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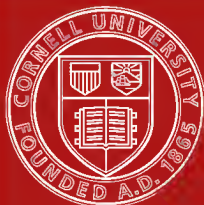
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1860. 1. 17. 1860.

1860. 1. 17. 1860.

Alphonse Daudet.

THE NOVELS, ROMANCES
AND WRITINGS OF
ALPHONSE DAUDET

MEMORIES OF A MAN
OF LETTERS

NOTES ON LIFE

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INTRODUCTION.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹ *Partial Portraits*, page 234.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

One instance of a character drawn from life, not

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹ M. René Doumic, *Portraits d’Écrivains*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

nique. The novel was published by Charpentier in 1898.

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

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

¹ *Journal*, January 4, 1891.

The idea came to nothing.

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹ M. René Doumic.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹ See the Preface to *Robert Helmont*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹ *My Brother and I*, page 448.

² Page 462.

³ *The Nabob*, pp. xix-xxi.

and loved with our whole heart: Edmond de Goncourt, Alphonse Daudet.”¹

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

“Daudet has been living in the Lamoignon mansion² in the Marais these seven years,” says the diarist under date of March 21, 1876. “He tells me that the house has been kind to him, that it has soothed and tranquillized him. In his youth he was fond of excitement, of haunting low places; it was a youth that retained for a long while, as he expresses it, the posthumous waves, the whale’s-backs of the sea after a storm. But in that tranquil, placid, soporific house, he has been transformed and, by dint of hard work, has become an entirely different man.” — Again, in October 1885: “Daudet talked of the excesses of his youth; a conversation broken by excruciating pains which, from time to time, cut him short and

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

² Where he wrote *Fromont and Jack*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹ *Thirty Years in Paris*, page 47.

² M.M. Marguerite in Rev. Encyc., *ubi supra*.

³ *Thirty Years in Paris*, page 44.

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

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

While this assertion, if correctly reported, is

¹ *Journal*, January 25, 1885

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

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

¹ See *My Brother and I*, page 453.

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

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

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

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

¹ October 6, 1885.

² June 29, 1887.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹ *Nouvelles Études*, etc. *passim*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

GEORGE B. IVES.

A. DAUDET.

MEMORIES OF A MAN OF LETTERS

ÉMILE OLLIVIER.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But a pistol-shot rang out in the direction of Auteuil. Pierre Bonaparte¹ had shot Victor Noir; and that Corsican bullet through a young man's heart dealt a deadly blow at the fiction of the liberal Empire. Paris suddenly rose, the cafés talked in loud tones, a mob gesticulated wildly on the sidewalks. From moment to moment fresh news arrived, reports of all sorts were circulated; people told of Prince Pierre's strange abode, that Auteuil mansion tightly closed amid the bustle and uproar of Paris, like the tower of a Genoese or Florentine nobleman, smelling of powder and old iron, and echoing the livelong day with pistol-shots and the clash of crossed swords. Others told what manner of man Victor Noir was, his exceeding gentleness of disposition, his youth, his approaching marriage. And lo! the women took a hand: they pitied the mother, the fiancée; the touching element of a love-romance inflamed political passions. The *Mar-seillaise*, between heavy leads, published its call to arms; people said that Rochefort would distribute four thousand revolvers at his office that

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Émile Ollivier listened to me with close atten-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

GAMBETTA.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹ Théophile Silvestre, littérateur and journalist, born at Fos-sat (Ariège) in 1823, died in 1876.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

withstanding the trampling of numerous idling Dominicans and the sliding of urchins, a few patches of sickly turf, broken and ragged, were still green. Below us, in the haze, the city with its myriad roofs and its mighty hum, which subsided from time to time to let us hear the dull roar of the cannon of the forts in the distance. There was a small tent on the square, and in the centre of a circle enclosed by a rope, a huge yellow balloon pulling on its cable and swaying back and forth. Gambetta, it was said, was about to leave Paris, to electrify the provinces, to arouse them to the point of rushing to the deliverance of the capital, to inflame men's minds, to restore courage, in a word — and perhaps he would have succeeded but for Bazaine's treachery — to repeat the miracles of 1792! At first I saw nobody but Nadar, friend Nadar, with his aeronaut's cap, which had played a part in all the events of the siege; then, standing in the centre of a group, I spied Spuller¹ and Gambetta, both muffled in furs.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

feet, accustomed to the elastic turf of the woods or the rough stones of the highroads, slipped on the polished floors and tripped over the rugs, and who would have aroused a laugh by their awkward, frightened reverences, had not the artless embarrassment of so many humble heroes tended rather to bring tears to the eyes. A faithful image of that sublime drama of resistance for the country's sake, which is the duty of all men, great and small alike. Gambetta was called. At that moment the fierce passions born of the inevitable reaction were in full cry upon his heels, and there was some talk of prosecuting him as well. He entered the room, wearing a short overcoat, and, as he passed, the Duc d'Aumale¹ bowed slightly to him; ah! I can still see that bow, — neither too stiff nor too low, not so much a bow as a signal of fellowship between men, who, although differing widely in opinions, are always sure of meeting and understanding each other upon certain questions of honor and patriotism. The Duc d'Aumale did not seem to be offended, and I, in my corner, was overjoyed at my former comrade's correct and dignified man-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He died at Sèvres, December 31, 1882.

HISTORY OF MY BOOKS. — NUMA ROUMESTAN.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In the case of the *tambourinaire*, Valmajour, some details are taken from life, for instance, the little tale: "*It came to me at night*," etc. — which I plucked, word by word, from his artless lips. I have described elsewhere¹ the burlesque and pitiable epic of this Draguignanais, whom my dear and great Mistral despatched to me one day with these lines: "I send you Buisson, *tambourinaire*; pilot him," and the endless series of failures which Buisson and I made, in the wake of his rustic flute, in Parisian salons, theatres and concert halls. But the real truth, which I could not tell in his lifetime for fear of injuring him, I may divulge to-day, when death has burst his drum, *pécaïré!* and stuffed with black earth the three holes in his flute. It is this: Buisson was a sham *tambourinaire*, a petty bourgeois from the South, who played a clarinet or cornet in some town band and had learned how to handle the *galoubet* and the *massette* of the old Provençal peasant merry-makings, simply as a diversion. When he arrived in Paris, the poor devil did not know a single Provençal tune, not a serenade or a *farandole*. His repertory consisted of the overture to the *Bronze Horse*, the *Carnival of Venice* and the *Panteïns de Violette*, all brilliantly executed, but decidedly lacking in local accent for a *tambourinaire* vouched for by Mistral. I taught

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Pure invention, my dear Gambetta."

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

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

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

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

“Oh! it is all very much exaggerated!”

THE FRANCS-TIREURS.

Written during the Siege of Paris.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“To arms! — turn out!”

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

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

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

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

"Hurry up," says Reuil.

"We are coming," Nanterre replies.

And the companies start off at a gallop.

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

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

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

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

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

With one bound the officer was before us.

"Who was it who spoke? You?"

"Yes, captain, I —"

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

"But, captain —"

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

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

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

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

When I returned to Nanterre it was still dark.

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

THE GARDEN ON RUE DES ROSIERS.

Written March 22, 1871.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“I have five,” he sobbed.

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

“If we don’t shoot him to-day, he’ll order us shot to-morrow.”

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

“General,” he said, “if you will promise us—”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Yonder, beside the *capote*.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

AN ESCAPE.

Written during the Commune.

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

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

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

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

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

¹ Napoleon I. died May 5, 1821.

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Good-morning, viscount,” I said in an urder-tone as I passed.

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

Each man walked beside his horses, whip in

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SUMMER PALACES

Written during the Commune.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I learned these details from Père La Loué, a perfect type of the forest-keeper of Seine-et-Oise, with his drawling accent, his sly air, his little eyes blinking in an earth-colored face. The good man is so jealous of his keeper's duties, he invokes so often, and in every connection, the five cabalistic letters that glitter on his copper badge, that the country people have nicknamed him Père La Loi¹ — La Loué in the patois of Seine-et-Oise. When we came into Paris in the month of September, to shut ourselves up for the siege, old La Loué buried his furniture and his clothes, sent his family away, and remained alone to await the Prussians.

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

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

¹ Father Law.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"But no one made me sign anything."

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

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

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

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

¹ See Preface to *Robert Helmont*.

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

THE SHIPWRECK.

Champrosay, May 25, 1871.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Can I wake up now?”

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

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

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

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

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

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

HISTORY OF MY BOOKS. — KINGS IN EXILE.

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

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

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

To my eyes the difficulty of the work consisted principally in this search for models, for accurate information, in the tedium of all the interviewing made necessary by the novelty of a subject so far removed from me and my surroundings, from my habits of life and mind. As a young man I had often brushed against the ghastly black wig of the Duke of Brunswick¹ traversing the corridors of night restaurants in the hot breath of gas, patchouli and spiced meats; at Bignon's, on the couch at the rear, Citron-le-Taciturne had appeared to me one evening, eating a slice of *foie gras* opposite a girl from the street; and again, at the conclusion of a Sunday session at the Conservatoire, the tall, haughty figure of the blind King of Hanover, feeling his way between the

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

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

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

It required much time and innumerable jour-

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

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

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

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

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

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

than one, I transplanted it to Rue Herbillon, within a few steps of the great faubourg and its itinerant fairs, where I proposed to have Méraut show Frederika the common people at close quarters and teach her to fear them no more. As the King and Queen of Naples¹ lived for a long time on Rue Herbillon, it was commonly said that they were the royal personages whom I intended to depict; but I solemnly declare that it is untrue, and that I have simply displayed a purely imaginary royal couple on a real stage.

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

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

² Written by Blanc Saint-Bonnet.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This letter is from Thérion's brother.

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

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

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

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

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

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

As for the charge that my book was a pamphlet

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

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

And, a few pages farther on:—

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

“‘How does Monseigneur find himself at Butscherad?’

“‘Growing old.’

“‘Like everybody else, Monseigneur.’

“‘How is your wife?’

“‘She has the toothache, Monseigneur.’

“‘Inflammation?’

“‘No, Monseigneur, old age.’

“‘Do you dine with the king? We shall meet again.’

“And we parted.”

And what an indictment is contained in M. Fourneron’s book, *History of the Émigrés during the French Revolution!* The bearing of the Comte d’Artois¹ and the Comte de Provence² in exile, while their brother was a prisoner in the Temple and when he was sent to the scaffold—the rivalry between mistresses, Madame de Polastron and Madame de Balbi!

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

¹ Afterwards Charles X.

² Afterwards Louis XVIII.

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

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

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

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

A READING AT EDMOND DE GONCOURT'S.¹

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹ Jules de Goncourt died June 20, 1870.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But still the great public held aloof.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

That was the last stroke. The younger brother,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ACTORS AND ACTRESSES.—DÉJAZET.¹

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

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

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

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

LESUEUR.¹

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

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

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

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

FÉLIX.

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

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

MADAME ARNOULD-PLESSY.¹

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

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

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

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

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

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

ADOLPHE DUPUIS.¹

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

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

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

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

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

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

LAFONTAINE.¹

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NOTES UPON PARIS. — THE NOUNOUS.¹

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

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

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

¹ The name by which children call their nurses.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But Madame enters, with the conventional man-

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

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

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

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

“How old is your milk, nurse?”

“Three months, M'sieu'.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

“What! is that all you have?”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

These great weekly *coups* do not prevent the

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NOTES UPON PARIS. — THE RIDICULOUS SALONS.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

meanwhile some one at the piano continues to sing:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I would have liked to embrace that young gentleman!

IN THE PROVINCES. — THE GUÉRANDE RACES.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The journey seemed short to us.

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

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

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

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

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

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

In this clear weather, which brings the shore

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NOTES ON LIFE

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

JULIA A. DAUDET.

NOTES ON LIFE

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

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

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

To a woman. Your eyes are like sweet violets.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

OF M—, admirable brains without a regulator

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

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

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

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

RUSTICS' faces, color of the soil.

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

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

OF my friend X—. He excels in mediocrity.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A WOMAN'S definitions:

Little girls: three chins and the air of a dunce.

The works of George Sand: a great soup.

The Mondays of St. Beuve: they smell musty.

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE dryest hearts are most inflammable.

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

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

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

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

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

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

CONSOLING another is lending to be repaid.

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

OH! these people who say everything — the catch-penny writers!

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

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

SOME souls are hares, some are cabbages.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DANGER is an intoxication that sobers.

HOW stupid are all pictures of battles! The soldiers should be only accessory, so much does the landscape fill the scene. A battle—'t is a wood, a ravine, a street, a cabbage-field, with smoke.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE Aureole. A god who loses his aureole.

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

THERE are women who laugh without gayety.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FOLLY is a cranial fissure through which vice sometimes enters.

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

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

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

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

So long the days, so short the years!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HEROIC phantasy narrating this:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I NOTE, in passing, the avowal, so heartrending, so ridiculous, of Madame Roland to her old husband, of her quite ideal passion for Buzot. Grief of the old man, the cruel misconception, the savor taken out of life for ever. And the conclusion of Sainte-Beuve: "Would n't it have been better to deceive her husband and say nothing to him about it?" But I detect something else here, the unconscious vengeance of the woman who makes a rude sacrifice to remain honest, and wishes the old husband, obstacle to her happiness, to suffer with her.

History : the life of peoples.

Romance : the life of men.

FOUND at N —, an artist of my lineage, charming old man, straight and vigorous under his eighty years. I get him to turn the leaves of his life, stir the antique dusts of his memory. Delightful reminiscences. David, his cheek puffed out of all shape, his mouth full of soup, exacting from his pupils, whom he calls "thee" and abuses, the correction of their drawing. the anatomy of the finger, the nail. Then visits to Malmaison, to Josephine in Roman draperies of creole tissue, hedged round with tropic birds and marvellous flowers, that have come for her over hostile waters, from the very ends of the earth. Talma also

crosses the scene, Talma in the country, repeating the vagaries of the Duc d'Antin, upheaving his park, always getting into debt and having his obligations met by the Emperor. All this very simply told, during little halts, as he trotted about the sloping garden; and always at the end of the recital, a shake of the head, a far-away glance, a: "I saw that myself," like a signature of authenticity at the bottom of a picture.

CHAT at table, about the earliest dwellings of mankind. The round form given to cabins the world over, after the manner of the beaver, who builds in this fashion. I think the tree, with the shadow of its foliage, suggested the circular form of huts, as it gave also the first idea of the column and its capitals, the ogive, and so forth.

FINE touch of Gall's, discussing, in a lecture on phrenology, the amativeness of woman, citing a mistress who had adored him and whom he had loved passionately. Oh, the good, the lovely creature, so devoted, so tender! "I have her skull there, gentlemen, and, if you like, we will study it." Then to the attendant: "On the shelf, at the left, number eight."

CHARMING type of woman, affected with a timidity amounting to disease, so that her intimate friends alone are acquainted with her, in the true sense of the word, alone know she is beautiful, a musician, an exquisite creature. Under fire of eyes, in conversation, she is another woman, her whole being contracts.

Could never bring herself to have her portrait painted; wears the ring of Gyges, which renders her invisible to all that intimidate her. The husband, talented, jealous, greatly pleased at having his wife all to himself, smiles pityingly as he observes other women. Put beside her a "*femme pour les autres*," husband vain, a player to the gallery.

THE Goncourt romances, admirable cartoons on the nineteenth-century model; the *Serving-maid*, the *Bourgeoise*, and so forth.

BANVILLE, disgusted with the commonplaces of conversation, suppresses them, replaces them by a sort of legerdemain of word, a kind of *et cætera*, to arrive at the essential phrase.

CHARMING picture to be drawn in the world of ideas, from the recent discovery in science that light is nothing but motion. Isn't that the Midi, though?

ANGER. Between two beings united by the heart, by blood, by familiarity, from father to son, from brother to brother, it passes and ruptures everything. Looks of hate, words of hate; a thousand miles apart. "There is nothing more between us. I wish you were dead, struck down by my hand!" Afterward, oh! what tears, what straining to the heart to repair all this. Possible, when both are violent, but if only one is so, in time how tired the other becomes!

NOT to be lost: the impression made by that trio, violin, flute, and falsetto voice, rising suddenly under

my window, on the bank of Lake Lucerne, in the sonority of air and water. Italian melody of perfect grace, the loveliness of the day and of the sky, my whole soul stirred and mounting in song. And how far off it is! To be put somewhere as the echo of an ended love-affair.

BELIEVER by tradition, conventionality, respect for the priesthood. God in heaven; below, his road-inspectors.

ATTACKED by such a taste for precious stones as physiologists consider evidence of a cracked brain, he passed hours before the shop windows, enamored of an opal, bathed, lapped round in its fires. Then he wrote, and the words gave him a like sensation, tints, reflections, plays of light under his fingers; he engulfed himself in them.

SKETCH of X—, who has just died, long a banker, diplomat, high liver, regular old African of the Conquest, eater of hashish, fervent Catholic, disciple of Dupanloup. A great pallor, eyes lustreless, but all at once a mad flash of lightning in them when he spoke of religion. Boasting that he had had all the vices. I found in him a repetition of his father; the old Marshal derailed.

AH! the erudition of sentiment, how it deadens sensibility!

ONE *blinds* a spring, a water-course. It is because the water, with its shimmer, its movement, has indeed the life of a glance.

THE more I consider, observe, and compare, the more I feel how truly the initial impressions of life, those of early childhood, are almost the only ones which stamp us irrevocably. At fifteen years, twenty at most, one has "come from the press." The rest is but reprints of the first edition. Reading an observation of Charcot's confirms me therein.

NEITHER cheerful nor sad, impressionable; a reflection of the time, the circumstance.

BRAVE and a coward in one day, according to the disposition of his nerves.

FOR certain women in view, mundanity, vanity, sport; — even charity is a sport.

AS one goes northward, eyes grow pure, their fires burn out.

AUTHORITY: a sacrament that should be left in the inner temple, and exposed but rarely.

HE said — a writer by profession, and sincere: "All the good sense I have, all my insight and philosophy of life, I put into my books, give it to the good people who read me, and then I have it no longer."

Word for word.

THAT a poet! — mounted infantry at most.

A TYPE, this C —, with his wild imaginings about people, his invention of shocking crimes;

and he names names, and his stories grow with each repetition; a forger of tragic gossip.

NOTE the sadness, the despair of my big boy, just entering Philosophy, reading Schopenhauer, Hartmann, Stuart Mill, Spencer. Terror and disgust at living; the doctrine gloomy, the professor hopeless, the conversations in class heartrending. The idea that everything is useless overcomes these lads. Spent the evening reanimating, stirring up mine; and, without realizing it, infused warmth into myself.

Ruminated on this all night. Is it a good thing to initiate them so abruptly? Might it not be better to continue to lie, leaving life to disillusion them, remove the bright masks one by one?

I AM reminded of the void left in my education by the complete absence of algebra and geometry, and my year of philosophy cut short and undirected. Thence my repugnance to general ideas, to abstractions, the impossibility of my having any philosophic formulas. But one thing I know; to cry to my children: "Live your Life!" Torn with trouble as I am, it's hard. As to the little fellow, six years, he spent the breakfast hour questioning his mother — for that child has faith in no one but the mother, and turns always to her; — asking what death is, the soul and heaven; how one can be at the same time underground and above the blue. Of the eternal joys promised, a sole thing touched him, the idea of living again to die no more — "That, that's nice!" And he ate his cutlet with infinite relish.

WHAT a touchstone is an act decisive, unforeseen and sudden, like my letter the other day to the Academy: you should have seen some of the faces, the double and contrary current of impressions.

TO meet, learn to know each other: — two hatreds thus brought together sometimes destroy each other.

INDIFFERENT people: there are none.

I HATE Sir Oracle.

HER first lover. Gave herself up, at a students' tea, stupidly, sadly, not to be a prude, not daring to say she was pure.

TO recount — drama or romance: The effort of a man married to his mistress, who wishes to have his wife received in the world. Ease with which the woman forgets what she has been.

J — AFFIRMS that what happens at a distance does n't interest her; it affects her like a deed of a thousand years ago. She confounds time and space, height with breadth; it's all remoteness.

THE great beaker of A. R —. "Drink! draw in the cheer!" He is dead of it, poor giant, dead of his great bulk and his false strength.

IT is striking to see the transformation of certain beings, the changes life makes them undergo by divers meetings with good or bad fortune. A man whom I have always thought upright, appears to me at

bottom a knave; the hideous avarice of a certain woman suddenly discloses itself. Is it I who have changed? Is it the sharply ended friendship that clears my clouded eyes? No, all things change, are transformed. But then what becomes of my famous "issued from the press"? Alas! how dangerous to handle is a formula!

THE importance of good switching, at the moment when a life takes its direction. The careers of art are full of the derailed, the misdirected; full of routed lives. The assurance of him who passes, plume to the wind, sure of his road, and firm on the rails; how astonished he would be, if some one told him he is n't going to his destination. Musicians who paint, writers who are painters and nothing else.

GOOD title for a book: *In Distress!* to recount one of those crises of life when everything fails you at once.

HOW it rushes along, this end of a century! Transformations of a social order, shadow pictures on a screen! Cleave to the True, to the foundations of things.

MARK of a divided household, in spite of the prescribed smile of affection: always a friend at table, some one, no matter who, to put space between them.

THE man and the woman, a duality. And love lasts so long as there is not one vanquished, so long as

the other has not spoken his fiat, so long as the book holds a page interesting and noble, so long as the woman or the man reserves somewhat of body or spirit.

A FATHER'S authority, how far may it go? what is his duty? I see the flaw in the old world, the family imperfect, as the State is. The great cleft of the house of Usher, I perceive it from top to bottom of French society.

IRONY — what antiseptic!

WHERE is he, the man whose voice, whose manner does not change, the moment he is no longer tête-à-tête in a company of comrades? Ah, vanities of print! am I then the only one of my kind who loves the true, whose speech is ruled by his heart-beats!

H— LOSES his only son, seven years old, a cherub. Eight days after, returns to the fencing-school; carriage in mourning, shooting costume all black, black mantle, a veritable personage of Italian comedy.

I WAS saying the other day, how few brave men there are. It is n't *brave* one should say, and Dostoevski furnishes me the right word: *resolute*.

EVERY truth, once it is formulated, loses some of its integrity, verges toward a lie.

CURIOUS admission of a comedian, the last make-up. He is returning to real life, and stupefaction seizes him at sight of the distance between the two worlds. He was so happy before the scenes.

TITLE for a book: *Without Dissimulation.*

I HAVE a fear of installations! the dreamed-of table, the home of one's own: illness, death.

ANGER of the Midi; a debauchery of violence. Father F — comes in from hunting, fagged out, gameless, hungry, raging. Tempest in the kitchen of his country house; he abuses the servants, who move quickly and in silence and bend over the flame where the tardy pot is boiling. While the demoniac roars and perorates, a chicken comes in from the yard, making its little "pioo, pioo" gaily, confidently. Rage of the goodman, who with a kick sends the little chick rolling over the door-stone, half dead. The cat, passing, pounces on the chicken. Father F — more and more exasperated, darts forward: "Miserable cat, will you —" and seeing the cat run off without heeding him, the chick in its teeth, he takes the gun he had put down in a corner, fires on the cat, bowls it over, and stands exhausted and sobered before the bodies of his two pet animals, killed in an instant, because the soup was late. The emotion it gives him sets his blood surging again; he cannot eat, and goes to bed with a brew of vervain.

FOR *hypocondria* read: *ignorance of the doctors.*

WE have at our pension a very able fellow named So-and-So.

"What has he done, So-and-So?"

"Nothing, — but what he's going to do some day — . . . Is n't it true, you others?"

The others: "So-and-So? Ah! you'd better believe it!" and they laugh gloriously at the strong man of the group. There is such a man in every restaurant, café, club, atelier of Paris. The story of this unfortunate ought to be written, wearing his title in spite of himself, and ingenuously. Then the things he does to sustain his reputation, working himself gray, battering his brains, changing his language, his manners!

I AM thinking of the end of the world. Logically, according to human law, it will resemble its beginning, cold, the fires gone out, no more combustibles; the few survivors on the great raft, men and animals, crowded into caverns, groping about in the dark.

THE new honey.

I was working, the door open on the sloping garden, sweet-scented away down to the river, in the warm haze of a June morning. The bee came in, made a circuit, rocking and humming like a ball; lighted on the inkstand, on the ash-tray full of cigarette stumps.

Nothing for thee here, little bee; go roam about in the garden, over the flowers and honey-making grasses.

Out on the old honey! Out on Hymettus! I make the new honey, an individual honey, my own!

And the ambitious creature flew away to the kitchen and the refuse heaps of the backyard.

ON the train. A mosquito, trying to get out, beating the pane furiously, ceaselessly, in a frenzy. The

will of the little thing, all its stings out, its body tense; blows with the back, blows with the head, a trembling from one end to the other of its armor. And I have the thought: life, all life, is parted in equal doses, for great and small. These last, consumed in a breath, always in movement, in nervous commotion; needs of mating, of fighting, living in a day the hundred years of the pachyderm, with its scarce mating seasons, its slow-moving life, at large in a vast environment.

IN vain will forms of government change, kings disappear, and princes and nobility; men will always arrive at using whatever there is in them of native baseness, of the need to grovel and ingenuously vilify themselves.

"There are no longer fish in these nets," said an ex-minister, now deputy again.

"Never any fish at this season."

"Oh, come now! At this time last year the nets were full."

"But, hang it! last year you were minister," said the fisherman winking. He had passed eight days getting fish together, and had filled the nets himself.

CONTORTIONISTS of the phrase, dervishes, clowns, and cockneys; in the long run they end by believing in themselves.

UPON reflection, something truly diverting in *Choses Vues*: The profound utterance, 'tis always he who made it; the large thought, always his. He has foresight, hindsight, everything.

A good bit of Tartarin in that.

MYOPIA: when I lose my monocle, I need a monocle to find it; type of scientific research.

A DELICATE thing to be made out of the three days the little Jesus passes, lost in Jerusalem! They leave him a child, they recover him a God. These three days passed with his Father, who confides to him his mission. Linen robe of ideal fineness and whiteness, and eyes, eyes wherein is written what he is to suffer.

A Jerusalem like Algiers, like Arles; Ramadan and Fair of Beaucaire; odors of frying. On the return, 't is he who is on the ass, the father and mother on foot.

EXAGGERATIONS of people of the world; every sick man is going to die, every man they don't know is a scoundrel.

I RECOGNIZE the Midi in this Talleyrand, and if Napoleon escapes me, he is the one I hope to paint. Club-foot, Meridional, eighteenth-century corruption, priest.

AH! the people in the same boat: Stendhal, author of *Le Rouge et le Noir*, of *La Chartreuse*, who does n't find Madame Cottin ridiculous; and I, I have come to the defence of G. O—!

FINE thing, politics! Thiers letting them shoot Monseigneur Darboy: "They must shoot an archbishop!" He was thinking of '48, of Monseigneur Affre, and the blow his death dealt the insurrection.

HE'S a proud fellow; he accepts the favor without saying thank you; he even feels a little resentment against you, bears a grudge.

THE guide asks on which side of you he shall walk.

THE Misfortune of Boche, in two parts.

First part. Boche not bad, born with his eyes holden, does what he sees done, but feels nothing, perceives nothing; becomes a man of letters, initiation. His childhood very happy, he tells about it in a book, false, abominable. Everything turns deformed in his mind. It's altogether worse when he takes notes; he observes and observes, sees nothing, maugre his grand efforts, and stands his phrases on their heads. A fall down a staircase makes Boche very ill, but he lives, and comes out of it a man of genius.

Second part. After the fall. A book that makes a revolution, new school, *verism*, or *nebulism*. Boche, head of the school, gives out its points; then come solitude, heart-burnings, the journals no longer talk of him. "Nothing happens," he says. There is cholera, war, old Europe in convulsion, and Boche: "Nothing in the papers!" His wife, his children, nothing counts.

DURATION and destruction: two forces.

OBJECTS of love: instruments of torture.

POE wrote the *Raven*, later the genesis of this *Raven*. This — the after-stroke — American pleas-

antry, no doubt, but admired and emulated by our young school. The devil of the thing is to find the raven, the dry sob, the foreboding *never more*.

NAPOLEON at Saint Helena explains admirably all the acts of his life, with annotations. How sententious he is, how reasonable, how deliberate — he, the soul of spontaneity! Not a quarter of it true, not even in the notes.

THE Dark Chamber (in Wecker's dispensary), where stories confidential or fantastic grope about from bed to bed.

I HAVE a sudden thought of the moral good war has done me.

THE Midi: agitation in idleness.

HALT of a teamster at a turn in the road. Oh! but the way is long! The man, the horse, everything takes breath, the ponderous dray too, swaying from side to side.

SO many tenantless beings! One thinks he sees a spire of smoke, a lighted window; approaches. Nothing, the desert.

A FROG'S chant, harsh, rasping, that is what the voice of the nightingale becomes in June, when the nests are filled with fledgelings. As night falls, I hear in the park the birds twittering under the leaves. Apparent confusion, but the whole thing as orderly as the clock-work of a cathedral tower. With a little attention, one is able to distinguish play, quarrels,

housekeeping, preparations for sleep. The chilly little bodies, like the swallows, get still first; the cuckoo, far off, watches late, a noctambulist. At Paris, my blackbird wakes at dawn: at sundown, larks, wagtails, goldfinches, sparrows, silence. Then the night-hawk, the frogs, the screech owl, night. The darkening trees seem taller and closer. Come in, the air freshens.

MEN grow old, but they do not ripen.

FOUND some pages of notes, journeys, tramps, landscapes, of thirty years ago! Absolutely the sensation of dreams, all these scraps of my life. Dreamed, not lived.

THE back is so expressive, simply because it is not suspicious, does not think itself observed

SEE a man fire — 't is to know him.

AND when they have told each other everything — they begin again.

NOTE in passing the avowal of X—, so heart-rending, so ridiculous. He had deceived his wife, then, deserted in turn, and seized with desperate remorse, he felt the need of telling everything to the wronged woman, of confessing his sins. I dissuaded him. "Make a hole in the ground, rather, and tell your fault, if that will soothe you: but why cause pain? You would be pardoned now, but the confession would mine ahead, you would meet it again and again." Thinking of this, recalls those husbands who

tell their young wives their past good fortunes. The wife says nothing, she expands toward life, listens curious and disturbed. Imprudent man, you will see later on!

THERE is always in families, especially those whose types are most salient and most similar, some brutal exception which seems a revenge, a violent protestation of Nature and her laws of equilibrium. Thus C—, in the midst of his tribe of Jewish bankers hoarding and grasping, is himself a capricious prodigal, a rudderless bohemian, the despair of all his kin. The strange part of it is that with his drawn eyelids and misshapen mouth, he is physically more a Jew than all the rest. I, in my environment so desperately bourgeois, was a little like that.

IN the train. A soul is passing; the wife of the switchman has just been struck by a buffer. She lies there on the other track, young, her heavy black hair about her. At night, on our way back, the husband stands in his doorway, holding the flag, his handkerchief to his eyes, sobbing. Two little children are playing round the little house, whose funeral tapers pierce the dusk of evening.

THE answer of Doctor S—: "How much a visit?" — "It is n't by the visit, it's by the year."

HAVE been reading the journal of a poet. The great de Vigny, prisoner of expression, has the visions of genius, but a diction formal, heavy, painful: the head is eloquent, the hand halts.

MATERNITY in Paris: no more mothers. In society, of most young girls the physician says: "Do not let her marry, or beware of the first child!"

I NOTE this significant mark of the letters of Jacquemont: in a few days he had become the intimate friend of all those cold Englishmen, and was drawing from them a thousand confidential things of which they never spoke among themselves. How many joys those people forego, withholding the expression of tender feeling.

BELOW, the highway, the canal of the Durance, windmills, little stone bridges like asses' backs, a stream flanked by plane-trees with trunks as white as if plastered, the cafés and hotels of a rich town, the new walls of the school that is building. Above, the former village, clinging to the cliff; tottering buildings, wrought-iron balconies, a door of the Renaissance, pediment and columns crumbling to dust with their notary's signs. Higher yet, the really primitive village, narrow alleys, ruined walls, refuse heaps; every ten paces an arch, a postern, old women, the color of the stones, sitting on sunken doorsteps. Overhead, the crumbling dungeon tower, opening its windows to space. Then the mountain with its shrines along the rocky and zigzag route; and at the very top, new like the school, the convent, rising on the ruins of the old feudal castle dead at its feet, the Church alone playing its part against the modern world. It is Orgon. History is there, written in those stones — a history that lies not nor quibbles, the true.

FOUND again the genuine Provençal smack, in this last journey to Cavaillon. Decameron in front of the farmhouse, sunbonnets in the shadow of the great litter heap: the farmer and his wife listening gravely to discussions about the beginnings of Provence, Massilia, Carthage, Rome, the Gauls.

AT Saint-Rémy, the *antiques*. Sky gray, rocks gray, exquisite landscape in a circle of mountainets, with an opening on magnificent horizons. Away off, the sun's rays striking on bell towers, visible at phantasmal distances. A lane of pines leads to an old house, gloomy, mysterious, its fast closed gates, yellow shutters and high walls framed in soft green, at the turning of a white road. "Let's come and see!" . . . The shouts of a voice, a voice of the North, not of this country, rise at intervals from behind the great walls. At once I think it may be the madhouse. We ask a passing peasant, and find that it is. When he has gone, we look at each other in silence, dismayed and saddened in this abruptly transformed landscape, which is always to stay with me in the colors of dreams, shot across by that cry, monotonous, almost animal. The first time I heard the lion at Matmatas, at nightfall, I had the same kind of sensation, was present at one of these sudden changes of scene. Once again, and always, everything is within us.

FRIENDLY and at ease all through his visit, then at the end, a "Good day, sir," which puts things back in their places; hands apart, nothing accomplished. Propriety.

DUEL in the stud-meadow. Great undulations of green, fenced in by wooden railings that one must stride. Horses untethered, bounding, that come to see, and are driven away. In the middle of the pasture, the tiny stable, and all about it the earth trodden and yellow, where they grappled on a field the size of a ship's deck. Remembrance of the two profiles, a modern struggling with a chevalier of the middle ages, hand to hand, walking, turning round the little building; horrified cries of the doctors, and we following this surge of battle, this mad-dog struggle. The sky clear, beautiful, and all at once a sense of the imbecility of our emotion, the pettiness and pretence of our gestures and our cries. All human resentment appeared to me base, ugly, profitless. Puerility, puerility! I was more than ever persuaded that man wrinkles, withers, silvers, loses his teeth, but remains a child.

THE pretty gesture, showing the baby's band she's sewing.

THE unconsciousness of one's being, in moments of strenuous action. Courageous, cowardly? — one might have been either. And what a mist around it all!

THE incarnations of P. D—. Not a bit of personality, always playing a rôle in the town. All the professions I've known him vaguely essay were to him veritable stock parts, as they say at the theatre. I've seen him play the merchant, *à l'américaine*, hurried, rude, "time is money," inexorable; the sportsman,

in a phaeton, tipping over at every turn, breaking his friends' crowns; the cynical bohemian, in a porter's cap, wide breeches, twirling an enormous bludgeon wind-mill fashion; but the part never came, for all that. Then, an old gentleman, small proprietor aping the big ones; frock-coat, ivory-topped cane, big platinum snuff-box. No real profession, a barn-stormer; he does n't live, he fills parts.

YES, Goethe is right, Othello is not a jealous man; he is ingenuous, a passionate primitive. He has an attack of jealousy, but not a jealous spirit: otherwise, and it is I who discover this, Iago would be needless. All the villainous and calumnious machinations of Iago, a jealous Othello would have found within himself. He would be his own poisoner, — bitter, subtle, insidious, devilish, all the time continuing to be a very brave man, a hero.

A MAN and his "*tirant d'eau*." The word is Napoleon's. But did he say how much this "*draught*" is modified by the years, by circumstances?

I BELIEVE there is in history nothing more extraordinary than the episode of that Bishop of Agra who followed the Vendean army, blessing the standards and cannon, and chanting the *Te Deum*. Suddenly, through a mysterious letter from the Pope, it is learned that the bishop is an impostor, unknown in the ranks of the Church. How proceed? Unmask him? the chiefs do not dare, what would the peasantry say? Besides, deprive themselves of this influence? And

the bishop continued to follow the army, to bless, to pontificate, to confirm — a little sad, but resigned, feeling that he had been discovered, for the generals and the priests scarcely spoke to him, though forced to honor him in public. Who was this man? It has been said, a spy of Robespierre's; but he was guillotined by the Jacobins. I think rather an ambitious man without a star, an adventurer in the Church, a priest in imagination.

MAKE a drama *à la* "Lorenzaccio," with Maximilian.

CRISPI visits Palermo, Catania, and so forth, disguised as a tourist, to deceive the police, and takes down notes in museums and cathedrals, and, at the same time, observations on barracks and bombs. Curious, the story of it; the page and its reverse.

A GOOD subject for comedy is Tiberge: What with counselling his friend and preaching to him, caught himself also, in the end.

THERE is fire there! I am thinking of passion, and its consuming side. "I am secure," says the plain and quiet gentleman. No security against passion, the fatal kind, the veritable; an ogress, to whom the being gives itself for food, and everything it loves — mother, wife, children. And a joy to give all this, and to suffer a thousand cruel deaths in the giving. A mystery; pathology very difficult.

BAUDELAIRE, quintessence of Musset; Verlaine, extract of Baudelaire.

I AM struck by the little variety, little originality, in this under-stratum of society, these depths of vice and crime. Nothing personal, a residue, an agglutination, which the individual goes to join, where he loses himself, confounds himself with the mass, having no longer human form.

THE heroes of evil. Sometimes crime demands for its accomplishment the same amount of energy, courage, intelligence, will, as the brilliant action, the heroic deed. Storehouse of vital force, cutler's stall, whence Nature has taken arms of like temper for crime or for duty.

FOR some months, coolness toward Montaigne: Diderot has taken his place. Very curious, these infidelities of the mind, little dramas of the libraries, the intellectual harems. My brain, an impassioned pacha, but right capricious.

BORN an outcast, he became an anarchist.

THE men of the advance-guard in literature need a peculiarly audacious temperament, the spirit of the spoiler, an unrestraint of action and of onslaught not permitted to the rank and file, nor to the mounted leaders.

LAST night there came to me the idea of a play, which should be a succession of tableaux giving the history of a family, with its heritage of maladies, infirmities, tempers, and fads; or again, a prologue in Louis XIV. costumes, with a radical type, which

should reappear a century later, and reproduce, in costumes of to-day, another *him*, with the same destiny. The piece was to be named *The So-and-So's, or the Heritage*. Perhaps, parallel with this, a younger son, called in the family the chevalier, who should renounce the paternal name and title, and in the end found a bourgeois family called simply *Chevalier*.

THE family reflects the State. It is democratized in France, at the present day: it was monarchic and then constitutional, after having been despotic and Louis-Quatorze.

STANDING in front of the library shelves, stretching out your hand on the hazard of a good choice, and gleaning a few pages here and there, this is for the mind, that delicious bite they sent you to get in the garden, when you were little, giving you a piece of bread, and permission to trespass as far as you could reach on the grape arbor or the espalier.

STRANGE apparitions, that seem to come unevoked, of certain people figuring in your past life, and also of certain episodes or places forgotten absolutely, which now pass before you with the rapidity of a bird-flight. Those who, like me, suffer from long hours of wakefulness, are familiar with this. One should never be taken unprepared, should note down these things he will probably never see again.

How vain are all these theories and discussions! What do they mean with their suppression of scenes in the romance? Scenes, there are always scenes

wherever there are beings and assemblies of beings. Scenes in the Bible, in that historical romance, the *Iliad*, and the romance of manners, the *Odyssey*. There are none in the *Imitation*, which is only philosophic dissertations. Eh, mon Dieu! no more scenes, no more scenes! The romantic taste is becoming debauched.

L— TOLD me this story. A young man having asked his sister in marriage, he took steps to get the *casier judiciaire* of the youth. The friend whom he had at the Palais de Justice said: "If there is nothing, if the papers are clean, we can tell you so; if there is anything in them, professional secrecy obliges us to be silent." A number of days passed, then the recorder saying: "I can tell you nothing, my friend." I find in this mystery something dramatic and torturing.

I AM thinking of Othello again: to have made him a black, a mulatto, in short, of an inferior race, is the stroke of genius; for the true jealousy, the tormenting, is accompanied by ugliness, infirmity, inferiority.

DOUBLE mystery of the foreign woman: mystery of the woman, mystery of the language. Two unknowns!

I AM thinking of the painter Legros, who did not know English, the language of his wife and children.

LOVE episode for a Shakespearean comedy: The young man has no understanding with the woman he

loves, pays her no attentions; delicious situation for another woman, who mistakes, thinks he loves her.

A WRITER who will not bear either quoting or reading aloud. There remains, when the book is closed, what remains of a conversation.

“RARE the soul that dares be what it is.”

Verse and verity alike admirable. Guess whose: Boileau's.

OBSERVATION I've often made. People I have known, chanced to meet in life, then lost, forgotten, come to sight again before they die. So, quite recently, little V. D—, with whom I had long ago broken off all relations, and who came to renew them this year; so, too, M. R—, one of the last ministers of Napoleon III. And how many others!

SOMETIMES, little sure of the truth or originality of an idea, I have it adopted and offered by some one else. We don't lack men of this type in literature, lay-figures, like dressmakers' models, full of stateliness and grand airs, imagining the luxurious attire they wear is theirs.

THE ill-starred. That De Long, who commanded the *Jeannette*; the opposite of Stanley; appalling run of ill luck, in great things as in small: a mystic, heady, but not a quality of the man of action. Above all, without a star!

Beside these ill-starred, are those I call bastards of Fortune. Always a bar across the arms, that bar which tarnishes the scutcheon.

RE-READ last night *The Forest*, by Stanley; philosophized much thereupon. He sees in it the image of a life small and insignificant; for me, on the contrary, it is an admirable vision of the world disorganized, of chaos awaiting order, light: *Fiat lux!*

WHAT a beautiful study in these last few letters of Balzac: *A rich marriage!* What dramas between the lines, between the words; what lessons!

WHAT a marvellous instrument of sensation I have been, above all, in my childhood! At a distance of so many years, certain streets of Nîmes, where I passed only now and then, dark, cool, narrow, smelling of spices; the drugs, the house of Uncle David—all come to me in a far-off accord of time, sky, sound of bells, exhalations from the shops.

It must be that I was porous and penetrable; impressions, sensations to fill stacks of books; and all as intense as dreams.

GENIUS! genius! it is life, an accumulation of intense living. And as life burns low, in like measure does genius decline, and the disposition to feel, and the power to express.

A CITY of buffoons, a people of jugglers—Paris has become that.

A SAYING of Boche's after his fall: "I am fortunate to have lost my memory, for I always re-read myself with new pleasure."

“A VERY little boy
Was setting off for school . . .”

These dainty verses of Madame Desbordes-Valmore's always come to my mind, when I see in action one of those neo-naturalists, neo-symbolists, etc., doing a hard task in violence to his tastes and temperament, — setting off for school, in short!

AFTER reading the correspondence of the Ampères: Struck by the difference between the men of those times and the men of our own: gentleness, kindness. And always the academic lobbying.

A HOUSEHOLD, — so supposed to be, — and charming. The man's friend comes there, petted, pampered. In time the man himself makes a regular, bourgeois marriage. . . . What shall they do to see each other? It is the young wife who says to her husband: “I don't wish to rob you of a friend; this woman is honorable, you say, the story you told me is touching; let us see them.” Annoyance of the husband; somewhat afraid of the lady; good fellow but very experienced. “They're not married,” he says, “it's only pretence.” . . . They see each other, nevertheless. Then one fine day the friend marries the mistress Ugly reports abroad in the world — the two women in the same boat, both declassed; and I see confusedly attractive scenes, and a crowd of amusing figures of women.

WHAT an escape for inventive minds is the imagination. In a child's abridged history, three lines on Philippe le Bel, that I had the little chap recite —

food for dreams, invention, construction. All this rushes through my mind as I think of Shakespeare, and what a line of Plutarch becomes in the magical chamber of his brain. I think also of my light-keepers, and what this Plutarch, unique book, represented to them.

P— SAID a very good thing to me about the fashion in which black spreads, in painting as in literature. One puts down a dab, and the canvas, the whole book is full of it; it gushes, it creeps, oil and ink.

THE modern Napoleon: Stanley, a traveller.

MYSTERY of races. I am thinking of that Russian, K—, I had never seen before, who, at the end of a breakfast, related to me the reckless life of his wife, and her violent death on a pleasure jaunt. And as he talked on, I felt that he would bear me a grudge for his confidence, as involuntary. Never seen since.

AND that other, cousin of a great man, who talked to us a whole evening about himself and his, proffered his soul, open to its inmost recesses; love, faith, a whole confession: then good-night! never a word of him, even a reminder of his name, which I have completely forgotten. Beside these Slavs, we are, — we of the South, — hermetic, like emery, veritable Saxons.

FINE end for a romance: two brothers, whom marriage has separated, their children established, one unhappy in his home, the other having lost his wife,

begin again the life of their childhood, lodge together, ruminate on their early adventures.

WHAT horror, after all, to reflect that there is no joy so pure, so delicate as not to have lees, no happiness whose reverse can be looked at without fear.

HAVE re-read *Lorenzaccio*, struck by the disinterestedness of such a work. The theatre speaks to the crowd, the book to the individual: the difference of their two esthetics is there.

AS I read and re-read the letters and memoirs of the eighteenth century, — *Memoirs of Vigée Lebrun*, letters to Mademoiselle Volland, — it strikes me how often I have encountered that old France in my own home in the provinces, where the evolution of manners has been slower; countless details, convivial songs, even to the absence of a beard. Vision of that face of a clerk, book-keeper for the vine-growers of Camargue, seen at Fontvieille only three years ago: he was a personage of before '89.

VAUVENARGUES, from the heart of Provence: corroborates my observations on the colorless style of the men of the Midi.

NAPOLEON knows no jealousy of the past, that is null. But the other, the others, he has them all.

TALLEYRAND, reputation for craft, as some people have a reputation for good humor, because they arrive with a retinue. The genial Monselet: Ah!

ah! ah! here comes Monselet! Yes, yes, false, crafty — Talleyrand, and one side of him the spitefulness of infirmity.

APROPOS of the instantaneous: mistake of fixing transient things, the fugitive, a gesture, a fall. The same in the realm of morals; those sudden ideas that cross your mind in flight, and that you would like to submit to the microscope, to analysis. But a criminal thought may graze an honest brain without imbedding itself; that does n't count.

I SEE that the French nation has lost its amiability. This dates from the end of Louis Philippe's reign — even from the end of the Restoration. I attribute it to the entrance of the dollar, of money into France: hardness, rudeness. Perhaps also the admixture of realism in literature and art.

“HOW fast you live,” H. J— said to me; “the most active nations of Europe are, intellectually, forty years behind Paris.”

My friend the Anglo-American did not tell me all his thought. Yes, we live fast, very fast, skim things, without ever going to the bottom; the book read at a gulp, all subjects treated, all questions handled, elucidated. But how we lack application!

MIRAGE: To me, reflection carried thousands of leagues in the flanks of a cloud.

THE dinner where that provincial told us how his brothers and he had made a fortune through exploit-

ing the idea of Balzac, the silver scoria of the mines of Sardinia. I thought of the martyrdom of Balzac, of his quest, his chase of fortune, of his letters, passionate, feverish, of his bitter disappointment.

OUR young men less taken with the poets and novelists than with the critics and historians, didactic and dogmatic, who continue the tradition.

THE great antagonism between Paris and the provinces, which I find everywhere since 1870. The provincial Trochu hated Paris, and now L— of Montélimart, charged with the safeguard of the city, inspires in me only a half confidence. Tell some day of what Paris is made, what we owe her.

RUSSIAN pathos: I return to it again. No, Sonia is not the whole of human misery, it is not over her that *I* should have wept!

WHETHER we serve for anything: are we chance passengers, simply ballast of a packet going to a destination, or is it the contrary?

READING *Eugénie de Guérin* I cry out: "Why did not we all stay at home, in our own quiet corners of the earth?" How our minds would have gained, from the point of view of originality in the etymological sense of the word, that is to say, potency of origin.

BRAVE soldier, dying on the miserable pallet of the ambulance, open your eyes once more, raise yourself,

see what the great Emperor sends you ; it is a bit of red ribbon, cut out of our flag ; fasten it on your breast ; your suffering will cease.

But see the soldier weeping, and if any one says it is for joy, believe not a word of it ; there is no despair like his.

SKETCH of a politician, once a small journalist and writer of vaudeville, now turned statesman, trying to give himself ballast, mincing walk, his hands behind his back, gray academic coat, buttoned to the chin, and the *Journal des Débats* ; mimic doctrinaire, nodding his head, mouth a round O, breath drawn in ; putting stones in his pockets for fear the wind will abduct him.

ITCHING fingers, that do not wait to leave mine before testing the piece I slip into them, and show astonishment, joy, or discontent : " Only that ! "

THERE was once a very crafty old cat, who claimed acquaintance with all the forms of mouse-traps, and all the ways of attaching bacon to catch the little animals. But there was a maker of mouse-traps, more crafty than he, who gave him very disagreeable surprises. And this maker of traps was called Life.

PEOPLE who never suffer the stroke, but the counter-stroke of fortune ; joy or sorrow, they are struck only on the rebound. Observation on myself, and the small part I have taken in the things that have made me what I've been.

OF a woman: I count her visits by the griefs she's caused me.

HISTORY, the life of collective man; the novel, the life of individual man.

ABRUPT new vision of life, when the brigand puts himself squarely outside of law, looks on theft as the chase, every shop-window as game, judges and police as gamekeepers. And the side Crusoe-like and childish, the wine drunk from the hogshead, through a straw, the perpetual and active vigilance.

THE laugh of Voltaire, left behind him at Berlin, made harsher, heavier, in the mouths of the Germans, is found again in some authors: Heinrich Heine, music of Offenbach.

I AM trying to analyze the feeling of chill at the heart, the shiver of fear or pain, that seizes me on certain winter mornings, when I put myself at my work-table, the light dim and yellow, the fire roaring, no sky.

This peculiar anguish, which makes me want to crouch in a corner, efface myself, comes without doubt from the custom of being played in the winter, published in the winter, above all, criticised in the winter. On such mornings one has the habit of remembering only that it is the hour for reading the newspapers, — so many papers whose venom bismirches you, — the hour when one must set himself at work, the habitual hour of battle.

OUR anger, confused as battles where the aides-de-camp are supposed to be the bearers of orders which from cowardice or accidental cause they never give. All our passionate impulses comparable to that. It is not till all is over that we pretend to have acted from such and such motives.

B—, SITTING opposite that young woman, each entirely preoccupied with self and the effect made on the other. They are both safe from all surprises. And this singular flirtation may last a long time.

MYSTERIOUS noise at the *Invalides*, in the tomb of Napoleon, at certain recent dates.

MAKE an episode out of the death of that British ship, cut in two by its vice-admiral, and foundered with fifteen hundred men. Mad suicide or recurrent mania; admirable matter in the stern framework of discipline, and the exotic landscape of a Bengal gulf.

HOW should one read the novels of the Goncourts? The question was put to me by a very ingenuous gentleman.

POSTSCRIPT of a letter of Bonaparte's, which speaks of his "Southern blood" flowing in his veins with the impetuosity of the course of the Rhone. To make an epitaph for my Napoleon, Emperor of the Midi.

WHEN I arrive at Champrosay, where I leave my Sainte-Beuve rusticating while I am in Paris, I have

always the sensation of finding again an old gentleman in silk cap, smooth-faced and erudite, whose talk, substantial and varied, makes a change from the silly chatter of all winter long. Naturally, while he asks questions and I respond, I cannot help contrasting the two epochs, and finding that in the times of Sainte-Beuve, if people were not more serious than now, they at least attempted to appear so.

RENAN, peripatetic of life.

THE bridges of Paris: peddlers of gossip from one society to another.

EVERYTHING is epileptic: we no longer laugh, we go into convulsions.

BEAUTIFUL anecdotes of love, chaste and well told, are they worth a book of amatory philosophy? Ah, pedantic Youth, vaguely imitative, nevertheless!

GOETHE in his "Elective Affinities" has felt the influence of the poor eighteenth-century French romances.

FELT two or three times, apropos of Napoleon, the horror of the human mess.

DESCRIBE some day the feeling of tenderness stirred within me by the apparition, at a turn in the way, of the rose and white peak of the Jungfrau; sensation delicately voluptuous, in which literature had no part. I comprehend the name of virgin,

maiden, given to this snow under the glimpses of the sun; — a maiden asleep, and whom sleep discovers; roses and lilies.

THE broken communications between the preceding generations and our own: incomprehension amounting even to hatred.

ACTION, action! Rather than dream, saw wood to make your blood circulate!

ODD enough, the love affairs of Byron and Countess Guiccioli! she, enraptured with the idea that the eyes of the world were on her, on the two together; and he, more tired of it all day by day. I think of all the Byronians I have known, and find them the same, of identical pattern. — Why?

ALL the picturesque topographical detail we have of the earthly paradise is that an angel with flaming sword guarded the entrance, and that the tree of knowledge flourished therein. The tree of knowledge! Knowledge, then, preceded love? Everything has come from beneath that tree.

FORTUNE. When Napoleon — to whom one must always return in thinking of fortune's wheel, of a star, of the fairy destiny of man — when Napoleon begins to decline, it is striking to see his best props fall first all around him. It is by Lannes that fate makes the first rent, then Duroc; — crackings in advance of the earthquake, warnings of the disaster to come.

I believe it is so with all fortunes; they are not

made at a stroke, nor do they fall in a moment. I think of this as I see my friends dying about me, my best and most valiant defenders. Strokes at the heart, the beginning of one's own death knell! It is for that reason, no doubt, that I feel these departures so deeply.

IT has not been sufficiently noted, that from Taine and his theories are drawn the principles of the two great schools of the novel — the naturalistic and the psychological: Balzac and Stendhal.

VANITY is carried outside, hampering like a sack of coins; pride, on the contrary, is worn within, invisible.

WHAT inclines me to believe in Hindoo superstitions, in the migrations of souls through different species to arrive at the state of man, is that we find all men to have, at the depths of them, something like a remembrance of the beast they have been and are always ready to become again.

WHAT is the most alarming thing in life? Great happiness.

CONVERSATION about pain, between Jesus and the two thieves on the cross.

STRIVE against men of ill-will, who are like submerged jetsam, moving and traitorous reefs which cleave the ship under its water-line.

And keep this formula: Let us try to heal with literature the evil literature has done.

SOMETHING fine to make out of "War." State of mind of a young man of the Second Empire, whose life, day in and day out, left no room for upward strivings, knew no standard of duty. Illuminated suddenly, he understood life, one long night of guard, while great flames mounted silently over the woods of Malmaison.

Then a soliloquy: "Had I been killed, what would have remained of me? what traces of my pride?— Nothing accomplished!" Fierce examination of conscience.

INTERESTING to write, the romance of the young consumptive, honest hitherto, then, in her illness, inaction, exaltation, head full of a young author. They write to each other, *poste restante*. The husband discovers it, and, filled with pity, explains to himself this sentimental need, which he perhaps could not satisfy.

DEATH! so I call the dark passage and its anguish, not the absence of being which precedes and follows life.

I READ in the memoirs of Constant, that the mechanic Maelzel had contrived an apparatus of automatic limbs for replacing those shot off in battle. Skeleton of a fine dialogue between the conqueror and the mechanic.

ACTORS unconscious and inglorious of a play whose end alone is known to us.

DREAMS

I RECORD here some of my dreams, which have appeared to me out of the common. Some day I shall elaborate them, if I have the time.

I have let not a few escape. Every one knows how dreams fade — how they impress you and then vanish.

THAT evening we had talked a long time of Maximilian. I had been much struck with the fine romantic flavor of his adventures. Here is a dream that came of it: We were trying to get a carriage, Place Saint-Sulpice, in the midst of an animated crowd. Arriving at the station, we found the first carriage just taken, a sort of gala carriage, white reins. Quick for the second: taken too. So there was a crush of cabs and carriages filled with people in gala dress. The last was a sort of cart, drawn by two horses, like a great truck over which a long tent had been thrown, giving it the appearance of a gypsy's canvas-covered wagon without a window. They said: "It is a Mexican cart." I approach, part the curtain, and see a bed: on this bed, her head lying on a lace pillow, a woman with the great coiffure of a gray sister, pale, like wax, her eyes closed, her hands crossed: I did not see her very well. At one side, on a table, a silver vase, as for holy water, a sprinkler, and a little candle that lighted it all. The daylight without, entering a little through the canvas, and the candle flaring pale red, made together a singular light, so

soft! — I was greatly moved: this woman, dead, there, in this place, in the midst of this life and bustle and sunshine, at this cab station — waiting.

IT is in dreams that I have felt most deeply the intense poetry of landscapes. One night I saw a little pool, all shadowed with leaves — fine, airy, like Corot's. It was no bigger than a hand-mirror, gleaming there between the softly radiant leaves. Never did a loved face bathed in tears move me as that pool. — Strange!

A SINGULAR dream: Prussian soldiers at a farm, one singing a fine song, in a beautiful voice. The song said: "When the Prussian soldier comes to a farm, he does not ravage it nor set it afire, — nothing of that, for he is a father, and he sees little cradles all about."

Across the way the French were singing: *En avant, Fanfan la Tulipe!* (Written before the war.)

VERSES recited in a dream:

The while above her heart her white hand lies,
She sees her happiness with inward eyes.

OTHER verses made while dreaming:

TO JULIA

When sounds the hour supreme within thy soul,
Weep not, nor cry aloud, nor know dismay;
Make of thy thoughts one thought, of those one whole
Who love thee, look on them, join hands, and pray.

TO add to my studies in dreams. What impresses me most is the lavish intensity of life in them. Reality there is so impressive, everything strikes you, sinks in more deeply than in waking. 'Tis there that one feels how the body, the senses cumber our delicate sensations and perceptions, since the spirit, freed from its bands, feels more deeply, sees better, suffers or enjoys more. Oh! the landscapes seen in dreams, simple as they may be, how they stay with you, how you see them!

IN a dream: an eye without lashes, immense, undefined, covered with bluish mist, bleared, sightless. I said: "See it! it has the look of some one crying out, — calling into the night."

ONE of the strangest phenomena of dreams is the participation in them of reality; the very real noises about one often mingle with his dream, play a part in it.

LAST night I had again a dream of nature, like the beautiful ones I used to have long ago. But I did not write it down at once, and I feel that it has faded.

There was a village, on the brink of an abyss, up on a mountain that was crumbling away, dragging down each day a bit of wall, a street corner, the angle of a house. A red flag, staff in the ground, warned against entering the village, and the guides, with great precaution, took us over the least dangerous quarters. Every instant a hollow thud, or a slide

of stones into the abyss, and the laughter of prying children, saving themselves from the houses as they tottered and went down to ruin in the great hole.

A DREAM. I was giving a lecture at college, and to explain in a figure by what series of attempts the idea arrives at its true formula, I told the story of a match, from the piece of wood dipped in pans of sulphur, to the phosphorescent match, the Swedish, the English. So many steps ahead, to retrograde in turn; so many completions that are not so.

THERE is a magical country I have seen only in dreams, but which I see there often, and always the same. There are cities, or rather islands, with white houses among rocks and clumps of wormwood, all leading down to the sea, to great quays full of sunshine, with fountains, girls in brilliant costumes, carrying water-jars on their heads, or seated on great stone steps. Odor of tar in the sun, of flowers crisping in the heat; the rigging of the ships quivering in the hot air. These islands are all on the left. The boat in which I am grazes them with its sails; the sea is smooth, profoundly blue, and I coast along this fairyland (realistic though fairy-like), full of emotion from these cries of joy, this life, this gayety in the sunshine. In my dream this is called Corsica, and its language is the Greek of the Archipelago. I always go by, never stop.

LONDON

FORBIDDING, the first impressions of Dover. Homecoming English; rocks, barracks, stretch of open country like Japan; glimpses of English decoration, Kate Greenaway scenes behind wooden fences, little cottages like toys, painted, varnished, all alike; horses at large, sheep and cattle grazing, mad course of a horse afraid of the train.

LONDON, Victoria Station, aristocratic quarter, houses uniform, all in a line, porticos of dark stone or red. Windows shut. One of the most striking impressions of your arrival — this mute and close aspect of the houses, this fastening of port-holes, portentous in the clear sunshine and beautiful spring weather we bring with us; one can easily imagine the distress of a poor man and a stranger under a pall of fog.

MORNING promenade, under a splendid sun, in Hyde Park, a lesser Bois, but in the midst of the city, not outside. Throng of landaus, carriages, horsewomen, young girls with loose masses of tawny hair and little boating caps, galloping on ponies; and just one side, separated from all this neighboring luxury by only a low rail of wood or iron, ragamuffins, vagabonds, coatless, shoeless, lying flat in the high grass, visions of squatting brutes, bison-backed, seeming to await the rifle-shot of Stanley. This drowsing antithesis is certainly to French eyes a most disquieting thing.

Not a glance falls from the equipages toward the brutes; no more does one of the brutes interrupt his sleep, or his sinister and sombre and furtive meal, to cast envious eyes on all this luxury. And as I was admiring the strange security of it all, an Englishman suddenly said to me: "Don't be too confident. In 1867 or '8 the people of London, as a punishment for some disobedience, were condemned by the Queen to enter Hyde Park no longer. In one night all the railings of the Park were down; not a yard of iron remained in place. Immediately the privilege was restored. There are mutual concessions between the English government and the people, and where there is need, the police look the other way."

FINE aspect of the Thames, at the giant bridge. Passage of a ship, the bridge opens, rises; trusses perpendicular, the roadway with its traces of horses, decorations which drop; tricks of the boards!

Many times in London this impression of paste-board monuments, of a vast Middle-Age pandemonium; everywhere battlements, turrets, monoliths, statues on gigantic socles; a sense of solidity, but now and then, especially in the modern works, an exaggerated sense of it.

FROM the first, struck by the crying colors of the omnibuses covered with announcements and fluttering handbills — wandering signboards. Countless telegraph wires crossing one another on the roofs.

MISTAKE of the stranger who asks to see the under side, the horrors of London; these sights are all around you, under your hand — customs so different from ours.

HOME of the Dean of Westminster; tea in the great Gothic room with stained windows; then the visit to the Abbey. Promenade of a grub through the heavy stone pages of an enormous history; shades of Gloucester, Charles I., Cromwell.

Here the kings and queens are crowned: here all sorts of great men are buried. Admirable sight, but marred by the haphazard interment of the comedians. Some disorder anyway, as in the monuments of the city generally. The Latin genius and its rectitude are absent.

DICKENS' sons. The elder secretary of a theatre. Tale for children to be made from Dickens' little grandson, who wishes to pass a night in what he calls his grandfather's chamber. The night in Westminster: the child's terror.

PASSION for the Middle Ages in English architecture; it seems to have invented nothing since, a thing which makes the London decorations rather monotonous.

IN the country, Box Hill, little station with great columns and capitals, vaulted like a church of the twelfth or thirteenth century.

Arrival on the platform of George Meredith; not very tall, but looking it, English cap with two visors,

worn negligently, *à la française*; face intellectual, nose straight and reddened, white beard, very short. He leans on the arm of a friend, walks with difficulty; sensation of fraternal irony, these two novelists who trail the wing like two wounded gulls, birds of the tempest, punished for affronting the gods. Chance for a story *à la* Swift. Meredith's humming as he walks. A fine monologist, learned in the Greco-Latin languages, knows all the Provençal writers, all the young men of the reviews.

Cottage in the midst of verdure, which he has n't left for twenty years; little alleys of box leading down a rather sharp incline to the rustic chalet where the novelist works, even sleeps sometimes; life of the recluse and artist. Idealist, Meredith, refusing to see anything near him, around him; and yet, what a beautiful piece of verse to France in 1870! A subtle writer, too much so for the general. His deafness, like a drawbridge always up, hampers him in his intercourse with men, and he soliloquizes perpetually, as he hums in walking, in an automatic voice, a rasping English voice. He speaks more slowly in French, with mouth wider open, as if our words were of smaller dimensions than those of the English. Never to be forgotten, that visit to Box Hill.

On the way back, H. J—tells about the life of Stevenson at Samoa: a return to primitive existence, his wife and her mother living in *gandouras*, a sort of night-dress, hair loose over the shoulders. A young midshipman to whom Stevenson had given a letter of introduction to H. J—, arrived at his house four or five months after Stevenson's death. "So," said the

graceful writer, "one Sunday morning I had at breakfast a fine, bronzed young fellow, who brought me the latest news of the dear friend already wept for many a day."

OPPOSITE us, in Dover street, typical old English residence, dingy sash windows, air-tight, rose blinds, clear glass. Before the door a great carriage—coachman and footman blooming with bouquets—into which gets an old lady, coiffed and robed in antique fashion, conducting to the drawing-room of Her Majesty a little miss in white, shoulders thin and sharp, décolleté astonishing in broad daylight. Two brothers coming with their bicycles to see their young sister's first court dress. In the middle of the silent street, a hand-organ, accompanying the songs and jigs that two or three burnt-cork minstrels, bare-footed and hideously dressed in black, are droning and dancing to perfection: American foolery. Striking contrast of the old and new England. And to finish this corner of a picture *à la* Hogarth,—whose works I had reviewed the evening before, in two volumes of photographs,—away at the top of the old-time house there appeared in the narrow frame of a mansard window, a young maid in a light striped dress, following as she stood, with shoulders and hips, the demoniacal movements of the jig the minstrels were singing and dancing.

The mute and mysterious house that I had watched with curiosity from the hotel window, offered me that day, in five minutes, admission to its cloistered life; for we were invited by our neighbor, the old countess,

mistress of the aforesaid house, to an informal luncheon, *en famille*. Refused! Good for actors on a tour.

HOLLAND HOUSE, a residence unique in London. At Kensington, in the very midst of the city's throng and rush, a high seigniorial grille, before which stands a liveried porter, opens on a magnificent park of feudal verdure; winding gravel walks lead up to a sixteenth century château with turrets, posterns, great corridors broken here and there by uneven steps. We are received by the Countess of H—, in a great apartment with high ceiling, walls tapestricted with a library of four or five tiers of books. In a great fireplace, hung round with eighteenth-century family portraits, a great fire is burning; for the day is dark and damp, remarkable at the end of April.

High windows of unstained glass open on lawns stretching as far as the eye can see, vast pastures where troops of cattle and sheep are grazing; and this in the heart of London, in a quarter where the land is worth nobody knows how much a foot.

Tea is served, on a portable table that two servants bring in. The Countess of H—, to whom Lady Holland, a distant relative, bequeathed this extraordinary dwelling-place, serves us graciously, aided by her young daughter. Then we visit the historic house, the fine library, a gallery of family portraits all painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds. I notice a portrait of Talleyrand. He was a frequent guest of the house, and it possesses thirty or forty of his letters, addressed to Lady Holland, the friend of Napoleon I.

WINDSOR; glimpses of old-time royal buildings, between the great trees on the left as the train comes in. At the station, conveyances that take you to the residence by way of a little city of purveyors and inn-keepers, which has formed round the castle and its old abbey; first impression of Mennecy, Seine-et-Oise.

In a square, a statue of the Queen, her sceptre in her hand, which she holds with the authoritative gesture characteristic of Elizabeth and all the sovereigns of Great Britain. Then the postern, with a horse-guard in red, with heavy bear-skin, in the angle of the old crenelated rampart.

Different parts of the castle are of different epochs; the old church, Gothic, like that at Oxford; the abbeys of Westminster are mixed up in the remembrance. Opposite the church, little lodgings, about a dozen, built in the old wall, ornamented with gardens the size of an open drawer, where grow sunflowers yellow as the stones. They are the dwellings of old retired officers, to whom the Queen offers shelter. The guard is just about to be relieved, and we go up the winding gravel path to the palace. We are allowed to visit it, although the Queen is expected for dinner; beautiful apartments, pictures by master hands, along with a complete collection of Louis-Philippe brasses and Sèvres ornaments.

Then the park, the model farm, deer scattered over the grass; and then the exit into the open country, through a gateway of the Middle Ages, opened for us by an old, old guard, with white beard, high hat with galloons, shrunken and tottering in his blue and

silver livery. Beautiful road, verdure everywhere, rich pasturage, little bridges over the Thames, gigs and skiffs on the bank.

ETON and its building of old red brick, with arcades around the great court, and high windows to light the lecture rooms. Drive in the park to find the professor, H. J—'s friend. He has at his house pupils who eat, sleep, and study there, and follow the courses of the school. The students appear in their short black vests, great white collars round their rosy cheeks. Exquisite little house, — the professor's; tall shrubs, wistaria, and ivy away to the roof. The little village of Eton is all for the use of the professors and the furnishers of the college; the boys go about as they please, like little men. The instruction is for from twelve to eighteen years; then, Oxford or Cambridge.

NOTHING we have in France would give us an idea of Oxford; to begin with, it was a city of convents, in the Middle Ages — twelve, fifteen, twenty convents, that the Reformation changed into colleges.

Trinity College, where we stayed awhile, is in large part three or four centuries old, and the modern buildings, on the old types of English architecture, are scarcely to be told from the ancient, because of the sombre color of their stone. Cloistered courts, ivy reaching up over the walls from its giant roots. The chambers of the students open on long corridors; we enter one, through a little sitting-room, finished in light colors, with its little library and artistic pic-

tures. Then we descend to the great gardens all equipped for athletic life — cricket, foot-ball; but at this hour the young men are scattered about under the trees, seated on benches and rustic chairs, reading and chatting, or are rowing on the river.

Visit to the chapel, the refectory, great hall with Gothic windows and old paintings, which reminds me of Westminster. Went through several colleges, the oldest, New College, the largest and richest, Christ College. More or less imposing and beautiful, and all more or less alike. Exquisite moment in one of them. I arrived on the arm of my son, in a splendid garden; deer were running over the grass, a giant lilac lapped me in its sweet odor mingled with the perfumes of the woods. An old clock, cracked but clear, sounded the hour, in the midst of the almost empty colleges, the students being on the Thames.

We follow to the river, along a shady path; each college has its float of distinctive color moored along the river, which is narrow here, and brazen in the May sunshine. Racing, outcries, uproar, chagrin of the vanquished, young men in striped sweaters coming out of the gigs, bronzed, perspiring, and for the most part lean and sleek as hounds.

Return under the great trees, soft tread of the English crowd over the dusty path, where my rolling chair is the only vehicle to be heard. Back to Christ College and its admirable entrance-way, its arch crowned by a giant rosette; illustrated menu cards on the tables of the immense refectory; on going out, am struck by a rickety chair, a remnant of the past, in a corner of the court.

In another, at the back, on the terrace, representation in monstrous sculptures of all the sins and crimes which tempt man. Magnificent, that afternoon at Oxford, which remains with me in the synthesis of a kaleidoscopic picture of mad races on the Thames, the river all scintillating with colors reflected in the mirror of the water and the dipping movements of the oars; of cricket and foot-ball games, on lawns intensely green; — all the luxurious sport of modern English life, viewed from the Gothic windows of an old sculptured cloister of the fifteenth century.

VENICE

ARRIVAL at Venice. The gondolas, — it is night, — great black swans, which press up to the steps of the landing. The imprisoned water is dashing against the old stones. The cry of the gondoliers — somewhat the same sensation as from the cry of our Piedmontese chimney-sweeps: “Ho — ho,” but with the vibrations of the water added. Note this prolonged sensation of reverberated sound; in a measure like the effect on the eyes of the whiteness and scintillations in a country of ice and snows.

I HAVE in my eyes and mind the letter of Aretino to Titian, describing the delightful spectacles he had seen on the Grand Canal. I took a gondola, and had myself conveyed, with my Léon, that extension and expansion of myself, to a place whence I could

see the bridge of the Rialto, the Palace of the Chamberlains, etc.

How far away all that is now! how these stones have aged! I try in vain to bring to life that luxurious past of regal and artistic debauchery; it is all dead, dead.

THE Baux, the Baux! — they it is whom Venice calls up into me. But the wind is more destructive than the water, more corrosive, and the Baux are more dead than Venice.

I HAVE the key to all music; I know what the water of the Adriatic whispers to the stones of old Venetian palaces — oh! the melancholy song! Every night, in the silence of the old city and its canals, I hear this simple music. By day the cries and calls of boatmen, the general traffic of life, prevent me from distinguishing the meaning of the words, the rhythm of this perpetual lament: *Venezia la bella*.

ENCOUNTERED Father Saturn, his great scythe over his shoulder, under his arm a mysterious box he calls his tool-chest. For cutting down the life of kings and peoples along his route, the races of men and of beasts, the iron of his instrument suffices; but to get through stone, wood, metal, and the solid works of man, he needs more potent engines, and opening his box he showed me sun's rays ready to blaze forth, a leather bottle swelling with tempest, and a vessel full of salt water, that salt sea water so corrosive that it seems as if each of its waves were armed with little teeth of salt.

MUSIC that dies away, a passing boat. . . .

"LA FENICE," said my forward gondolier, at the bend of a *canaletto*. This name, spoken thus carelessly, stirred in a corner of my memory a whole romantic past of festivities and illustrious names: novels of George Sand and Balzac, verses of Musset, the love affairs of Byron, Malibran, Lablache, Rossini . . . and I have before me, beaten by waters that are turbid, oily, streaked, thick, black, slimy, three stone steps leading to a high iron grille before glass doors fast bolted, beyond which I divine the enchantment of great deserted corridors and dim staircases leading to the boxes; and the empty ticket bureau, seeming at the bottom of the water. Across the rectilinear pediment, between two enormous lanterns of elegant antique iron work, this name, pretentious, magniloquent, "La Fenice," The Phoenix, incrusts its letters in the sombre stones of the palace.

"I was eight when I saw the whole theatre on fire," said my old gondolier, head fine and bronzed, fringe of white beard, gold rings in his ears. "The fire raged three days and nights." And there succeeded to my romantico-amorous vision, the apotheosis of those long tongues of red flame, reflected in the dead water, and licking the neighboring palaces right and left.

VENICE! So many paintings, so many museums, and nowhere in them the representation of this city on piles, this extraordinary life, canals, gondolas, carnivals on the water. We are all the time obliged to question the rocks, to call up, on the steps of

marble palaces, apparitions of beautiful women going to a supper, a ball, entering their gondolas by the glimmer of torches repeated in the deep water as in a black metallic mirror.

And when one thinks of those painters of the North, who have so magically and minutely told the tale of their homes, of the corners most secret and secluded! . . . look at the "Dropsical Woman," for instance.

Here painting is all allegorical or religious, speaks but for the Church or the kings; and yet it must have been striking to see a procurator, in his gondola, going to his morning's business, or the pale face of a condemned criminal, behind the iron bars of the mysterious gondola of the prisons.

Discussed the matter the evening long. My wife and Lucien are for the Italian painters, putting themselves outside and above life and its platitudes: Léon and I hold with the painters of the North, who glorify existence, make their times the vanquisher of death and oblivion.

IN certain hours which I call dead, hours colorless and arid, when the Venus de Milo herself has no message for you, when what is left of Thebes or of Memphis, when the stones of the most beautiful Venetian palaces, leave you blind and deaf, without one pulse-beat for Art, I understand how life appears to many; I have a notion of that sinister Sahara they call a flat existence.

NOTICE the lines, free and salient, of the gondolier rowing in the stern, like a silhouette of pantomime.

The movement is in three and a half time, broken in the middle; Scaramouche in outline. The forward gondolier is in general the chief. He is the one to make the melancholy cries with their *ai's* and their *o's*, that warn against shocks and collisions at the turnings of the little canals; he, too, it is who chats with the passenger opposite; and on carnival days and high festivals, when the gondola is decked and garlanded, I have noticed that it is he who wears the sailor collar latest laundered, and the freshest hat and ribbons. His comrade in the stern makes no holiday toilet. He says nothing, no one notices him, but as he rows along, he makes, over the head of the passenger, at the other gondolier and at those who pass, all the grimaces possible to his cocked eye and protuberant, hooked nose.

MORNING is announced by the angelus of Saint George's and of La Salute, two great chapels on the water, in the horizon or our windows. In my bed, my eyes yet heavy and sealed, I think I see the two isles, quaking with their tintinnabulations, splashing sky and water with their clear notes of waking. Many other bells respond, mingled with the wash of the waves against the steps of the old Giustiniani palace, with the hoarse and drowsy morning voices of the gondoliers mooring their boats at the foot of the hotel, with the sound of stretching chains and of boats driven against the high *palis*. Never the low of a beast or cry of a bird.

OPPOSITE the Lido, on the border of a great expanse of filthy water shunned by boats, the slaughter house,

WITH its clef-like prow, its swan's-neck stern, and its *felze*, near enough to the belly of a stringed instrument, the gondola partakes of the boat, the bird, and the contrabass. I see the possibility of a fantastic tale ending thus: The gondolier rises, sets his dripping gondola upright against his breast, plays an air on it with his oar, then, lowering it, springs astride the keel, and it flies off heavily, noisily, toward the high seas, as though it were a great black swan: "Fenice!"

THE END.

