, French speech.

It must be borne in mind that 20,000 French Alsatians had quitted Strasburg alone, and those of the better classes who were unable to emigrate sent their young sons across the frontier before the age of seventeen. Thus, by a gradual process, the French element was being eliminated from the towns, whilst in the country annexation came in a very different guise.

It is this sweet village, consecrated to literature and peaceful memories, that has lately won such opprobrium as the German Zabern! Happy for its presiding genius, the gifted, the cosmopolitan,

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above all, the patriotic About, that he did not live to see that horrifying exhibition of militarism which shocked humanity two years ago.

It is a beautiful drive to Blaesheim, south-west of Strasburg in a direct line with Gustave Doré's country. We pass the enormous public slaughter-houses and interminable lines of brand-new barracks, then under one of the twelve stone gates with double portals that now protect the city, leaving behind us tremendous earthworks and powder magazines, and are soon in the open plain. This vast plain is fertile and well cultivated. On either side we see narrow, ribbon-like strips of maize, potatoes, clover, hops, beetroot, and hemp. There are no apparent boundaries of the various properties and no trees or houses to break the uniformity. The farm-houses and premises, as in the Pyrenees, are grouped together, forming the prettiest, neatest villages imaginable. Entzheim is one of these. The broad, clean street, the large white-washed timber houses with projecting porches and roofs, may stand for a type of the Alsatian "Dorf." The houses are white washed outside once a year, the mahogany-coloured rafters, placed crosswise, forming effective ornamentation. No manure heaps before the door are seen near, as in Brittany, all here is clean and sightly. We meet numbers of pedestrians, the women mostly

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wearing the Alsatian head-dress, that enormous bow of broad black ribbon with long ends, worn fan-like on the head, lending an air of so much severity. The remainder of the costume—short blue or red skirt (the colours distinguishing Protestant and Catholic), gay kerchief, and apron—have all but vanished. As we approach our destination the outlines of the Vosges become more distinct, and the plain is broken by sloping vineyards and fir-woods. We see no labourers afield, and, with one exception, no cattle. It is strange how often cattle are cooped up in pastoral regions. The farming here is on the old plan, and milch cows are stabled from January to December, only being taken out to water. Agricultural machinery and new methods are penetrating these villages at a snail's pace. The division of property is excessive. There are no leaseholds, and every farmer, alike on a small or large scale, is an owner.

Two classes in Alsace have been partly won over to German rule: one is that of the Protestant clergy, the other that of the peasants.

The Third Empire persistently snubbed its Protestant subjects, then, as at the time of the Revocation, numbering many most distinguished citizens. No attempts, moreover, were made to Gallicise the patois-speaking population of the Rhine provinces. Thus the wrench was felt less

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here than in Catholic, French-speaking Lorraine. Higher stipends, good dwelling-houses and schools, did much to soften annexation to the clergy. An afternoon "at home" in a country parsonage a few miles from Strasburg reminded me of similar functions in an English rectory.

At the parsonage of Blaesheim we were warmly welcomed by friends—all French—and in their pretty garden found a group of ladies and gentlemen playing at croquet, among them two nice-looking girls wearing the Alsatian *coiffe*, just mentioned. These young ladies were daughters of the village mayor, a rich peasant, and had been educated in Switzerland, speaking French fluently and correctly. Many daughters of wealthy peasants marry civilians at Strasburg, when they for once and for all cast off the last feature of traditional costume. After a little chat, and being bidden to return to tea in half an hour, we visited some other old acquaintances of my friends, a worthy peasant family residing close by. Here also a surprise was in store for me. The head of the house and his wife—both far advanced in the sixties and who might have walked out of one of Erckmann-Chartrian's novels—could not speak good French, although throughout the best part of their lives they had been French subjects!

Admirable types they were, but by no means

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given to sentiment or romance. The good man assured me in his quaint patois that he did not mind what he was so long as he could get along comfortably and peacefully! He added, however, that under the French régime taxes had been much lower and farming much more profitable. The good folk brought out bread and wine, and we toasted each other in right hearty fashion. Over the sideboard of their clean, well-furnished sitting-room hung a small photograph of William II., doubtless a sop to Cerberus! On our return to the parsonage we found a sumptuous five o'clock tea prepared for the ladies, whilst beer and cigars awaited the gentlemen in the garden.

Even in a remote corner of Alsace, memorialised by Germany's greatest poet, we find the most pathetic clinging to France!

Every one has read the story of Goethe and Frederika, how the great poet, then a student at the Strasburg University, was taken by a comrade to the simple parsonage of Sesenheim, how the artless daughter of the house with her sweet Alsatian songs and pretty ankles enchanted the brilliant youth, how he found himself, as he tells us in his autobiography, suddenly in the immortal family of the Vicar of Wakefield. "And here comes Moses too!" cried Goethe, as Frederika's brother appeared. That accidental visit has in

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turn immortalised Sesenheim. The place breathes of Frederika. It has become a shrine dedicated to pure, girlish love.

A new line of railway takes us from Strasburg thither in about an hour over the flat, monotonous stretch of country, so slowly crossed by diligence in Goethe's time. The appearance of the city from this side—the French side—is truly awful: we see fortification after fortification, with vast powder magazines at intervals, on the outer earthworks bristling rows of cannon, beyond several of the numerous forts constructed since the war. The bright greenery of the turf covering these earthworks does not detract from their dreadful appearance. Past the vast workshops and stores of the railway station—a small town in itself—past market-gardens, hop-gardens, hay-fields, beech woods, all drenched with a week of rain, past old-world villages, the railway runs alongside the high road familiar to Goethe. We alight at the neat, clean, trim station, and walk to the village. An old, bent, wrinkled peasant woman, speaking French, directs us for full information about Frédérique—thus is the name written in French—to the auberge. First, with no little interest and pride, she unhooks from her own wall a framed picture, containing portraits of Goethe, and Frederika, and drawings of church

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and parsonage as they were. The former has been restored and the latter wholly rebuilt.

As we make our way to the little inn over against these, we pass a new handsome communal school in course of erection. On questioning two children in French, they shake their heads and pass on. The thought naturally arises—did the various French Governments, throughout the period of a hundred and odd years ending in 1870, do much in the way of assimilating the German population of Alsace? It would not seem so, seeing that up till the Franco-Prussian war the country-folk retained the patois. Of course only German is taught in communal schools. At the Auberge du Bœuf, over against the church and parsonage, we chat with the master in French about Goethe and Frederika; his womankind, however, only spoke the lingo, familiar to us in the Erckmann-Chatrian classics. Here, nevertheless, we find French hearts, French sympathies, and occasionally French gaiety.

Unidyllic, yet full of instruction, is the drive in the opposite direction to Kehl. We are now approaching friendly frontiers, yet the aspect is hardly less sinister than on the other side. True that cannon do not bristle on the outer line of the triple fortifications: otherwise the state of things is similar. We see lines of vast powder

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magazines, enormous barracks of recent construction, preparations for defence, on a scale altogether inconceivable and indescribable. Little wonder that meat is a shilling a pound, instead of fourpence as before the annexation, that bread has doubled in price, taxation also, and to make matters worse, that trade has remained persistently dull.

A tremendous triple-arched stone gate, guarded by sentinels, has been erected on this side of the lower Rhine, over against the Duchy of Baden. No sooner are we through than our hearts are rejoiced with signs of peace and innocent enjoyment, restaurants and coffee taverns, family groups resting under the trees. Beyond, flowing briskly amid wooded banks to right and left, is the Rhine, a glorious sight, compensating for so many that have just given us the heartache!

On taking leave of my kind Strasburg friends, I could not bring myself to pass Mulhouse by. But, alas! after ten years' absence, I found few old acquaintances. The great Jean Dollfuss, founder of the famous Cité Ouvrière, and princely benefactor of his fellow-citizens, to the last, staunch patriot, protesting against annexation, had long since gone to his rest. The equally patriotic lady-bookseller, Mademoiselle Z., with whom I had such pleasant chats, had passed away. I missed, too, the friendly

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Alsatian family who had given me "harbour and good company." But friends' friends accorded me a warm French welcome, and with these I reviewed familiar scenes. Mulhouse was not changed. The powerful, wealthy, and public-spirited "cotton-lords" of this city—all, be it remembered, Protestants—still hold aloof from German society. There is no social intercourse whatever between the immigrants and natives of the better classes. Mulhouse, which became French of its own free will in 1708, remains so to the core.

Only in one respect the process of Germanisation has been complete. I allude to the numerous vast barracks erected within the last few years, and which outwardly transform these busy streets. Imagine Bradford or Ashton-under-Lyne swarming with soldiers, for every group of tall chimneys a huge caserne, and you have some notion of the Mulhouse of to-day. Formerly no such incongruity existed. The great centre of the cotton industry in eastern France wore an eminently peaceful look. But militarism knows no *via media*. It must be all or nothing. Besides the number of barracks and a handsome Imperial Post Office—we are never for one instant allowed to forget that everything here is imperial—not much has been added to Mulhouse.

From hence we may re-enter France by one

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of her proudest porticoes. The colossal lion of Belfort, hewn out of the solid rock, is fit emblem of a city whose heroism moved even Bismarck to something like magnanimity. The siege of Belfort gave French history as grand a page as that of La Rochelle; and, advocated by Thiers, "the old man eloquent," rescued the key of the eastern frontier from the fate of Strasburg and Metz. It is a wonderful place, full of martial reminders, with a bristling crest of forts and triple girdle of fortifications. In the heart of these, as if placed there to be so guarded, are the monuments of its glorious defender, Denfert, and his men. We are glad for a moment to breathe the air of Belfort, but glad to get away. Peaceful folks and peaceful thoughts seem out of keeping with the warlike little city, ever armed to the teeth, set like fabled dragon at the gate of beautiful garden. From the heights surmounted by Bartholdi's grandiose lion, the eye is refreshed with a pleasant, prosperous scene, tillage and pasture, running streams and factories, whilst behind us lies the wooded mountain pass, the "Trouée de Belfort," leading from the Vosges to the Jura. The culture of tobacco, a charming crop with its delicate pink blossoms, is allowed by the State here—what sign of favour is not accorded the new heroic department?—honey,

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corn, hemp, beetroot, and potatoes are staple products; cotton mills, iron foundries, breweries, brick kilns, the manufacture of pianos, local industries. A large portion of territory is covered with forest, the wood of various trees being exported.

CHAPTER XII

TOWARDS GERMANISED LORRAINE

It is a pleasant six hours' journey from Dijon via Chalindrey to Nancy. We pass the little village of Gemeaux, in which amongst French friends I have spent so many happy days.

From the railway we catch sight of the monticule crowned by an obelisk; surmounting the vine-clad slopes, we also obtain a glimpse of its "Ormes de Sully," or group of magnificent elms, one of many in France supposed to have been planted by the great Sully. Since my first acquaintance with this neighbourhood, more than twenty years before, the aspect of the country hereabouts had in no small degree changed. Hop gardens in many spots have replaced vineyards, owing to the devastation of the phylloxera. It was in the last years of the third Empire that the inhabitants of Roquemaure on the Rhône found their vines mysteriously withering.

A little later the left bank was attacked, and about the same time the famous brandy-producing region of Cognac in the Charente showed similar symptoms. The cause of the mischief, the terrible *Phylloxera devastatrix*, was brought

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to light in 1868. This tiny insect is hardly visible to the naked eye, yet so formed by Nature as to be a wholesale engine of destruction, its phenomenal productiveness being no less fatal than its equally phenomenal powers of locomotion. One of these tiny parasites alone propagates at the rate of millions of eggs in a season, a thousand alone sufficing to destroy two acres and a half of vineyard. As formidable as this terrible fertility is the speed of the insect's wings or rather sails according extraordinary ease of movement. A gust of wind, a mere breath of air, and like a grain of dust or a tuft of thistledown, this germ of destruction is borne whither chance directs, to the certain ruin of any vineyard on which it lights. The havoc spread with terrible rapidity. From every vine-growing region of France arose cries of consternation. Within the space of a few years hundreds of thousands of acres were hopelessly blighted. In 1878 the invader was first noticed at Meursault in Burgundy; a few days later it appeared in the Botanical Gardens of Dijon. The cost of replanting vineyards with American stocks is so heavy, viz.: twenty pounds per hectare, that even many rich vintagers have preferred to cultivate other crops. Some owners sold their lands outright. To-day the pest is pretty well a thing of the past.

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On quitting Is-sur-Tille we enter the so-called Plat de Langres, or richly cultivated plains stretching between that town and Toul, in the Department of the Meurthe and Moselle.

With the almost sudden change of landscape—woods, winding rivers, and hayfields in which peasants are getting in their autumn crop, literally mauve-tinted from the profusion of autumn crocuses—we encounter sharp contrasts, the events of 1870-1 changing the French frontier, necessitating the transformation we now behold—once quiet, old-world towns now wearing the aspect of a vast camp, everywhere to be seen military defences on a wholly inconceivable scale. It seemed comforting to hear from the lips of those who should know, that at the present time war is impossible, the engines of warfare being so tremendous that the result of a conflict would be simply annihilation on both sides! After ten years' absence, and in spite of radical changes, the elegant, exquisitely kept town of Nancy appears little altered to me. The ancient capital of Lorraine is now one of the largest garrisons on the eastern frontier, but the military aspect is not too obtrusive. Except for the perpetual roll of the heavy artillery waggons and perpetual sight of the red pantalon, we are apt to forget the present position of Nancy from a strategic point of view.

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Other changes are pleasanter to dwell on. The Facultés, or schools of medicine, science, and law, removed hither from Strasburg after the annexation, have immensely increased the intellectual status of Nancy, whilst from the commercial and industrial side the advance has been no less. Its population has doubled since the events of 1870-71, and is constantly increasing. Why so few English travellers visit this dainty and attractive little capital is not easy to explain. More interesting even than the artistic and historic collections of Nancy is the celebrated School of Forestry. Formerly a few young Englishmen were out-students of this school, but since the study has been made accessible at home, the foreign element at the time of my visit consisted of a few Roumanians sent by their government. The École Forestière, courteously shown to visitors, was founded sixty years ago and is conducted on almost a military system. Only twenty-four students are received annually, and these must have passed severe examinations either at the École Agronomique of Paris, or at the École Polytechnique. The staff consists of a director and six professors, all paid by the state. Two or three years form the curriculum and successful students are sure of obtaining good government appointments. Forestry being a most important service,

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every branch of natural science connected with the preservation of forests, and afforesting is taught, the school collections forming a most interesting and wholly unique museum. Here we see, exquisitely arranged as books on library shelves, specimens of wood of all countries, whilst elsewhere sections from the tiniest to the gigantic stems of America. Very instructive, too, are the models of those regions in France already afforested and of those undergoing the process; we also see the system by means of which the soil is so consolidated as to render plantation possible, namely, the arresting of mountain torrents by dams and barrages. In the Dauphiné, and French Alps generally, many denuded tracks were at this time in course of transformation, the expense being partly borne by the State and partly by the communes. It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of such works, alike from a climatic, economic, and hygienic point of view. The extensive eucalyptus plantations in Algeria teach us the value of afforesting, vast tracks having been thereby rendered healthful and cultivable.

A strikingly beautiful city, sad of aspect withal, is this ancient capital of Lorraine, ever wearing half mourning, as it seems, for the loss of its sister Alsace.

Unforgettable is the glimpse of the Place Stanis-

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las, with its bronze gates, fountains, and statue, worthy of a great capital; of the beautiful figure of Duke Antonio of Lorraine on horseback, under an archway of flamboyant Gothic; of the Ducal Palace and its airy colonnade; lastly, of the picturesque old city gate, the Porte de la Craffe, one of the most striking monuments of the kind in France.

All these things may be glanced at in an hour, but in order to enjoy Nancy thoroughly, a day or two should be devoted to it, and creature comforts are to be had in the hotels.

In the Ducal Palace are shown the rich tapestries found in the tent of Charles le Téméraire after his defeat before Nancy, and other relics of that Haroun-al-Raschid of his epoch, who bivouacked off gold and silver plate, and wore on the battle-field diamonds worth half a million. The cenotaphs of the Dukes of Lorraine are in a little church outside the town—the *chapelle ronde*, as the splendid little mausoleum is designated, its imposing monuments of black marble and richly-decorated octagonal dome, making up a solemn and beautiful whole. Graceful and beautiful also are the monuments in the church itself, and those of another church, des Cordeliers, close to the Ducal Palace.

Nancy is especially rich in monumental sculpture, but it is in the cathedral that we are

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enchanted by the marble statues of four doctors of the church—St. Augustine, St. Grégoire, St. Léon, and St. Jérôme. These are the work of Nicholas Drouin, a native of the town, who formerly ornamented a tomb in the church of the Cordeliers just mentioned. The physiognomy, expression, and pose of St. Augustine are well worthy of a sculptor's closest study, but it is rather as a whole than in detail that this exquisite statue delights the ordinary observer.

All four sculptures are noble works of art; the beautiful, dignified figure of St. Augustine somehow takes strongest hold of the imagination. We would fain return to it again and again, as indeed we would fain return to all else we have seen in the fascinating but sorrowing city of Nancy.

CHAPTER XIII

AMONG ANNEXED LORRAINERS

AT the railway station of Nancy, I was met by a French family party, my hosts to be, in a château on the other side of the French frontier.

We had jogged on pleasantly enough for about half an hour, when the gentlemen, with, to myself, perplexing smiles, briskly folded their newspapers and consigned them, not to their pockets or rugs, but to their ladies, by whom the journals were secreted in pockets of undermost skirts.

“We are approaching the German frontier,” said Madame to me.

I afterwards learned that only one or two French newspapers were allowed to circulate in the annexed provinces, the *Temps* and others, the names of which I forgot: for the first and second offence of smuggling prohibited newspapers, the offender is subjected to a reprimand, the third offence is punished by a fine, the fourth involves imprisonment. Now, as all of us know who have lived in France, the *Figaro* is a veritable necessity to the lettered classes in France, the *Times* to John Bull not more so. Similarly, to the peasant

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and the artisan, the *Petit Journal* takes the place of the halfpenny newspaper in England. This deprivation is cruelly felt, and is part of the enslaving system introduced by William II. No other word is adequate.

Custom-house dues are at all times vexatious, but on the French - Prussian frontier they are so arranged as to provoke patriotic feeling. It may seem a foolish fancy for French folks, German subjects of the execrated Kaiser, to prefer French soap and stationery, yet what more natural than the purchase of such things when within easy reach? Thus, on alighting at the frontier, not only were trunks and baskets turned out, but we were all eyed from head to foot suspiciously. My hosts' newspapers were not unearthed, certainly: perhaps their rank and position counted for something. But one country girl had to pay duty on a shilling box of writing paper, another was mulcted to half the value of a bottle of scent, and so on. There was something really pathetic in the forced display of these trifles, the purchasers being working people and peasants. All French goods and productions are exorbitantly taxed. Thus a lady must pay three or four shillings duty on a bonnet costing perhaps twenty in France. On a cask of wine, the duty often exceeds the price of its contents, and, according to an inexorable law of

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human nature, the more inaccessible are these patriotic luxuries, so the more persistently are they coveted and indulged in.

Custom House officials on the Prussian side have no easy time of it, ladies especially giving them as much trouble as possible. The duty on a new dress sent or brought from France across the frontier is ten francs: and we were told an amusing story of a French lady who thought neatly to circumvent the douane. She was going from Nancy to Strasburg for a wedding, and in the ladies' waiting-room on the French side changed her dress, putting on the new, a rich costume bought for the ceremony. The officials got wind of the matter. The dress was seized and finally redeemed after damages of a thousand francs!

Persons in indifferent circumstances, however patriotic they may be, can support life without French beer, soap, and writing paper. The blood tax, upon which I shall say something further, is a wholly different matter.

A short drive brought us to a noble château, inside a beautifully wooded park, the iron gateway showing armorial bearings. Indoors there was nothing to remind me that I had exchanged Republican France for Despotic Prussia. Guests, servants, speech, usages, books, were French, or, in the case of the three latter, English. Every

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member of the family spoke English, afternoon tea was served as at home, and the latest Tauchnitz volumes lay on the table.

Difficult indeed it seemed to realise that I had crossed the frontier, but though within easy reach, almost in sight of it, the miss, alas! was as good as a mile!

Bitterness of feeling but increases with time. On the occasion of my third visit to Germanised France, I found things precisely the same, the clinging to France ineradicable as ever, nothing like the faintest sign of reconciliation with imperial rule.

One might suppose that, after a generation and a half, some slight approach to intercourse would exist among the French and Prussian populations. But no! By the upper classes, the Germans, no matter what their rank or position, remain tabooed as were Jews in the Ghetto of former days.

At luncheon next day, my host smilingly informed me that he had filled up the paper left by the commissary of police, concerning their newly arrived English visitor. We are here, it must be remembered, in a perpetual state of siege.

"I put down Canterbury as your birthplace," he began.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed I, "I was born near Ipswich."

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“ Oh! ” he said, smiling, “ I just put down the first name that occurred to me, and filled in particulars as to age, etc., ” here he bowed, “ after a fashion which I felt would be satisfactory to yourself. ”

This kind of domiciliary visit may appear a joking matter, but to live under a perpetual state of siege is no subject for pleasantry, as I shall show further on. Here is another instance of the comic side of annexation, if the adjective could be applied to such a subject. In the salon I noticed a sofa cushion, covered, as I thought to my astonishment, with the Prussian flag. But my hostess smilingly informed me that, as the Tricolour was forbidden in Germanised Lorraine, by way of having the next best thing to it, she had used the Russian colours, symbol of the new ally of France.

Another vexation of unfortunate *annexés* is in the matter of bookbinding. French people naturally like to have their books bound in French style, but it is next to impossible to get this done in Alsace. If the books are bound in France there is, of course, the extra cost of carriage and duty.

A very pleasant time I had under this Lorraine roof. Our days were spent in walks and drives, our evenings entertained with music and declamation. Now we had the Kreutzer Sonata exqui-

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sitely performed by amateur musicians, now we listened to selections from Lamartine, Nadaud, Victor Hugo, and others, as admirably rendered by a member of this accomplished family, all of whom were now gathered together. I saw something alike of their poorer and richer neighbours, all, of course, being their country-people. This social circle, including the household staff, was rigorously French.

Let me now describe a Lorraine lunch, as the French *goûter* or afternoon collation is universally called, our hosts being a family of peasant farmers, their guests the house party from the *château*. We had only to drive a mile or two before quitting annexed France for France proper, the respective frontiers indicated by tall posts bearing the name and eagle of the German Empire and the R.F. of France.

“You are now on French soil,” said my host to me with a smile of satisfaction, and the very horses seemed to realise the welcome fact. Right merrily they trotted along, joyfully sniffing the air of home.

Why Catholic villages should be dirty and Protestant ones clean I will not attempt to explain. Such, however, is the case. As we drove through the line of dung-heaps and liquid manure rising above what looked like barns, I was ill-

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prepared for the comfort and tidiness prevailing within. What a change when the door opened, and our neatly dressed entertainers ushered us into their dining room! Here, looking on to a well-kept garden, was a table with spotless linen, tea set out as in a middle-class house. An arm-chair, invariable token of respect, by no means a homage to seniority, was placed for the English visitor: then we sat down, two blue-bloused men, uncle and nephew, and three elderly women in mob caps and grey print gowns, dispensing hospitality to their guests, belonging to the *noblesse* of Lorraine. There was no show of subservience on the one part, or of condescension on the other. Conversation flowed easily and gaily as at the château itself.

I here add that whilst the French *noblesse* and *bourgeoisie* remain apart as before the Revolution, with the peasant folk it is not so. These good people were not tenants or in any way dependents on my hosts. They were simply humble friends, the tie being that of nationality. And we were here in France—we had crossed the frontier! The order of the feast was peculiar. Being Friday no delicacy in the shape of a raised game pie could be offered: we were, therefore, first of all served with bread and butter and *vin ordinaire*. Then a dish of fresh honey in the comb was brought

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out: next, a plum tart. When tea, tart, and cakes of various kinds had disappeared, a bottle of good Bordeaux was served: finally, grapes, peaches, and pears with choice liqueurs. Healths were drunk, glasses chinked, and when at last the long lunch came to an end, we visited dairy, bedrooms, and garden, all patterns of neatness. This family of small peasant owners is typical of the very best rural population in France. The united capital of the group—uncle, aunts, and nephew—would not perhaps exceed a few thousand pounds, but the land descending from generation to generation had increased in value owing to improved cultivation. Hops form the most important crop hereabouts. This village of French Lorraine testified to the educational liberality of the Republic. For three hundred and odd souls the government provides schoolmaster, schoolmistress, and a second female teacher for the infant school, their salaries being double those paid under the Third Empire.

Now a word concerning the blood-tax. Rich and well-to-do French residents, as I have said, in the annexed provinces can afford to send their sons across the frontier and pay the heavy fines imposed for default. With the artisan and peasant the case is otherwise. Here defection from military service means not only lifelong separation but worldly

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ruin. To the wealthy an occasional sight of their young soldiers in France is an easy matter. A poor man must stay at home. If his sons quit Alsace-Lorraine to go through their military service on French soil, they cannot return until they have attained their forty-fifth year, and the penalty of default is so high that it means, and is intended to mean, ruin. There is also another crying evil of the system. French conscripts forced into the German army are always sent as far as possible from home. If they fall ill and die, kith or kin can seldom reach them. Again, as French is persistently spoken in the home, and German only learnt under protest at the primary school, the young *annexé* enters upon his enforced military service with an imperfect knowledge of the latter language, the hardships of his position being thereby immensely increased. We can easily understand the disadvantage under which they labour. I visited a tenant farmer on the other side of the frontier, *i.e.* under German rule, whose only son had lately died in hospital at Berlin. The poor father was telegraphed for, but arrived too late, the blow saddening for ever an honest and laborious life. This farmer was well-to-do but had other children. How then could he pay the fine imposed upon the defaulter? And, of course, French service involved lifelong separation.

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Cruel, indeed, is the dilemma of the unfortunate *annexé*. But the blood-tax is felt in other ways. During this stay in Germanised Lorraine the autumn manœuvres were taking place. This means that alike rich and poor are compelled to lodge and cook for as many soldiers as the authorities choose to impose upon them. I was assured by a resident that poor people often bid the worn out men to their humble board, the conscripts' fare being regulated according to the strictest economy. In rich houses German officers receive similar hospitality, but we can easily understand under what conditions.

The annexed provinces are, of course, being Germanised by force. Immigration continues at a heavy cost. Here is an instance in point.

When Alsace-Lorraine was handed over to the German Government it boasted of absolute solvency. It has since become burdened with debt, owing, among other reasons, to the high salaries received by the more important German officials, the explanation being that the position of these functionaries is so unpleasant they have to be bribed into such expatriation. Thus their salaries are double what the same would have been under French rule. Not that friction often occurs between the German civil authorities and French subjects. Absolute aloofness and reserve are the

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rule. On the other hand, the perpetual state of siege is a grievance daily felt. Free speech, liberty of the press, rights of public meeting, are unknown. Not long since a peasant just crossed the frontier, and as he touched French soil, shouted "Vive la France." On his return he was convicted of *lèse-majesté*, and sent to prison. Another story points the same moral. At a meeting of a village council an aged peasant farmer, who cried, "We are not subjects but servants of William II.," was imprisoned for six weeks. The occasion that called forth the protest was an enforced levy for some public works of no advantage whatever to the inhabitants. Sad, indeed, is the retrospect, sadder still the looking forward, with which we quit French friends in Germanised Alsace and portions of Lorraine. The word "Adieu" has additional meaning. Even epistolary intercourse is not sacred. The rule of the first William was the rule of rods, that of the second is the rule of scorpions.

CHAPTER XIV

THE "MARVELLOUS BOY" OF ALSACE

It is especially at Strasburg that travellers are reminded of another "marvellous boy," who, if he did not, like Chatterton, "perish in his pride," certainly shortened his days by over-reaching ambition and the brooding bitterness waiting upon shattered hopes.

Gustave Doré was born and reared under the shadow of Strasburg Cathedral. The majestic spire, a world in itself, became indeed a world to this imaginative prodigy. He may be said to have learned the minster of minsters by heart, as before him Victor Hugo had familiarised himself with Notre Dame. The unbreeched artist of four summers never tired of scrutinising the statues, monsters, gargoyles, and other outer ornamentations, while the story of the pious architect Erwin and of his inspirer, Sabine, was equally dear. Never did genius more clearly exhibit the influence of early environment. True child of Alsace, he revelled in local folk-lore and legend. The eerie and the fantastic had the same fascination for him as sacred story, and the

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lives of the saints, gnomes, elves, were-wolves, and sorcerers bewitched no less than martyrs, miracle-workers, and angels.

His play-hours would be spent within the precincts of the cathedral, whilst the long winter evenings were beguiled with fairy tales and fables, his mother and nurse reading or reciting these, their little listener being always busy with pen or pencil. Something much more than mere precocity is shown in these almost infantine sketches. Exorbitant fancy is here much less striking than sureness of touch, outlined figures drawn between the age of five and ten displaying remarkable precision and point, each line of the silhouette telling. At six he celebrated his first school prize with an illustrated letter, two portraits and a mannikin surmounting the text.¹ His groups of peasants and portraits, made three or four years later, possess almost a Rembrandt strength, unfortunately passion for the grotesque and the fanciful often lending a touch of caricature. Downright ugliness must have had an especial charm for the future illustrator of the *Inferno*, his unconscious models sketched by the way being as uncomely as the immortal Pickwick and his fellows of Phiz. A devotee of Gothic

¹ See his *Life* by Blanch Roosevelt (Sampson Low and Co., 1885), also the French translation of the same, 1886.

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art, he reproduced the mediæval monstrosities adorning cornice and pinnacle in human types. Equally devoted to nature out of doors, the same taste predominated. What he loved and sought was ever the savage, the legend-haunted, the ghoulish, seats and ambuscades of kelpie, hobgoblin, brownie, and their kind.

From the nursery upwards, if the term can be applied to French children, his life was a succession of artistic abnormalities and *tours de force*. The bantling in petticoats who could astound his elders with wonderfully accurate silhouettes, continued to surprise them in other ways. His memory was no less amazing than his draughtsmanship. When seven years of age, he was taken to the opera and witnessed *Robert le Diable*. On returning home he accurately narrated every scene.

At eight he broke his right arm, but became, as if by magic, ambidextrous, whilst confined to his bed, cheerily drawing all day long with the left hand. At ten he witnessed a grand public ceremony. In 1840, Strasburg celebrated the inauguration of a monument to Gutenberg, the festival being one of extraordinary splendour. Fifteen cars represented the industrial corporations of the city, each symbolically adorned, and in each riding figures suitably travestied and occupied, men, women, and children wearing the

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costumes of the period represented. Among the corporations figured the *Peintres-verriers*, or painters on stained glass, their car proving especially attractive to one small looker-on.

Intoxicated by the colour and movement of the fête, garlanded and beflagged streets, the symbolic carriages, the bands, civil and military, and the prevailing enthusiasm, the child determined to get up an apotheosis of his own: in other words, to repeat the performance on a smaller scale; which he did. Cars, costumes, banners, and decorations were all designed by this imp of ten. With the approval of his professors and the collaboration of his school-fellows, the Doré procession, consisting of four highly-decorated cars, drawn by boys, defiled before the college authorities, and made the round of the cathedral, the youthful impresario at its head. The car of the painters on glass was conspicuously elaborate, a star copied from a cathedral window showing the superscription *G. Doré, fecit*. Small wonder is it that the adoring mother of an equally adoring son should have believed in him from the first, and seen in these beginnings the dawn of genius, the advent, indeed, of a second Michael Angelo or Titian.

The more practical father might chide such over-reaching vaticinations, might reiterate:

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“ Do not fill the boy’s head with nonsense.”

The answer would be:

“ Our son is a genius. I know it.”

And Doré *père* gave way, under circumstances curious enough.

In 1847 the family visited Paris, there, to Gustave’s delight, spending four months. Loitering one day in the neighbourhood of the Bourse, his eye lighted upon comic papers with cuts, published by MM. Auber and Philipon. Their shop windows were full of caricatures, and after a long and intent gaze the boy returned home, in two or three days presenting himself before the proprietors with half a dozen drawings much in the style of those witnessed. The benevolent but business-like M. Philipon examined the sketches attentively, put several questions to his young visitor, and, finding that the step had been taken surreptitiously, immediately sat down and wrote to M. and Mme. Doré. He urged them with all the inducements he could command to allow their son the free choice of a career, assuring them of his future.

A few days later an agreement was signed by father and publisher to this effect: during three years the latter was to receive, upon certain terms, a weekly cartoon from the sixteen-year-old artist, who, on his side, bound himself to offer no sketches

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elsewhere.¹ Meanwhile, Gustave would pursue his studies at the Lycée Charlemagne, his patron promising to look after his health and well-being. The arrangement answered, and in *Le Journal pour Rire* the weekly caricature signed by Doré soon noised his fame abroad. Ugly, even hideous, as were many of these caricatures, they did double duty, paying the lad's school expenses and paving the way to better things. Of caricature Doré soon tired, and after this early period never returned to it. Is it any wonder that facile success and excessive laudation should turn the stripling's head? Professionally, if not artistically speaking, Doré passed straight from child to man; in one sense of the word he had no boyhood, the term, tyro, remained inapplicable. This undersized, fragile lad, looking years younger than he really was, soon found himself on what must have appeared a pinnacle of fame and fortune.

Shortly after his agreement with Philipon, his father died, and Mme. Doré with her family removed to Paris, settling in a picturesque and historic hôtel of the Rue St. Dominique. Here Doré lived for the rest of his too short life.

The house had belonged to the family of Saint Simon, that terrible observer, under whose gaze

¹ This document was reproduced in *Le Figaro* of December 4, 1848.

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even Louis XIV. is said to have quailed. So aver historians of the period. The associations of this house immediately quickened Doré's inventive faculties. He at once set to work and organised a brilliant set of *tableaux vivants*, illustrating scenes from the immortal *Mémoires*. The undertaking proved a great social success, and henceforth we hear of galas, soirées, theatricals, and other entertainments increasing in splendour with the young artist's vogue—and means.

The history of the next twenty years reads like a page from the *Arabian Nights*. Although dazzling is the record from first to last, and despite the millions of francs earned during those two decades, the artist's ambition was never satisfied. We are always conscious of bitterness and disillusion. As an illustrator, no longer of cheap comic papers, but of literary masterpieces brought out in costly fashion, Doré reached the first rank at twenty, his *Rabelais* setting the seal on his renown. So immense was the success of this truly colossal undertaking and of its successors, the *Don Quixote*, the *Contes de fées* of Perrault, and the rest, that he meditated nothing less than the illustration of cosmopolitan *chefs d'œuvre, en bloc*, a series which should include every great imaginative work of the Western World! Thus in 1855, we find him noting the following projects, to be carried out in ten

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years time — illustrations of Æschylus, Lucan, Ovid, Shakespeare, Goethe (*Faust*), Lamartine (*Méditations*), Racine, Corneille, Schiller, Boccaccio, Montaigne, Plutarch's *Lives*—these names among others. The jottings in question were written for a friend who had undertaken to write the artist's biography.

The *Rabelais*, *Don Quixote*, the *Inferno*, and several more of these sumptuous volumes were brought out in England. Forty years ago Doré's bold and richly imaginative work was in great favour here: indeed, throughout his life he was much more appreciated by ourselves than by his countrymen. All the drawings were done straight upon wood. Lavish in daily life, generous of the generous, Doré showed the same lavishness in his procedure. Some curious particulars are given upon this head. Fabulous sums were spent upon his blocks, even small ones costing as much as four pounds apiece. He must always have the very best wood, no matter the cost, and it was only the whitest, smoothest, and glossiest boxwood that satisfied him. Enormous sums were spent upon this material, and to his honour be it recorded, that no matter the destination of a block, the same cost, thought, and minute manipulation were expended upon a trifling commission as upon one involving thousands of pounds. The penny paper was

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treated precisely the same as the volume to be brought out at two guineas. In the zenith of his fame as an illustrator, at a time when tiptop authors and editors were all clamouring for his drawings, he did not despise humbler admirers and clients. His delight in his work was only equalled by quite abnormal physical and mental powers. Sleep, food, fresh air, everything was forgotten in the engrossment of illustration. At this time he would often give himself three hours of sleep only.

Doré's ambition—rather, one of his ambitions—was to perfect wood engraving as an art, hence his indifference to the cost of production. Hence, doubtless, his persistence in drawing on wood without preliminary sketch or copy.

Perhaps such obsession was natural. How could he foresee the variety of new methods that were so soon to transform book illustration? Anyhow, herein partly lies the explanation of the following notice in a second-hand book catalogue, 1911:—

“No. 355. Gustave Doré: *Dante's Inferno*, with 76 full-page illustrations by Doré. 4to gilt top, binding soiled, but otherwise good copy. 42/- for 3/6. London n.d.”

A leading London publisher consulted by me on the subject, writes as follows:—

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“Doré’s works are no longer in vogue. One of the reasons lies in the fact that his pictures were done by the old engraved process. He drew them straight on wood, and there are, accordingly, no original drawings to be reproduced by modern methods.”

In an evil hour for his peace of mind and his fame, Doré decided to leave illustration and become an historic painter. He evidently regarded genius as a Pandora’s gift, an all-embracing finality, an endowment that could neither be worsened nor bettered, being complete in itself.

A reader of Ariosto, he had not taken to heart one of his most memorable verses, those mellifluous lines in which the poet dwells upon the laboriousness of intellectual achievement. Nor when illustrating the *Arabian Nights* had the wonderful story of Hasan of El-Basrah evidently brought home to him the same moral.

Between a Doré and his object—so he deemed—existed neither “seven valleys nor seven seas, nor seven mountains of vast magnitude.” A Doré needed no assistance of the flying Jinn and the wandering stars on his way, no flying horse, “which when he went along flew, and when he flew the dust overtook him not.”

Without the equipment of training, without

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recognition of such a handicap, he entered upon his new career.

In 1854, for the first time, two pictures signed by Doré appeared on the walls of the Salon. But the canvases passed unnoticed. The Parisians would not take the would-be painter seriously, and the following year's experience proved hardly less disheartening. Of four pictures sent in three were accepted, the third being a landscape. The first, "La Bataille de l'Alma," evoked considerable criticism. The rural scenes were hung, as Edmond About expressed it, so high as to need a telescope.

Both About and Th. Gautier believed in their friend's newly-developed talent, but art critics and the public held aloof. No medal was decreed by the jury, and, accustomed as he had been to triumph after triumph, his fondest hopes for the second time deceived, Doré grew bitter and acrimonious. That his failure had anything to do with the real question at issue, namely, his genius as a historic painter, he would never for a moment admit. Jealousy, cabals, prejudice only were accountable.

The half dozen years following were divided between delightfully gay and varied sociabilities, feverishly prolonged working hours, and foreign travel. The millions of francs earned by his illus-

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trations gave him everything he wanted but one, that one, in his eyes, worth all the rest.

Travel, a splendid studio, largesses—he was generosity itself—all these were within his reach. The craved-for renown remained ungraspable.

Even visits to his favourite resort, Barr, brought disenchantment. He found old acquaintances and the country folks generally wanting in appreciation. With greater and lesser men he subacidly said to himself that a man was no prophet in his own country.

Ten years after the fiasco of his first canvases in the Salon, came an invitation to England and the alluring project of a Doré gallery. The Doré *Bible* and *Tennyson*, with other works, had paved the way for a right royal reception. The streets of London, as he could well believe, were paved with gold. But many were the *contra*. “I feel the presentiment,” he wrote to a friend, “that if I betake myself to England, I shall break with my own country and lose prestige and influence in France. I cannot exist without my friends, my habits, and my *pot-au-feu*. Folks tell me that England is a land of fogs, that the sun never shines there, that the inhabitants are cold, and that I should most likely suffer from sea-sickness in crossing the Manche. To sum up, England is a long way off, and I have a great mind to give up the project.”

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Friendly persuasion, self-interest, wounded self-love carried the day. Reluctantly he decided upon the redoubtable sea voyage. Whether he suffered from sea-sickness or no we are not told. In any case the visit was repeated, John Bull according the great Alsatian, as he was called, what France had so persistently withheld.

Doré was here accorded the first rank among historic painters. His gallery in Bond Street became one of the London sights; in fashionable society, if not in the close ring of the great Victorian artists, he made a leading figure. Royalty patronised and welcomed him. The queen bought one of his pictures ("Le Psaltérion"), now at Windsor, and invited him to Balmoral. The heir-apparent, the late king, admired his talent and relished his society. By the clerical world he was especially esteemed, being looked upon as a second Leonardo da Vinci. And, in fine, Doré must be regarded as an anticipator of the Entente Cordiale.

"Gustave Doré," his compatriots would say, "he is half an Englishman!" Forty years ago our popular favourite might indeed have believed in the fulfilment of his dream. The Thorwaldsen Gallery of Copenhagen had ever dazzled his imagination. Bond Street was not Paris, certainly, but in the greatest metropolis of the world

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his memory would be for ever perpetuated. Turning to the dithyrambic utterances of the London press at the time, we can hardly wonder at the hallucination.

Here are one or two passages culled from leading dailies and weeklies:—

“ In gravity and magnitude of purpose, no less than in the scope and power of his imagination, he towers like a Colossus among his contemporaries. Compared with such a work as ‘ Christ leaving the Prætorium,’ the pictures in Burlington House look like the production of a race of dwarfs whose mental faculties are as diminutive as their stature. And it is not alone the efforts of the English School of Painting that appear puny in presence of so great and gigantic an undertaking; the work of all the existing schools of Europe sinks into equal insignificance, and we must go back to the Italian painters of the sixteenth century to find a picture worthy of being classed with this latest and most stupendous achievement of the great French master.”

Elsewhere we read:—

“ The most marvellous picture of the present age is to be seen at 35 New Bond Street. The subject is ‘ Christ leaving the Prætorium.’ The painter is the world-renowned Gustave Doré.”

A journal devoted to art criticism wrote:—

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“ In ‘ The Christian Martyrs ’ we have a striking, thrilling, and ennobling picture.”

And so on, and so on. Yet at this time among “ the dwarfs ” of Burlington House then exhibiting was Millais, and contemporaneously with Doré in our midst, 1870-71, was Daubigny, whose tiniest canvases now fetch their thousands!

It was during Doré’s apogee in England that a well-known French amateur, also visiting our shores, was thus addressed by an English friend: “ Come with me to Bond Street, you will there see the work of your greatest living painter.”

“ *Our* greatest painter!” exclaimed the other. “ You mean your own. Doré is our first draughtsman of France, yes, but painter, never, neither the greatest nor great: at least we were ignorant of the fact till informed of it by yourself and your country people.”

Doré knew well how matters stood, and bitterly resented the attitude of his own nation. Accorded a princely welcome across the Manche, his work worth its weight in gold on the other side of the Atlantic, in France he was looked at askance, even as a painter ignored. He regarded himself as shut out from his rightful heritage, and the victim, if not of a conspiracy, of a cabal. His school playmates and close friends, Taine, Edmond About, and Th. Gautier, might be on his side; perhaps,

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with reservations, Rossini and a few other eminent associates also. But the prescient, unerring verdict of the collective "man in the street"—

"The people's voice, the proof and echo of all human fame"—

he missed: resentment preyed upon his spirits, undermined his vitality, and doubtless had something to do with his premature breakdown.

The Doré gallery indeed proved his Capua, the long-stop to his fame.

As a personality the would-be Titian, Durer, Thorwaldsen, and Benvenuto Cellini in one, presents an engaging figure. His domestic life makes very pleasant reading. We find no dark holes and corners in the career of one who may be said to have remained a boy to the end, at fifty as at five full of freak and initiative, clingingly attached to a devoted and richly-endowed mother, and the ebullient spirit of a happy home. With his rapidly increasing fortune, the historic house in the Rue Dominique became an artistic, musical, and dramatic centre. His fêtes were worthy of a millionaire, and, alike in those private theatricals, *tableaux vivants*, or concerts, he ever took a leading part. An accomplished violinist, Doré found in music a never-failing stimulant and refreshment. Rossini was one of his circle, among others were the two Gautiers, the two Dumas, Carolus Duran,

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Liszt, Gounod, Patti, Alboni, and Nilsson, Mme. Doré, still handsome and alert in her old age, proudly doing the honours of what was now called the Hôtel Doré. By his literary and artistic brethren the many-faceted genius and exhilarating host was fully appreciated. Generosities he ever freely indulged in, the wealth of such rapid attainment being dispensed with an ungrudging hand. To works of charity the great illustrator gave largely, but we hear of no untoward mis-reckonings, nor bills drawn upon time, health, or talents. With him, as with the average Frenchman, solvency was an eleventh commandment.

Meantime, as the years wore on, again and again he bid desperately for the suffrages withheld, his legitimately won renown held by him of small account. To his American biographer he said on showing her some of his pictures: "I illustrate books in order to pay for my colours and paint-brushes. I was born a painter."

On the lady's companion, an American officer, naïvely asking if certain canvases were designed for London or Paris, he answered with bitter irony:

"Paris, forsooth! I do not paint well enough for Paris." As he spoke his face became clouded. The gay, jovial host of a few minutes before sighed deeply, and during their visit could not shake off depression.

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Two crowning humiliations came before the one real sorrow of his life, the loss of that gifted mother who was alike his boon companion, closest confidante, and enthusiastic Egeria. Perpetually seeking laurels in new fields, in 1877 he made his *début* as a sculptor. The marble group, "La Parque et l'Amour," signed G. Doré, won a *succès d'estime*, no more. In the following year was opened the great international exhibition on the Champ de Mars, Doré's enormous monumental vase being conspicuously placed over one of the porticoes. This astounding achievement in bronze, appropriately named the "Poëme de la Vigne," created quite a sensation at the time. Reproductions appeared in papers of all countries containing a printing press or photographic machine. But for the artist's name, doubtless his work would have attained the gold medal and other honours. The Brobdingnagian vase, so wonderfully decorated with flowers, animals, and arabesques, was passed over by the jury.

Equally mortifying was the fate of his marble group in the same year's Salon. This subject, "La Gloire," had a place of honour in the sculpture gallery, and won universal suffrages. The critics echoed popular approval. The jury remained passive. It was in the midst of these unnecessarily crushing defeats—for why, indeed, should

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any mortal have craved more than mortal success?—that Mme. Doré's forces gave way. From that time till her death, which occurred two years later, her son's place was by her side, floutings, projects, health, and pleasure forgotten, his entire thoughts being given to the invalid. No more beautiful picture of filial devotion could suggest itself to the painter of domestic subjects than this, Doré with table and sketching materials seated in his mother's sick-room, or at night ministering to her in wakeful moments. At dawn he would snatch a few hours' sleep, but that was all. No wonder that his own health should give way so soon after the death-blow of her loss.

"My friend," he wrote to an English boon companion, on March 16, 1881, "she is no more. I am alone. You are a clergyman, I entreat you to pray for the repose of her beloved soul and the preservation of my reason."

A few days later he wrote to the same friend of his "frightful solitude," adding his regret at not having anticipated such a blank, and made for himself a home—in other words, taken a wife.

Some kind matchmaking friends set to work and found, or at least they fancied, a bride exactly calculated to render him happy.

But on January 23, 1883, Doré died, prematurely aged and broken down by grief, corroding dis-

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appointment, and quite frenzied overwork and ambition.

He never attained recognition as a historic painter among his country folks. One canvas, however, "Tobit and the Angel," is placed in the Luxembourg, and his monument to Dumas ornaments the capital. His renown as an illustrator remains high as ever in France. And one, that one the passionately desired prize of every Frenchman, became his: in 1861 he was decorated with the Red Ribbon. Six of Doré's great religious subjects retained their place in the Bond Street Gallery, but for reasons given above his wonderfully imaginative illustrations are here forgotten.

The superb edition of the *Enid* (Moxon, 1868), a folio bound in royal purple and gold, and printed on paper thick as vellum, the volume weighing four pounds, awakens melancholy reflections. What would have been poor Doré's feelings had he lived to see such a guinea's worth, and cheap at the price, gladly sold, rather got rid of, for three shillings!

Doré's last work, the unconventional monument to the elder Dumas, was left unfinished. Completed by another hand, the group now forms a conspicuous object in the Avenue Villiers, Paris.

The striking figure of the great quadron, with his short crisped locks, suggests a closer relation-

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ship to the race thus apostrophised by Walt Whitman:

“ You dim descended, black, divine-souled African. . . .”

He surmounts a lofty pedestal, on the base being seated a homely group, three working folks, a mób-capped woman reading a Dumas novel to two companions, evidently her father and husband, sons of the soil, drinking in every word, their attitude of the most complete absorption. Classicists and purists in art doubtless look askance at a work which would certainly have enchanted the sovereign romancer.

“ Will folks read my stories when I am gone, doctor? ” he asked as he lay a-dying. The good physician easily reassured his patient. “ When we have patients awaiting some much dreaded operation in hospital,” he replied, “ we have only to give them one of your novels. Straightway they forget everything else.” And Dumas, “ the great, the human,” as a charming poet has called him—died happy. As well he might, in so far as his fame was concerned. *La Tulipe Noire* would alone have assured his immortality.

CHAPTER XV

THE LITERATURE OF ANNEXATION

A VOLUME might well be devoted to the literature of the *annexés*, every writer from Edmond About and the fellow-authors, Erckmann and Chatrian, downwards, breathing the same spirit. The two last mentioned I will not here deal with, their stories of Alsatian life in war and peace had become classics long before 1870-71, and little that they wrote after annexation added to their fame. But a brilliant galaxy have followed the *Alsace* of Edmond About dedicated to his son, 1874, *pour qu'il se souvienne*, "in order that he may remember." How well succeeding generations of Frenchmen living under Prussian rule remember, the volumes here considered, and my own, will amply testify.

I will first take *Quarante ans après*, 1911, by the late much beloved administrator of the Comédie Française, which may well be described as being both an excitant and a sedative. Whilst his pages give voice to the passionate yearning for mother-country animating all classes of Germanised

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France, his vivid memories might well sober the wildest clamourer for *la revanche*. As a young man he not only remembered the Franco-Prussian war, but witnessed some of its most terrible, heart-rending, and humiliating scenes. At intervals of a few years he spent his holidays in the forfeited provinces, his book having, therefore, an actual as well as a retrospective interest. Here is an experience on the morrow of Sedan:—

With the crowds of terrified inhabitants, routed troops, and stragglers, M. Claretie and his companion had crossed the frontier, bivouacking at the little Belgian village of Bouillon, next morning retracing his steps:

“ So quiet were these streets that the hideous tumult of the night before seemed a mere nightmare. Alas! We were soon recalled to the sad reality. Near the burgomaster’s house by the picturesque River Semoy, above which sloped the Ardennes, we perceived a hundred or more war-horses, all saddled and bridled, and most of them riderless. Some were grazing, others watering at the river’s brink, others neighing pitifully as if calling their masters. More than one dragged a wounded horseman or dead body. The sight of these good, intelligent animals, sweated and emaciated by yesterday’s battle, their frightened look, their blood-stained saddles and loose bridles,

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made one's heart sick. As we approached the French frontier we encountered scenes recalling Goethe's *Hermann and Dorothea*, peasants' carts piled with bedding and furniture, their owners hastening out of France. By the roadside numbers were encamped like gipsies, eyeing us timorously as they cooked their soup. From time to time a rustling of the hedge told us of some straggler who, taking us for the enemy, disappeared behind the trees."

M. Claretie does justice to the courtesy, at times somewhat stilted, of the Prussian officers. On this subject indeed his pronouncements throughout the volume are startling.

Writing—be it remembered only three years ago—of recent events and actualities, he says:

"It is only just to acknowledge that, on the whole, hatred to France I found less pronounced in the German army than throughout the rest of the population. Apropos of the Casabianca incident and the affairs of Morocco, which threatened war, it was the officers who showed moderation and a spirit of equity. 'We should have behaved precisely the same as your own military men,' they said. It is the professional classes, the savants, the pedagogic body, who constitute the untiring agents of hatred (*incessibles agents de haine*). It is the same with the commercial ranks."

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On the subject of Franco-Prussian relations, M. Claretie was far from hopeful. Naturally enough, his repeated visits to the annexed provinces recalled the great war—"our only war," he calls it—in which he took part.

To Alsace and to the Germanised portion of Lorraine he went as a pious pilgrim, placing wreaths on one patriotic shrine after another. Metz the anniversary of Bazaine's surrender, brought him a new and most suggestive experience. A grand military concert was taking place at a brasserie, or beer-drinking café, and one of the items announced was a souvenir of 1870-71, a grand *pot-pourri militaire avec musique guerrière*. M. Claretie entered, and contrived to sit out the entire performance, which was a kind of magnified Battle of Prague—the piece played by our grandmothers—giving in music the history of the Franco-Prussian conflict from beginning to end. The declaration of war, the call to arms on both sides, one crushing defeat after another, hurrahs of the victors, cavalry charges, hand-to-hand encounters, no item being left out, the so-called symphony calling forth thunders of applause.

This experience closes the volume, M. Claretie's conclusion being that of other travellers in the annexed provinces, myself being among the number. In a moral, social, and intellectual sense, the words

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“Germanised France” are devoid of meaning. Only officially and by means of armed force and immigration have the annexed provinces become in one sense German.

First let me say a few words regarding the purely literary merits of the next work taken in hand.

The third of M. André Hallays' delightful scenes, hitherto devoted to France on this side of the Vosges, and entitled, *En Flânant*, 1911, is devoted to Alsace. Its title might almost be—Alsace, psychological, archæological, and picturesque. To most English readers, even to those who have visited the lost province, his pages will prove a revelation in other senses besides the political. Helped in his interpretation by numerous and excellent illustrations, we realise as we read that Alsace is much more than a delightful holiday ground. Art has endowed it no less generously than nature. Historian, critic, and æsthete, M. Hallays moves leisurely from one enchanting scene and ancient townling to another, formulating as he goes a theory that in such hands appears questionless.

In the eyes of this writer, Alsatian genius is neither French nor German, but native, independent, standing apart. Alike architecture, ecclesiastical and domestic, furniture, decoration, and

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handicraft, are stamped with a special seal, the characteristic being recognisable to the initiated. The tour of the annexed province thus gains added interest. All who like myself have several times sojourned among French *annexés* can bear testimony to the great variety of Alsatian scenery and the charm of the old-world villages. But M. Hallays points out the originality of the artistic note.

Take, for example, his pages devoted to the three churches of Guebveller, a little manufacturing town near Mulhouse. "We feel as we study each of these," he writes, "that we have seen nothing like them before. Neither one nor the other recall edifices constructed on the same plan and during the same period elsewhere." Sculpture, painting, wood-carving, ironwork, turnery, taken in hand by the same skilled and minute observer bear out his hypothesis. "By the originality of temperament and culture, Alsace intrigues and charms us," he adds; and elsewhere, "The conviction that we are here entering an unknown little world lends extraordinary interest to every excursion."

With its wealth of illustrations, its artistic insight and learning, the volume has especial interest at this time. The conclusions of the well-known *Flâneur* as to social and political affairs in 1911

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are precisely those of M. Jules Claretie's *Après quarante ans*.

M. Hallays tells us that for years he had withstood ardent longings to visit Alsace, he feared to find that the Alsace of France had disappeared. A perusal of M. René Bazin's well-known novel, *Les Oberlé*, decided him to venture across the frontier, where he found, as he tells us, that the novelist had spoken truth, that assimilation, morally speaking, had not been advanced by one jot, and that the youth of Alsace were French in heart. His experiences here collected are from sojourns made in 1903, 1904, 1905, 1909, and 1910.

Here is a pathetic story:—"At St. Jean-des-Choux, near Saverne" (the Zabern of infamous notoriety) "I demanded permission to see the beautiful tapestries belonging to the ancient monastery of this name. The curé being absent, a nun, teacher in the village school, came forward as cicerone, and in exquisite French very minutely explained each subject. On expressing my warm thanks she pleaded: 'Do not thank, pray do not thank me,' her meaning being—to speak French for a quarter of an hour has been only too much joy. Then the gentle-voiced sister re-entered the schoolroom where she had to teach French children to speak German, because such is the law."

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Take these passages, written in 1903:

“Alsations there are who have rallied to Germany out of sheer interest, none have done so out of sympathy.

“Such was the condition of things I found thirty-three years after the conquest.

“One is staggered by an example of fidelity unique in historic annals, especially when we remember that a modern State has two powerful auxiliaries—the school and the army. Germany counted upon both in order to subdue Alsatian resistance. She has been deceived.

“In the primary school, Alsatian, *i.e.* French, children are only taught German language and German history. Never is pronounced in their hearing a single word of French, and every past event is so put before them as to glorify the *patrie* of to-day (in other words the German régime) and to humiliate the *patrie* of their birth. Teachers are rigorously supervised. But the family quickly undoes the work of the school. The mother forbids her children to sing German songs taught by their masters. The father, if he understands French (that is to say, pure French, not the patois of mixed French and German familiar to us in the Erckmann-Chatrion novels), teaches it to his son. In 1903, indeed, French is as much and perhaps more spoken than it was in 1870.”

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Nor has military discipline been more efficacious in Germanising Alsatians than education. The so-called volunteers of a year, sons of the upper and professional classes, are permitted to choose their garrison, thus (as in Barrès' famous story, *Un Volontaire d'un An*) going through their service amongst their friends and relations. The rank and file, that is to say, conscripts, as a body are sent into Prussia, the veneer there acquired—waxed moustache, hair parted in the middle, set movements and cane manipulated *à la Prussienne*—all disappearing after a few months at home.

“In fine,” he adds, “to-day as yesterday, as always, Alsatians refuse to become German.”

In the forefront of contemporary Alsatian fiction stands the delicious classic, *Colette Baudoche* of Maurice Barrès. Thus, I believe, or in almost identical terms, has Mr. Henry James described it. Nothing in the way of a story can be simpler. A middle-class French widow, having an only daughter living at Metz, is driven by necessity to receive a German as boarder. With great delicacy is brought out the natural inclination of these two young people, and on the girl's part the shrinking back, the unsurmountable obstacle of race. Also equally measured, tactful, and artistic is the portrait of her lover, in every

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respect but one an eligible suitor. Here M. Barrès does not permit a partial or prejudiced word. Madame Baudoche's boarder is indeed an excellent type of the honest, simple German civilian, but for the assiduously instilled militarism of later times, a class wholly admirable.

To love, also to material considerations, Colette at last yields, the betrothal takes place, and here I cite a passage especially interesting to English readers at this time. In company of the heroine's mother and a friend or two, the *fiancés* take part in a little festival held at Gorze, a village near the blood-stained fields of Mars-la-Tour and Gravelotte.

"At Gorze," writes the novelist, "church, lime trees, dwellings, and folks belong to the olden time, that is to say, are very French. In crossing the square, the five holiday-makers halted before the Hôtel de Ville, and read with interest a commemorative inscription on the wall. A tablet here records English generosity in 1870-71, when, after the carnage and devastation of successive battles, money, roots, and seeds were distributed among the peasantry by a relief committee. The inspection over, the little party gaily sat down to dinner, regaling themselves with fried English potatoes, descendants of those sent across the Manche forty years before."

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The relief committee was mainly due to the efforts of my friends Sir John Robinson and Mr. Bullock Hall, both passed away. With these and other friends of the Entente Cordiale I lunched at the Princes Restaurant in honour of President Loubet's visit, a souvenir worth having—this by the way.

That summer holiday to Gorze was the last enjoyed by the lovers. Colette, by a celebration of another kind, is awakened to the gulf dividing her from a German, in his own despite, a sworn enemy of her race. The "call of blood" is not to be resisted, it may break hearts, but it is stronger than love!

Of quite another theme is the famous *Au service de l'Allemagne*. Here the pathos is that of a volunteer who describes, and in no covert terms, his experiences. The first stage, that of having to don German uniform, learn the German salute, step, and port, almost made him waver. Again and again he said to himself, "No, I cannot bear it. I must flee, bid eternal adieu to parents, home, country," and in an agony of tears he throws the loathed helmet and uniform to the ground. But by volunteering for a year, he can remain in Alsace, stay among his kinsfolk, and carry out his original intention of practising medicine at Colmar. And the step was a patriotic

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duty. For the youth of Alsace to cleave to native soil, thus keeping alive the Alsatian spirit despite officialdom and militarism, the school and the barracks—such, from childhood, had been their daily, hourly lesson. Now issued by Fayard, Paris, in a popular edition, notwithstanding its subject, this book must be described as essentially interesting and also diverting. With no little wit and raillery M. Barrès brings out the contrast of French and German character, naturally somewhat unsparing in regard to the latter. This author's series of Alsatian studies form quite a little library—*Colette Baudoche* being the pearl. All, however, are well worth perusal just now.

Standing mid-way between Edmond About, these two writers, and other novelists of Alsace is the conspicuous figure of the French Dickens, the great Alphonse Daudet. No native of Alsatian soil was the author of *Tartarin de Tarascon*. He, nevertheless, added to French literature, besides that immortal creation, one short tale, equally undying, and which no Frenchman or Frenchwoman can read to-day without tears. *The Last Lesson* (*La dernière Classe, Contes de Lundi*) focuses in three pages the tragedy of annexation.

The narrative, date 1872, is put into the artless language of a little Alsatian attending the village school; he has arrived somewhat late and is

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very much afraid of a scolding, for though he loves his master, he cannot endure his frown. But no sooner does he enter the schoolroom than he divines that something extraordinary has happened. In a gentle voice the master merely said: "Quick, to your place, my little Frantz, we were about to begin without you." Then he noticed that M. Hamel, such was the pedagogue's name, was dressed in his Sunday's best, and what astonished him still more, that in the farther end of the room, silent and immobile as statues, sat the ex-mayor, ex-postman (these having been replaced by Germans), and other well-known residents.

Then the schoolmaster rose, and in a grave, subdued voice said:

"My children, this is the last time that I shall hear your lessons. The order has come from Berlin that henceforth only German is to be taught in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine. Your new master arrives to-morrow. To-day then you receive your last French lesson. I beg of you all to be very attentive."

"I now understood," continues the youthful story-teller, "why M. Hamel had put on his fine green frock coat, white muslin neck-tie, and embroidered black silk cap, also why the neighbours were present. These old men seemed to

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come by way of thanking our master for his forty years' services, and of paying their last respect to the fatherland they were losing."

Despite the agitation of their preceptor and lookers-on, every lesson was heroically got through, not a jot being omitted, the little ones spelling their two-syllabled words, the bigger boys writing from dictation, doing sums, and repeating their tasks.

" Ah! how I remember that last lesson!

" All at once the church clock struck twelve, and the Angelus sounded. At the same moment a troop of Prussians returning from exercise blew their trumpets as they passed under our windows. Pale as death, the master rose from his seat, never had he seemed to me so great.

" ' My friends, my friends,' he got out, ' I—I——'

" He could say no more. Then, pulling himself together as best he could, he seized a piece of chalk and on the black-board wrote in big letters:—

“ ‘ *VIVE LA FRANCE.*’

" His head fell back, leaning against the wall, without a word he waved his hand, the gesture saying:

" ' All is over—you may go.' ”

Other stories of the volume in question touch, and most movingly, upon similar incidents, none

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comparable to this little masterpiece. I have heard an elderly Englishman, a devotee of Daudet, declare that his *Jack* contained scenes he could not read without tears.

What then must be the spell of *The Last Lesson* over French audiences!

The roll-call of Alsatian novelists includes many good writers perforce omitted here.

CHAPTER XVI. AND LAST

GERMAN RULE IN ALSACE-LORRAINE—A FORECAST

I CONCLUDE these personal experiences with the reproduction of a remarkable leader from the *Daily News* so far back as September 27, 1893. The late editor, Sir John Robinson, had just published some of my notes from the annexed provinces.

“ The letters lately issued in these columns are the production of a well-known writer whose exhaustive works on France are, in themselves, a guarantee of peculiar fitness for the task now under consideration. The state of things they reveal is not precisely reassuring, though the writer's observations neither have, nor are meant to have, an alarmist effect. Germany holds Alsace-Lorraine for good or ill, and her very determination to hold it is the cause of all the evils which our Correspondent sees so much reason to deplore. The provinces are not reconciled to the new system — Lorraine in particular — and perhaps, in fairness to the Germans, a marked distinction must be made between the two, Lorraine remains what it has ever been, Catholic

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and French. Alsace was always, in the main, German and Protestant, and here, necessarily, the change of masters has not exactly had the effect of a change in all the habits of life. The Germanisation of Alsace goes on apace, and it is in part due to the sense of hopelessness among that part of the population still attached to France. They feel that there is no satisfaction for them in the province except on the hard condition of a profession of loyalty which they do not feel. They remain indeed fixed to the spot to which their interests bind them, but they send their children across the frontier to find a career in the land of their choice. Lorraine has no such easy alternative. The whole population cannot emigrate, and so the bulk of it nurses its patriotic discontent in silence, and hopes against hope for a better day. All this represents the fearful cost, moral as well as material, which, in these times, annexation entails. Germany has to hold the provinces, and one element of her security of tenure is a sympathetic population. In consequence, the whole force of the administrative machine is devoted to a sort of ethnographic labour to which there has been no parallel since our own plantation of Ulster, unless, indeed, it is to be found in the Russianisation of Poland.

“There is no liberty, as we understand the term, in

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Alsace-Lorraine. (The italics are my own.) The natives are only permitted the exercise of their own religion, and the use of the French tongue, under certain restrictions. But these restrictions import the presence of German detectives in the churches. No more need be said to show that they must be irksome and oppressive to the last degree.

“It is the German method, one might almost say the method of our time. We are in a hurry and we bolt our food, even when great empires are making their meal on small states. In 1871, France left Alsace pretty much as she found it when it was seized by Louis XIV. At the time of the seizure, as little as possible was changed in laws, customs, manners, or observances. In consequence, Alsace remained German, in speech and in race habits, while gratitude for fair treatment slowly rendered her French in sentiment. The gentler way may seem the longer, but it is certainly the better; and that the rougher is, to say the least, no shorter, we have our experience in Ireland to prove. Our mistake, indeed, was one of sheer ignorance, while Germany’s is something of a sin against the light. Prince Bismarck is still for the rigorous application of the method to Poland, and he sees danger there, even when the Emperor tries to cover the hand of iron with a silken glove. The one thing that stifles dis-

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content in Alsace-Lorraine is the passionate desire for peace. These unhappy people have seen enough of war. They dread its horrors, and they dread its consequences. They have to live; and they know that, if they escape death in the shock of nations, they can hardly avoid ruin in other forms. Their civic virtues and their social needs stand pitted against their patriotic sentiment. In this state of things, there are all the elements of a settlement, if the Germans try to turn them to account. If Alsace-Lorraine were polled to-day, there would probably be but few voices for war. The cry, if it came at all, would come from those regions most remote from the scene of any possible invasion. The man who knows that his own homestead may be set ablaze by the first shot is under heavy securities to keep the peace.

“ The frontier populations have always a terrible object lesson before their eyes. Metz, as our correspondent tells us, is a vast camp; Mulhouse a vast barrack. Strasburg is only to be described as ‘ truly awful.’

“ Thirteen new forts have been built since the war, and the place seems like some monster whose iron jaws are distended in one spasmodic grin of cannon reaching for miles and miles. It is much the same at Kehl, where the preparations for defence are ‘ altogether inconceivable and inde-

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scribable.' Such toys are not bought for nothing. At Strasburg, the cost of food and lodging has more than doubled since the annexation. There is the new city to pay for, and the new forts, for palaces and other public buildings have been built in almost reckless profusion. In some places, meat is a shilling a pound, where it was fourpence; bread is just twice as dear as it was, and to make matters worse, trade remains persistently dull. Militarism always moves with its full train of evils. The soldier is more than ever king. He is, and must be, master while the Empire has no better defences than these; and he 'takes the floor' in Alsace-Lorraine in a way which tends to reduce the status of civilians to that of camp-followers. It is a most serious situation, but it certainly is not to be improved by any spirit-stirring invocations to triumph and revenge addressed to the other side. Where the results are so entirely unsatisfactory, one cannot help feeling that the methods must be radically wrong. They are logically right, no doubt, if once we admit their fatal premiss that peace is only to be maintained by bristling readiness for war. Lives of individuals as well as lives of nations are often ruined by a mistake of that sort in their main proposition. All else is steady, consistent, laborious, and full of faculty of every

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sort, but this only serves to make the matter worse. The life is wrong at the start, and all its developments are vitiated by a capital error. Given that Alsace and Lorraine had to be held against the wishes of their populations, as well as against those of France, then there was but one way of holding them—to make them impregnable. They became camps by the law of their being, and trade and commerce tended inevitably to dwindle to the proportion of accidents—to come in only as opportunity served. There is now more to pay and less to pay it with, and this means suffering and hardship all round. The civil population loses the sense of importance, and with it the habit of enterprise. The soldier dominates the situation, and the whole administration necessarily becomes but a veiled form of martial law. Alsace-Lorraine is held in such a way that its whole surface could be to-morrow turned into a vast camp, governed by the laws of camps, and all its energies devoted to war. It is marvellous, but it is not peace, and the cruel necessity that has created it will, hereafter, appear the most tragic thing in the history of our time.”

Thus wrote Sir John Robinson twenty-nine years ago. Let the reader turn to my chapter on the literature of Alsace and re-con the conclusions of the late M. Jules Claretie and of M.

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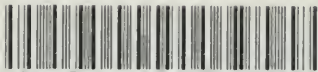
André Hallays published in 1913. The evil seed has been sown and the crop that has sprung up on the soil of Alsace and Lorraine is that of undying hate, a hate too deep for words.

A final word. Until unable to cross the Manche by reasons of health, again and again I was the guest of my Lorraine friends in their Paris home. And during my last visit, now eight years ago, the hostess of the château repeated her oft-uttered words: "*There is no kind of rapprochement between French and Germans in the conquered provinces. Detestation of German rule is stronger than ever.*"

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