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 15,000 MILES IN A KETCH. *Captain R. du Baty.*
 KNOWN TO THE POLICE. *Thomas Holmes.*
 THE STORY OF MY STRUGGLES. *Arminius Vambéry.*
 THE CITY OF THE WORLD. *Edwin Pugh.*
 THE PANAMA CANAL. *J. Saxon Mills.*
 THE ISLAND. *Richard Whiteing.*
 THE PLEASANT LAND OF FRANCE. *R. E. Prothero.*
 THE RIVER WAR. *Winston Churchill.*
 TRUE TALES OF MOUNTAIN ADVENTURE.
Mrs. Le Blond.

Etc., etc.

Others to follow.



EDMOND DE GONCOURT.



JULES DE GONCOURT.

By courtesy of the Librairie Larousse.

The Journal of the De Goncourts

PAGES FROM A GREAT DIARY
BEING EXTRACTS FROM THE
JOURNAL DES GONCOURT

EDITED, WITH INTRODUCTION, BY
JULIUS WEST



THOMAS NELSON AND SONS
LONDON, EDINBURGH, DUBLIN
AND NEW YORK

INTRODUCTION.

IF Edmond de Goncourt (1822-96) and his brother Jules (1830-70) are at present in a sphere in which literary interests are permitted, the relative disrepute into which their works have fallen must be a matter of sorrow, or, at any rate, of regret at the incalculability of the things of this life. There are few writers who have something new to say, or who have found some new way of saying some old thing, who expect immediate recognition. Stendhal predicted that his turn would come about seventy years after his death.* And there are few innovators, on the other hand, who do not believe that recognition will come, sooner or later. The de Goncourts fervently believed that they would be applauded both in their lifetime and after it, and they were almost completely wrong from either point of view. The genius of the survivor of the two brothers, after forty years of hard work, was recognized in two banquets, and that was nearly all.

* *Vie de Henri Brûlard.*

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Yet Edmond and Jules did a great many things that had not been done before, and, on the whole, they did them well. They are principally known as novelists; and their claims to be the completest expression of modernity are, if extravagant, far from baseless. They claimed to have introduced realism into French literature in one novel; in another, they claimed to have invented that unpleasant child of realism which Zola afterwards brought up as his own, and which is known as naturalism. In a third novel, they professed that symbolism had made its *début*, and so forth. There was something in all this, as we shall see later. But not content with introducing new points of view into fiction, they did their best to educate the French public along other lines. In the first place, they introduced Japanese art and the appreciation of it into France; they nursed the cult of it all their lives, and the last book written by Edmond was about Hokusai, the great Japanese artist; he had already published a work on Outamaro. Another very considerable department of their activities was consecrated to the eighteenth century, French society during that period, and especially the women thereof. In this branch Edmond took a predominant part, and himself wrote four books of biography about forgotten

actresses of that age, while in collaboration with his brother a great many more books on the subject were written. The two interests, art and the eighteenth century, united in the production of three more volumes about the French artists of that time. A couple of plays, not to mention a large number subsequently adapted by Edmond de Goncourt from the novels of the two brothers, the biography of Gavarni, the famous caricaturist, and one of their great friends, notes on a journey to Italy, and various literary odds and ends complete the very considerable tale of their activities.

But with the de Goncourts the manner is of infinitely greater importance than the matter. Style preceded everything, followed closely by accuracy to detail. The rest mattered little. The attitude taken up by the brothers was largely this: other writers may do their utmost to present eternal truths, but if we succeed in rendering a humble dog-fight in such a way that the memory of it will put those eternal truths in the shade, we shall have done as much as man may do. The attitude was one of bravado, one which naturally demanded a lack of proportion and an eye for effects, and, perhaps because it required an intense concentration upon a certain class of effect, it led its possessors to the creation of something distinctly new.

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But novelty is not everything. It is easy to shock people, and, by shocking them, convince them that they are under the influence of a new sensation. When Baudelaire, bent upon shocking, entered a café, fantastically dressed, and observed, in a loud tone of voice to his neighbours, "The night I killed my father, I remember, . . ." he shocked, it is true, but the novelty soon wore off. One can do a great deal with a reputation for parricide, as the Playboy of the Western World discovered, but it does not do to be found out. The problem the de Goncourts set out to solve was just this, how not to be found out. They answered it the only possible way—by being sincere. If they strained the French language to breaking-point, it was because they sincerely aimed at effects of which the language was hardly capable. If they achieved curious effects, and made some novels convey the impression that they had been written in paragraphs loosely fitted together, like an incomplete jig-saw, it was because they sincerely believed that by such means their novels would convey truth in a manner altogether convincing and inexpugnable.

We therefore arrive at the curious fact that the de Goncourts were both impressionists and realists; indeed, some of their most realistic novels,

bearing the unmistakable traces of their authors, have many of the qualities of an impressionist picture. In *La Faustin*, for example, an extraordinary study of an actress, the descriptive matter is laid on in brilliant patches which do not, at first, appear connected or suggest continuity of purpose. It is only when we have finished reading the novel that the separate portions slip into their proper places and we get an idea of the perspective values of the various ingredients of the book. Yet side by side with the effects of this class, the de Goncourts always aimed at the most complete accuracy of detail. Perhaps no more convincing illustration of this can be adduced than the fact that Marcel Schwob, a French critic of considerable importance and discernment, found that the novels of the de Goncourts had much in common with those of our own Daniel Defoe, who may well be regarded as the master of realist fiction. But the de Goncourts went further than Defoe in their quest for realities. They sought for the "document." They studied their characters and their actions with all the minuteness made possible by the most painstaking personal investigation. Lest their imaginations should lead them astray when they invented characters and their actions, they refrained from putting their inventive faculties to

such a purpose, and drew upon the "document" instead. In this connection it is interesting to note that the very expression "human document," now safely acclimatized in the English language, was first used by the de Goncourts. They drew their raw material, in the first place, from their own surroundings. The original of *Germinie Lacer-teux* was one of their servants; *Madame Gervaisais* was an aunt. Many of the characters of *Charles Demailly* and most of their conversation were also ready-made. They did not hesitate to incorporate their own feelings and sufferings in their novels. Brotherly love and grief is the mainstay of *Les Frères Zemganno*, into which Edmond de Goncourt introduced his own emotions caused by the death of his brother. The distinctly morbid tastes of Jules led him to collect and to register the details of a large number of unpleasant sights, deliberately studied with an eye to future "copy." Visits to the *Morgue*, to hospitals when difficult operations were to be performed, and endeavours to obtain as much information as possible about the seamy side of things, were almost routine to him. Edmond seems generally to have accompanied him on these researches, but apparently did not pursue them on his own account.

Edmond Louis Antoine Huot de Goncourt and

Jules Alfred Huot de Goncourt were the sons of an artillery officer who had won much glory in Napoleon's campaigns. He stood high in the Emperor's estimation, and would undoubtedly have become more than a mere major had he not been disabled by his wounds from taking an active part in military life. He married some years after his retirement; his wife, however, does not seem to have exercised much influence over the lives and careers of her children. During his last years the major lived the life of a veteran officer to whom immense respect was due, and apparently disappointed because Edmond showed no signs that his career would lie in the same direction as his father's. But he died when Edmond was only twelve, and Jules four years of age, leaving behind him little more than a tradition. Both children were delicate, especially the younger.

Reference has already been made to an aunt, the original of *Madame Gervaisais* — a Madame de Courmont. She was their father's sister, and after his death she took a prominent part in the education of the two brothers. Their artistic tastes especially owed much to her. She lived in a charming old villa at Menilmontant, surrounded by a fine art collection, from which Edmond received many an object lesson. In 1848 Madame de Goncourt

died, commending Jules to the care of his brother. Edmond shortly afterwards threw up a post he held in the Ministry of Finances, and spent a few years in travel with his brother, who had developed a striking gift for sketching. Little by little, however, literary interests came to dominate all others. At last, on December 2, 1851, their first novel was published—*En 18..*, a childish production, perhaps, but still a published book.

On the day of its publication the *Journal* opens. For nearly nineteen years Jules jotted down, apparently without considering the possibility of subsequent publication, whatever he saw or heard or thought which seemed to satisfy the exigencies of the adjective *inédit*—unpublished. Incidentally he gathered in a great many interesting conversations, some anecdotes, countless reflections upon life, and a good deal of matter which in those days would be regarded as entirely unfit for publication. With the paralysis which preceded his death, the *Journal* was laid aside. But after his death, Edmond found a curious relief from the pain of his great loss by writing down, in continuation of his brother's entries, a long account of the death of Jules and of his own sufferings—all of which was duly turned into "copy" later on. That was in 1870. Within a month of the death the

Franco-German War broke out. Paris was besieged, and passed through exciting times. The experiences thus, as it were, forced upon Edmond were too exceptional not to be recorded with some exactness, so the *Journal* became an extraordinary register of the emotions of a siege. It is difficult to read some of de Goncourt's descriptions without feeling that he had the makings of a very rare journalist in him.

If he had felt any temptation to close his *Journal* with the siege, his mind was changed by the events which followed. Before the Germans had left the capitulated city, the Commune had broken out. Paris was in the hands of rebels who, in their efforts to seize the reins of government, subjected the city to even deeper sufferings than had the German besiegers. Edmond was a good spectator, and his *Journal* profited by it. After calm had been at last restored the diary-keeping habit had become ineradicable. It was continued to the end of Edmond's life. At first the record exclusively of things seen and heard, it became the keeper of his confidences; when the memory of the prematurely aged writer ceased to be equal to the effort of transcribing a whole conversation, he launched into elaborately worded descriptions of what he had seen. Finally, when his memory had

reached the stage we call "second childhood," he confided to his *Journal* long and charming descriptions of his parents and his aunt ; so detailed, and so fresh, that they give the latter volumes of the *Journal* something of the character of an autobiography written backwards.

Literary France of the last century has been described in the nine volumes of the *Journal* as nowhere else. We see here Théophile Gautier, humorous and imaginative ; Flaubert, fat and with a child's laugh, spending days, even weeks, upon a single page of writing ; Hugo, regarded by his contemporary writers (and by himself) as an almost divinely gifted poet, easily first among the authors of his age, yet kindly and unspoilt, a man of immense physical power and of an indefinable faith in something beyond himself ; Turgenev, the celebrated Russian novelist, who for many years made Paris his home, good-natured and gigantic, with a wonderful gift of poetic description, and an extreme sentimentalist whenever the conversation approached the subject of woman ; Zola, a neurotic young man to begin with, believing firmly that he was destined to make his mark on literature, yet, realizing his own lack of genius, submitting himself to as drastic a course of preparation for literary success as any author

ever voluntarily underwent, always haunted by the fear of death, yet, after having passed his fiftieth year, suddenly developing a corporation and an attitude of relative satisfaction both at his own success and the good things of this life; Sainte-Beuve, one of the most eminent of critics, yet with an accessibility to the personal side of things which is quite unusual in a critic of his standing; Renan, an amiable sceptic, large of paunch, with an immense belief in Protestant superiority; Daudet and his wife, also amiable and haunted by the fear of death, but of an extreme kindness in their less neurotic moments, with a Dickensian humour and compassion; and, last but not least, the de Goncourts themselves, always with a notebook in hand, at any rate metaphorically, anxious not to allow a single trait or eccentricity to escape them, ever on the alert—if not anxious to botanize on their mother's grave, at any rate perfectly willing to fasten upon the confidences of the living as well as of the dead, to capture the flying word, to take the evidence of the unforgiving minute. Many men and women still living appear in these pages: MM. Poincaré and Clemenceau, Mmes Sarah Bernhardt and Réjane; Pierre Loti, Anatole France, Rodin, and many others. Nor do these names exhaust the tale of the living and the dead celeb-

rities we meet here—Oscar Wilde, de Béhaine, Maupassant, Alexandre Dumas, père et fils, Baudelaire, Taine, Michelet: in fact, all literary France with a few adjuncts is included.

It may well be asked, Is this record accurate? The English character is relatively reticent: we do not rush into print with other persons' confidences, at least not while the other persons are alive, and offenders against this rule are regarded with suspicion. But the French character is different. Of the men we have just named, Zola, Daudet, and Anatole France, to name but a few, wrote up the de Goncourts in the lifetime of Edmond. Literary men proverbially live by taking in one another's washing, except when they merely mangle it. The de Goncourts did their best not to mangle it. Jules set himself a high standard of accuracy, of objective truth, and what errors there are in his descriptions are due to the personal equation, to the mechanical inexactitude of the instrument, not to its intellectual sinfulness. Edmond continued the effort to record the truth and nothing but the truth. The principal difficulty of the *Journal* is not its subject, but its style. Somebody once said of Mallarmé: "When anybody tells me that he can read Mallarmé, I know he is either a liar or a linguist." Anybody

who assures the public that he is so sure of the meaning of Jules de Goncourt's entries in the *Journal* that he has dared to express them in an exact English equivalent, also runs the danger of being regarded as a liar or a linguist. That young man, largely aided and abetted by his brother, had a trying habit of inventing words to supplement his already abundant vocabulary. The neologist is the enemy of the translator. He invents new forms, disguises old and well-established words by unrecognizable affixes or inflexions, and thrusts them into the translator's face, saying: "You won't find *these* in your dictionaries. They are a part of me, something so personal that I defy you to render them in any other language." That is the attitude of the de Goncourts, especially of the younger. They seek to swamp their readers in what seem to be malapropisms; that is part of their plan for creating a characteristic de Goncourt atmosphere. To such an extent did this habit of abusing the dictionary prevail that, in 1912, a Dr. Max Fuchs found it worth his while to produce a *Lexique du Journal des Goncourt*; but as this useful work supplied no equivalents, it does little more than illustrate the curiosities of the de Goncourt style.

The *Journal* was published in nine volumes, be-

tween 1887 and 1896. It was, as has been indicated, a scrap-book on a glorious scale. Much of it is uninteresting, a good deal is mere *obiter dicta*, evoked by events which we to-day scarcely remember. A good deal is frankly scandalous; Jules' tastes ran in that direction. A good deal is merely horrible; the product of that unpleasant and foreign type of mind which is so un-English that foreign words—*macabre* and *bizarre*—have to be used to describe it. The literary interests of the two brothers occupy a large share of the space. Their artistic interests also occupy a great many pages. Reflections on current politics come in for a good deal of attention. The state of health, of body and mind, of the diarists appears to occupy an almost insufferable amount of their *Journal*. Their literary and dramatic successes and failures constitute perhaps the last considerable factor of this massive *Journal*. It is clear that a complete translation is, if possible, hardly desirable. The nine hundred thousand words of the original contain a great many things that would please a great many readers; but few, if any, would regard the study of the complete work as anything but an affliction. The case for extraction, therefore, seems incontrovertible. But there is an obvious difficulty to be faced in attempting to take scraps out of

a scrap-book. A mere mass of scraps, in chronological order, does not make a book in any except a mechanical sense. I have therefore selected the passages of the greatest literary interest; with copious extracts from the diary of the siege and the Commune, and with specimens of the other varieties of diarizing in which the de Goncourts excelled, and which might be described as the *obiter dictum*, the condensed art criticism, and the "document." For the rest, it will be found that the extracts read as continuously as may be expected. They satisfy, at any rate, what may be regarded as the crucial test of such autobiographical writings; they do fill the place of an autobiography. In these pages we shall see Edmond and Jules de Goncourt leading their uneventful but intellectual life, with moments of wild excitement on the days of publication, of fearful attention to what their critics said. The de Goncourts dreaded severe criticism—which they generally received—but on principle made no efforts to meet it on its own grounds, to answer it, or to defend themselves. By cultivating sedulously this habit of aloofness, they secured for themselves the reputation of being aristocratic amateurs; and their very versatility helped to convince their critics of their amateurishness. In their youth they

were regarded as dangerous innovators, and cursed accordingly; in his old age, Edmond de Goncourt was considered an established institution, and mildly blackguarded in consequence by the younger generation of critics. The aloofness to which reference has just been made led to many literary hostilities and misunderstandings, to which Edmond, at any rate, attached an altogether exaggerated importance. The quarrel with Maupassant over the statue to Flaubert will show this.

The death of Jules de Goncourt was a terrible blow to his brother. They had not merely lived together and done all their work in common; they seemed to be united by bonds so close that a single personality, quite distinct from either that of Edmond or of Jules, appeared to dominate their later work. The last extract in this volume consists of a statement by Edmond of the extent to which he and his brother participated in their joint works. But this does not tell us all: Edmond does not say, because he cannot know, to what extent his own imagination, style, and line of thought were influenced by contact with his brother. Although Edmond was the more imaginative of the two, it was not until four years had elapsed since the death of his brother that he set to work on a new

novel, *La Fille Élisa*, which was not published until the very end of 1876. In the *Journal* the two styles are distinct, however; perhaps the additional experience of the siege, and of his brother's death, had wrought a change in Edmond.

This translation has been made, as already hinted, under peculiar difficulties. It should be understood that although the translator has made every effort to provide a correct rendering of the spirit and of the meaning of the original, and although he has not attempted to disguise the de Goncourt style, either by neglecting to place its gargoyles and affectations in their proper position, or to omit its peculiar features, pleasant or otherwise, he has nevertheless not aimed at providing an absolutely literal rendering, because the English language contains no exact equivalents for all the excrescences of style and diction of two Frenchmen who won a considerable proportion of their reputation by extravagance in these matters. That such extravagance was probably necessary to their purpose does not make things any better—at any rate, for the translator.

In concluding this introduction we may repeat that the de Goncourts were bigger than their present-day reputation. They were pioneers, and so they provoked brickbats; while their successors and

imitators, sailing under the de Goncourt colours, were enthusiastically acclaimed. Speaking at the graveside of Edmond de Goncourt, Zola said: "I was his pupil before I became his rival." Criticism can add nothing to that.

J. W.

P R E F A C E

THIS journal is our nightly confession—the confession of two lives undivided in pleasure, in toil, in distress, of twin minds, of two intelligences receiving such similar, such homogeneous, such identical impressions from their contact with men and things, that it may be regarded as the expansion of a single ego.

The persons who enter this autobiography are those whom chance, on one day and another, has led across our path. We have painted the portraits of these men and women as they appeared on the day and at the hour of our meeting; we meet them again in the course of our journal, and show them later, under different circumstances, changed and modified. We have tried not to follow those makers of memoirs who present their historical figures painted all in one piece, or with the colours chilled by remoteness or showing faintly against their backgrounds—our ambition, in brief, has been to represent humanity, in its ups and downs, true to the moment.

I admit that sometimes the changes indicated in persons who were familiar or dear to us may well proceed from the changes that have been taking place in ourselves. That is a possibility. We do not conceal the fact that we have been impassioned, or nervous, or morbidly impressionable, and therefore sometimes unjust. But we can affirm that even if we have occasionally expressed ourselves with the unjustness born of prejudice, or with the blindness due to an irrational antipathy, yet we have never knowingly lied at the expense of those of whom we speak.

Our aim, then, has been the resurrection of our contemporaries for posterity. We have striven to create their living likenesses, to bring them to life, by the record of a conversation, by the physiological surprises of a bodily movement, by those insignificant details of passion in which a personality manifests itself, by those indefinable things that give life its intensity—by setting down, finally, a little of that fever which is the essence of the capricious life of Paris.

And in this work that set actuality before everything else, that was wrought from incidents still fresh in our memories, in this work committed hastily to paper, and not always revised, we have let our syntax obey its own sweet will, and we have used words which have no respectable references.

We have preferred those words which did not allow the pride of our ideas or the vitality of our sensations to be covered over with moss, or injured by their academicism.

This journal was commenced on December 2, 1851, the day of publication of our first novel,* and the day of the Coup d'État.†

The whole manuscript, for practical purposes, was written by my brother, from the dictation of us both : that has been our mode of work for these memoirs.

After the death of my brother, regarding our literary work as at an end, I resolved to let the journal finish with the last lines traced by his hand, on January 20, 1870. But then I was bitten by the sad desire of relating to myself the story of his last months and his death, and soon afterwards the tragic events of the Siege and of the Commune forced me to continue this journal, which is still, from time to time, the recipient of my confidences.

EDMOND DE GONCOURT.

SCHLIERSEE, *August 1872.*

* *En 18...* This first novel was a failure. In spite of the praises of Jules Janin, only sixty copies were sold, and the publisher handed the remainder over to the de Goncourts, who a few years later made a bonfire of the thousand or so volumes. The de Goncourts feared that their book would remain unnoticed in the excitement of the Coup d'État.

† When President Louis Napoleon overthrew the constitution. He became Emperor a year later.

NOTE.

This journal should not have appeared until twenty years after my death. That was my intention until last year, when I was staying with Alphonse Daudet in the country, and read him a part of this journal which I had brought with me, at his request. Daudet enjoyed the reading, dilated on the interest of things related while the impression of them was still warm, begged me to publish some fragments, and broke down my resolution with a gentle violence by talking to our mutual friend, Francis Magnard, to whom it occurred to publish parts in the *Figaro*.

Here is the journal, or at least as much as it is possible to publish during my lifetime, and in the lifetime of those whom I have studied and painted from the life.

These memoirs are absolutely unrevised.

I beg the reader's indulgence for the first few years, when we were not yet masters of our instrument, when we were as yet imperfect reporters ; we beg him also to bear in mind that in those early days our connections were few, and our field of observation necessarily limited in consequence.

E. DE G.

THE JOURNAL OF THE DE GONCOURTS

1851

December 2.—What is a Coup d'État, or a change of government, to people who publish their first novel on the very day! By an ironical decree of fate, that is what happened to us. In the morning, when we were still lazily dreaming away of editions, of huge editions like those of Dumas *père*, Cousin Blamont noisily made his entry. He used to be a National Guard; he is now a red-hot Conservative, asthmatic and ill-tempered.

“ My oath, they've done it ! ” he puffed out.

“ Done what ? ”

“ The Coup d'État, of course ! ”

“ Oh, hang it all . . . and our novel was to be published to-day ! ”

“ Your novel . . . a novel . . . France doesn't care a brass button for novels to-day, my sons ! ”

He made a gesture habitual with him, buttoning up his frock-coat as if he were strapping on a sword-belt. He then took his leave and went off with the triumphant news to his still sleeping friends in the *Quartier Notre-Dame-de-Lorette*.

We were soon out in the streets looking for our poster, the poster that was to announce the publication of *En 18 . . .*, to Paris, and teach France and the world the name of two new men of letters—Edmond and Jules de Goncourt. The poster was missing. And the reason was this: Gerdès,* haunted by the idea that a political chapter in the book might be interpreted as alluding to the event of the day, and filled, too, with distrust of that bizarre, incomprehensible, cabalistic title, which seemed to contain a disguised reference to the 18th Brumaire—Gerdès, who was not a hero, had, of his own initiative, thrown the packet of posters into the fire.

Monday, December 15.—"Jules, Jules! . . . an article by Janin † in the *Journal des Débats!*" Edmond shouts the happy news to me from his bed. Yes, a whole Monday article about us in

* The printer.

† Jules Janin (1804-74) was perhaps the most influential critic of his day. He was also the writer of several unconventional novels. He wielded an extraordinary style, and is said to have always written the first thing that entered his head, but was generally amiable.

relation to everything and everything in relation to us—an article in which Janin trounced us with irony, forgave us with esteem and some serious criticism; an article in which our youth is introduced to the public with a cheerful hand-shake and a good-natured excuse for our temerity.

This is a high joy, one of those joys of one's first literary communion; one of those joys that are no more to be repeated than one's first love. All to-day we do not walk, we run. We go to thank Janin, who receives us heartily, with a large and jovial smile, looks at us, presses our hand, and says: "Well! — it, you're much as I thought you were!"

1857

October.—The Café Riche seems to be in a fair way to become a camping-ground of literary people who wear gloves. It is curious how places make their particular publics. At the bottom of the *salon* opening on to the rue Le Peletier may be seen, from eleven o'clock to midnight, after the theatre or a *soirée*, Saint-Victor,* About,† or Mario Uchard.‡ Baudelaire§ has been supping next to us to-night. He wore neither tie nor collar, and his head was shaven, as if for the guillotine. In addition to this, he has a studied elegance, little hands as carefully washed and trimmed as a woman's—and, to crown it all, a maniac's head, a voice that cuts like steel, and a delivery that aims at a sort of ornate exactness. He argues fiercely, with a sharp anger, that he has not put anything improper into his poems.

* Art and dramatic critic.

† Edmond About, novelist and dramatist.

‡ Novelist.

§ Baudelaire (1821-67), best known by his poetry, which is at times gruesome in the extreme, introduced, in the words of Victor Hugo, "un frisson nouveau" (a new thrill) into literature.

— If I were really wealthy, I should have enjoyed making a collection of all the muck that celebrities with no talent have turned out. I should get the worst picture, the worst statue of this man and that, and pay their weight in gold. I should hand this collection over to the admiration of the middle classes, and after having enjoyed their stupid amazement at the tickets and the high prices of the objects, I should let myself go off into criticism composed of gall, science, and taste, until I foamed at the mouth.

August.—

1. A troop of comedians.
2. A troop of dancing girls.
3. Some marionette exhibitors (at least three or four).
4. One hundred Frenchwomen.
5. Some doctors, surgeons, and chemists.
6. Fifty gardeners.

7. Liquor dealers and distillers.

8. 200,000 pints of brandy.

9. 30,000 ells of blue and scarlet cloth.

These are the things with which Napoleon set out to found a civilized society in Egypt.

1860

March 4.—We have been discussing Hugo's *Légendes des Siècles* with Flaubert. What specially strikes him about Hugo, who aims at being taken for a thinker, is the absence of thought.

Molière is a great event in the history of the middle classes; he is a solemn declaration of the soul of the Third Estate. Corneille is the last of the heralds of the nobility; Molière is the first poet of the middle classes.

March 10.—I have received a charming letter from Mme George Sand, on our *Hommes de Lettres*. It is like a friendly hand-shake. . . . The truth is, our book has a kindly reception; but it does not sell. Perhaps, some day, these lines we write coldly and not in despair, may teach courage to the workers of a future century. They should know that, after ten years of toil, after publishing fifteen books, after such vigils and such conscientious perseverance and even success; after an historical work of

which all Europe has heard, after a novel in which even our enemies recognized "a masterly power," there has not been a paper, a review, great or small, to come and ask us whether we shall be able to find anybody to publish our next novel at his own risk;—and this when the most unimportant literary hacks and the most worthless makers of novels are published, paid, and have their works reprinted.

1862

February 15.—I found myself on the quai Voltaire, in France's bookshop. A man came in, haggled a long time over a book, went out, came in again, and haggled once more. He was a large man, with a square face, and the swinging movements of a horse-dealer. He left his address to have the book sent him; it was at Rambouillet.

"Ah!" said the bookseller, writing it down, "I was there in 1830 with Charles X."

"So was I," replied the large man, "I was there too. . . . I had his last signature. Twenty minutes before the deputation from the provisional government arrived. . . . I was there with my carriage. . . . Ah! He was short of money! He was selling off his plate, and letting it go cheap. I had twenty-five thousand francs' worth of it for twenty-three thousand. If I had come earlier. . . . He sold two hundred thousand francs' worth. . . . I had fifteen thousand mouths to feed—his guard. I was the contractor."

“ Well,” cried the bookseller, “ you fed us very badly. . . . I remember we had to kill a poor cow for ourselves during the campaign ! ”

Chance had brought them together, the old guardsman of Charles X. and the contractor who had made his little profits from a royal misfortune and bought the plate of a king at bay : the soldier was now a poor bookseller, the contractor was a large and cheerful bourgeois, unmistakably comfortable and prosperous.

I wanted to see what he had bought : it was a *History of the Crimes of the Popes*.

March 3.—It is trying to snow. We take a cab and carry our manuscripts of *Eighteenth Century Art* to Théophile Gautier.

He lives in a street of wretched provincial houses, with yards full of fruit and poultry : the sort of suburban street that Hervier paints with his artistically nasty brush. We open the door of a plaster house, and we are in the presence of the lord of epithets. We are in a room with furniture covered in red damask, and gilt heavy Venetian shapes. There are old pictures of the Italian school with pretty yellow flesh-tints ; over the mantelpiece is a mirror innocent of quicksilver, decorated with Persian designs, of the Turkish café species. The

whole effect is one of odds and ends, like the rooms of an elderly retired actress, who has only become possessed of pictures on the bankruptcy of her Italian manager.

We asked him if we were disturbing him. "Not at all. I never work at home. I only work in the printing room of the *Moniteur*. They print my stuff as I go along. It is only the smell of the printer's ink that can make me move. Then there is that law of urgency. It is fatal. I have to deliver my copy. I can only work that way now. . . . I can only even write novels like that ; that is, as I write they print, ten lines at a time."

Gautier proceeded to criticize *The Queen of Sheba*. And as we acknowledged to him our complete musical deafness, and that we only just managed to appreciate military music, he said: "Ah! I'm very glad to hear you talk like that. I'm just the same. I prefer silence to music. I have managed to learn to distinguish good from bad music, having lived part of my life with a singer, but I care nothing for it. . . . It's very curious that all the writers of our time should be like that. Balzac loathed music. Hugo can't endure it. Lamartine himself, who is a piano to be let or sold, hates it. . . . Only a few painters have the taste for it. In music everybody is now at a terrible

Glück-like stage. We have large and very slow things happening; we return to plain chant. . . . This Gounod is a complete ass."

He went on to talk about Flaubert and his wonderful patience, his seven years' work on a book of four hundred pages.

March 30.—We go up to the fourth floor, at Number 2, rue Racine. A little commonplace man meets us, opens a door, and we are in a very large room, a sort of studio.

Against the window at the end, through which a five o'clock twilight is entering, there is a gray shadow in the pale light—a woman who does not rise and rests immobile when we greet her. That seated shadow with the sleepy countenance is Mme Sand, and the man who has let us in is the engraver Manceau. Mme Sand looks like an automaton. She talks in a monotonous and mechanical voice, which neither rises nor falls and never gets animated. Her attitude has something of the gravity, the placidity, the somnolence of a ruminant. Her movements are slow, very slow, almost like a somnambulist's, and they always lead to the same thing—always with the same methodical actions—to the lighting of a wax match and to a cigarette at her mouth.

Mme Sand has been very kind to us, and has praised us a good deal, but with a childishness of ideas, a flatness of expression, and a sombre good-nature which have made us feel as chilly as if we were in an unfurnished room. . . . We talked about the prodigious quantity of work she had achieved ; whereupon she told us that it was not meritorious work, because it had always been done easily. She works every night from one to four in the morning, and does two more hours' work during the day—and, added Manceau, who talks rather like a man exhibiting curiosities—"It doesn't matter if she is disturbed. . . . It's like turning off a tap. Mme Sand is like that." "Yes," she continued herself, "I don't in the least mind being disturbed by sympathetic people, by peasants who come to talk to me." Here is a little humanitarian note.

December 1.—We went to thank Sainte-Beuve for his article on our *La Femme au XVIII^e Siècle* in to-day's *Constitutionnel*. He lives in the rue Montparnasse. We are shown into a room with garnet-coloured walls, and with red velvet Louis-Quinze furniture. Then we go, by a complicated little staircase, into Sainte-Beuve's own room. We find him, for some unknown reason, furious against *Salammbô*,* and ejaculating little phrases: "It's

* By Flaubert. A wonderful novel placed in old Carthage.

unreadable. . . . Is it tragedy or. . . ? Are battles, famine, plague, things to put into literature. . . ?” During nearly an hour, whatever we say in favour of the book—for we must stand up for our friends—he spits out his lecture, the victim of a childish and almost ludicrous anger.

December (date missing).— . . . On Saturday we dined at Magny’s.* Sainte-Beuve told us he used to know an old librarian in Boulogne, named Isnard, who had been Professor of Rhetoric to the Oratorians in Arras, and had had Robespierre as a pupil. He said that when his pupil became an *Avocat*, having little to occupy him, he had written a poem entitled, “The Art of Spitting and Sneezing.” Whereupon Robespierre’s sister, fearing he might lose what little practice he had if he published the poem, went to Isnard, and asked him how publication might be prevented. Isnard asked Robespierre to read him the poem, and said, “It’s good, very good, but it needs a little touching up!” The Revolution took Robespierre in the midst of his touching up, and the poem was not published.

* The Magny dinners were held in a little restaurant, named after the proprietor, in the rue Contrescarpe. They were fortnightly, and became the occasions of much literary gossip. Sainte-Beuve, Gavarni (the caricaturist), and the de Goncourts were the originators.

1863

January 25.—To read a few hundred volumes of ancient authors, to make notes on them on cards, and to make a book after the Roman fashion of eating—that is, lying down,—that is what is called erudition. That is what makes one a “savant.” One becomes a member of the Institute, one is serious, one is all one should be.

But, take a century near our own, an immense century, handle a mountain of documents, thirty thousand pamphlets, two thousand papers, and extract from all that, not a monograph, but a picture of a society, and you will be considered a mere dilettante, a pleasant amateur. It will be long before the French public has any consideration for interesting history.

February 23.—Magny dinner. Charles Edmond brings us Turgenev, that foreign writer who has so delicate a talent. He is a charming colossus, a pleasant giant, with white hair, who looks like the

good spirit of a mountain or a forest. He is handsome, on a fine scale, with beautiful blue eyes, with all the humming charm of a Russian accent, that twang which has just a shade of a child or a negro. He was touched by the reception we gave him, which put him at his ease, and he talked to us most interestingly about Russian literature, which he regards as in full career towards realism, from the novel to the theatre. He told us that the Russian public is a great reader of reviews, and blushed to acknowledge that he and ten others are paid 600 francs (£24) the sheet. But, on the other hand, his stories in book form bring in at the outside only 4,000 francs (£160).

March 1.—Here is Taine, the incarnation of modern criticism; a critic who is at once very learned, very ingenious, and very often as far wrong as can be imagined. Something of the professor lecturing to his class sticks to him. That is not to be got rid of; but the academical side of the man is compensated by a great simplicity, a remarkable sweetness of manner, an attention which comes from a well-educated man, yielding politely to the views of others. As we were speaking of what old Turgenev had been saying—that there was only one writer popular in Russia, namely, Dickens, and

that since 1830 our literature had had no influence, and only English and American authors were read—Taine tells us that, for himself, he is certain that this will continue; that the literary influence of France will go on diminishing; and that since the eighteenth century France has had remarkable men in all branches of learning, but they have been leaders without an army, they have had no one to support them from behind.

March 14.—Magny dinner. Taine talks about the absence of an intellectual movement in provincial France, when compared with all the learned societies in English counties and in German towns. He speaks about this overgrown Paris of ours, which absorbs everything, attracts everything, and manufactures everything, and of the future of France, which, under existing conditions, must end up by a congestion of the brain. Then he goes on to praise England, and is taken up by Sainte-Beuve, who confides to him his disgust at being a Frenchman. "I know what one is told: a Parisian isn't a Frenchman, he is a Parisian; but one is French all the same, which means one is nothing at all . . . a country where there are policemen everywhere . . . I wish I were English; an Englishman is at any rate somebody. I have

some of their blood, at any rate. You know I come from Boulogne? My grandmother was English."

After which we have an enormous discussion about God and religion, a discussion born of a good meal and good brains. Taine explained the advantages and the conveniences of Protestantism to men of intellect, of the elasticity of its dogma, and of the interpretation which every one, according to his temperament, may give to his faith. He ended up by saying: "At the bottom of it all, I believe these things are matters of sentiment, and I have an idea that musical natures are inclined towards Protestantism and plastic natures towards Catholicism."

September 23.—Magny dinner. We come up from the country for the dinner. De Vigny* has just died, and the talk is all about him. Sainte-Beuve is there, throwing anecdotes on his grave. When I hear Sainte-Beuve describing a dead man with his little expressions, I always seem to see ants attacking a corpse; he cleans away a reputation in ten minutes, and a nice shiny skeleton is all that is left of the illustrious subject.

"Well, . . . we can't be quite sure if his family was noble, we never saw any other members . . .

* Famous French poet and historical novelist.

he was an 1814 noble ; people didn't ask questions much then. In Garrick's correspondence there is a letter from a de Vigny asking for money, but very nobly . . . he chose him specially to come to his help. It would be interesting to learn if he was an ancestor. De Vigny was always rather an angel. One never saw a beefsteak at his house, for example. If you were leaving him at seven o'clock to go and have dinner, he would be sure to say, ' You're not going already, surely ! ' He had no idea of reality. It simply didn't exist for him. He used to say glorious things sometimes. When he was coming away from his speech to the *Académie*, a friend told him he had been rather long on his feet. ' But I am not tired ! ' cried de Vigny. Gaspard de Pons, who used to be in his regiment, said of him that ' he does not look any one of the three things he is : a soldier, a poet, or a wit.' He was a clumsy person ; he never knew how he got into the *Académie*. Whenever he recommended anybody for a prize he always lost it for him."

September 30.—On coming out of a theatre I was once more struck by the idea, which haunts me nearly always, that Molière, in reading his plays to his servant, was sitting in judgment on the theatre.

He was simply letting himself down to the level of the theatre public.

December 16.—The Princess,* who arrived at five o'clock from Compiègne, said of the Emperor: "Say what you will . . . that man, he is neither alive nor impressionable! Nothing bothers him. The other day a servant emptied a siphon of seltzer water down his neck, and he was quite satisfied with passing his glass across to the other side of him, without saying a word or giving a single sign of impatience . . . A man who never gets into a temper, and whose most irate expression is, 'It's absurd.' He never says more than that. If I had married him, I think I should have broken his head, just to see what was inside!"

* Mathilde Demidov, daughter of Jerome Bonaparte, king of Westphalia. She ran a literary *salon*.

1864

December 14.—Dinner at Princess Mathilde's. At this dinner there is a staff-captain who starts off for Mexico to-morrow morning. His luggage is already packed. He dines in a uniform which has seen service, a uniform of a fine golden yellow, browned by exposure and powder. He talked about the Mexican army, and gave an amusing description of the manner in which it was recruited. He said, "If you arrest anybody for murder, the judge asks you if you will agree to a sentence punishing the man by making him join the army." There are other ways of getting soldiers in Mexico: the most successful is to have a band performing in the open air; then all the approaches are closed, and a round-up with lassos is organized. These measures do not produce soldiers who are particularly loyal to their flag; on the contrary, they are always ready to go over to the other side; so much so, that the verb "to desert" does not exist there, or is, at any rate, not used . . . and the fear that soldiers

will *pass* to the enemy is such that once Juarez was forced to make his cavalry guard his infantry. Moreover, the upper ranks of the army are considered as opportunities for exploitation. "At the siege of Puebla, Ortega sold flour to our army."

1865

January 12.—I think that the best literary education of a writer would be for him, from the time he left college until he was twenty-five or thirty, to write down without any conventions whatever he saw and felt—and, while doing so, as much as possible trying to forget everything he had read.

February 1.—This evening there was at the Princess's a tableful of literary men, among whom was Alexandre Dumas *père*. He is a sort of giant, with a negro's hair now turned pepper-and-salt, with a little hippopotamus-like eye, clear and sharp, and which watches even when it seems covered over, and an enormous face with features resembling the vaguely hemispherical outlines which caricaturists introduce into their versions of the moon. There is, I cannot say how, something about him of a showman, or of a traveller from the *Thousand and One Nights*. He talks a great deal without much brilliancy, without much biting quality, and with-

out much colour ; he only gives us facts, curious facts, paradoxical facts, stunning facts, which he draws with a hoarse voice from an immense store of memories. And he talks always of himself, himself, himself, but with a childlike vanity in which there is nothing irritating. He tells us, for example, that an article of his on Mount Carmel brought the monks there 700,000 francs (£28,000). He drinks neither wine nor coffee ; he does not smoke ; he is the sober athlete of articles and newspaper copy.

Lesseps, who has pierced the Isthmus,* whose eyes seem so black under his silvered hairs, and who dines with us to-day, just back from Egypt, confides to us—this man of implacable will—that he has been turned aside from doing many things in his life by a fortune-teller in the rue de Tournon.

February 8.—Dinner at Charles Edmond's with Herten.† He has a Socratic mask, a warm and transparent flesh-colour like that of a Rubens portrait, a red mark between the eyebrows like an iron branding, and hair and beard now turning gray.

When he talks we hear from time to time a sort of ironic grin rising and falling up and down his

* The Suez Canal engineer, ruined later by his Panama venture.

† One of the fathers of the revolutionary movement in Russia.

throat. His voice is sweet, melancholy, and musical, without any of the sonorous brutality we might expect from a man of his massive build. His ideas are fine, delicate, steel-like, sometimes subtle, always explained and illuminated by words which may come slowly, but which are always the fortunate expressions of the mind of a first-class foreigner speaking French.

He talked about Bakunin, of his eleven months in a dungeon, chained to a wall ; of his escape from Siberia via the river Amoor ; of his crossing California, and his arrival in London, where, after having for a moment breathed in Herten's arms, his first words were : " Are there any oysters here ? "

Russia, according to Herten, is threatened by internal disruption. The Emperor Nicholas, he said, was quite an insignificant person, and he told us things about this Tsar, whom many Russians believe to have poisoned himself after the Crimean disaster, which made him appear a sort of guard-room Christ. After the capture of Eupatoria he was walking up and down the palace one night with those stonily regular footsteps of his, like those of the Commander,* when he suddenly went up to a sentinel, tore away his rifle, and, dropping upon

* In *Don Juan*, by Molière.

his knees, cried to him, "Kneel down . . . and let us pray for victory!"

Then curious stories about the manners and customs of England, which he loves as the land of liberty. An English servant for whom Turgenev had found a place with the Viardots, and of whom he asked the reason of his giving notice, said to him, "These aren't well-bred people. Not only the mistress, but the master too, speaks to me at table." And then there was the story told by a wealthy Englishman to his friends. He had received notice on the same day from his valet, his coachman, and his groom. He consulted his house-keeper, who said, "If I had not been with you for half a century I, too, should have given notice. Come and look at the kitchen." And she took him down to a spacious kitchen, in the middle of which there was a very decent table. "Well, don't you see—the table is round, which means that sometimes the coachman puts himself next to me, sometimes the groom; whereas, if the table was square, the valet would always be in his proper place, next to me." According to Herten, the really funny thing was that the groom had given notice, foreseeing that when, a few decades later on, he would have become a valet, another groom might be able to usurp the place he himself was usurping at the moment.

And as we tried to unravel French and English characteristics, Herten said: "An Englishman summed up the two characters rather well when he said, 'The Frenchman eats cold veal hotly; we eat our hot beef coldly.'"

March 15.—A little boy of seven or eight years of age. He is dressed in black velvet, with a white waistcoat and red stockings. His hair is curled and his cheeks are chubby, and he has nice eyes, though a little sleepy. He is the Prince Imperial.

The Princess has given him to-night a children's performance, and he had obtained permission to go and mix with the actors after the show.

Poor little fellow! There he was, in the middle of the others who were playing about, prevented from amusing himself by the Grand Ribbon of the Legion of Honour, which he was wearing for the first time; he was both happy and sad, divided between his years and his dignity, and reduced to laughing only with his eyes at the games of the other children.

April 24.—At Magny. We talk about time and space, and I hear the voice of Berthelot,* a great

* Berthelot (1827-1907), an important physicist, who reached Cabinet rank in French politics in the 'eighties.

and brilliant inventor of hypotheses, toss these words into the general discussion :

“ All matter, all motion, exercises a chemical action on the organic bodies with which it has ever come into contact for a moment ; everything since the world’s beginning exists and slumbers on, preserved and photographed in millions of Nature’s negatives, and perhaps that is all there is, the only marks of our passage through this eternity. Who knows whether, some day, science as it progresses will not recover the portrait of Alexander from a rock on which his shadow had rested for a moment ? ”

May 4.—It was a queer table round which we have been seated at Théophile Gautier’s. It was like the *table d’hôte* of the ultimate caravanserai of the Romantic movement or of the Tower of Babel, where all nationalities meet. The other day, Gautier told us, at his table there were twenty persons speaking forty different languages, twenty persons with whom one could have gone round the world without interpreters.

December 5.—The first night of *Henriette Maréchal*. We have dinner at Bignon’s, where we eat and drink thirty francs’ worth, just as if our play is going to have a hundred nights’ run. There is

not the least unrest; everybody is certain that, even if the public does not find our play perfect, it is at any rate remarkably well acted—so well that the actors ought to pull the thing through. We read and re-read the names of our actors. We smoke our cigars, elbowing this Paris where our name is already being heard, and which to-morrow will be full of us. We reach the theatre.* The approaches seem to us to be sufficiently crowded. We mount the staircase with a feeling of victory; the staircase up which we have so many times gone in an entirely different state of mind. We have made up our minds during the day that if *towards* the end of the play we see the public is enthusiastic, we shall go out quickly, so as not to be dragged in triumph upon the stage.

The corridors are full of people. There is a general fidgety talkativeness going on everywhere. We catch rumours of a racket outside: "The queue has broken down the barriers!" We begin to breathe, little by little, an atmosphere of storm. Got, † on whom we fall, tells us that the audience "doesn't look any too amiable." We go to the centre of the curtain, and try to see into the auditorium, but only see in a sort of glare a dazzling

* The Théâtre-Français.

† The principal actor in the play.

crowd. Suddenly we hear the music. The rise of the curtain, the three knocks,* these solemn things that we were expecting with throbbing hearts, have entirely escaped us. Then, all astonished, we hear a hiss, two hisses, three hisses, and storm of yells, answered by a hurricane of applause.

We are in the wings, with our backs up against some of the properties, and it seems to us that as the actors pass us they throw pitiful looks in our direction. And the hisses and the applause continue all the time.

The curtain falls ; we go out without our overcoats, feeling our ears tingle. The second act begins. The hisses start again with violence, mingled with cat-calls in which the actors' voices are parodied. Everything is hissed, even a pause by Mme Plessy. The battle continues between the actors, a part of the orchestra, and nearly all the boxes, from which applause is coming, on one side, and the pit and the whole poultry-yard † on the other, which are trying by shouts, interruptions, explosions, and abuse to bring down the curtain.

“ Ah, it's hot work,” Got says to us two or three times. We remain all this time with our backs

* Which announce the rise of the curtain.

† The literal rendering of a picturesque French term for the gallery.

up against the stage property, pale, nervous, but upright, and not budging an inch, and making the actors, by our determined presence, to go through with the play to the end.

The pistol shot is fired. The curtain drops amid the shrieks of a riot. I saw Mme Plessy leave the scene with the wrath of a lioness, roaring out abuse of the public which has insulted her. And behind the scenes we hear, for a whole quarter of an hour, fierce shouts to prevent Got from saying our name. We go out through the noisy groups that fill the galleries of the Théâtre-Français, and we go and have supper at the Maison d'Or with Comte d'Orsay, Bouilhet, and Flaubert. We present a good appearance, in spite of the state of our nerves, which scarcely allows us to eat. Flaubert cannot prevent himself from saying that he finds our behaviour superb, and we get home at five o'clock in the morning, overcome by the most extreme weariness we have ever felt in our lives.

December 6.—The leader of the claque tells me that since *Hernani* and *Les Burgraves* * the theatre has never seen such an uproar.

We dine with the Princess, who went home last

* By Victor Hugo. The two plays in question were the precursors of the Romantic movement on the stage.

night with her gloves torn and her hands burning from her applause.

December 7.—Ideas that grow on one lead to curious results. These last two days I have been haunted all the time by hisses. This evening's performance is almost satisfactory, and the actors are able to perform a little; and a genuine ray of gladness shone on the face of Mme Lafontaine when she found she could go on without being hissed.

December 9.—Augier is astonished that quiet was not restored at the first performance of *Henriette Maréchal* by the ejection of ten or twelve interrupters. Coquelin told me to-night that while the hissing was preventing anybody from hearing anything at to-night's performance, two or three gentlemen from the boxes in the first tier went to the police-officer in charge, saying that they had paid for their boxes, and brought their families, and wished to hear what was going on. He replied to the effect that he had no instructions.

December 11.—Our first act has been acted absolutely as if it were a pantomime. Not a word was heard. In spite of the hostile uproar Bressant, in

the most difficult part of the play, was admirably unconcerned.

This morning a circular was distributed round the Latin Quarter with the object of bringing down the curtain with the first act. The plan of the interrupters is now perfectly evident: it is to kill all the effective scenes and speeches. All the best things in the play are those which have been most attacked.

A little thing which illustrates this plot, and I give my word of honour that this really happened, is this: before our play, to-night, they put on *Les Précieuses Ridicules*. It was hooted. They hooted Molière, thinking it was de Goncourt.

December 14.—It is astonishing that two weaklings, like ourselves, should possess a nervous strength which has been able to resist these last ten days of crowded life; a strength which astonishes everybody around us, our friends, actors, and Thierry, who said to us a few nights ago, “You are having very cruel evenings!”

I do not merely speak of the effect of these savage riots upon ourselves, but of this life which does not leave a moment of rest for body or soul. We have to correct the proofs of the play for *L'Événement*, make some alterations, write twenty letters a

day, thank everybody all over the place, read all the papers, receive people who come to see us, spend part of the day in a carriage, give away complimentary tickets, be present at every performance up to the end to prevent the actors from loosening their grip, take friends to supper in the evening—and on top of all this, to find time and sufficient detachment to write the preface, in little pieces, in pencilled sentences, in our carriage, when eating in cafés, behind the scenes; it is like spending ten years of one's life and energy and brain in ten days.

December 15.—Thierry came to see us this morning. The night before he had received the first copy of our preface. I immediately understood; our preface has killed the play.

Well, what does it matter!

Thierry took out of his pocket a number of the *Gazette de France* and showed us, following on the attack made by the paper against us, a curious appeal to the guarantors who have put up the money for *Henriette Maréchal* to withdraw their support. We refuse, saying that he understands perfectly well that it is not our play which is being hissed, and that we are determined to wait until the Government suppresses it.

To-night, thanks to the warm kindness of unknown friends, brought to our side by the mad and unreasonable hostility, the performance is a triumph. At the least hiss the whole audience got up and demanded the ejection of the interrupter. After this success, we ask Thierry to let us have one more show. He answers that he cannot promise it.

December 27.—At Havre. What joy to feel out of that hell of glory. Ate a splendid woodcock, breathed the salt sea-air, and feel a bit happier.

1866

January 1.—It is a misfortune to travel in France when you happen to be a Frenchman. The wing of the chicken at a *table d'hôte* always goes to an Englishman. And why? Because an Englishman does not regard a waiter as a human being, and every servant who feels that he is regarded as a human being despises the man who considers him in that light.

January 15.—A Magny dinner. Taine holds forth to the effect that all men of genius are the products of their time.* We maintain the contrary. Where do you find, we ask him, the origins of Chateaubriand's exoticism? He is like a pine-apple growing in a cave! Gautier comes to our support, and maintains that the skull of an artist of the time of the Pharaohs is the same as it is to-day. As to the bourgeois, he calls them "fluid nonentities;" their skulls may alter, but it makes no difference.

* Taine's favourite thesis. His *History of English Literature* is merely an expansion of this idea.

May 30.—The day of the *fête* given every year by the Princess to the Emperor. The garden is all electric light. The lawns and the trees are illuminated by a faëry moonlight, as if Titania was here, and the leaves, whose silhouettes seem to be so many little gas-jets against the inklike blueness of the sky, in which gray bats turn white for an instant. At the end, through the windows, one sees the fire of the candelabras gleam on the purple hangings, and here and there, in the warm mist of the *salons*, are black figures crossed by something of a striking red—a Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour.

The women, the women! Too many dresses, too many dressmakers' models, and not enough beings. . . Around us we feel a general coldness, and we notice a concealed sentiment which can forgive neither our personalities nor the truth of our books, and which seizes, to testify its antipathies, the pretext furnished by the failure of *Henriette Maréchal*.

June 29.—It is extremely curious that after the Revolution, after the diminution of monarchical power over all Europe, with the democratization of governments, even with the rule of the masses, there have never been greater examples of autocracy, of the omnipotence of a man, than to-day. Think of Napoleon III. and Bismarck.

September 24.—Magny dinner.

Nefftzer tells us an anecdote about somebody who was dining, after Sadowa, with the King of Prussia. After the meal, the king, half drunk and half in tears of emotion, said, "Why did God choose a pig like myself to muck off such a great glory for Prussia with!"

October 15.—This evening we are almost alone at the Princess's. She looks a little tired and talks about her past. She speaks about her marriage, Russia and the Emperor Nicolas. "I shall never forgive you" is what the Tsar said to her when she came to him, married to Demidov. The dream of the Tsar had been to give his son the hand of a Napoleon. So that this woman who was talking to us has missed two imperial crowns.* Is it not natural that in her loneliness the memory of the shadow of the crowns which have all but touched her brows should come back to her?

Nicolas was a little inclined to be an ogre, but he was influenced by feelings of sentiment as the head of a family. He was excellent as a father and relative. Some of his harshness, it must be acknowledged, was due to the blackguards who surrounded

* Napoleon III. had asked the Princess to marry him in his early days.

him. He used to say to his son, "We are the only two honest men in Russia," for he knew that all pleasures were bought and sold. It is therefore not to be wondered at that he should make a certain affectation of pitilessness. She told us about the way in which he himself used to act as a policeman, going round the streets in a little carriage, a head taller than any of his subjects. "And as beautiful as a cameo, and like a Roman Emperor!" she added.

"Well, he was a bit mad, but that is perfectly possible, when I think what I have seen at Moscow when he was going to the Kremlin: the peasants touched his boots, and made the sign of the cross with the hand which had touched him."

So the Princess let all this slip from her, word by word, dreamily, in the midst of silences in which we expected that she was going to break off her confessions, touching the things on the table with a wandering hand, and letting her eyes wander over the carpet. She forgot all about the time while she was talking, although she goes to bed early, and suddenly she is astonished to find it is a quarter past twelve.

History, history! I thought of the terrible portrait of the Tsar which Herten had drawn for us. And perhaps both portraits are true.

December 21.—During these last days we have been reading through the printed matter of the Revolution for a play which we are doing of that time. Our play will not express what we feel on rereading history; we shall try to put as much impartiality as the theatre demands into it.

But our true and intimate feeling is one of disgust and contempt. One's mind, however far it is from being delicate, rises up in revolt far more than one's heart against these pages, so much more full of ineptitudes than of crimes. What dominates everything in this swamp of assassinations is the odour of stupidity. The Revolution had good reason to make herself terrible, for at bottom she was beastly. Without blood, she would be silly; without the guillotine she would be burlesque. Take away from the great men, from Robespierre and Marat, the haloes they won for being butchers, and they remain, one a teacher of stringy rhetoric—an imitation Gracchus—the other a maniac, a fantastic lunatic. Yes, take away the blood from the Revolution, and the words "It's too beastly" will come to your mouth before this mass of cannibal imbecilities and flesh-devouring rhetoric. One must read to believe that all this happened to France not a hundred years ago: the reign and the dictator-

ship of the scullery, of menials, of all the jealousies and crimes of inferiors.

What hypocrisies, what lies make up this Revolution! The catchwords, the walls, the speeches, and history, all lie at this period. What a book one could write—*The Humbug of the Revolution!* For who has studied the real truth? Who has ever attempted to verify documents? What did the Revolution achieve which patriotism, party passions, and journalism have not made legendary? Of all those who speak of the famous sabre-cut of Lambesc, how many have read the justification of Lambesc and know the truth of the matter? And of all the fools who know all about the taking of the Bastille, how many know the number of prisoners released from these terrible and devouring dungeons? Three or four!

December 23.—Saw old Barrière to-day. We found the poor old man awaiting our visit as if it were a great occasion. All shaky, with trembling hands, he made us sit down by his fire. His weakening memory, his stammering and half-paralyzed speech, tried to bring us into contact with his recollections. He speaks of all the wicked sentiments as if they were things which have terrified him and left painful impressions, and unlooses them all on to us; and

while speaking in this manner, there rises from this dying old man who saw 1793 a burst of terror of these times, and of the future hatreds now germinating in the mass of literature—which seems to him an evil and unprecedented fermentation. “Ah, yes,” we said to him, “if there were no gendarmes to-day, anybody with a pennyworth of reputation would be torn to pieces in broad daylight.” *

* Barrière was the last survivor of those members of the Convention of 1793 who had voted for the execution of Louis XVI.

1867

February 5.—We two are curious Parisians, to be living in Paris and yet as solitary as wolves. For three months we have only communicated with our likes at the Magny dinners and those of the Princess. Three months, with scarcely a single visit, or a meeting with a friend on our walks at eleven at night. We are gathering, by our wish and our strength, a solitude around us; we are, at the same time, satisfied at not being injured by contact with others, and sad because we have only ourselves.

February 22.—We have been on our backs for a week; both of us ill and suffering painful attacks which took us—curiously in sympathy—in the same night, one of us in the liver, the other in the stomach.

March 8.—We run away like thieves with two large volumes under our arms; they are the *Memoirs of Gavarni*, which his son has entrusted to us. We have had few such joys in our lives.

March 15.—Gavarni's memoirs are curious. Not a relative, a friend, an acquaintance is named; there is a complete absence of others.

April.—In Rome.

At the Vatican Museum.

One of the things which go to make the eyes of Greek statues beautiful—and which I have never seen noted anywhere—is the slope of the lower eyelid, so that if the eye is looked at from the side, a line descending without a break is seen; while in Roman busts, and particularly in mediocre sculptures, the upper eyelid is in the same line as the lower.

One of the beauties of Greek beauty which the poets teach us to appreciate is the shape and delicacy of the cheeks: the bony mask of the face should be tight, and adhere closely to the cheek-bones. This is not seen in Roman heads, where the projections of the temporal arch bones are swelled out, as is the case with barbaric heads.

No. 66. A head, believed to be Sylla's. A head of the type of Provost, the actor. An old man, his brow furrowed with wrinkles, an eye without an eyeball in the hollow of an orbit marked with crows'-feet, the flesh hanging weary and loose from old age on the cheeks, the mouth with the little

gap at the side, half open from toothlessness, one corner lowered, another lifted, and breathing an ironical and intelligent bitterness ; there is nothing so fine as the easy modelling under the chin, and the two fine cords making the fork of the neck.

What can be more artistic in this head, on the under side and on the carefully modelled corners, than the strokes of the chisel which have preserved the vigour of the first sketch, and stamp this head with the strong imprints of life and years ! Parts of this head, like the slope of the cheeks, and the ears, show up the treatment of the stone, in the graining of the marble, as if the design of a genius had been abandoned. This is an exceptional and rare union of the beauty of Greek sculpture with the realism of Roman sculpture.

Here is a statue, twice the size of a man, of gilt bronze, the gilding as thick as the deposit of rust upon a coin some centuries old—a statue which resembles a giant's body in a damascened gold armour ; it is the newly-found Hercules. It is a piece of splendour that the day dwells upon with joy, and which rises up in its corner like a grand specimen of the wealth and luxury of ancient temples.

Here I recognize and I proclaim what I have always maintained in my discussions with Saint-Victor—the overwhelming superiority of Greek

sculpture. As to painting, I cannot tell: perhaps that too was a very great art. But painting is not design—painting is above all a matter of colour; and I only see it in those countries where warm or cold fogs prevail, in those countries where a certain prismatic effect rises from the water into the air, as in Holland or Venice. It does not appear in the clear air of Greece, any more than in the clear blue of Umbria.

May 4.—The *Transfiguration* of Raphael. The most disagreeable impression of badly painted paper which painting can give the eye of a colour painter.* Look where you will, you cannot find a more blatant discord of villainous tones—blue, yellow, red, and green—especially green, an abominable serge-green; and all these tones, associated in shrieking contradiction to one another, picked out with zinc-like lights always outside the tonality of the picture, and lighting up the violet with a yellow glaze and the greens with a white glaze.

The great question of modern times, especially threatening to-day, is the great antagonism between Latin and Teuton—the latter about to devour the former. And yet take random specimens of these two humanities, and personal intelligence will

* Literally translated from the original.

almost always be on the side of the Latin—of the Italian, for example. But this intelligence is rather like the purely artistic sun in Rome, which only makes flowers grow, and not vegetables.

May 19.—Italy has ended by giving us a feeling of home-sickness for gray skies. The new rain seems to us like our native land. . . . Paris once more.

1868

June 18.—As we are talking to Michelet about his book, *Le Prêtre et la Femme*, he interrupts us vehemently: “Ah! that book! I wish I had never written it, although it gave me . . .” And the old man shook his long white hair, leaving his sentence unfinished, and turned towards his wife with a look of grateful love. Mme Michelet replied: “Yes, he made the priest very interesting, he made a novel out of the confessional, and many women, after having read a passage of the book, have gone to confession. That is not my own case. I read the book when I was quite young, and since then I have always hated priests!”

“Yes, works of art have that unfortunate effect!” we say.

“No, no,” repeated Michelet, “Voltaire would not have written that book . . . it was not his particular controversy. . . . This is a curious fact. A young man was sentenced to three months’ imprisonment in the South for a press offence. He

was sickly and had to be transferred to the hospital. The sisters who look after everybody came to look after him, and asked him if he was not bored, whether he didn't want any books. 'But what books have you, my sisters?' 'Well, we have Monsieur Michelet's *Le Prêtre et la Femme*.' 'Michelet's?' 'Yes, it is a book authorized by our confessor.' When they told me that, it gave me quite a shock."

October.—We were the first to have a taste for Chinese and Japanese work. Who has felt, preached, and propagated this taste, which has now descended to the middle classes, more than ourselves? Who waxed enthusiastic over the first Japanese albums, and who had the courage to buy them?

In our novel *En 18* . . . there was a description of a mantelpiece covered with Japanese knick-knacks, which made Edmond Texier demand our imprisonment in a lunatic asylum—which created the taste.

But let us go back a bit farther, to our old family recollections. When the elder of us was only a child of fourteen, we used to have an old country aunt who loved him. And do you know the only quarrel that there was between our aunt and my brother? For our aunt the Chinese had absolutely no existence except as figures which ap-

peared on screens, and never having seen them except painted on paper, she used to imagine that this nation was a comic invention. My brother, strong in the faith of his schooling, used to exert himself in pointing out, in favour of his beloved race, the invention of the compass, of gunpowder, of printing, etc., etc., but our aunt persisted in covering them with contempt. "Oh, bother your Chinese!" she ended up by saying one day. It was the good old times thundering. Our aunt belonged to those times.

December 14.—To-day our admirer* Zola came to lunch. This is the first time that we have met him. A striking characteristic of his is his ultra-nervous sickliness, which gives you at times the feeling that you have at your side the melancholy and rebellious victim of a heart affection. He is, to sum up, restless, anxious, profound, complicated, reserved, and not easily understood.

He talked to us about the difficulties of his life, and of the need that he should find a publisher to pay him 30,000 francs, and who would in this way assure him 6,000 francs per. year; which would keep him and his mother and give him the chance of writing *The History of a Family*, a novel

* Zola had written an article eulogizing *Germinie Lacerteux*.

in eight volumes. For he wants to do "big things" and have done with articles—"infamous, ignoble things!" he cried in a voice which carried indignation against himself; "yes, the articles I am obliged to write for the *Tribune* in the middle of people whose idiotic opinions I have to consider. . . . For it is absolutely true that this Government, with all its indifference to and ignorance of talent, and of all its productions, throws us over to the Opposition papers, the only ones which allow us to earn our bread. Truly, that is all we have." Then, after a silence: "I have so many enemies . . . and it is so hard to get oneself spoken of!"

And, from time to time, during a bitter recrimination, when he repeats to us and to himself that he is only twenty-eight years old, he breaks out violently into a note of sharp and peevish energy.

He ends up by saying: "Yes, you are right; my novel is going off the line. . . . Three characters are all that are needed. But I will follow your advice. I will do the job like that. . . . And then we are the last comers: you know that you are our elders, Flaubert and you. You! Even your enemies acknowledge that you have created your art; only they believe there is nothing in it, that's all!"

1869

March 2.—Before going to a Magny dinner, we call in on Sainte-Beuve. He talks to us about our novel*—which he has been reading in the intervals of his work—like a man who has a great deal to say about it. At first he employs a kind of flattery, rather like the touches of the paw of a cat which is going to use its claws, and we do not have to wait long for the scratches. They come in minute instalments. He tells us that we try to achieve excess in our effects, that we overwork our qualities, that he does not deny that some passages when read aloud nicely may be enjoyable in certain circumstances. “But books are made to be read . . .” he says, in an ill-tempered voice, “and read by all. Suppose they do print extracts from your books in anthologies: that is all very well, but it is not literature . . . and there’s another thing that you ought. . . . That is movement in colour, as you say. . . . It is the soul of

* *Madame Gervaisais*, just published.

things. It's impossible. I have no idea how people will take these things later on. But at present, you must dilute yourselves, extinguish yourselves. Take your description of the Pope, for example, all in white. No, no . . . it won't do."

Then, suddenly becoming angry, "'Neutral tint'!—what on earth is it? . . . It isn't in the dictionary. It's a painter's expression. But everybody isn't a painter. It's like your 'tea-rose coloured sky.' What is a 'tea rose'?" And he repeated once or twice, "Tea rose!" adding, "If it's only a rose there's no meaning in it!"

"But, Monsieur Sainte-Beuve, if I wished to say that the sky was yellow with the rosy yellowness of a tea rose—of a *Gloire de Dijon*, for example—and not the rosiness of an ordinary rose?"

"In art you must succeed," he continues without listening to us. . . . "You must succeed . . . I wish you would succeed . . ." Then he stopped, ending up with a few half-swallowed words which made us suspect that the book had not enjoyed much success amongst his associates.

Then he went on to exhort us to write for the public, to lower our work to the intelligence of everybody, almost reproaching us for our effort, and the ambition of our literary conscience, the work of our books, which are, so to speak, written

in the sweat of our brows, and, lastly, the passion which we have set out to satisfy.

And when we proudly tell him that for us there is only one public—not that of the moment, but of the future—he asks us with a lift of his shoulders: “Is there a future or a posterity? Just think of that!” blasphemes the journalist who in every article uses up some of the glory which will not survive him, and who does not wish writers, not appreciated in their own lifetime, to have longer reputations than his—not even on account of those misunderstood books which hope to receive their only reward from posterity.

He growls, he grumbles, he argues, with that nervous irritability which all those who know him have always seen him display for a work a little above the usual—a sort of petty anger which chokes him in discussion, and with that feminine shiftiness which characterizes him. He is jealously uneasy lest our work be accepted by a present or future public, and then he drops politeness and shows his teeth. Suddenly, while he is speaking, we feel we are visiting a friend who does not love us. Sainte-Beuve bitterly reproaches us for having made our heroine read Kant, who had not been translated in her time, shouting at us, “Then what faith can one place in your study?”

And he repeats this gross error of our book to us several times, exaggerating the fault every time.

We took pity on the ignorance of the great critic, who would no doubt have been much annoyed with us had we told him that, between 1796 and 1830, there were about ten translations into French of various books of Kant.

April 16.—Our little adventure with Sainte-Beuve from one end to the other has its queer sides. After his bitter exhortations against our novel, and his personal hostility against its heroine, Sainte-Beuve actually proposed to us, through Charles Edmond, that he should do two articles upon the book in *Le Temps*. He warned us that he was asking us to accept its bitterness with its sweets, and that he understood that we might reply, in the same paper, to his severities. We immediately accepted Sainte-Beuve's proposal, very touched and grateful to him for his courtesy. We wrote to him, and he replied to us. . . . To the end of his life, up to the very edge of the grave, Sainte-Beuve will be the same Sainte-Beuve, the man always influenced by the infinitely little, by petty considerations, personal questions, and his own domestic affairs.

May 22.—We call on Michelet.

In spite of his years and his immense toils, the hoary old man is always young, vivacious, and still bubbling with coloured words, original ideas, and the paradoxes of genius.

We talk about Hugo's book. He professes that fiction is the construction of miracles, by great effort—the exact opposite of history, which is the great destroyer of miracles. He supports this theory by one of those zigzags which are familiar to him, and quotes Joan of Arc, who is no longer a miracle, since he demonstrated the weakness and inefficiency of the English army when opposed to the concentrated French forces.

Returning to Hugo, he tells us that he represents him to himself, not as a Titan, but as a Vulcan, a mighty gnome, who knocked iron into shape in great forges . . . in the bowels of the earth. Hugo! who is above all a creator and lover of monsters: *Notre-Dame de Paris*, with Quasimodo; *The Laughing Man*, which owes its success to the monstrosities; and even in *Toilers of the Sea*, all the interest of the novel lies in the octopus. Hugo, he continues, has a great power, a very great power, urged on, kept going . . . the power of a man who is always walking against the wind and takes two sea-baths daily. That is criticism and good

criticism, from a man who is not a critic, and which has not been reached by Sainte-Beuve.

Then he talks to us about the difficulty of writing modern novels, partly on account of the change in surroundings; and without appearing to notice our objections, he goes on to *Pamela*, of which the greatest interest to him is the change which has taken place in manners: the transformation of old English Puritanism into Methodism, in accordance with human interests and life, happened on the day when Wesley said, "There is room for the saints." "*Pamela*," he added, emphasizing his final words with a smile, "is at once a type of young woman and a schoolmaster."

October 15.—At Trouville. We hear of the death of Sainte-Beuve. The dead man never really paid for all the favours he received from the cheap press.

1870

January 5.—Had a sleepless night, and while tossing about in bed, unable to find sleep, I tried to find distraction by reviewing the distant days of my childhood. I remembered Menilmontant, the *château* given by the Duc d'Orléans to an opera dancer, which had become a family property, and was inhabited by my uncle and aunt* de Courmont, M. and Mme Armand Lefèbvre, and my mother, on friendly terms with the two women. I saw once more the ancient concert-hall, the terrible little wood where the father and mother of my aunt were buried, the sort of Greek temple where the women awaited the return of their husbands from the counting-house and from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; then I remembered Germain, that old brute of a gardener, who used to stick his rake into you if he caught you steal-

* It is curious that the thoughts of both Jules and Edmond should turn to this aunt as each was approaching his death.

ing grapes. I also remembered an eccentric old uncle of my aunt, working in the stables, manufacturing a three-wheeled carriage which was to go by itself. The *château*, the garden, and the little wood all seemed big, like the things one saw with the eyes of a child. Then I remembered my early youth, and my stays with uncle Alphonse, who was to have been an Oratorian, but whom circumstances had made an English merchant, and who, after having been nearly ruined by a partner, who suddenly bolted to the Indies, retired with a Horace and a waistcoat-maker to a little property he had in the Loiret. My uncle had a curious set of acquaintances. He cultivated a bandage-maker of Orléans, who had the prettiest wife one could imagine. One day when he took me to dinner at his house I was suddenly smitten with affection for his wife. I was so inebriated by the timidity of my fifteen years, that, at the moment when I was pressing her with my knee, she moved her leg, and I fell over backwards, almost incapable of getting up, while her husband calmly remarked: "If you had not put out your leg that would not have happened."

We went home, my uncle a little drunk, half laughing at the fun of the thing, and half in terror at the prospect of a duel with his friend the bandage-

maker. My uncle was not at all heroic. All this was mixed up with recommendations and exhortations not to damage a valuable cambric shirt with a little lace frill, which was all that remained to him of his English finery, and which he had lent me that day.

What extraordinary things are nervous affections! Here is the composer Vaucorbeil, for example, who is afraid of velvet, and the preoccupation is agonizing, when he is invited to a house to dine for the first time, to know whether the dining-room chairs are covered in velvet.

[These are the last words written by Jules de Goncourt in the "Journal." A few months after these last entries were made, he died. It would almost seem, from the "Journal" of the year or two before his death, that he had strong presentiments of the approaching end. Apart from the frequent complaints of restlessness, of febrility, and various forms of sickliness, we have more positive statements, such as that made on April 30, 1869: "The hours of our life seem to be escaping us, during these last few months, as if on a runaway horse."]

After these months, these many months, I pick up the pen fallen from the hands of my brother. At first I wished to make this Journal end with

his last notes, with the note of the dying man revisiting his youth and infancy . . . "What use is there in continuing this book?" I asked myself; "my career is ended, my ambition is dead . . ." To-day I feel as I did yesterday, but I have a certain alleviation in relating to myself these months of despair! Perhaps this is with a vague desire to fix the sorrow for the future friends of the loved one's memory . . . Why? I cannot say; it is a sort of obsession. So I take up this Journal, and write notes dropped, in my nights of tears, like those cries with which great physical pains are healed.

January. — We went for a walk at nightfall, without saying a word, in the Bois de Boulogne. He was sad that night, sadder than ever. I said to him: "Suppose you rest for a year or two . . . you are quite young, you are not yet forty. Won't you have enough time left you to manufacture more old books?" He looked at me with the astonished air of a man whose secret thought is revealed, and he replied, emphasizing every word: "I feel I shall never be able to work again . . . never!"

I think of that last paragraph in the book about Gavarni, which he read to me one morning at

Trouville, while I was still in bed. He had composed it in the sleepless night. I cannot describe the profound sadness into which I fell, when he recited to me, with a calm solemnity, that little bit which we had not planned together, and which did not need to be done till later. I felt that in lamenting Gavarni he was lamenting himself, and the sentence: "He sleeps at our side in the cemetery at Auteuil," became, quite inexplicably, a fixed remembrance, and, as it were, humming in my mind.

For the first time I had the idea, which I had never had before—I had the idea that he might die.

June 18.—To say that this close and inseparable connection of twenty years' standing, those days, those nights spent together, since the death of our mother in 1849; to say that this long period, which has only known two separations of twenty-four hours; to say that it is now finished, finished for ever! I shall no longer have him at my side when I go out walking. I shall no longer have him opposite me when I eat. In my sleep, I shall no longer feel his presence in the next room. I shall no longer have his eyes, as well as my own, to see countries, and pictures, and modern life. I shall no longer have that twin intelligence which made him anticipate what I was going to say, or repeat

what I was in the act of saying. In a few days, in a few hours, the frightful solitude of an old man yet living will enter into my life, so full of this affection.

[Jules de Goncourt died the next day. His brother's description of the death is unpleasantly protracted; among the causes of death was a weakening of the brain which had been going on for some time. The lungs were also affected. Within a month of the death of Jules the war with Germany had broken out.]

August 6.—From the Gallery of Engravings of the National Library I saw people running in the rue Vivienne. Instinctively I put down the volume of reproductions and, soon outside, I began to run behind the runners.

At the Bourse, from one end to the other, all heads are bared, hats are waving in the air, and every one is singing a mighty Marseillaise, the deafening waves of which swamp the buzzing within. I have never seen any enthusiasm like this. One passes men pale from emotion, children skipping with excitement, and women making intoxicated movements. Capoul sings that Marseillaise from the top of an omnibus, in the Place de la Bourse, and on the Boulevard Marie Sasse

sings it, standing up in her carriage, which is being almost swept away by the delirium of the populace.

But the telegram which announces the defeat of the Prince of Prussia and the capture of 25,000 prisoners, this telegram which is said to be hung up inside the Bourse, this telegram which people assure me they have read, in the midst of whom I search for it inside the building, this telegram which, in a strange hallucination, people believe they see, pointing with their fingers: "Look, there it is, there!" . . . and showing me a wall at the end with nothing on it—this telegram is not to be found; though I look again and again in every corner of the building.

August 7.—A frightful silence fills the Boulevard. There is not a carriage to be heard, not a child's cry of joy, and on the horizon is a Paris where sound itself seems dead.

August 19.—The emotions of the last week have given the Parisians the faces of sick men. On these yellow, drawn, shrivelled countenances are to be seen all the ups and downs of hope through which the nerves of Paris have passed since August 6th.

August 21.—In the Bois de Boulogne. To see all these great trees fall under the axe, with the quiverings of men wounded to death; to see these, where a green curtain was spread, this mass of sharpened stakes, shining whitely, this sinister harrow—you feel a hatred of the Prussians rising in your heart; they are the cause of these violations of nature.

August 22.—Everybody on the Boulevards—men and women—seems to be asking a question of everybody else, turning round to listen to whoever is speaking, restless, anxious, frightened.

August 23.—I find at the Saint-Lazare railway station a group of twenty Zouaves, all that are left of a battalion which has yielded under MacMahon. There is nothing so fine, in such style, so sculptural or so picturesque, as these men broken by battle. They are marked by a weariness which cannot be compared with any other weariness, and their uniforms are soiled, marked, and stained as if they had been under sun and rain for years together.

In the evening, at Brébant's, we stood at the window, attracted by the shouts of a crowd to a regiment starting for the front. Renan goes away quickly, with a movement of contempt, saying: "In all this crowd, there is not one man capable of a noble action!"

“What, of a noble action!” we shout at him. “Is it not a noble, a devoted action, for these men, unknown to glory, these nameless men, to give up their lives!”

August 26.—At the East Station. In the middle of cases, baskets, parcels of old linen, bottles, mattresses, quilts, tied together with great ropes, there is now a little crowd shaking and tumbling down among all this variety of objects, of keen-eyed countrymen, buried and sunk in the holes and interstices. Here is an old woman of Lorraine, with a hunting dog at her feet and a crutch at her side, in a pointed brown bonnet, who draws from time to time from a basket some of the black grapes of her country, which she passes over to her grandchildren.

August 27.—Zola has lunch with me. He tells me of a series of novels he wants to write, an epic in ten volumes, giving the natural and social history of a family, which he is ambitious to attempt, with an exposition of the temperaments, characters, virtues, and vices developed by the environments, and differentiated, like the plants of a garden, “where there is sun here and shadow there.”

He tells me that after the infinitely minute analysis of feeling, executed as Flaubert has done it in *Madame Bovary*, after the analysis of artistic

things, plastic and nervous things, as we have done it, after all this "jewellery," these chiselled volumes, there is no room left for young writers to construct characters and figures: only by the quantity of volumes, and creating on a large scale, can one speak to the public.

August 30.—From the top of the Auteuil omnibus, going down from the Trocadéro, I saw, on the large gray open space of the Champ-de-Mars, in the sun-filled clearness, a mass of little red dots, of little blue dots—the men of the line.

I got down, and here I am in the middle of gleaming bundles; in the middle of little kitchens, where tin pots are boiling; in the middle of open-air toilets, which are being made by men in their shirt-sleeves; in the middle of tents, in a triangle of shadow, in which may be seen the tan-coloured head of a pot-soldier, lying near his water-bottle in the straw. Some soldiers are filling their cans from bottles, sold by a wine-seller from a barrow; others are kissing a laughing woman who is selling green apples. I walk about in this movement, this animation, this gaiety of French soldiers about to start for death, when the broken voice of a little bandy-legged old man, who might have come out of Hoffmann's stories, cries out: "Pens and writing

paper!" A cry which was almost a funereal memento, a sort of discreetly formulated piece of advice, which really meant, "Gentlemen, have you made your wills?"

August 31. — This morning at daybreak the demolition of houses on the military zone has been commenced, in the middle of the procession of removals from the suburbs, which resemble the migration of an ancient nation. One sees queer corners of half-demolished houses, with the remains of fantastic pieces of furniture; thus, there is a barber's shop, the gaping front of which shows the curule chair, all forgotten, in which laundrymen used to be shaved on Sundays.

September 2.—I caught hold of Chennevières coming out of the Louvre, who tells me he is going to Brest to-morrow to escort the third consignment of pictures from the Louvre, which have been taken out of their frames, rolled up, and sent away, to be saved from the Prussians, to the arsenal or the prison at Brest. He describes the sad and humiliating spectacle of this packing, and Reiset, weeping hot tears before "La Belle Jardinière" at the bottom of her packing-case, as if she were a dead friend, ready to be nailed up in her coffin. In the evening, after dinner, we go to the railway

station in the rue d'Enfer, and I see seventeen cases, containing the Antiope, the finest Venetians, etc.—those pictures which believed they were to hang on the walls of the Louvre for all eternity, and which are now mere luggage, protected against the accidents of removal only by the word “Fragile.”

September 3.—It is not life to go on living in this great and terrifying unknown, which surrounds you and crushes you.

What a sight Paris was this evening, under the blow of the news of the defeat of MacMahon and the capture of the Emperor! Who can paint the depression on all faces, the comings and goings of people walking aimlessly about, the blackness of the crowds around the municipal offices, the assaults on the newspaper sellers' stands, the triple line of readers under every gas-lamp, the anxious asides of the *concierges* and the shopkeepers on the doorsteps, and on the chairs in the back shops the overcome attitudes of the women, who are alone, without their men. . . .

Then the angry cries of the mob, the rage followed by stupefaction, the bands rushing over the boulevards crying, “Defeat! *Vive Trochu!*” * the

* Military Governor of Paris.

tumultuous and disorderly spectacle of a nation determined to save itself by the impossible means which succeeded in the days of the Revolution.

September 4.—This morning there is a fearful silence everywhere, under a gray sky which saddens everything.

Towards four o'clock the outside of the *Chambre* looked thus: Separating itself from the grayness of the façade, above and around the pillars, on the steps of the grand staircase, a multitude has accumulated, a world of men whose blouses make blue and white spots against the black-clothes men, the majority of whom have boughs in their hands or bouquets of green leaves fastened to their hats. Suddenly a hand raises itself above all the heads and writes on a pillar, in great red letters, the list of members of the Provisional Government, while, at the same time appears in black on another pillar, "The Republic is Proclaimed." Then shouts of applause, hats in the air, people climbing up the pedestals of the statues, a man in a blouse who calmly begins to smoke his pipe on the stone knees of the Chancellor L'Hôpital, and clusters of women who hang on to the railings immediately opposite the Pont de la Concorde.



ERNEST RENAN.

Everywhere one hears around one people greeting each other with the remark, "There it is!" and above the pediment, a man takes the blue and the white away from the tricolour flag, and leaves only the red waving. On the railings of the Tuileries, the gilt N's are hidden away under old newspapers, and crowns of everlasting flowers hang in the place of the absent eagles.

At the main door of the Palace I see written in chalk, "To the Citizens' Guard." Men in white blouses, with one arm around a pillar of the peristyle, and one hand resting on a rifle, are shouting, "Admission free to the bazaar;" while the crowd is breaking in, and an immense noise is pouring into the staircase of the invaded Palace.

On the benches, against the kitchens, women are sitting about, cockades in their hair; and a young mother is quietly nursing a quite small infant in white swaddling-clothes.

Along the rue de Rivoli one can read on the blackened old stones, "Rooms to let," and notices, written by hand, "Death to Thieves," "Respect Property."

Pavements and roadways are full, covered with men and women who behave as if they were entirely at home, a sort of holiday in the great city; yes, a million creatures who seem to have forgotten

that the Prussians are only three or four days from Paris, and who, in the hot and intoxicating weather, go out seeking for adventures, urged on by the feverish curiosity to see the great historical drama which is being performed.

All along the rue de Rivoli troops are marching, singing the Marseillaise. Outside the Hôtel de Ville is an enormous crowd. From time to time little papers fall from the windows, which the crowd collects and throws back into the air, and which seem like snowflakes above the heads. From time to time some figures on the extreme left show themselves and receive the applause of the crowd; and Rochefort, seen for a minute with his old wig and his nervous face, is acclaimed as the future saviour of France. Returning by the rue Saint-Honoré, I found myself walking over pieces of gilt plaster which were, two hours ago, the shields bearing the imperial arms of the purveyors to His Majesty that was; and I met crowds of bald men, trying to express by means of epileptic gestures what they could no longer shout with their choked-up voices and soundless throats.

I do not know, but I have no faith. It does not seem to me likely that this noisy mob is going to do the work of those good men who sang the Marseillaise in bygone days; these men seem to be

simply the blackguards of our age on the loose—sceptical blackguards making a noise about politics, and having nothing under the left breast for the great sacrifices of their country.

Yes, the Republic! In these circumstances I believe only the Republic can save us; but a Republic which should have a Gambetta at the head, and which should call to its aid the real and rare able men of the country, and not a Republic composed almost exclusively, as this is, of all the idiots and all the mediocrities, old and young, of the extreme left. . . . This evening, right along the boulevards, the flower-sellers are only selling red button-holes.

September 6.—Dinner at Brébant's. I find Renan all alone at the large table in the red room, reading a newspaper and making despairing gestures with his arms.

Saint-Victor comes in, collapses on a chair, and exclaims, as if he sees a terrifying vision: "The Apocalypse—the white horse!"

Nefftzer, du Mesnil, Berthelot, etc., etc., come in, and we dine in the desolation of each other's words. We talk about the great defeat, the impossibility of resistance, the incapacity of the men of the

National Defence; of their entire lack of influence with the diplomatic corps and neutral governments. We curse that Prussian savagery which Genseric is starting again.

On this, Renan says: "The Germans have few joys in life, and the greatest one they know they put into hating; into the thought and the perpetration of vengeance."

Somebody says: "Weapons requiring precision are contrary to the French temperament; our soldiers like to fire quickly, then use their bayonets; if they cannot do this they are paralyzed. The 'mechanization' of the individual is not in his line. That is where the Prussian excels just now."

Renan, lifting his head up from his plate, says: "In everything I have studied I have always been struck by the superiority of German intelligence and work. It is not astonishing that in the art of war, which after all is an inferior art but complicated, they have reached this superiority which I see in everything, I repeat, which I have studied, which I know. . . . Yes, gentlemen, the Germans are a superior race!"

"Oh! oh!" we cry from all quarters.

"Yes, very superior to us," replies Renan, becoming animated. "Catholicism stultifies the individual; education by Jesuits or lay brothers

arrests and restricts all power to achieve, while Protestantism develops it."

The gentle and sickly voice of Berthelot brings us back from these sophistical heights to threatening actualities: "Gentlemen, perhaps you do not know that we are surrounded by enormous quantities of oil, left at the gates of Paris, which cannot enter because of the octroi, which the Prussians will capture and throw into the Seine. They will make a river of fire which will burn the two banks! That is how the Greeks destroyed the Arab fleet." "Then why not warn Trochu?" "Is this the time to occupy oneself with such matters?" Berthelot goes on: "If the locks of the Marne canal are not exploded, all the heavy Prussian siege artillery will arrive, as it were, on rollers up to the very walls of Paris; but will they think of exploding them? I can go on telling you things of this sort till to-morrow morning."

And when I ask him if he hopes some engine of destruction to be forthcoming from the committee over which he presides: "No, no, we have neither men nor money, and I receive two hundred and fifty letters daily, which leave me no time to make any experiments. It isn't that there is nothing to be tried or discovered, perhaps, but we've no time; we've no time to make experiments on a

large scale . . . and to get them accepted ! There is a big bird in the artillery to whom I was explaining the use of oil. ‘Oh yes,’ he said, ‘they did that in the ninth century.’ ‘But the Americans,’ I said, ‘in their last war. . . .’ ‘That’s quite true,’ he replied ; ‘but it’s dangerous stuff to handle, and we don’t want to blow ourselves up.’ So you see,” added Berthelot, “how things are.”

Renan, obstinately attached to his theory of the superiority of the German people, continues to develop it to his neighbours. When du Mesnil interrupts him by this remark : “As to the sentiment of independence among your German peasants, I can tell you this, that I, who used to go shooting in Berlin, have sent them to pick up the game by kicking them in the rear !”

“Well,” says Renan, completely abandoning his theory, “I prefer peasants whom one can kick in the rear to those, like our own, whom universal suffrage has made our masters—peasants who, though the inferior elements of civilization, have imposed this government on us for the last twenty years.”

Berthelot continues his unpleasant revelations, at the end of which I say,—

“Then it’s all up with us, and nothing is left us save to bring up a generation to revenge us.”

“No, no,” cries Renan, who has got up, all red in the face; “not revenge. Let France perish, let our country perish; there is something higher than country—that is, Duty, Reason. . . .”

“No, no,” shouts everybody; “there is nothing higher than one’s country.” “No,” yells Saint-Victor, still louder, and quite angry, “do not let us aestheticize; don’t let’s go in for Byzantine philosophy . . . there is nothing higher than one’s country!”

Renan has got up, and walks round the table somewhat unsteadily, waving his short arms in the air, quoting Scriptural passages very loudly and saying that they contain everything.

Then he goes to the window, under which the heedless populace comes and goes, and says to me, “There is what will save us; it is the softness of that population.”

September 7.—Between the Barrière de l’Étoile and Neuilly. It has rained all night. The tents have pailfuls of water in their folds, and damp straw is coming out, showing inside the tents pieces of red, which are soldiers sleeping rolled up. Sentries, like sick men in a hospital, are standing on guard, wrapped up in a covering, and with their heads swathed in handkerchiefs with blue squares.

They all show, both by their faces and by the slackness of their movements, the bad effects of the cold night. They are not sad, but they look passive—resigned in a way which is at once melancholy and a bit stupid. They seem to be predestined to die, not to conquer; to defeat from lack of discipline; and haunted by that great solvent of armies—that is, Treason.

September 8.—It is irritating to hear always the same thing on every possible occasion—"It's the fault of the Emperor!"—and it is generous on my part to write this, as for quoting four verses, quoted in Sainte-Beuve's course on French literature, and crowned by the Academy, I was prosecuted by the Imperial government, and what has never before been the case at any press trial, placed between gendarmes—yes, it is irritating. For if the generals have been inefficient, if officers have been unable to rise to circumstances, if . . . if . . . it is not the fault of the Emperor.

September 11.—All along the Boulevard Suchet, all along the road inside the fortifications, the cheerful animation of the National Defence proceeds. All along the road fascines and gabions are being made. Up above, civilians are learning to use

artillery; down below the National Guard is practising shooting. All the time one sees the blue, black, and white blouses of the Garde Mobile passing by, and in the sort of green canal in which the trains run, the quick movement of trains, in which one can only see red trousers, epaulettes, and kepis of this new military population improvised out of our *bourgeoisie*.

The Champ-de-Mars is always a camp, where military humour has daubed on the gray tent-covers, "Maids-of-all-work wanted here!" Interminable files of horses descend to the Seine to drink and line the embankment, where enclosures of thick ropes shut off the artillery trains and the engineers' equipments.

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This evening what recklessness, what heedlessness of the morrow—that to-morrow when perhaps the town will be in fire and blood! The same cheerfulness, the same futility of talk, the same light and ironical tone of voice in restaurants and cafés. Men and women are as frivolous as they were before the invasion, except that some ill-tempered women find that their husbands or lovers spend too much time in reading the newspapers.

September 13.—This is the day of the great review,

the inspection of the monster of the armed population.

At the stations the carriages are packed with soldiers of the line, their little round loaves stuck on their bayonets. In Paris, in all the streets and new boulevards of the *Chaussée-d'Antin*, the pavements are no longer visible under the gray masses of human beings which cover them. A line of the *Garde Mobile* in white blouses is seated with their feet in the gutter; a second line rests with its backs against the houses, or is simply lying down. Between a double line of armed civilians are the bayonets of the *National Guards* going up the boulevard to the *Bastille*, and the bayonets of the *Garde Mobile* going down to the *Madeleine*—an unending double current whose steel weapons gleam in the sunshine.

From every street pour *National Guards* with songs which have no longer the vulgar or crapulous note of these last days, but which seem to contain devotion and to show the enthusiasm of devoted hearts.

Suddenly a great silence falls, extinguishing the drums; men look at each other as if they are taking an oath to die; then a great shout darts out from this concentrated enthusiasm, a shout from the bottom of one's lungs—"Vive la France! Vive la

République ! Vive Trochu ! ”—to greet the General and his escort as they rapidly gallop past.

The march past of this National Guard commences with rifles decorated with dahlias, roses, and tufts of red ribbon—an interminable march past, where the Marseillaise, murmured rather than shouted, continues far behind the slowly moving men, like the pious and sonorous waves of men's prayers.

And when one sees in the ranks these riding-coats side by side with blouses ; gray beards mingled with beardless chins ; to see these fathers, of whom some hold by the hand their little girls, who have slipped into the ranks ; to see these workers and middle-class men suddenly made into soldiers, and ready to die together—one can only wonder if, after all, one of those miracles is going to happen which come to the aid of nations which have faith.

September 16.—To-day I amuse myself by going round Paris on the “ Ceinture ” railway. At the Bel-Air station there is great excitement. The porters, with feverish gestures, tell me that Marshal Vaillant has just been arrested for showing a Prussian the weak points in the fortifications, and they wax indignant that the traitor was not shot on the spot. Always Pitt and Cobourg ! In times of danger stupidity grows at an alarming rate.

I get off at the Boulevard d'Ornano. At the same moment there passes a battalion of marines, armed with shovels, and preceded by trumpeters, who in one minute have taken possession of the Custom House officials' barrack; and I had the pleasure of seeing at every window their fearless faces, solemn yet smiling, with eyes the colour of sunlit waves.

September 17.—At Boulogne-sur-Seine only the butcher, the wine-merchant, and the hairdresser are open. In the abandoned village pantechinons are standing about, without horses, before mattresses and bedding thrown on the pavement; and here and there a few old women sitting in the sun, before the entrances to obscure alleys, refuse to go away, determined to die where they have lived. In the little side streets, deserted and inanimate, pigeons walk about the sidewalks, on which no human being disturbs them. The brilliant flowers, and the corners of gardens in flower, contrast strangely with this absence of human life.

As far as Saint-Cloud the road goes on between houses with blinds down, closed shops, catching the eye of the passer-by on account of the quantity of lost goods, sown broadcast on the pavement in the hurry of the retreat to Paris. A little

child's sock, quite a new sock, tells me a whole story.

Saint-Cloud, with its terraces of houses, on the finest day of the year, frightens one by its silence. It might almost be a dead city, under the implacable blue of a beautiful cholera sky.

September 17.—Cannon thunders all through the morning. At eleven o'clock I am at the Point-du-Jour gate. Under the railway bridge, hanging on to the projections of the unfinished crenellated wall, or standing on heaps of plaster or ashlar, or up on ladders, anxious women are listening by the side of the Sèvres bridge; while the battalions which are going out to the firing line pass under them, and with difficulty force a passage for themselves through the last of the extra-mural inhabitants who are now entering the city, pushing loaded barrows before them, mixed up as they are with the bands of refugees.

Questions are asked of these men, among whom are some soldiers of the 46th, with mud up to their knees, and four or five Zouaves, one of whom is slightly wounded on the face—these men, who seem to be trying to spread their discouragement by their words, their terror-stricken faces, and their cowardly expressions.

In spite of this appearance of retreat, of disbanding, and of panic, the Garde Mobile, who await orders, and are in the disarray of a corps without a commander, though a bit pale, have an air of decision.

At this moment a battalion of Municipal Guards marches past with the martial tread of old soldiers. One of their officers, turning at the bridge, notices the slightly wounded Zouave, and shouts to the crowd, "Arrest that Zouave; they fled this morning!" And soon I see that Zouave arrested and taken back to the firing line.

A battalion of the Garde Mobile returns. One of the men is carrying a Prussian epaulette on the end of his bayonet.

Then comes a tilted cart holding three wounded Zouaves, who can only be seen from below, and whose yellow faces under their red caps alone show.

I return to the Point-du-Jour just as a little group of Zouaves returns. They say that they are all that remain of a body of two thousand men to which they were attached. They tell us that there are a hundred thousand Prussians in the Bois de Meudon, and that Vinoy's corps was dispersed like the lead dust of a rifle-shot. . . . One feels the madness of fear in these accounts, the hallucinations of panic.

There is another group of Zouaves near the Madeleine. One of them, laughing nervously, told me that there was no battle . . . that there was just a headlong rout . . . that he did not use a single cartridge. The look of these men is striking. The men who have fled are vague, troubled, greenish; they do not seem to be able to fix their look on anything.

In the Place Vendôme, where people accused of being spies are brought along, I meet Pierre Gavarni in the crowd. He is now a staff-captain in the National Guard. We dine together, and at table he tells me that since the first defeats—he was at Metz and Chalôns as secretary to Ferri-Pisani—he has been struck by the helplessness of everybody, by the lack of attention shown by the French brain to its most vital interests. He has several times tried to obtain without success an inventory of the rifles at Mont-Valérien.

This evening on the boulevards the crowd is bad—agitated, swelling, seeking for disorder and victims; every now and again it shouts, "Arrest him!" and at once on the tracks of a poor fellow, who is taking refuge in flight, rushes a brutal heap of men, who force themselves through the crowd with violence sufficient to tear him to pieces.

September 22.—On the top of the Trocadéro, in the quickly-moving air, all sonorous with the incessant drumming in the Champ-du-Mars, there are groups of sightseers, in the midst of whom are correctly-dressed Englishmen, with race-glass cases hanging behind them, holding in their gloved hands enormous binoculars.

Behind them are noisy companies of boys of fourteen years of age, carrying, instead of flags, planks fixed on long laths, and marked, "Ambulance Helpers," "Engineers' Helpers," "Firemen's Helpers"—battalions of ragamuffins who, with cigarettes in the corner of their mouths, have turned themselves into actors in the revolution, and rather suggest a strike of mud-larks.

This evening, when getting off the train at Auteuil, all the passengers looked with a certain seriousness at the sort of ironclad cupboard in which the engine-drivers are to be placed from to-day onwards.

September 23.—Pélagie boasts that she is not at all frightened, and declares that this war seems rather a joke. In fact, the terrible cannonade of this morning, as she says, made no more noise than a carpet being shaken. But let us wait.

At the Palais de l'Industrie a circle of men and women stand round the little door on the left, wait-

ing, with fear at their hearts, for the carts which are to come back with the wounded.

Outside the Staff Office, on the Place Vendôme, are agitated groups, excited by everything that happens, every one who comes in, or is brought there, or who goes out. I saw a pale man, with a white helmet, go out between two Gardes Mobiles. I was told he was caught looting, and would be shot to-morrow. I saw an old priest, cheered by the crowd, come riding in saucily on a horse which was recognized as a Prussian horse. With riding-boots reaching to his hips, and a red-cross armlet on his arm, he brings post-haste news of the fight from which he has come.

September 24.—It is really ironical to see Parisians, of all people those who most like their meat fresh and their vegetables new, consulting one another in front of the tinned provisions of cosmopolitan grocers. Then they decide to go in, and come away, carrying under their arm tins marked "Boiled Mutton," "Boiled Beef," etc.—all the possible and impossible varieties of preserved meat and vegetables, things which one would never have thought of seeing the food of Paris the wealthy.

Businesses are all changed. Pea-jackets and tunics of the National Guard fill the windows where

linen used to be displayed ; Disderi breastplates are exhibited in the midst of exotic flowers, and the hammering of iron can be heard through basement gratings, and through the bars one can see workmen forging cuirasses.

Restaurant menus are contracting. Yesterday the last oysters were eaten, and the only fish now left are eels and gudgeons.

Everywhere there are great bands of white cloth fastened to the walls, marked with the red crosses of the Ambulance Corps, and sometimes one sees through a window a soldier's head, bandaged with a cloth spotted with blood.

September 25 (Sunday).—Both banks of the Seine are lined with cavalry horses. As ever, there are peaceful fishermen watching their lines, but who wear to-day the kepis of the National Guard. The windows of the galleries of the Louvre are closed up with bags of sand. In the rue Saint-Jacques women in groups of two or three are plaintively talking of the rise in the price of food. Outside the Collège de France, all covered with white advertisements, is a notice on violet paper that has been but lately posted there, announcing the formation of the Commune, and demanding the suppression of the Prefecture of Police, and urging a

mass rising. A wounded or dead man passes by on a litter, escorted by a few Gardes Mobiles. In the Luxembourg Gardens thousands of sheep, tightly packed and restless, are rumbling about in their narrow enclosure like maggots in a box.

September 27.—Yesterday there was great animation among the groups on the Boulevard des Italiens against the butchers. People are asking that the Government should sell its own cattle without the intermediation of these speculators in the prevailing poverty. In the rue Drouot a woman is holding forth on the lack and the dearness of the most necessary foodstuffs, and she accuses the grocers of holding back part of their provisions so they should be able to double the price in a week. I hear two women say behind me, both sighing at once, "Already there is nothing left to eat!" And indeed the butchers' shop windows do look remarkably bare. They only contain a few sausages done up in silver paper and some bottles of preserved truffles.

Something grim enters the expressions of the passers-by who approach the white notices shining in the gaslight. I see them read slowly, then go away, thoughtful and meditative. These bills are the notices of the courts-martial established at Vincennes and Saint-Denis. One stops at this sentence:

“The sentences will be executed while the court is sitting, by the picket on duty at the court.” It is borne in on us with a little shudder that we have entered on the dramatic and summary period of the siege.

September 30.—Awakened by cannons. A red dawn. The hollow rumbling in the distance. I go down to the end of the rue d’Enfer, to the newly-built church in the angle of that street and the Boulevard Saint-Jacques.

There, near empty carts, arranged along both sides of the street, is a crowd of men and women waiting in silence. The women, with handkerchiefs or little linen bonnets on their heads, are seated on the edge of the pavement, with little girls by them, who spread their handkerchiefs on their heads against the sun, and, without playing, look at the serious faces of their mothers. The men, with their hands in their pockets or their arms crossed, look forward into the distance, their pipes extinguished in their mouths. They no longer drink at the bars, or even talk. One solitary liar in the midst of a group is relating what he has seen, emphasizing all his statements by a movement which makes him continually carry a large finger up to his nose.

The population might almost have turned to stone, and there is such a severe gravity in these men and women, that, in spite of the ever-beautiful sun and the eternally blue sky, the surroundings seem to adopt something of the sadness of that silent wait.

All eyes are turned towards the rue de Châtillon. From time to time couriers, and with them some street boys with their blouses hanging behind them, dash at a gallop over the dust of the road; from time to time appears the red cross on a white ground. Then a great murmur goes round: "Wounded," and then, on both sides of the cart, is the brutal jostling of the crowd trying to see.

Next to me a soldier gets out of a carriage; his face is earthy, his expression is astonished. He is taken by two National Guards by the arms into the ambulance church, on which, in newly-painted gothic letters, are the words, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." I see another come, his poor handkerchief knotted round his head, and a green quilt on his legs. And from all sorts of vehicles a procession of pale faces passes in front, or reveals red trousers on which blood has made large black marks.

October 1.—Horseflesh has entered on the sly into the diet of Paris. The day before yesterday Pélagic

bought a piece of fillet which looked suspicious, and so I did not eat it. Yesterday, at Péter's, they brought me a roast beef of a blackish red of which my artist's eyes made me suspicious. The waiter merely assured me quite peacefully that this horse is beef.

October 10.—This morning I went out to get a card for an allowance of meat. I seemed to see one of those long lines of people waiting, as my poor old cousin Cornélie de Courmont described them to me, at the time of the great Revolution. Or they were to be seen penned up in improvised whitewashed offices, where, seated around a table, all-powerful in their uniforms of officers of the National Guard, and the supreme dispensers of your food, you behold your not altogether honest purveyors.

I took away a blue paper, a typographical curiosity for Goncourts in times to come. It gives me the right to buy every day, for myself and my servant, two rations of meat or four portions of other food, prepared in the national canteens. There are coupons up to 14th November.

October 12.—During these tragic days, while one's pulse is quickened and one's head intoxicated from the rumbling noise of the long-drawn-out battle

that is going on all around, one feels a need to escape from oneself, to get rid of the useless individual one feels oneself to be, to transform one's waking life into a dream, to imagine oneself a leader among the combatants, surprising convoys, slaughtering the enemy, freeing Paris—and spending long moments in this way, transported into a life of the imagination by a sort of hallucination of the brain.

Now it is the discovery of some means of flying which will enable you to see and to uncover the positions of the enemy, or the discovery of some lethal engine which will kill whole battalions, and put to death whole sections of the army. And then one goes on absently, like a child reading its first books, in which one goes great distances and through all manner of impossible adventures, the hero of an hour's romance.

October 13.—It is a strange feeling, closer akin to mournful humiliation than to fear, to know that those hills, so near you, are no longer French ; that those woods are no longer the places in which one's friends walk ; that those houses, bathing so beautifully in the sunshine, no longer shelter your friends and acquaintances ; and to look through binoculars at men in busbies and with black and white flags on that Parisian soil, and to feel those men we

conquered at Jena hidden on the green horizon, only just over a couple of miles away.

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The ruined walls on the descent from Passy to the Trocadéro are covered with men and boys, who, perched up on the crumbling stonework, are watching the cannonade.

On the Pont de la Concorde, preceded by a yelling, singing crowd of children, dancing about in the middle of a detachment of Gardes Mobiles, I notice from the top of an omnibus two sandy heads over bluish uniforms. They are Bavarian prisoners.

From the Place d'Italie to the Jardin des Plantes everywhere stables are being covered with oilcloth; everywhere men are working away at huttings, the cross-bars of which serve as trapezes for the children, and everywhere are men in blouses going through military drill, and who are being imitated by swarms of slatternly little girls with frizzled hair and the bright eyes of Bohemians, armed with laths.

Night has come, little bats are zigzagging on the dense violet of the towers of Notre-Dame, against the pale sky, underlined, as it were, by the bayonets of the armed multitude marching on the embankments.

October 15.—I live on myself. I can only exchange

my ideas for some as little varied as my own ; I only read news of a wretched war ; I can only find in the newspapers the eternal repetition of these defeats they call " reconnaissances on the offensive ; " I am driven from the Boulevards by the forced economy of gas ; I can no longer enjoy a nocturnal life, in this city where everybody goes to bed early. I can read nothing. I cannot dwell in the pure realm of thought because of the lowering of that thought by the poverty of its food ; I lack the new, and I vegetate in this brutal and monstrous thing—war. The Parisian in Paris is overcome by a boredom that is like the boredom of a provincial town.

October 17.—All day long I hear the thundering from Mont-Valérien, the rolling and prolonged echo like that of a pop-gun on the rising ground about Sèvres and Meudon, and the snapping noise of the Mortemart battery.

October 18.—The cannonade attracts me to the Bois de Boulogne, to the Mortemart battery. There is something solemn in the serious gravity and the thoughtful slowness with which the artillerymen do their work. They load ; they stand immovable on each side ; a few lean in fine sculpture-like attitudes on their ramrods. An artillery-

man in shirt-sleeves standing on the right holds the cord.

There are a few moments of stillness, of silence—I should almost say, of emotion; then the cord is pulled; there is a thunder, a flame, a cloud of smoke in which the bunch of trees which mask the battery is lost. For a long time there is a white cloud, which slowly disappears, and once more reveals the yellow of the sanded embrasure, furrowed by the charge, the gray of sacks of earth, of which two or three are broken open by the recoil of the gun, the red of the artillerymen's caps, and the white of the shirt of the man who drew the cord.

This thing which kills from afar is a real entertainment for Paris, which comes in barouches and landaus up to the firing-point, where women mingle with the soldiers, and get as near to the formidable noise as they can. To-day, among the spectators here, are Jules Ferry, Rochefort (who speaks and laughs feverishly), and Pelletan, whose head, like that of a philosopher of antiquity, looks strange in a kepi.

The cannon fires six times; then the officer in charge removes from its tripod the little copper instrument which takes the height, places it carefully into a tin box, puts it in his pocket and goes

away, while a young artilleryman sits down on the gun, a blond with a woman's face, bearing something of that heroic appearance which the painter Gros gives his soldiers, and who, with a police helmet on his head, and an Algerian belt with striking colours around his waist, a cartridge box on his stomach, all untidy, and charming in his picturesque disorder, rests from the weariness of that exercise of death.

The performance is over ; the people go away.

October 20.—At Batignolles there are interminable queues outside the butchers' doors—queues composed of feeble old men, of ruddy National Guards, of old women with little chairs under their arms, of little girls quite strong enough to take away the miserly ration in their big market-baskets, and grisettes, with their noses in the air and their hair in the wind, and their eyes full of flirtatiousness for the veterans who keep the queue in order.

Between Montmartre and the rue Watteau, where I dine, only billstickers in white blouses are to be seen, covering the walls with notices relating to the manufacture of guns.

The shops are exercising themselves in converting all their stock into articles for use on the ramparts ; only rampart bedclothes, rampart furs,

rampart beds, rampart head-gear, and rampart gloves are to be had.

At the same time, the windows of the food shops begin to take on a sinister appearance, on account of the absence of exhibits. The cook-shops have nothing more to show than the soiled table-napkins of their customers ; on the other hand, hand-barrows are going round the streets selling pancakes made on the spot.

The Grand Market is curious. Where fish used to be sold, only horseflesh is now to be had ; and instead of butter the grease of unspecified animals is offered, looking like large squares of white soap.

What animation and movement there is, is to be seen in the vegetable market, which is still plentifully supplied by marauding ; and there are crowds around these little tables, loaded with cabbages, celery, and cauliflowers, over which they haggle, and which women take away in table napkins.

October 28.—The astonishing, the marvellous, the incredible thing is the absence of all communication with the outside world. There is not a single inhabitant who has received news of his relatives during the last forty days. If a copy of a Rouen newspaper manages, by hook or by crook, to gain admittance, it is reproduced in facsimile, as if it were

the most wonderful of rarities. Never before have two million men been shut up in such a coop. We can invent nothing, no scheme, no happy piece of audacity. There is no imagination left in France.

Little by little we begin to face the reality of war. In the rue d'Auteuil, preceded by a soldier leading the horse by its bridle, I see two soldiers come past; their faces are earthy, and their poor sides quiver at every jerk, and their exhausted feet attempt to prop them up on their stirrups. It hurts. Wounded men one expects, but it is more horrible to have men die of cold, rain, and want of food than of wounds won in battle. "They belong to my regiment," says a canteen-woman travelling with me in the omnibus, "my regiment, the 24th Foot; every day they take them away like that." Her accent has something of the discouragement of those whose drinks she pours out.

On the gray stone of the Pantheon, under the gold of its cross, stands an immense platform, with stairs draped in the red cloth used by wine merchants. A great notice says: "Citizens, the country is in danger. Voluntary enrolments of National Guards." Below, a shield representing the silver ship of the city of Paris is surmounted by a bundle of flags, crowned by a black flag, in the funereal folds of which are the names Strasbourg,

Toul, Châteaudun. The dates 1792, 1870 are inscribed on the two ends, under the tricolour oriflammes. On the pillars are fastened cardboard shields on which are the two letters R.F.

The huge platform is covered with kepis adorned with silver lace, brilliant epaulettes gleaming under the indiarubber of wet mantles, and between all these passes and returns the crowd that mounts the staircase, in white or blue blouses; all this in the midst of drum-beats and clarion calls. The spectacle recalls the market-place, and nevertheless it moves one by the electricity which is set free by great and generous acts, and by devoted multitudes.

An enormous crowd covers the place, overhung by pyramidal groups of women and children, who have climbed up between the pillars of the *Mairie* of the *Fifth Arrondissement*, and of the School of Law. Their faces are wan; the food supplied during the siege has made them yellow, and this is added to by the emotion of the spectacle, penetrated by the solemn chanting of the *Marseillaise*.

Lastly, there is the endless march past of the already enrolled National Guards passing in front of the office place in the centre of the platform.

October 31.—On all faces, in the attitude of every-

body, one feels the consequences of the great and terrible things which are in the air. Behind the backs of a group of people questioning a National Guard, I hear the words: "revolver . . . the detachment fired . . . wounded." On the threshold of the Théâtre-Français, Lafontaine tells me the official news that Metz has capitulated.

The rue de Rivoli is tumultuous, and the crowd with umbrellas thickens as one approaches the Hôtel de Ville. There everything is a seething mass, a confusion of people of every class, through which National Guards, with the butt-ends of their rifles in the air, and shouting "Vive la Commune," are forcing their way. All faces show grief at the capitulation of Bazaine, and a sort of fury over yesterday's check to Bourget, at the same time as an angry and heroically unconsidered resolution not to make peace.

Some workmen in round hats are writing in pencil on thick writing-cases a list dictated to them by a man. I hear among the names those of Blanqui, Flourens, Ledru-Rollin, and Motte. "That will do now," shouts one of the men in a blouse, in the midst of the stupefied silence of my neighbours, and I find myself in a group of women, already timorously talking of the distribution of goods. It appears from what I hear, and from the legs that

show themselves through the windows of the Hôtel de Ville, that the Government is upset, the Commune established, and the list of the man who has been dictating is to be confirmed by universal suffrage.

It is all up. One can now write: "Finis Franciæ." . . . Cries of "Vive la Commune!" burst out all over the place, and new battalions precipitate themselves into the rue de Rivoli, followed by a vociferous and gesticulating mobocracy. At this particular moment an old woman who saw me buy an evening paper asks me—the irony of it!—if the movements on the Stock Exchange are in my paper.

After dinner I hear a workman say to a tobaccoseller, where I am lighting up: "Can we let things go on like that? You are going to see another '93; and we are going to hang one another!"

The boulevard is quite dark. The shops are shut. No passers-by are to be seen. A few rare groups of people, with their fingers around the string of some food done up in a packet, stand in the lights of the newspaper stalls, and of the cafés, whose proprietors come and go as far as the door, uncertain whether or not to close. Drums beat to arms, an old and apoplectic National Guard takes his kepi in his hand and shouts, "The swine!"; an officer of the National

Guard calls the men of his battalion to the door of the Café Riche. The rumour goes round that General Tamisier is a prisoner of the Commune.

The call to arms continues with fury ; while a young National Guard rushes at a breakneck pace along the middle of the boulevard yelling at the top of his voice : “ To arms, for God’s sake ! ”

Is civil war, with famine and bombardment, to be our lot to-morrow ?

November 1.—Some detachments of the National Guards are slowly moving from the Place de la Concorde towards the Hôtel de Ville, watched, from behind the windows of the Tuileries, by the cotton caps of the wounded and the veils of the sisters. It is the counter-demonstration to yesterday, made through such a crowd as fête days bring out upon the pavements of Paris.

Curiously enough, there is quite a number of us to-night at Brébant’s. There are Théophile Gautier, Bertrand, Saint-Victor, Berthelot, etc., etc. Louis Blanc makes his first appearance there, with his clerical exterior, and in a riding-coat which pretends to be a frock-coat.

Naturally, yesterday’s revolution is the subject of the conversation. Hébrard, who was present inside the Hôtel de Ville, says that it is difficult to

conceive the crapulous imbecility of which he was a witness. He saw a group who wanted to support Barbès ; the good people did not yet know that he was dead. Berthelot said : " As for me, wanting to know where we were, I went very early to ask a sentry at the Hôtel de Ville : ' Who is there ? Whom do you guard ? ' ' Parbleu ! ' he replied, ' I guard the Government of Flourens. ' That sentry did not know that the Government he guarded had been changed ! What can you expect, when France is like that . . . ! "

Louis Blanc replies, speaking gently and slowly, keeping his words in his mouth a moment as if they were delicious sweets : " All yesterday's nominees nominated themselves, and to get support, they added some distinguished names to their own, as one puts a feather into a hat. "

He says that in his half-bitter, half-sweet voice, with a load of secret bitterness that his name, so popular in 1848, should weigh so little with the masses, and, it must be recognized, with the little weight which all celebrities have to-day with a populace that prefers mediocrity among its masters.

And little Louis Blanc, to support his statements, draws out of the little pocket of his little trousers a printed list of twenty names, submitted to the vote of the citizens of the *Fifth Arrondissement* for the

formation of a Commune, which is indeed a body of the most distinguished nobodies with which a government in any part of the world has ever been fabricated.

Saint-Victor tells us that he has heard from a friend of Trochu, that the general boasts he will get the siege of Paris raised in a fortnight.

Everybody bursts out laughing, and those who know the Governor of Paris personally proceed to describe him as a man of little intelligence, with the narrow ideas engendered by militarism, opposed to the adoption of any new invention, or of any novelty, and just as apt to veto a serious thing as an impossibility. The impossibilities abound: there are people who would defend Paris by making dogs go mad and then turning them loose on the Prussians.

Then Louis Blanc talks about an idea which, though another man's, he promoted. It was to deprive the Prussians of water at Versailles by the destruction of the Marly machine and the drying up of the ponds. Trochu smashed the suggestion by the word "absurd." Dorian had warmly approved of the idea. Then between a maker of military engines who was there and Berthelot, our talk becomes a long string of inventions or products, refused for one reason or another, or, more often, for

no reason at all, on sight, through stupidity. Louis Blanc said: "As I was speaking with astonishment of the lack of news, Trochu said to me: 'But the Government is doing all it can; do you know, it spends 10,000 francs per month!' That staggered me—10,000 francs for a matter of such extreme importance, when it is necessary to spend 100,000 or 200,000, or perhaps a million!"

From Trochu we pass on to General Guiod, whom Berthelot holds responsible for our disasters—that man who, not content with opposing the manufacture of chassepots,* refused Commander Potier his guns. He adds: "It is very simple: it has been an artillery battle since the war began, and as the Prussian guns carry six or eight hundred metres farther than our own, they just sit down one or two hundred metres out of our reach and demolish us quite comfortably. Potier's guns would have made matters equal."

All this time Renan has sunk down, his hands canonically crossed on his stomach, and every now and again, glad to hear Latin, he whispers verses from the Bible into Saint-Victor's ear. Then as we begin once more on the causes of our ruin, Nefftzer cries:

"What has lost France is routine and rhetoric!"

* Rifles used in the French army until 1871.

“ Yes, classicism ! ” sighs Gautier, interrupting the analysis of the *Rubáiyát* of Omar Khayyám which he is making with Chennevières in a corner.

November 6.—Armistice is not accepted by the Prussians. I believe that the diplomatic history of the world cannot show a more ferocious document than Bismarck’s Memorandum. His pity for the hundreds of thousands of Frenchmen who will die of hunger resembles the Jesuitry of an Attila.

November 7.—At lunch this morning in Lucas’s restaurant, I find my table-napkin marked 15 centimes on the bill. Laundries are, it appears, in disorder, on account of the retreat of laundrymen from Boulogne and Neuilly into Paris, and, still more, through the requisition of potash and other materials by the Government for the manufacture of gunpowder.

I go to visit Victor Hugo, to thank him for the sympathetic letter written by the illustrious master on the death of my brother.

I am shown into a little room with ceiling and walls covered with old tapestries. There are two women in black, in the corner of the fireplace, whom one cannot see clearly in the half-light. Around the poet, half reclining on a sofa, are some friends,

among whom I recognize Vacquerie. The fat grandson of Victor Hugo is in a corner in a National Guard's dress, playing on a stool ; he is a little child with yellow hair and a red waistband.

Hugo, having given me his hand, has settled himself in front of the fireplace. In the subdued light of the old furniture, on this autumn day, darkened by the old age of the colours on the walls, and made blue by the smoke of cigars—in the midst of this setting of a bygone day, where everything is a little faded and uncertain, things as well as faces—the head of Hugo stands out in the light, as if in a frame, and looks its finest. A strange and almost ecstatic placidity is on his hair, on those fine, rebellious white locks, which is like that on the heads of Michael Angelo's prophets. Yes, it is an ecstasy, but from time to time there is an awakening, which almost immediately dies out, of a black, black eye.

When I ask him how he finds himself in Paris, he says : “ Yes, I like the Paris of to-day. I should not have wanted to see the Bois de Boulogne at the time when it was all carriages, barouches, and landaus ; it pleases me now that it is a bog, a ruin . . . it is fine, it is grand ! But don't you think I condemn everything they have done to Paris. I am the first to acknowledge the intelligent restoration of Notre-Dame-de-Paris, and of the Sainte-Chapelle ;

and fine new houses have been put up, there is no doubt about it." When I said that the Parisian finds himself out of his element in this Paris which is no longer Parisian, he answered: "Yes, it's true that Paris has been anglicized, but it possesses, thank God, two things which prevent it from resembling London—the comparative beauty of its climate, and the absence of coal. As far as my own tastes are concerned, I am like you: I like our old streets best. . . ." When somebody said something about "great arteries," he threw himself down on a sofa and said: "It is true that this Government has done nothing to defend itself against a foreign enemy, but it has done a great deal to defend itself against its own population!"

Hugo sat down next to me and talked about my books, which, he was so good as to say, formed the distractions of his exile. He added: "You have created some types; that is a power which people with the greatest talent often have not!" Then, in speaking of my isolation in this world, which he compared to his own when he was in exile, he advised me to work in order to escape it, and to imagine a sort of collaboration with him who has gone, ending up, "As for me, I believe that the dead are present; I call them the *invisible ones*."

In the drawing-room everybody is completely

discouraged. Even those who send inspiring articles to the *Rappel* acknowledge that they have little confidence in the possibility of defence. Hugo said: "We will rise once more some day; we must not perish. People will not be able to endure the abominable rule of the Germans. We shall have our revenge in four or five years!"

Victor Hugo, in the course of this visit, shows himself to be amiable, simple, kindly, and not in the least grandiloquent or sibylline. His great personality only makes itself felt, as it were, between the lines, as when he speaks of the improvements of Paris, and when he talks about Notre-Dame. His politeness, if a trifle cold and distant, is something to be thankful for in these days of banal effusions, when outstanding celebrities salute you the first time they see you with: "Hallo, there you are, old thing!"

November 9.—This evening I knock up against Nefftzer, who takes me off to have drinks. We go down into a cellar haunted by democrats.

November 11.—The wounded are in high favour. I saw along the Boulevard Montmorency a lady in an open carriage taking a wounded man in a gray cloak and a police helmet out for an airing. She is

all eyes on his account ; every moment she adjusts the furs that cover his legs, and her hands are all over him, like a mother's or a wife's, all along the journey.

The wounded soldier has become fashionable. He is now a useful object, a sort of lightning conductor. He defends your house against the invasion of the suburban populations ; he will save you, in the future, from the fire, the loot, and the requisitions of the Prussians. Somebody told me that a man of his acquaintance had fitted up an ambulance—eight beds, two nurses, lint, bandages, and everything all complete for dressing wounds ; nothing was missing. In spite of all that, not a single wounded soldier appeared on the horizon. The man with the ambulance became very anxious about his house. What did he do but go to an ambulance which had been favoured by wounded men, and paid 3,000 francs—yes, 3,000 francs—for one to be handed over to him !

I very sincerely want peace. I hope, very egoistically, that a shell will not drop on my house and my treasures, and I walked, sad as death, along the fortifications. I looked at all these works which can make no protest against victorious Germany ; I felt, from the attitude of our workmen, National Guards, soldiers, from what the souls of these people

confess of them, that peace was signed in advance on the terms laid down by Bismarck, and I suffered terribly as if I had been deceived or disillusioned by one I loved! Some one said to me to-night: "We had better not talk about the National Guards, had we? The Line will not use its guns. The Garde Mobile will hold on a little. The Marines will fire without conviction. That is how they will fight, if they fight at all."

November 12.—I hope posterity will not talk to future generations about the heroism of the Parisians in 1870. All their heroism will have consisted in eating nasty butter with their haricots, and horse steaks instead of beef, and that without taking too much notice: the Parisian has hardly the discernment of the animal he eats.

November 14.—While I was walking about in the ruins of the Bois de Boulogne, I felt some curiosity to see the houses of the Parc des Princes. They have all been abandoned by their owners, and the pretty gardens are messed up by soldiers, and the red of the infantry contrasts with the white marble of the de la Tourbey house, which I nearly bought. . . . I go straight ahead, as chance directs me, across empty building plots where the suburb commences. These

are only houses with doors left open by the visits of a sharpshooter ; houses with broken windows, from which at times flutter the tatters of little curtains, all shrunk from the rain. But among these buildings there is one that speaks to me, I do not know why—a building made up of demolitions of all kinds and all periods ; a building to which I feel that a strange and odd Parisian, after having been the architect of it, used to take his invalids. I go into the yard, in which are piled up confused masses of objects, amongst which I notice a child's bathing-tub, and an immense straw hat, such as an inventor or a philosopher might wear in the country. Half of an old Louis XV. door introduces me into the only room on the ground floor. The furniture is in bits : a buffet, knocked to pieces, has nothing more left of its panels than mere threads of wood, hanging down like strings.

It was strange to find in the midst of the devastation which has taken place in this poor house, in a corner, on a chair, the only thing left intact is an old book with red edges, lying open on its back, as it was left by the owner when he had last been reading it.

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There is something comforting to walk about the boulevards in this noise of newspaper sellers

shouting: "Recapture of Orleans by the Army of the Loire!"—yes, something comforting, something like a resurrection of Paris.

November 18.—Every gun has its own sound, its timbre, its resonance, its *boom*, sonorous, or strident, or dry, or shattering. I now can recognize with certainty the guns from Mont-Valérien, from Issy, Point-du-Jour, and from the Mortemart battery. I need not mention the naval gun on my own rampart, because, during the daytime, it slams all the doors as if a gust of wind had flung itself into the house; and because, at night, it shakes me in my bed like a slight earthquake.

November 24.—The rag-picker of our boulevard, who at the moment keeps a place in the queue at the market for a low eating-house keeper, told Pélagie that he was buying, for his employer, cats at six francs, rats at one franc, and dog-flesh at one franc fifty, the pound.

November 26.—This is the last day the gates are to be kept open. To-morrow, Paris will end at the ramparts, and the Bois de Boulogne will no longer be Parisian. Before it disappears, as perhaps it may, I want to spend all day there, and so

here I am in the winding road with a man with binoculars over me, who calls to the passers-by, "Who wants to see the Prussians? They can be seen very well, gentlemen. . . ."

November 28.—I was awakened in the night by the cannonade. I go into a room upstairs. In the starless sky, cut up by the branches of large trees, there is a succession, from the Bicêtre fort to the Issy fort, through all the length of that semi-circular line, of little points of fire, which light up like gas jets and are followed by sonorous echoes. These great voices of death in the midst of the nocturnal silence move one. . . . After a little time the barking of dogs adds itself to the brazen thunder, the timid voices of people awaking begin to be heard, and the cocks begin to crow. Then guns, dogs, cocks, men, and women, all return to silence, and my ear outside the window can make out no more than a distant, a very distant noise of gunfire—like the dead sound that an oar makes when it touches the side of a boat.

November 29.—The dirty meat delivered by the Government is unwashable, uneatable. I am reduced to cutting the neck of one of my last little hens with a Japanese sword. It was abominable

to see the poor little hen flying about the garden for a moment without its head.

November 30.—From one in the morning until eleven o'clock there was an uninterrupted cannonade, so sharp that the separate explosions could not be noticed, and which sounds like the interminable rumbling of a storm which refuses to burst. It is something like a celestial moving-day, with Titans shifting the heavy furniture of heaven over your head.

December 2.—To-day all Paris is in the Avenue du Trône. And you have the spectacle of the great emotion of the capital. . . .

On two sides of the road, kept clear by National Guards, up to the barrier of the pillars turning blue in the winter sun, two crowds are ranging themselves, and form, here and there, on the masses of stonework, little mountains of men and women. The roadway is filled with ambulance carts coming and going, with ammunition carts, trucks of cartridges, and transport vans of all kinds. The eyes of the crowd are turned towards the top of the avenue where one first sees the ambulance carts on their way back, and all look at the hat of the priest or the white bonnet of a sister on the seat. We are

all in a painful tremor, mingled with a greedy curiosity for pallor, spots of blood, and the sufferings endured by these mutilated men who know they are being looked at and do their best to keep pace with the spectacle.

Wounded men go by, sitting on the backboards of a cart, their legs hanging limp and dead, with vague smiles to the passers-by on their discoloured faces—smiles which make one want to weep.

Wounded men go by with the unconsciousness caused by amputation marked on their faces—an unconsciousness which may be of life or death.

Wounded men go by, who pose in theatrical attitudes on a truss of straw and call out to the crowd from the cart where they are perched: “There’s some Prussian meat out there!”

One wounded man with a fierce look holds his rifle close up against him; its broken bayonet is only an inch long.

At the bottom of carriages one can distinguish officers with bleeding heads, whose gold-embroidered sleeves and feeble hands rest on the hilts of their swords.

It is very cold, but the crowd cannot tear itself away from the moving sight. I can hear the heels of women’s boots tapping on the frozen earth.

One wants to see, one wants to know, and one

does not know, and the most contradictory rumours circulate and grow every minute. Faces brighten up or sadden at a word from this man or that. Somebody says that the noise of the guns from the forts is no longer to be heard: that this is a good sign—the army advances! I hear somebody in a group say: “ Things seem to have gone badly this morning: the Mobiles turned tail. . . . It’s all right now.”

And all eyes continue to be turned on the wounded, the couriers, the aides-de-camp, and on everybody who is galloping past from out there.

No positive news comes through, but something tells the crowd that things do not go so badly. Then a feverish joy shows itself on all faces, made pale by the cold, and men and women, taken with a sort of frivolousness, run in front of the horses, trying to get out of the messengers, by means of laughs, jokes, and flirtatiousness, the news they do not bring.

December 6.—To-day we have on the restaurant menus *bona-fide* buffaloes, antelopes, and kangaroos.

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In the open air, this evening, one sees at every light, with every flash of the improvised lamps,

consternated faces over newspapers. They announce the defeat of the Army of the Loire and the recapture of Orleans.

December 8.—If the Republic saves France—I do not yet despair of my own country—it must be understood that France was saved, not by the Republic, but in spite of it. The Republic merely brought along inefficient men, the grandiloquent proclamations of Gambetta, and the feeble battalions from Belleville. The Republic will have disorganized the army by its nominations after the manner of Garibaldi, and killed off national resistance by the associations of its name; and not one of its popular men will have fallen on the field of battle for the deliverance of his native land.

Nowadays the men in authority are sentimental lawyers, and their followers are political brigands, who smash up everything in a government as they do in the houses they enter in the clothes of National Guards. No, no; behind this word Republic there no longer exists a religion, a sentiment—false if you like, but none the less ideal—which lifts humanity above itself and makes it capable of greatness and devotion.

December 8.—People no longer talk except about

what is being eaten, or may be eaten, or can be found to eat.

“ You know, a fresh egg costs twenty-five sous ! ”

“ As far as I can gather, there is a person who is buying up all the candles in Paris, with which, and a little colouring matter, he makes that grease that is so dear ! ”

“ Be careful with cocoanut butter ; it infects a house, at any rate, after three days.”

“ I have seen some dog cutlets ; they are very appetizing—just like mutton cutlets ! ”

“ Don't forget that Corcelet still has some preserved tomatoes ! ”

“ I'll tell you something good. Make some macaroni, and make it up with salad, with a lot of herbs. What more can you expect just now ! ”

Famine is on the horizon, and elegant ladies begin to transform their dressing-rooms into hen-coops.

Not only food, but light, begins to run short. Paraffin oil is getting scarce, and candles are used up. And worst of all, in view of the extreme cold, we are quite near the moment when no more coal or coke or wood will be available. We shall enter on famine, frost, night, and the future appears to be promising such sufferings and horrors as no other siege has known.

December 9.—What a time for war is this season of snow and ice! One thinks of the sufferings of the men condemned to sleep in that frozen dampness, and of the wounded, killed by the cold.

December 10.—There is nothing more enervating than this state, when your hope leads you stupidly to believe, at one moment, the lies, the shams, the contradictions of journalism, and then falls back into doubt and disbelief of whatever is.

Nothing is more painful than this state, when you do not know if the armies of the provinces are at Corbeil or at Bordeaux, or even if they exist; nothing is more cruel than to live in obscurity, in night, in ignorance of the tragedy that is threatening. It really seems as if Bismarck had shut up all Paris in the solitary cell of a prison. For the first time I notice outside the grocers' doors long and anxious lines of people, who throw themselves at random on all that remains of the tins in their shops.

In the streets people look for wounded men among the convoys of corpses, and large alms-gatherers in calico, like those that Italy produces for the benefit of carnivals, climb up the fronts of houses, up to the first floor, to solicit the charity of the people at the windows.

One cannot describe just now the provincial appearance of the large Paris cafés. What does it consist in? Perhaps in the small number of waiters, or the eternal rereading of the same newspaper, or in these groups which form in the middle of the café, and talk of what they know as one talks of town matters in a little town, and then that stupid settling down of people who, the other day, flitted from place to place with the lightness of birds on the wing.

Everybody is growing thinner. On all sides one hears the complaints of people who have had to have their trousers narrowed. Théophile Gautier laments that he has had to wear braces for the first time; his abdomen no longer can support his trousers.

We both go to see Victor Hugo. He is surrounded, like a god, by women. He looks old to-night, his eyelids are red.

He talks first of the moon, then of Dumas père. He said to Gautier: "You know that I have been to the Académie . . . I was there to get Dumas nominated. I had him nominated, because I have really some authority over my colleagues . . . but there are only thirteen in Paris at the moment, and twenty-one are wanted for an election."

December 12.—To-day Pélagie received a visit from a nephew, a Mobile of Paris. He told her, with the utmost candour, about his looting in houses and châteaux, with the connivance of the officers, on condition that they had the best part of the booty. She was almost frightened by the highwayman expression which he had adopted, and gave me this curious detail, that they all had plumb-lines to sound false walls and hiding-places made in view of the Prussians. Our soldiers have plumb-lines to help them to rob the houses they are charged to defend and protect.

All this raised the indignation of this daughter of the Vosges, who regarded the visit with a kind of horror and could not understand this lack of interest in one's native land, in one's invaded mountains in this man, who said his trade was a very good one, barring the awful fear of being killed.

I suffer from sleepless nights, produced by the incessant cannonade from Mont-Valérien, the repeated shooting from which resembles revolver-shots, fired by a man attacked unexpectedly.

December 15.—I dined at Voisin's this evening. While eating, I heard a man say to my neighbour, "I wish I could get news of my poor wife. Do you

know, since September. . . ." Then the husband of the poor wife finished his dinner and went away. A few moments later a man who had been dining returned, and sat down at the table of my neighbour, whom he knew. They talk ; my neighbour says, " Just imagine. X—— was only just now complaining to me that he had had no news of his wife ; I did not know what to say."

" Yes," replies the other, between two mouthfuls. " She is dead . . . at Arcachon."

" Exactly so, but he knows nothing."

Is not this ignorance, whether those we love are alive or dead, truly frightful ?

December 16.—To-day the capture of Rouen is officially announced.

Was taken with a silly delight in shrubbery, and spent hours with pruning-shears clearing the small twigs off the old branches, weeding out the violet beds, and manufacturing a suitable vegetable mould for them . . . This at the moment when Krupp guns threaten to make a ruin of my house and garden ! It is too idiotic ! Vexation has made me foolish, and has planted in me the tastes of an old shopkeeper retired from business. I am afraid that there is now only a gardener left inside my literary man's skin.

December 18.—Pélagie was only able to get this morning a half-pennyworth of bread from the bakers of Auteuil.

December 20.—What with the absence of fresh meat, the lack of nutrition in all this boiled and preserved flesh, the want of nitrogen, the bad, adulterated, sophisticated stuff that is all the restaurants have been able to provide for the last six months, you are in a permanent state of incompletely satisfied hunger. One is always hungry, whatever one eats.

December 24.—I saw a peasant holding a tame rabbit lovingly between his arms, like a child. He was asking forty-five francs for it.

December 25.—It is Christmas Day. I heard a soldier say, “When we called the reveillé we found five men frozen in their tents!”

What an extraordinary transformation has taken place in our shops. A jeweller in the rue de Clichy is now exhibiting in jewel-cases fresh eggs, wrapped up in cotton wool.

The mortality rate in Paris is high. It is not altogether due to starvation. And the dead do not merely consist of sick and sickly people, finished

off by the hardships and continual privations. This mortality is largely due to depression, to enforced removals, to home-sickness, for that corner in the sun which people used to have outside Paris. Of the little tide of emigration from Croissy-Beaubourg—twenty-five persons at the most—already five are dead.

December 26.—A new eatable has been discovered for the unsatisfied appetite of Parisians; it is arsenic. Newspapers cheerfully describe the energy this poison gives to Styrian chamois hunters, and offer you, for lunch, an arsenical globule of some doctor or other.

In the streets in the neighbourhood of the Avenue de l'Impératrice I come upon a threatening crowd, in the middle of which are old women with frightful heads, muffled up in neckerchiefs, who look like Furies of the lowest class. They threaten to wipe out the National Guards, who are seen, as sentries, closing the rue des Belles-Feuilles.

It is all about a pile of wood to be used in making charcoal, and which they had started to raid. This cold, this frost, the lack of fuel to cook the little ration of meat one is given has exasperated the feminine population, which throws itself upon trellises, wooden shutters, and snatches at all that comes to

its angry hands. These women are helped in their work of destruction by the terrible children, who mount on each other's shoulders and break down all they can from the trees in the Avenue de l'Impératrice, and go away dragging fagots behind them by means of a little string which they hold in their hands buried in their pockets. If this terrible winter continues, all the trees in Paris will fall under the pressing need of fuel.

December 27.—Dinner at Brébant's.

Somebody is comparing Jules Simon with Cousin. Renan jumps at the opportunity of praising the Minister—which is all very well ; and the philosopher—I say nothing ; and the writer, and proclaims him to be the foremost writer of the century. My word !

This opinion excites Saint-Victor and myself to rebel, and that leads to a discussion on Renan's favourite theory—that authorship is at an end ; that the language should shut itself up in the vocabulary of the seventeenth century ; that when one has the good fortune to possess a classic language, one should hold on to it ; and that now, more than ever, is the time when we ought to hold fast to the language which has conquered Europe—that there, and only there, should we seek the prototype of our style.

We ask him to which of the languages of the

seventeenth century he is referring? Is it that of Massillon? of Saint-Simon? of Bossuet? of Madame de la Sévigné? of La Bruyère? The languages of that century are so diverse and so contrary.

I shout at him: "Every great writer of every period has absolutely nothing but this to recognize; but there is a personal language, a language of which every page, every line, is signed, for the intelligent reader, as much as if his name was at the bottom of that page or that line; and with your theory you condemn the nineteenth century, and the century which shall follow it, to have no more great writers."

Renan withdraws, as he usually does in argument, and retires to praising the University, which has reframed style, which has purified the language, spoilt by the Restoration, and declares that Chateaubriand was a bad writer.

Cries and vociferations. . . . The discussion is broken by the tale of a lunch with Bertrand, the mathematician, on the Plateau d'Avron, at the moment when the order was given to destroy the embattled wall of the Maison-Blanche, an operation which it was estimated would cost the lives of a dozen men. "Here is the chance," said Bertrand, "to use dynamite; it will save your men."

“ Have you any in your pocket ? ”

“ No ; but if you give me a horse, you will have some in two hours.”

They were in a hurry, and so the proposal fell to the ground.

December 30.—To-day the abandonment of the Plateau d'Avron is officially announced, and the stupid reports which accompany it have killed off the energetic resolution of resistance. The idea of a surrender before the last mouthful of bread had been eaten—an idea which did not exist yesterday—has entered the brain of the people, and promises that the entry of the Prussians will take place in a few days' time.

The things which are happening indicate such an incapacity in those in authority that the people may well be mistaken and take this incapacity for treason. If that should ever come to pass, what a responsibility will Trochu and his Government be under to history ! With fairly complete means of resistance, with an army of half a million men, without a battle, without a victory, without a single brilliant action, without even a single great misfortune, and without anything either intelligent or audacious or madly heroic, this defence has been the most shameful defence in history, the most com-

plete indication of the military weakness of the France of to-day.

Indeed, France is accursed! All is against us; if the cold and the bombardment continue, there will be no water to put out houses which are on fire. All the water in the houses is frozen.

December 31.—I had the curiosity to call on Roos, the English butcher of the Boulevard Haussmann. I saw all sorts of strange relics. On the wall, hanging in a place of honour, is the trunk of young Pollux, the elephant from the Jardin d'Acclimation; and in the midst of nameless meats, and of unusual horns, a boy is offering camel kidneys.

The master butcher is holding forth, surrounded by a circle of women: "It's forty francs the pound for the fillet, and for the trunk . . . yes, forty francs . . . You find that dear? . . . Well, really, I don't see what I am going to get out of it. . . . I reckoned on 3,000 pounds, and I've only got 2,300. . . . The feet—you want to know how much the feet are? They are twenty francs. Other parts go from eight to forty francs. . . . Yes, I can recommend those sausages; elephant's blood, you know, is most nourishing . . . his heart weighs twenty-five pounds. . . . Yes, there's some onion in the sausage. . . ."

I buy two larks for my to-morrow's lunch.

New Year's Eve in Paris consists this year in a dozen miserable little shops strewn here and there over the boulevard, where shivering shopkeepers offer Bismarck, caricatured as a jumping-jack, to the frozen passers-by.

At Voisin's I found in the evening the famous elephant sausage, and I dined off it.

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January 6.—Walking in the garden, the light green of which begins to pierce the thawing snow and hoar-frost, I hear the whistling of howitzer shells every moment, like the noises of a great autumn wind. Since yesterday that appears so natural to the population that no one bothers about it. So much is this the case, that in the garden next to mine two little children are playing who merely stop and lisp at every explosion, “It’s off,” and calmly go on with their games.

Shells begin to drop in the rue Boileau and the rue Fontaine.

Women sit on doorsteps and watch, half in curiosity and half in fear; ambulance men go by in white blouses with a red cross on their arms, carrying litters, mattresses, and pillows.

January 7.—The sufferings of Paris during the siege were a joke for two months. In the third month the joke became serious, and involved priva-

tion. To-day we have stopped laughing, and are going straight ahead for famine; or, at any rate, for an all-round inflammation of the stomach. The ration of horse-flesh, weighing thirty-three centigrammes,* including bone, intended for the consumption of two persons for three days, is merely enough to satisfy the appetite of a normal person at lunch. The scarcity of meat does not allow one to fall back on vegetables. A little turnip sells for eight sous, and a litre of onions costs seven francs. One does not talk about butter, and even grease which is not candle-grease or cart-grease has disappeared. Two things still remain to sustain, to feed, to keep alive the straitened population: they are potatoes and cheese. The cheese is a thing to be remembered, and one has to have private influence to be able to buy potatoes at twenty francs the bushel. The greater part of Paris is living on coffee, wine, and bread.

When I asked for my ticket to Auteuil this evening at the station, I was told that the trains from to-day are not to run beyond Passy. So Auteuil is no longer a part of Paris.

January 8.—This night I asked myself, behind my curtains, if there was a hurricane going on. I

* Eleven ounces.

got up and opened the window. The hurricane was the incessant and continuous whistling of the howitzer shells passing over my house.

Everybody is on the lookout for shells, and at the same time out of doors; the women have forgotten to do their toilets, and some are in their nightcaps.

January 10.—This morning's firing is so hurried that it seems to have the regularity of the piston strokes of a steam-engine. I go up to Paris with a marine from the Point-du-Jour battery. He says that yesterday there was such a storm of howitzer shells that they had to take seventeen volleys lying down and unable to reply, after which they sent a broadside that blew up a powder magazine. In spite of this frightful fire they had only had three wounded.

There are a lot of us at Bréban's to-night. All the bombarded ones are anxious to compare experiences. Charles Edmond gave terrifying descriptions of the bombs that are raining down on the Luxembourg. Saint-Victor left his lodging in the rue de Furstenburg on account of a shell that fell in the Place Saint-Sulpice. Renan has also emigrated to the right bank.

The conversation is all about the desperation of

the army chiefs—on their want of energy and initiative, on the discouragement they spread among the soldiers. There is talk of a meeting where, in front of the feeble or undisciplined attitude of the old generals, poor Trochu threatened to blow his brains out. Louis Blanc sums the thing up by saying: "The army has lost France; it does not want her to be saved by civilians."

Tessié du Motay relates some of the idiocies of our generals, which he claims to have witnessed with his own eyes. When General Vinoy, in the course of the December affair, had received orders to take Chelles at eleven o'clock, he did not arrive on the scene until two, surrounded by a slightly boozed staff, and asking where Chelles was. Du Motay was also present, on the same day, I think, at the arrival of General Leflô, who also wanted to know if that was the Plateau d'Avron over there. The same du Motay affirms that after our complete success on 2nd December, the army had received instructions to go forward, when Trochu was told that there was no ammunition left.

January 12.—I go round the bombarded quarters of Paris. There is no terror or fright. Everybody looks as if nothing out of the way had occurred; and the coffee-house keepers are having, with the

most admirable calm, new plate-glass put in to take the place of those broken by the exploding shells.

A shell has broken a capital away from one of the columns of the School of Law. In the rue Saint-Jacques walls are pierced and in tatters, and pieces of plaster fall off at every moment. Enormous blocks of stone and part of the entablature of the Sorbonne form a sort of barricade against the old building. But where the bombardment truly speaks to the eyes is on the Boulevard Saint-Michel, where all the houses making an angle with the streets parallel to the Thermes de Julien have been shattered by the explosions. At the corner of the rue Soufflot the balcony on the first floor has been broken off the stonework, and hangs in the void threateningly.

January 13.—This evening I saw in a restaurant the host make about two hundred slices from a leg of veal, from a calf found on a fourth floor, perhaps the only calf left in Paris. Two hundred slices at six francs, about the size and thickness of a visiting-card—that amounts to 1,200 francs.

January 16.—While the Mortemart battery was thundering away at night, I heard a noise overhead as if a piece of furniture was being moved about. A few minutes later Pélagie came into my room

and cheerfully told me that a shell had fallen on my next-door neighbour's house, exactly into a room with a fireproof wall. The shell, or rather two pieces of it, pierced the roof, and fell into a room where a little boy, whose chilblains prevented him from walking, was in bed. Nothing happened to the child, except that he was frightened by the plaster falling from the ceiling.

To-day they begin to distribute bread, pieces of which will be regarded as real curiosities by future collectors—bread with a bundle of straw inside it.

January 22.—This morning I remove my most precious belongings in the midst of bursting shells, which fall to right and left, anxious that one should not kill the only horse of the removal van, or that any of these poor furniture shifters should not be killed or wounded, as they bravely make fun of the explosions which come nearest.

I am taking my things to a part of the flat which Burty occupies on the boulevard, at the corner of the rue Vivienne, and which he has very kindly placed at my disposal.

January 24.—Vinoy replaces Trochu; it is an exchange of doctors by a sick bed when the patient is about to die.

No more cannonade! Why? This interruption

of the noise that thundered on the horizon seems to me to be an augury of evil.

Bread is now of such a quality that my last surviving hen, a funny little thing, when she has some given her, groans, weeps, grumbles, and cannot make up her mind to eat it until quite late in the evening.

On the boulevard, outside the Opéra-Comique, I meet a crowd stretching across the roadway, and preventing the omnibuses from going on. I asked myself if it was another riot. No; all these heads in the air, these arms pointing out something, all these women's parasols, all this anxious and hopeful waiting is on account of a pigeon—perhaps the bearer of dispatches—who rests on the tile of one of the chimneys of the theatre.

In this crowd I meet the sculptor Christophe, who tells me that negotiations for an armistice have been entered upon.

At Brébant's, in the little antechamber outside the dining-room, everybody is spread on sofas and easy-chairs as if crushed; we speak in hushed, sick-room voices of the sad events of the day and the day that awaits us.

Somebody asks if Trochu is not mad. On this subject somebody else mentions a poster which was printed but not posted up for the benefit of

the Mobiles, in which Trochu speaks of God and the Virgin as a mystic would speak.

Dinner is twice announced, but nobody hears.

At last we sit down to table. Everybody pulls out his own piece of bread.

While the soup is being eaten, Berthelot gives the true explanation of our defeats. "No, it is not so much the superiority of artillery; it is what I am going to tell you. You see, when a Prussian staff officer receives an order to advance an army corps to a certain point by a certain time, he takes maps, he studies the country, the lie of the land, and works out the time that every section will take to get over every part of the road. If he notices an incline, he takes his . . . (I forget the name of the instrument), and he makes allowances for the delay. And so, before he goes to sleep, he has found out the ten or so routes along which he will have to move his troops. Our staff officer, on the other hand, doesn't do anything of the sort; he has a night out, and the next day, on arriving at the scene, he asks if the troops have come, and where the attack is to be made. Since the beginning of the campaign—and, I repeat it, this is the cause of all our defeats, from Wissembourg to Montretout—we have never been able to collect troops on a fixed point within a given time."

A shoulder of mutton is brought along.

“ Oh ! ” says Hébrard, “ we shall be eating the shepherd at our next dinner.”

In fact, it is a very nice shoulder of dog.

“ Dog—you say it’s dog,” cried Saint-Victor, in the tearful voice of an angry child ; “ this isn’t dog, is it, waiter ? ”

“ But it’s the third time you have had dog here.”

“ No, it isn’t true. M. Brébant is an honest man ; he would have warned us . . . but dog is an impure meat . . . ” he said, with a ludicrous horror. “ Give me horse, but not dog.”

“ Dog or sheep,” mutters Nefftzer, with his mouth full, “ I’ve never eaten such a good roast . . . but if Brébant gave us rat . . . I know . . . It’s very good . . . tastes like a mixture of pork and pheasant ! ”

The seriousness of the situation soon leads us to ask ourselves how the Prussians will behave towards us. Some believe that they will loot the museums. Berthelot is afraid they will take away our factory machinery. Nefftzer, contrary to the views of every one else, says that the Prussians will astonish us by their generosity and magnanimity. *Amen !*

Coming out of Brébant’s, on to the boulevard, the word surrender, which might have been dan-

gerous to pronounce a few days ago, is on everybody's lips.

January 26.—It is drawing near. New batteries seem to have been unmasked. Shells burst every minute on the railway lines, and our Boulevard Montmorency is crossed by people walking on all fours.

Everybody is filled with a sorrow which induces one to consider the shame of surrender. It is, however, the women who still resist the idea. This very morning there were poor women who stood in the lines outside the bakers' shops and cried: "Let them cut down our rations still more, but don't let them surrender!"

[*On 28th January the capitulation was signed, and the garrison of Paris became technically prisoners of war. The war was not yet at an end, and the crowning act of the German victory did not take place until 1st March, when the German army entered Paris in triumph, three days after peace had been definitely concluded.*]

January 28.—The journalists are happy men to-day, and proclaim their pride in what the Republic has done for national defence. They quote boastfully the tributes paid by the Prussians to our

heroism, and go almost so far as to hope that Trochu will be recognized as a great soldier.

January 29.—The Mobiles return and pass under the windows, abused by the National Guards standing about on the boulevard.

Nothing can be compared with the destruction wrought to the Boulevard Murat. There are no houses left there. There are only bits of walls and frontages, to which the end of a staircase and odds and ends still stick, where a window without panes is hanging somehow or other in the air, shapeless masses of brick, rubble, and slate: the pulp of houses, marked in the middle by a great spot of blood around a bundle of hair—the blood of a Mobile.

January 30.—Oh! the stern extremity of this surrender, which will convert the new Assembly into something like those men of Calais, who, with ropes round their necks, had to submit to the conditions of Edward III. What revolts me most is the Jesuitry of these governors of ours, who, in return for having been granted the word "Convention" instead of "surrender," in the face of this dishonourable treaty, hope to trick France out of understanding the fullness of her misfortunes and her

shame. Bourbaki has been left out of the armistice, which is a general armistice. The Convention of unsealed letters! And all these shameful secrets which the negotiators hide from us, which little by little the future will unveil! Ah that a French hand should have been able to sign such terms!

How truly proud they are of having been the jailers and the keepers of their army! They did not realize that that apparent gentleness was only a trap of Bismarck! To shut up a hundred thousand men, undisciplined and demoralized by defeats, in Paris, in these days of famine which must precede revictualling, is it not enclosing rebellion, insurrection, and looting? Is it not certainly to give himself a pretext to enter Paris?

In a paper which announces the surrender, I also read that King William has been enthroned as German Emperor at Versailles in the Galerie des Glaces, right in front of Louis XIV., whose statue stands in the court. Well . . . that's the end of the greatness of France.

February 7.—A strange procession of men and women is returning from the Neuilly Bridge. Everybody is loaded with bags, with provisions, with pockets crammed with eatables.

Men of the middle class carry five or six chickens on their shoulder, balanced by two or three rabbits. I notice an elegant little woman carrying potatoes in a laced handkerchief. And nothing is more eloquent than the happiness, the tenderness, I might almost say, with which people handle four-pound loaves—those fine white loaves of which Paris has been so long deprived.

This evening, at Brébant's, conversation abandons politics for art, and Renan uses this to declare the Piazza San Marco * a horror. Like Gautier and every one else, we all shout at him. . . . What a silly brain he has got when it deals with things it doesn't understand.

Fébruäry 11.—Paris begins to have meat and food, only Parisians still entirely lack charcoal for cooking them.

Fébruäry 24.—A sort of taste for literature came back to me to-day: I was bitten this morning by a wish to write *La Fille Éliſa*, the book which he and I were to have written, after *Madame Gervais*. I threw four or five lines on to a piece of paper. They may, perhaps, develop into the first chapter.

February 26.—It is announced that the Prussians

* Venice.

will occupy us to-morrow. To-morrow the enemy will be amongst us. God preserve France for ever from diplomatic treaties got up by lawyers.

February 28.—It is impossible to describe the all-embracing sadness. Paris is under the most terrible of all apprehensions—the apprehension of the unknown.

I saw pale faces in ambulance carts: these are the wounded men from the Pavillon de Flore, who are being cleared out hurriedly, so that King William can lunch at the Tuileries.

March 1.—Cursed Auteuil! This suburb will have been deprived of communication with the rest of Paris, sacked by the Mobiles, starved out, shelled, and now is to have the misfortune of being occupied by the Prussians.

This morning Paris has lost her deep humming voice, and the restless silence of these uneasy hours is such that we can hear the church at Boulogne strike eleven.

The horizon seems empty and uninhabited. Then in this great, all-pervading silence, the flat and distant noise of the approaching Prussian drums can be heard. The idea of my door opening and giving way to these Germans, who are to

be guests for some days, makes me feel as ill as if something was physically wrong.

The rolling of carriages and of the Prussian military equipage is now like a thunder.

Hours have never seemed so long—hours in which it is impossible to fix one's thoughts on anything—hours in which it is impossible to be still for a moment. The Prussian retreat has sounded, but no Prussian has yet appeared. We shall, no doubt, have them to-morrow.

I slipped into Auteuil during the night. There was not a living soul in the street, not a light at the windows, and I saw Bavarians going about these sad streets in fours, looking very uneasy in that dead town.

March 2.—I want to try to get into Paris, and, in spite of my desire to see no Prussians, I get as far as Passy. They told me, as I was going out, that peace had been signed; that they would go to-day, at midday.

March 3.—I was awakened by music—their music. The people I meet in the streets walk slowly, happily, and like convalescents who are allowed out for the first time. The only marks that Passy has of the occupation are chalk inscriptions on doorways and

shop-fronts, indicating the number of soldiers billeted upon the dwellers.

The Champs-Élysées are filled with a watchful and talkative crowd, which walks about pretending not to notice the destruction of a café, by way of revenge upon it for having remained open to the Prussians every night while they were in occupation.

March 17.—Saint-Cloud no longer exists. It is a land of stone, rubble, plaster, where burned-out bits of wall raise themselves over caved-in cellars, and still hold up, at inaccessible heights, pieces of furniture. Here is a corner of a stove, there a daguerrotype portrait; farther on, a card of billiard rules, with a marking-board.

March 18.—This morning the baker's carrier told us that there was fighting going on at Montmartre.

I go out, and notice a curious indifference to what is going on there. The population has seen so much during the last six months that nothing more seems to excite it.

The triumphing insurrection takes possession of Paris. The National Guards spread and put up barricades everywhere, crowned by wicked little street boys. Carriages no longer go about. The shops close. Curiosity takes me to the Hôtel de

Ville, in front of which orators are speaking of putting traitors to death. In the distance, by the river, in a cloud of dust, the Municipal Guards are making inoffensive charges while the National Guards are loading their rifles in the rue de Rivoli, and hooligans are assaulting the two barracks behind the Hôtel de Ville with shouts and stones.

While coming back, I heard loafers saying that Clément Thomas and Lecomte had been shot.

March 19.—This morning's papers confirm the shooting of Clément Thomas and General Lecomte.

I am filled by a weariness of being French, and by the vague desire to go and find a country somewhere else, where the artist can be free to think in peace, and not be bothered by stupid agitations all the time, by the beastly convulsions of a destructive crowd.

In the train I am told that the army is in full retreat upon Versailles, and Paris is in the hands of the insurgents.

On the Boulevard Montmartre I find the names of the new Government posted up; they are so unknown that this might almost be a trick.

This poster means to me the eternal death of the Republic. The events of 1870, guided by the pick of the bunch, were bad enough. These now,

guided by the remainder, will be the end of this form of government. Republicanism is certainly the beautiful dream of rightly thinking, of generous and disinterested brains; it is not practicable with the evil and petty passions of the French. With them Liberty, Equality, Fraternity only means the enslavement or the death of the upper classes.

The main roads which lead to the Hôtel de Ville are closed by barricades, with cordons of National Guards in front. One is seized with disgust at the sight of their stupid and abject faces, where triumph and intoxication have placed a radiant loathsomeness.

A red flag flutters from the tower of the Hôtel de Ville, over the rumbling of an armed proletariat, bearing weapons and supported by three cannons.

March 20.—Three o'clock in the morning. I was awakened by the lugubrious knelling of the tocsin, which I heard during the nights of June 1848.

How entirely the reverse of all that human beings could foresee! How is it that the battalions of Belleville, so yielding before the enemy, have been able to take possession of Paris? How is it that the National Guard of the middle classes, so anxious to fight a few days ago, has melted away without firing a shot? Everything seems to be happening to

illustrate the insignificance of human experience. At the moment Paris and France are in the hands of the crowd, which has given us a Government entirely of its own making. How will it last? There is no knowing. The unlikely rules.

March 31. — Don't laugh! Jules Vallès is Minister of Public Instruction. This pub-crawler fills the seat of Villemain. And yet, in Assi's whole gang, he is the man with most talent and least viciousness.

April 1.—One thing in this Government, which has proceeded from violence and extremities, specially revolts me: it is its cheerful resignation to the peace terms; its cowardly submission to dishonourable conditions—it is, one might say, its friendliness almost towards the Prussians.

April 2.—About ten o'clock there was a cannonade in the direction of Courbevoie. Civil war has commenced! Well, as things are, it is to be preferred to hypocritical murders. The cannonade dies down. Is Versailles beaten? Alas! if Versailles suffers the least defeat, Versailles is lost!

I go to Paris. I watch people's faces, which act as a sort of barometer during revolutions, and I see something like a surreptitious joy, a pleased artful-

ness. At last a newspaper tells me that the Belle-villans have been defeated.

April 3.—A cannonade is going on, just as in the time of the Prussians. At daybreak it is from Mont-Valérien, later on in the day from Meudon, where the army of Versailles has placed its guns, in the fortifications set up by the Prussians. In the midst of this storm of artillery, so completely have we become accustomed to live in the noise of cannon, and to such an indifference have we all attained, that I could see gardeners quietly cutting sods, next to workmen putting railings back into their places, as peacefully as in bygone springs.

April 4.—I wake up feeling very sad. The horizon is silent. Has Versailles been beaten, and are we in the hands of the Commune? On the boulevard the drunkenness of the National Guards is becoming aggressive to passers-by.

April 5.—According to this morning's papers, the government of the Committee seems to be at an end; yet the cannonade lasted all day around the fort at Issy, where one sees the large red flag waving in the wind.

April 6.—All the morning there was firing going

on around Issy, around Neuilly. A frightful fire from cannons, mitrailleuses, musketry—a fire such as I never heard in the time of the Prussians.

April 7.—The sixth day of cannon and slaughter.

At the Arc de l'Étoile there is always a crowd—ambulancè carts, galloping messengers, and battalions of National Guards going to the front. The cannonade is incessant, and Neuilly is covered with shells.

My contemplations are disturbed by a pif, paf, crack: it is a shell which strikes the cornice of the Arc de l'Étoile over our heads. We all immediately fall down flat, while something explodes close by us. Then everybody gets up and runs. I do as much.

A poster announces that every citizen who is not inscribed in the registers of the National Guard within twenty-four hours will be disarmed and will be liable to arrest. That, and the regulation about landlords, look like pretty preparations for a Reign of Terror.

Somebody whom I meet, and who lives in contact with the powers that be, casually remarks to me: "It's quite likely the Archbishop will be shot to-night!"

At Auteuil some people are buying ropes to get

let down the fortifications by their friends, and so escape the national requisition.

April 9 (Easter Sunday).—Sleep is interrupted by the guns at every moment.

My house-porter warns me that domiciliary visits will be made at midday. He offers, if I have any weapons, to hide them for me. These people take everything—show weapons, and things from collections. He has seen savage bows and arrows taken away.

April 14.—I am awakened this morning by the news, brought me by Pélagie, that a notice on the walls forces all men, of whatever age, to march against Versailles, and that Auteuil is speaking with horror of the house-hunt which is to be made for those who refuse.

April 15.—I was gardening this morning, and heard the whistling of several shells. Two or three explosions were very close. A cry was raised: "Everybody to their cellars." And here we are, like our neighbours, in the cellar. Terrible explosions. Mont-Valérien is dropping one shell a minute on us. An unpleasant sentiment of anxiety holds you at every shot, during the few seconds of its course, in the fear of feeling it on the house, on oneself.

Suddenly there is a terrible explosion. Pélagie, who is making up bundles of wood in the other cellar, falls flat from the shaking of the house. We timidly await a fall, an avalanche of stones. Nothing happens. I poke my nose through a half-open door. Nothing. . . . And this happens again, and goes on for about two hours around us, wrapping us round in shots that glance over us. Then an explosion which strikes the zinc roof. I am more frightened than I ever was in the time of the Prussians, and feel physically very sick. I had had a mattress put down on the ground, and I lay on it in a state of sleepy stupor, which paid very little attention to the cannonade or death itself. Soon a terrible storm is added to the bombardment, and the tearing noises of the thunder and the shells give me, at the bottom of my cellar, the feeling that the end of the world has come. At last, at three o'clock, the storm goes away, and the firing becomes regular, and the shells begin to drop away from me, on the rampart, where siege guns are being put back by the Federals.

During an interruption of the bombardment I go round the house. One might almost think that my house has been the objective of Mont-Valérien. The three houses behind me, in the Avenue des Sycomores, numbers 12, 16, and 18, have each

received a shell. The house adjoining mine, already twice hit by Prussian shells, has a crack which runs down from the roof to the foundations. The shell which upset Pélagie has cut the points on the railway line, and carried off a piece of rail weighing more than four hundredweight, with which it struck the front of a house, which is now a great square of rubble collapsed on the pavement.

We talk of the dangers of the night, and install ourselves in the cellar. We choke up the ventilator, and make a blaze in the hot-air stove, and Pélagie fixes up a bed for me under the staircase.

April 21.—In *La Vérité* it is announced that tomorrow, or the day after, the *Officiel* will publish a decree in virtue of which every man, married or unmarried, between nineteen and fifty-five years of age, will be enrolled and condemned to march against Versailles. There I am under the threat of this law, and obliged to hide myself for some days, as if this were the Terror. I am still free to go away if necessary, but I have not the will.

[*During the next few weeks the entries made by Edmond de Goncourt relate almost exclusively to his acute depression at the turn events have taken, and to a detestation of the Communards. The bombardment continued practically without interruption.*]

May 22.—I cannot stay at home. I want to see, to learn what is going on. I go up to Burty's, and we go out together to study the physiognomy of Paris.

There is a gathering before the shop windows of the baker of the Place de la Bourse, which has just been destroyed by a shell. On the boulevard, in front of the new Opera House, a barricade has been constructed, consisting of casks filled with earth. It is guarded by a few men who look the reverse of energetic.

Just then a young man comes running up, and announces that the Versailles forces are at the Pépinière barracks. He fled at the Saint-Lazare station, on seeing men fall all round him.

We go along the boulevard. There are unfinished barricades before the old Opera House, before the Porte Saint-Martin, where a woman with a red band round her waist is turning up the paving stones.

National Guards and middle-class men are having altercations all over the place.

The lamentable defile of groups of National Guards who have abandoned the battle proceeds. They are in complete disorder. There is not a single officer to give orders; there is not a single member of the Commune along the whole line of boulevards.

A bewildered artilleryman is taking a large gun about by himself; he does not know what to do with it.

Suddenly, in the midst of the disorder and the fright, in the midst of the hostility of the crowd, there comes on horseback, with his tunic unbuttoned, his shirt in the wind, his face apoplectic with anger, and striking his horse on the neck with his fist, a large and vulgar officer of the National Guard, superb in his heroic *deshabillé*.

We return. All along the boulevard are great shouts, disputes, and fights as the middle-class men begin to rebel against the National Guards, who end by arresting them, in the middle of hoots.

I came to pay Burty a visit, and here I am, a prisoner. For how long? I don't know! I can't go out. Everybody whom the National Guard finds in the streets is forcibly enlisted, and set to work at the barricades.

Soon shells burst on all sides, soon they come quite close. A house in the *rue Vivienne*, just across the road, has its kiosk smashed; another shell breaks the street-lamp outside; a third, lastly, during dinner, bursts just outside the house, and shakes us in our chairs, as if it were an earthquake.

They made up a bed for me. I threw myself on it, dressed as I was. Under the windows I could

hear all night the voices of intoxicated National Guards, every moment shouting hoarsely at every passer-by. It was day when I at last fell into a sleep broken by explosions and nightmares.

May 23.—There was no positive news when I woke up. Finally an unhopèd-for newspaper from the stall in front of the house told us that the Versailles troops were in occupation of a part of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, Monceau, and Batignolles. We went up to the watch-tower of the house, where by the clear sun which is lighting up the immense battlefield the smoke of the guns and rifles allowed us to see the whole series of engagements which were taking place from the Jardin des Plantes as far as Montmartre. At the moment, fighting is concentrated on Montmartre. In the midst of the distant rumbling of artillery and musketry, some shots fired close by lead us to suppose that fighting is going on in the rue Lafayette and the rue Saint-Lazare.

This deserted boulevard, with its closed shops, the great immovable shadows of its kiosks and its trees, with its deathly silence, broken from time to time by a heavy and quivering explosion, has a sinister character. . . . We think we see, through a field-glass, the tricolour flag floating over

Montmartre. Just at that moment we are driven out of our glass observatory by the whistling of bullets which pass by us, making sounds in the air like the miaulings of a kitten.

When we go down and look out from the balcony, an ambulance van is under our windows. They are putting an obstreperous wounded man into it, who resists: "I don't want to go to the ambulance." A brutal voice answers him: "You're going, all the same." And we see the wounded man pick himself up, collect his weakened strength, struggle for a second against two or three men, and fall back into the cart shouting in a desperate and expiring voice: "It's enough to make one blow one's brains out!"

The cart goes away. The boulevard becomes empty once more, and one hears a cannonade close by for a long time; it seems to be aiming at the new Opera House.

Then the heavy trot of an omnibus, the top of which is crowded with National Guards leaning on their rifles.

Then some staff officers gallop past, warning the National Guards who are gathered under our windows to take care not to be surrounded.

Then some ambulance-bearers pass in the direction of the Madeleine.

Meanwhile, little Renée is crying because she is not allowed to play in the yard. Madeleine, serious and pale, starts at each explosion. Mme Burty is feverishly taking down pictures, bronzes, and books, looking everywhere for a corner where her daughters can take refuge.

The shooting draws nearer and nearer. We distinctly hear shots fired in the rue Drouot.

At this moment a gang of labourers appears. They have received orders to block the boulevard at the rue Vivienne, and to make a barricade under our windows. They do not seem very keen on their work. Some turn up two or three paving stones, the others ease their conscience by making a dozen strokes with a pick on the asphalt sidewalk. But they very soon stop work, in the face of the bullets which fly down the boulevard, over their heads. Burty and I watched them disappear, sighing with relief, down the rue Vivienne. We both thought about the National Guards, who would be certain to enter the house and shoot from the windows, from the midst of our collections, all mixed up under their feet.

Then a numerous troop of National Guards retire with their officers, slowly and in good order. Others follow them, more hastily; then others, jostling each other in a general disarray, among

whom one sees a corpse with a bleeding head, which four men carry by the arms and legs like a packet of dirty linen, taking it from door to door, none of which will open.

In spite of this retreat and these flights, there is still a firm resistance at the Drouot Barricade. The shooting there has not died down. But, little by little, the firing becomes less intense. Soon there are only isolated shots. Then two or three last cracks, and almost at once we see the last band of the defenders of the barricade run past, four or five boys about fifteen years old, of whom I hear one say : " I shall be one of the last to return ! "

The barricade is taken. The Versailles troops form up in the road and open a terrible fire in the direction of the Boulevard Montmartre. Shut up between the two tall façades of stone which form the boulevard, the rifles thunder as if they were guns. The bullets graze the house, and at the windows one can only hear a sort of whistling as of silk being torn. We had retired into the back rooms for a moment. I return to the dining-room, and here, on my knees and as well hidden as possible, is the spectacle I witnessed through the half-opened window-curtains.

On the other side of the boulevard a man is lying on the ground. I can only see the soles of his

boots, and the end of a gold-embroidered sleeve. Near the corpse are standing two men, a National Guard and a lieutenant. The bullets are making the leaves of a little tree, the branches of which are extended over their heads, rain down upon them. I was forgetting a dramatic detail. Behind them, in a break in the wall, before a closed door, is a woman, lying flat on the pavement, and holding a kepi in one hand—perhaps the kepi of the dead man. The National Guard, with violent and indignant gestures, speaking to somebody I cannot see, is telling the Versailles troops that he wishes to remove the corpse. The bullets are still pouring leaves down on the two men. Then the National Guard, whose face, I notice, is red with anger, throws his rifle across his shoulder, butt end in the air, and walks away, insults pouring from his mouth. Suddenly I see him stop, lift his hand to his head, rest his head and forehead for a moment against a little tree, then turn round on himself, and fall on his back, with his arms crossed.

The lieutenant had remained by the side of the first corpse, as calmly as a man might meditate in a garden. A bullet, which had made a little branch, not a leaf this time, fall near his head, and which he had thrown off, had not drawn him out of his immobility. Then he looked long at his dead

comrade, and making up his mind, without hurrying, and, as it were, with a disdainful slowness, he pushed his sword behind him, bent down and tried to lift up the dead man. But the corpse was large and heavy, and, like an inert thing resisted his efforts, moving about to right and left. At last he lifted it, and, holding it to his chest, was taking it away, when a bullet made both the dead and the wounded man twist round in a hideous pirouette, and fall down on top of each other.

I suppose that it has been given to few persons to witness two such heroic and such simple instances of contempt for death.

At last our boulevard is in the hands of the Versailles troops. We take the risk of looking at them from our balcony, when a bullet strikes over our heads. It is the fault of the upstairs tenant, who has been so foolish as to light his pipe by his window.

Good! now the howitzer shells are once more moving, aimed this time by the Federals at the positions conquered by the Versailles troops. So we camp in the antechamber opening on to the court. Renée's little iron bedstead is dragged into a safe corner. Madeleine goes to sleep near her father, on a couch, her clear face showing itself in the light of a lamp, on the white background of her pillow, while her little body is lost to sight in the

folds and the darkness of a shawl. Mme Burty collapses anxiously on an arm-chair. During a part of the night I am haunted by the terrible cries of a wounded soldier, who has dragged himself to our door, and whom the hall-porter has not allowed in, from a cowardly fear of compromising himself.

From time to time I go out and look through the windows at the boulevard, at this black night of Paris, without a ray of gaslight in the streets, without a lamp lighted in the houses, the thick and terrible shadow of which guards those of the day's dead who have not yet been taken away.

May 24.—On waking up, my eyes find the corpse of the National Guard who was killed yesterday. He has not been removed, only he has been a little covered by the branches of the tree under which he fell.

The burning houses make the day seem like the day of an eclipse.

I profit by a moment of interruption in the bombardment to leave Burty and get into the rue de l'Arcade. I find Pélagie there; she has had the courage to go right through the battle, with a large bouquet of my *Gloire de Dijon* roses in her hand, helped and protected by the soldiers, who admired this woman fearlessly advancing with

flowers in the midst of the fusillade, and allowed her to pass into the environs of the Chapelle Expiatoire, along the road cleared by the Military Engineers.

We then set out for Auteuil, full of curiosity to see what had happened to the Tuileries from the immediate neighbourhood. A shell, which burst nearly at our feet in the Place de la Madeleine, forced us back into the Faubourg Saint-Honoré, where we are pursued by the shells striking above our heads to the right and left.

The projectiles go no farther than the Barrière de l'Étoile. From there all Paris is to be seen wrapped up in the dense smoke that comes out of the chimneys of a factory in which gas is used.

Passy has not suffered ; it is in the Boulevard Montmorency that the ruins begin ; only the four blackened walls of the houses there remain—the houses are smitten to the ground.

Mine is still upright, with a large hole in the second floor. But how many times has it been shaken by exploding shells ! Fragments of stone are scattered over the sidewalk. There are bits the size of a child's head. The door is pierced by twenty round bullet-holes, the large round hole of a grapeshot ball, and a piece has been torn out by the pick of a Federal who was attempting to force an entry.

Inside the house one walks on pieces of plaster and fragments of glass mixed with bullets and bits of shell, which are curled up like leeches which have been put into salt. On the first floor—I think it an unusual case—a bullet has gone right through the house, going through a blind, a mattress, a partition, a swinging door, and a door covered with a Chinese cloth. But the real damage is on the second floor. A shell, quite a small shell, one of the last fired by the Versailles troops on the Sunday night when they were already masters of the Point-du-Jour, has smashed up the joist at the corner of the house, passed by the foot of Pélagie's bed, crossed the floor of her room, exploded on the wall of the landing, knocking all the doors on the second floor to bits. Well, we could have fared worse. All my precious things have been spared, and the disasters of my neighbours have something in them to console me.

Poor garden ! with its grass like the weeds of an abandoned cemetery . . . with that excavation in the middle of the lawn made by a shell, an excavation in which an elephant might be buried !

While we go round the house, and while she serves dinner, Pélagie described to me the installation of my neighbour César, who has no vaulted cellar, in one of mine ; while she took possession of the other with the servant of the said César, and

as they had nothing to do, they both spent all day playing cards, their eyes being accustomed to seeing in the darkness.

May 28 (Sunday).—I go off to have a look at the burnt-out parts of Paris. The Palais Royal is burned down, but the pretty frontages of the two *pavillons* are intact. The Tuileries will have to be rebuilt on the side of the gardens and the rue de Rivoli.

I go along in the smoke, and breathe an air which smells of both the burning and the varnish of the houses ; and on all sides one hears the noise of pumps at work. There are still horrible traces of the battle left in corners. Here is a dead horse ; there, near the stones of a barricade which has been half demolished, kepis are lying about in a pool of blood.

Here the serious destruction has begun, and continues to the *châtelet*. Behind the burnt theatre, the dresses are spread out on the ground ; charred silks spangled with gold. On the other side of the *quai* the Palais de Justice has had the roof of its round tower decapitated. The new buildings have only the iron skeleton remaining of their roofing. The Prefecture of Police is a burning mass, in the bluish smoke of which gleams the new gold of the Sainte-Chapelle.

By little paths, made across the barricades which

have not yet been demolished, I reach the Hôtel de Ville.

The ruin is magnificent, splendid, unimaginable ; it is a ruin the colour of sapphire, rubies, emerald ; a ruin that blinds one by the beauty of the agatization of the stone fired by kerosene. This ruin is like the ruin of a magic palace, illuminated in an opera by Bengal lights. With its empty niches, its shattered or damaged statues, its remains of a clock, its high window-frames and chimneys, standing upright by some miracle of balance in empty space against the blue sky, this ruin would be a marvel of the picturesque to preserve, if the country were not condemned, without appeal, to the restorations of M. Viollet-le-Duc. Irony of fate ! Among all the degradation of the building, the lying inscription, " Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," gleams on an untouched square of marble in all the newness of its gilding.

Suddenly I see the crowd begin to run, like a crowd attacked during a riot. Cavalrymen appear, threateningly, swords in hand, making their horses rear, and turning the public off the street on to the sidewalks. In their midst is a troop of men, in front of whom walks an individual with a black beard, his forehead bandaged with a handkerchief. I notice another whom his neighbours support on

both sides under the arms, as if he had not the strength to walk. These men have a peculiar pallor, with a vague expression which has fixed itself in my memory.

I hear a woman crying out as she runs away, "Why did I come here to-day!" By my side a placid bourgeois counts: One, two, three . . . they are twenty-six. The escort takes these men at full speed into the Lobau barracks, where the door shuts them all in with a strange violence and haste.

I did not yet understand what it was about, but I had in me an indefinable anxiety. When my bourgeois had finished counting, he said to his neighbour,—

"They wont be long. You'll soon hear the first volley."

"What volley?"

"Well, they are going to be shot!"

Almost at the same moment there was an explosion, as if a violent noise had been shut up in the walls—a fusillade having something of the mechanical regularity of a machine gun. There was a first, a second, and third, a fourth, a fifth—homicidal *rrara*; then a long interval; then a sixth; and then two reports, one on top of the other.

The noise seemed as if it would never end. At last there is silence. Everybody acts as if relieved,

and we all breathe, when a shattering noise breaks out which makes the unfastened door of the barracks swing on its shattered hinges ; then another ; then, at last, the final one. These, I am told, are the shots fired to finish off those who are not yet dead.

The platoon responsible for the execution now come out of the door. They are like drunken men, and some have blood on the end of their bayonets. And while two closed carts enter the court a priest slips out, of whom one sees for some time, along the outer wall of the barracks, the thin back, the umbrella, and the feeble legs.

May 29.—I read the proclamation of MacMahon on the walls, announcing that everything came to an end yesterday at four o'clock.

This evening one once more feels the movement of Paris coming to life again, and its murmur, like that of a great distant tide. Time no longer passes in the silence of a desert place.

May 30.—From time to time we hear frightful noises—houses collapsing, or volleys.

[After the excitement of the Commune had died out, and Paris had returned to its normal state, Edmond

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de Goncourt took a holiday in the country, returning about the middle of August for a short while, and then going away again, to hunt and to visit friends and relatives, until the beginning of October.]

1872

March 2.—To-day, Gautier, Turgenev, and I dined at Flaubert's.

Turgenev, the delightful giant, the lovable barbarian, whose white hairs fall down on to his eyes, with a deep fold that runs across his forehead from one temple to the other like a furrow, with his infantile speech, charms us from the soup onwards by that mixture of simplicity and depth which makes the Slav race so seductive—emphasized in his case by the originality of his mind and by his immense and cosmopolitan knowledge.

He told us about the month he spent in prison after the publication of *A Sportsman's Sketches*; of that month when he had, for his cell, the archives of the police of his district, of which he read through the secret files. He described to us, with the detail of a painter and a novelist, the police inspector who one day, intoxicated by Turgenev's champagne, said to him, touching his elbow and lifting his glass into the air: "To Robespierre."

Then he stopped for a moment, lost in his reflections, and began again: "If I took pride in these things, I should ask that on my tombstone should be carved what my book did for the emancipation of the serfs—and nothing more. Yes, I should only ask that. . . . The Emperor Alexander had me informed that the reading of my book was one of the principal motives of his determination."

March 26.—Hugo said, the other day, to Burty: "It's an effort for me to talk, while a lecture wearies me as much as making love three times over!" And, after a moment's thought: "Or even four!"

May 20.—The marriage of Sardou and Mlle Soulié is original. An engraver who was copying a picture in the Gallery of Versailles came to ask Soulié something, and found his family at lunch. Soulié asked him to join in the meal. The engraver excused himself, saying that Sardou was waiting for him downstairs. Soulié asked him to go and bring up the author of *Madame Benoiton*. Sardou sees the girl . . . and falls in love, just as a person in one of his plays might do.

June 3.—To-day Zola lunches with me. I see him take his glass of Bordeaux in his hands and hear

him say, "Look how my fingers tremble!" And he talks about threatened diseases of the heart and the bladder, and a probable articular rheumatism.

Literary men seem never to have been born more dead than in our times, and yet work has never been more active and more incessant. Sickly and neurotic as he is, Zola works every day from nine o'clock until half-past twelve, and from three to eight. That is what he has to do nowadays, with his talent and reputation, to earn a living. "I have to," he repeats, "and don't believe that I want to do it. I am by nature very weak, and altogether incapable of enthusiasm. Instead of a will I have an obsession, which if I did not give way to it would make me ill."

1873

January 22.—Thiers asked de Béhaine to come and dine with him this week, to have his impressions on Germany. But Thiers never allowed him to open his mouth; all the time it was the President of the Republic who did the talking, describing his negotiations with Bismarck to the *chargé d'affaires*.

From the profound study which the historian of the Revolution made of him, he concluded that Bismarck might be ambitious, but he was "not animated by bad feeling against France." In spite of all his malice—he almost acknowledged it—what really made Thiers grant an amnesty to Bismarck was that during the negotiations for Belfort the Prussian minister, knowing that Thiers was in the habit of taking a nap during the daytime, wrapped his feet round in an overcoat, so that he should not be cold. We must congratulate ourselves that this attention did not cost France Belfort.

My friend came home almost scared by the senile and mediocre drivel of our great statesman.

March 5.—I dined with Sardou this evening. I have seen him once or twice, but I have never yet had a talk with him.

Sardou has nothing of Dumas' contempt for the people he is not acquainted with. Sardou is hail-fellow-well-met. He accepts everybody as his equal. He is extremely talkative, and his talk is that of a man of business. He only speaks about money, figures, receipts. Nothing in him indicates the man of letters. When he does attempt to be witty, the humour which rises to his thin lips is that of a third-rate actor.

He is rather too much inclined to make use of the first person singular, and tells us at great length about the suppression of his American play. And in this connection there was a nice little detail about Thiers. When the Vaudeville begged Thiers to permit Sardou's play to be performed, Thiers replied that it was impossible; the Americans were, for the time being, the only people giving employment in Paris, and they should not be offended.

Thiers is truly right when he boasts that he belongs to the lower middle class.

May 8.—I dine with Mme Sand, Turgenev, and Flaubert at Véfour's, in the Renaissance Salon, where I once arranged a meeting between Sainte-Beuve and Lagier.

Mme Sand has mummified more than ever, but she is still full of a fine childishness and of the gaiety of an old woman of last century. Turgenev is, as usual, talkative and expansive, and we let the sweet-voiced giant talk on about delicate little things.

Flaubert began to talk of a drama about Louis XI. which he had written at College, in which the poverty of the people was made to express itself in these words: "Monseigneur, we are obliged to season our vegetables with the salt of our tears."

This phrase turns Turgenev back to the memories of his childhood, to the memory of that severe education in which he grew up, and the revolts which injustice stirred up in his young soul. He describes himself, on account of some misdeed or other, lectured by his tutor, then whipped, then deprived of his dinner; he described himself walking in the garden, and, with a sort of bitter sorrow, drinking the salt water which fell down his cheeks into the corners of his mouth.

Then he talked about the fragrant hours of his youth, the hours when, lying on the ground, he listened to the earth's noises, and to the hours spent lying in watch, in a dreamy observation of nature, which one cannot regain.

He told us about a favourite dog of his, which seemed to share in his state of mind, which surprised

him by sighing deeply when he himself was melancholy,—a dog which, one night, on the borders of a lake, when Turgenev was suddenly seized by a mysterious terror, ran away headlong, as if it shared his fears.

June 2.—I cannot get over my disgust when I read, on the fourth page of a newspaper, among the advertisements: “The second edition has just appeared of *The Situation of the English Working Classes* . . . a work in which M. le Comte de Paris has shown himself a thinker and a citizen.” . . . Pretenders who make themselves Socialist writers . . . Pouah!

June 7.—I do not believe that the world will come to an end because a society perishes. I do not believe that the world will come to an end after the destruction of the affairs of to-day; but, nevertheless, I should like to know how the world would look when its libraries and museums had been burnt down, and which attempted to govern itself by the most notoriously incapable people known to the authorities.

June 24.—I am at Versailles—always in the capacity of a gardener. Nevertheless the interest of the

drama which is being enacted in the palace attracts me and makes me wander in the neighbouring streets. In these streets, I am astonished at the number of new chemists' shops which the Assembly has caused to spring up. Before the exhibition of so much gluten, I ask myself if the diabetics who are shut up in those walls can have any moral courage.

August 16.—Yesterday I came across Hugo conferring with La Rochelle on the staging of *Marie Tudor*.

It was an extremely comic scene. What Hugo had to say to the theatre manager was very simple. He said : "As far as I am concerned, there is only one thing which interests me, and that is, to play with my grandchildren ; and nothing else matters. So go and do absolutely as you please ; you are a lot more interested than I in the success of the play." Then, at the end of all these apparent surrenders, the name of Meurice would be slyly introduced, to whom La Rochelle was to refer at the last resort. And he always wound up by saying : "All I want is to be allowed to play with my grandchildren."

This evening Hugo is over-excited in his revolutionaryism by things which he does not say out loud. An implacable hardness shows itself on his face, and lights up the blackness of his eyes, when he talks

about the Assembly or the army of MacMahon. It is no longer the detached or ironical hostility of a thinker ; his words have something of the ferocious want of pity of a manual worker.

September 10.—To-day, at Cornuschi's exhibition of Japanese art, I met Burty, back in Paris from the country for a few hours.

We go out of the Palais de l'Industrie, he, I, and a gentleman whom he presents to me, and whose name I don't catch. We go along talking, all three of us, in the Champs-Élysées, I trying all the while to guess who this man might be, who talks intelligently, but whose face I can't catch. When he goes, I ask Burty, " Who is that gentleman ? "

" My dear man, are you having a joke on me ? " replies Burty.

It was Gambetta, the tribune, the dictator.

Upon my word, he has the fat and oily face of a money-changer on whom the gas of the Boulevard de l'Opéra shines by night.

December 12.—De Béhaine, who is waiting for his dinner, and Stoeffel, who is late, tell me of the morbid susceptibility of Bismarck, and of his fury at the least attack made upon him by a French newspaper, of his Gallophobia, of the good luck which France

has had in finding in the Comte d'Arnim—Prussian though he is—an aristocratic sentiment, which makes him hostile to French radicalism but not to France.

With another ambassador, he is certain that a pretext would already have been found to invade our country again.

1874

January 20.—This is a sad day, the first day of the vassalage of France. To-day *L'Univers* is suspended by order of Bismarck. To-morrow the Chancellor of the Empire will perhaps order France to become Protestant.

February 4.—Here is a story of Balzac, which perhaps his future biographers may not know.

Old Giraud was saying this evening that he used to live next door to the Director of the Beaujon Hospital, and that he called upon Giraud every day. Once the Director said to him: "I have a very distinguished dying woman here, who says she is Balzac's sister. As I did not want to bury her between four bare boards, I went to see Balzac, and asked him for sixteen francs for a coffin. Balzac said to me, 'The woman lies; I have no sister in a hospital.' Well, the woman interested me so much that I bought her a coffin out of my own pocket."



ALPHONSE DAUDET.

For years the painter and the hospital director go on calling on each other as they always have done. One morning the director came along, quite upset: "You remember my story about Balzac's sister, eh? . . . You don't know what's happened? . . . Balzac sent for me to-day. I found him dying, as the papers said. 'Monsieur,' he cried, on seeing me, 'I told you that the woman, for whom you came to ask me for a coffin, was not my sister; it was I who lied. I wanted to confess that to you before I died.' "

February 8.—This evening, when dining at Flaubert's, Alphonse Daudet told us about his infancy, a precocious and troubled childhood. It was spent in a house where there was no money, under a father who changed his business every day, in the eternal fog of that town of Lyons, already detested by that young sun-loving nature. And so he read immensely—he was not yet twelve years old—poetry, imaginative works which excited his brain, readings streaked by intoxications produced by liqueurs pilfered from home, readings which filled whole days, in boats which he detached from the river-side.

And in the burning excitement of these two things, reading and sweetened alcohol, and shortsighted as he was, the child came to live, as in a dream,

a hallucination, where scarcely anything real could reach him.

February 12.—Yesterday I dined with the Vaudevillistes, among whom was Labiche, the author of the *Chapeau de Paille d'Italie*.

He is a large, fat man, clean-shaven, with a sensual and turgid nose, in a plump and placid face. With uninterrupted seriousness, the almost cruel seriousness of all the humorists of the nineteenth century, Labiche says his funny things—things which make everybody laugh who can laugh easily. His greatest success was when he told us that he was made Maire—he is the Maire, it appears, of some district in Sologne—after having informed the Prefect that he was the only man in his district who blew his nose into his handkerchief.

February 13.—I spent yesterday afternoon in the studio of a painter named Degas.

After many efforts in all directions, he has fallen in love with the modern, and in the modern style he has pegged out his claim on laundresses and dancers. I cannot, of course, criticize his choice adversely, after having in *Manette Salomon* praised these two professions for supplying the most picturesque models of contemporary women for a

modern artist. Really, the rose of the flesh in the whiteness of the linen, under the milky mist of gauze, makes the most charming background for light and tender colourings.

And Degas exhibits under our eyes laundress upon laundress, talking the whole time in their technical language, and explaining smoothing irons, circular ironing, etc.

Then the dancers pass by. It is like the lobby of a dance, where the legs of the dancers are fantastically silhouetted upon a window as they go down a little staircase, with the striking spot of red of a tartan in the midst of all these floating white clouds, with the wretched and silly maître de ballet waiting to start them off. And I have, before me, nature taken by surprise in the graceful twisting, in the movements and gestures of these little monkey-girls.

The painter shows you his pictures, explaining from time to time by imitating choregraphical developments, by the imitation of an *arabesque*—to use the language of a dancing girl; and it is really very amusing to watch him with his arms rounded, mingling the æsthetics of a dancing master with the æsthetics of a painter, talking of the "muddy tenderness" of Velasquez and of the silhouetting of Mantegna.

This Degas is a strange youth, a sickly, neurotic person, suffering from ophthalmia to such an extent that he fears to lose his sight, but extremely sensitive and able to seize the character of things at once. He is up to the present the man who has most capably caught the soul of our modern life, in copying it.

But will he ever achieve anything quite complete? I do not know. His mind seems so restless.

April 14.—Dinner at Riche's with Flaubert, Turgenev, Zola, and Alphonse Daudet—a dinner of talented men who like one another, and which we propose to make a monthly affair during the next winters.

We were talking about the French language, and Turgenev said, on this subject: "Your language, gentlemen, seems to me to be an instrument in which the inventors simply went to work to find clearness, logic, and regard for definitions, and it has come about that the instrument finds itself handled to-day by the most nervous, the most impressionable people, who are the least likely to be satisfied with imitations of the real thing."

June 22.—Jules Janin has had what he has longed for all his life—a fine funeral.

Behind his remains marched soldiers, civil servants, Academicians, with some of the rank and file of literature. His glory will be that of an agreeable and loquacious talker alone, although he once had a certain talent. It will hardly outlive the "J. J." in flowers in the middle of his garden lawn.

The unhappy man is to be buried at Evreux. It is cruel for bones as Parisian as his to have to await the Last Judgment out in the provinces.

July 15.—I go away to Lindau, on Lake Constance, where de Béhaine has offered me hospitality in the Kallenberg villa.

I am in a compartment of Englishmen, and I saw seven of them simultaneously wind up their watches. It was done so mechanically, so automatically, that it nearly frightened me, and I fled into another compartment.

July 19.—Yesterday the Comte de Banneville sat down to supper at the Hôtel de Bavière in Lindau. Two German women followed. The waiter showed them their places, by the side of the young secretary of the Embassy. "Next to a Frenchman! We do not want to be poisoned!" shouted one of them quite loudly in French. And these women were society women!

This brutality illustrates, better than anything else, the hateful exasperation of Germany against France.

November 2.—In the midst of modern materialism and utilitarianism only a single non-material and disinterested sentiment remains in France—the cult of the dead.

I do not suppose that the cemeteries of any other country in Europe have so many black dresses, so many wreaths, so many flowers. Coming out of the cemetery I met Dubois de l'Estang at the gates, who, taking my hand, said: "You've been with your brother?" This expression, which represented me as returning from a dead man as if he were alive, made me happy all through the day.

November 13.—At lunch, speaking of Zola, whose name I had mentioned and who was being cursed as a democrat, I could not prevent myself from exclaiming,—

"It's all the fault of the Empire. Zola had no cash at all. He had a mother and a wife to feed. He had no political opinions at first. You could have had him with many others, if you had wished. He found he could only place his manuscripts with democratic newspapers. Well, living

with these people all the time, he became a democrat himself. It's quite natural. . . . Ah! Princess, you do not know what service you have rendered to the Tuileries, how many hatreds and angers your *salon* has disarmed, what a buffer you have been between the Government and those who wield a pen. . . . Flaubert and I, if you had not, so to speak, bought us with your grace, your attentions, your friendship—we would both have been among the bitter critics of the Emperor and Empress.”

November 20.—Through the cold wind that is blowing this morning, going up towards Saint-Cloud to get to Versailles—in the excitement of a walk during which I almost ran—my novel (*La Fille Élixa*) is beginning to plan itself in my brain. I decide to put into the background all the scenes of the Court of Assizes, which I wanted to paint in their brutal reality, and the three parts of the novel condense themselves into a single piece.

December 1.—The old dinners at Magny's are becoming a bit too much. There is nothing more in common between the varied collection of men who compose them at present than between the people who get off a coach to dine at an inn. There

is no more interest in one another for what each one does, or is trying to do, or hopes to do. That brutal person Charles Blanc declares, *à propos de* Mme de Sévigné, that if she were living now she would not be regarded as having any talent. He added that every woman writes as well as she did, and that he would bring along, next time, one hundred and fifty letters from women, as good as those of the most celebrated of woman letter-writers.

Renan, who is sure to let himself go when any literary paradox is being discussed, wags his head about in acquiescence. "That reputation is deplorable," he at last lets fall from his lips, and for a long time he repeats silently, "She is not a thinker . . . she is not a thinker."

1875

January 22.—The prices of things are truly paradoxical. I have before me a Japanese bronze, a bird that is astonishingly like the antique animals of the Vatican. If one was found like that in an Italian excavation, it would cost perhaps ten thousand francs. Mine cost a hundred and twenty francs. By the side of this bronze is a Japanese ivory, an ape dressed up like a Taicun soldier. The sculpture of the armour is a marvel of finished work and delicate perfection ; it might be a jewel by Cellini. But imagine what this ivory would cost if the Italian artist had signed it with his punch ! It is perhaps signed with a name of one as celebrated out there, but his signature is not yet worth twenty francs in France.

I am not sorry I introduced so much Japanese work into my picture of the eighteenth century. This nineteenth-century art has a little of the "classicism of the pretty ;" it is wanting in originality and size. It might in the end become ster-

ilizing. And these albums, these bronzes, these ivories have this much of good, that they turn your taste and your mind into the current of the creations of strength and fantasy.

January 25.—Flaubert's dinner parties are unlucky affairs. I caught my inflammation of the lungs when I was coming back from the first one. To-day Flaubert himself is ill in bed. So we are only Turgenev, Zola, Daudet, and myself.

At first we talk about Taine. As we all try to define the qualities and the imperfections of his talent, Turgenev interrupts us and says with that originality of his, in his gently warbling voice: "The comparison is not noble, but allow me, gentlemen, to compare Taine with a hunting dog I once had: he used to point, he used to stop, he used to go through the whole performance of a hunting dog in a marvellous manner, only he had no sense of smell, and I was obliged to sell him."

Zola is very happy, quite bright as the result of the excellent cooking, and when I asked him: "Zola, are you a gourmand, by chance?" he answered: "Yes, it's my only vice; and at home, when I have not something good at dinner, I am unhappy, quite unhappy. . . . It's the only thing . . . other things do not exist so far as I am con-

cerned. . . . Ah, you don't know what a life mine is ? ”

Then he begins, with his face suddenly darkened over, to enter upon the chapter of his miseries. It is curious how the brightness of the young novelist melts away with his melancholy recital.

Zola began to paint the blackest possible picture of his boyhood, the bitternesses of his present everyday life, the insults which are offered to him, the atmosphere of suspicion in which he lives, and the sort of quarantine in which his books are placed.

Turgenev said in a semitone : “ It's very strange. A Russian I know, a man with a good brain, used to affirm that the type of Jean Jacques Rousseau was a French type and only existed in France.”

Zola, who was not listening, continues to groan, and when we tell him that he has not much to complain of—that he is doing pretty well for a man who is not yet thirty-five years old—he exclaims,—

“ Well, do you want me to talk to you from the bottom of my heart ? . . . You will think I am very childish, but so much the worse. I shall never be decorated. I shall never be admitted to the Academy. I shall never have a single one of those distinctions which my talent claims. I shall always be a

pariah—yes, a pariah—so far as the public is concerned.” And he repeats the word “pariah” four or five times.

Turgenev looks at him for a moment with paternal irony, then tells him this pretty fable: “Zola, at the banquet given at the Russian Embassy on the occasion of the Emancipation of the Serfs, an event in which, as you know, I was concerned to some extent, Count Orlov, who is my friend, and at whose marriage I was a witness, invited me. Perhaps I am not the most important writer in Russia, but in Paris, as there are no others, you will agree that I am. Well, do you know where they placed me at table? They put me into the forty-seventh place, after the priest, and you know the contempt they have for ‘popes’ in Russia.”

And a little Russian laugh fills Turgenev’s eyes, by way of finishing off the story.

Zola is in the mood for gossip, and he continues to tell us about his work, about the hundred lines which he produces every day from out of his monasticism, for he has no distractions, except a few games of dominoes with his wife in the evenings, and visits from his compatriots. In the middle of all this, he allows himself to acknowledge his deep satisfaction at feeling the power he exercises from his humble life in Paris, and he says this in the tone

of a man of genius who has long been snowed under in poverty.

During the bitter confessions of the realistic novelist, Daudet is reciting to himself verses in Provençal, and seems to be gargling himself with the sweet and musical sonorousness of the poetry of those blue skies.

February 7.—De Béhaine saw Marshal MacMahon yesterday. He was struck and moved by the entire change wrought in that loyal brain by the tortuous complications of the politics of the day. The Marshal seemed to him to be a man threatened by a congestion of the brain at any moment.

Then de Béhaine told me how the Marshal had suddenly grown happy when he asked him about the state of the army. He had suddenly become another man. No more of that anxious concentration, no more of those nervous movements, no more of those impatient contractions of the hands, as if they were preparing to break things. The Marshal began to talk brightly about men, guns, and rifles, and ended up by saying: "It isn't likely that Bismarck will declare war on us this year, and next year we shall be ready."

February 11.—I have never been present at

a meeting of the Academy to receive a new member,* and I am curious to see with my own eyes and to hear with my own ears such a performance. I have had a ticket given me, and this morning, after lunch, we go—that is to say, the Princess, Mme de Galbois, Benedetti, General Chauchard, and myself.

These feasts of reason are pretty badly organized, and we have to wait outside a long time in the bitter cold, between gloomy policemen and nicely dressed women who are jostling gentlemen with official badges.

At last we reach the door. A head waiter appears. No, it is the illustrious Pingard, a Parisian celebrity who owes part of his notoriety to his perpetual whining—a man dressed in black, with teeth bent back in defence, and a growl like an angry bulldog. He shows us into a vestibule adorned with statues of great men, who look very bored with their representation in a too academic marble, disappears a moment, and then returns, and severely reprimands the Princess, whom he pretends not to recognize, for having gone past a certain line in the pavement.

Then we go up a narrow, winding staircase, like the staircase of the Vendôme column, and where

* Alexandre Dumas fils on this occasion.

Mme de Galbois begins to feel a little ill. And there we are in a little corner like a theatre box, the walls of which make you white, like a miller, and from where, as from an attic window, one looks down, not without a sort of giddiness, into the hall.

The decoration of the dome, which is as dismal as the literature which is encouraged underneath it, is enough to make one weep. On a greenish gray are painted, also in a sort of gray half-mourning, muses, eagles, and laurel wreaths. And the gloomy daylight, reflected by this saddening painting, falls heavy and cold on the bald pates below.

The hall is quite small, and Parisian society is so eager to see this sight that I cannot see an inch of the faded covering of the seats down below, or an inch of the wood of the wooden tiers of the large gallery, so closely jammed together are the representatives of nobility, learning, wealth, and heroism. And I see, through a crack in the door of our box, in the corridor, a woman dressed in the latest fashion, sitting on the stairs, and who intends to listen to the two speeches from those stairs.

We had met Marshal Canrobert as we were coming in, and the first person we see in the hall is Mme de la Valette, and everywhere are men and women of the highest society. I notice that the

women who are present have a certain solemnity, a sort of diluted air of the "blue-stocking" in their clothes, among which one sees, here and there, the mantle of violet velvet with fur linings of the superb Mme d'Haussonville, or the loud and extravagant hat of some actress.

The inner circle of the house, a few men and Academicians' wives, are gathered together in the little railed-in enclosure at the bottom. On the right and left, on the two large platforms, are arranged the members of all the Academies, in their black robes.

The sun, which has at last made up its mind to shine, lights up the high lines of every face. One feels a subdued admiration among all these men, impatient of showing itself, and there is something moist in the smiles of the women.

The voice of Alexandre Dumas makes itself heard. Immediately a religious contemplation is felt; soon after, kindly little laughs, affectionate applause, and breathless "ah's!"

His exordium is full of little frivolities, of amusing pasquinades, of pleasant flashes of humour. Then comes the serious part, the historical part, where he declares that, thanks to his power of being able to read between the lines, he has discovered that Richelieu was never jealous of the verses

of Corneille, and that he only bore him a momentary grudge for having delayed, by the publication of the *Cid*, the unity of France. He is satisfied with calling him and saying: "Take a chair, Corneille." Then follows a monologue of the Cardinal-Minister, invented by Dumas.

The crowd is intoxicated; there is applause and stamping.

When the peroration has been delivered, every feature on every face grows longer, mouths begin to look like horseshoes pointing downwards, and a dark sadness gathers on every forehead.

Then follows an interval during which I look round the hall. Then I saw little Jeannine Dumas, very little affected by her father's eloquence, just trying to upset her mother's eye-glasses. I saw Lescure quite close to the railing where the elect ones sat, taking notes. I saw the printer Claye, with the expression of a pleasantly hypnotized man. I saw a fine youth who, I was told, was the poet Déroulède, rolled up in a cloak embroidered in silver, his head bent down on a hand in a yellow glove. I saw the Academician Sacy, and his Buddha-like cheerfulness. I saw an Academician whose name nobody knew, with ringlets of hair in his ears, and the blue skin of an ape on his cheek-bones. I saw another Academician, wearing a black velvet cap,

with his face buried in a huge woollen comforter, and wearing woollen gloves without fingers. They could not tell me his name either. I saw . . . I saw . . .

At this moment the vinegarish voice of old d'Haussonville rose to us. Then began the performance—that is to say, the slaughter of the new member, with all the salutes, all the low bows, the ironical grimaces, and the ferocious hints of Academical politeness. M. d'Haussonville gives Dumas to understand that he is, roughly speaking, nobody at all, that his youth was spent among fast women, that he has no right to speak about Corneille; it was a slaughter in which contempt for literature was mingled with the aristocrat's contempt for the proletariat.

And, after the insult at the beginning of every sentence, thrown out in a sonorous voice, with his head held up, the cruel orator's voice would sink deep down into his chest for the banal compliments with which he finished his sentences—which nobody heard. Yes, I seemed to be present at a Punch and Judy show, when Punch bobs down respectfully after hitting his victim on the head with a stick.

At last the comedy is finished, and everybody goes away pleased.

February 17.—To-day the new Academician has been trying to show himself a mere man, to make his success seem as trifling as possible to his fellow-authors.

After dinner he began to talk in an interesting manner about the cooking up of literary success, and, turning towards Flaubert and myself, he said, in a voice in which contempt was united to pity: "You don't know how important a first-night audience is to the success of a play . . . you don't know what has to be done . . . if you do not surround the four or five members which each club sends on these days with sympathetic and well-disposed listeners . . . for these club gentlemen do not rise to enthusiasm easily . . . and if you don't think of this, that, and the other . . ."

And Dumas tells us a heap of things of which we are perfectly ignorant, and which, now we know, we shall never be able to put into practice.

March 19.—When these Englishmen set out to be original, they do so in a much more striking manner than other Europeans.

I say this with regard to Oliphant, this diplomatist of journalism, who one fine day throws up his fine existence to become part of a little religious sect on the banks of an American river. He was there

when the high priest of the place said to him : “ You are a force which is being wasted here ; you must return to active life.”

He goes back, and here he is, at once the *Times*' correspondent in Paris, with a salary of about £4,000, and here he is, a few months later, charged with peace negotiations with Germany, as the result of friction between d'Arnim and Thiers, which makes relations between them insupportable.

Then, suddenly, in the midst of these great affairs, he is again seized by the desire to live the life of his sect, and he goes, taking his mother—he to cut wood, she to do laundry work. For in that little world all have to work with their hands.

August 22.—To-day I go to look for “ human documents ” * in the neighbourhood of the Military School. People will never realize our natural timidity, our discomfort in the middle of a working-class crowd, our horror of the rabble, and how much the beastly and ugly document on which we have built our books has cost us. This trade of behaving like a conscientious police agent is quite the most abominable business to which a man with an aristocratic mind can turn.

December 16.—Yesterday Gambetta, a little in-

* The de Goncourts invented this phrase.

toxicated by his oratorical success and the wholesale nomination of Republican senators, remained in the offices of *La République* up to two o'clock in the morning, swanking.

According to Burty, he was very amusing when he was launching into a shameless parody of one of his last interviews with Thiers, whose fluty voice he imitated, and also his little movements of a vampire dummy.

Among other things, Thiers had told him everything he was hiding from Marshal Soult, and everything he was doing behind his back. At last, one day, the Marshal, infuriated by some action or other on which he had not been consulted, went to the King. "I was warned," said Thiers, "and my carriage followed close behind the Marshal's. In matters of state, you see, Gambetta, you must always look happy. . . . Remember that, Gambetta; it will be of use to you. . . . The King's door was closed to everybody. But I forced it, and at the moment I was getting through, the King, in conference with Soult, shouted at me, 'It's all settled . . . he's been crying!'"

King Louis-Philippe, one sees, was worthy of Thiers.

Then Thiers and Gambetta talked about the elections. And Thiers expressed surprise at the

names for which he had had to vote. "You've made me vote for Lorgeril, who has always ill-treated me so, and called me the . . . You know, I've been badly ill-treated during my lifetime. Do you know that I've had one thousand five hundred caricatures at my expense . . . Mme Dosne collects them. I look at them sometimes; they amuse me . . . Some are funny."

1876

March 5.—Turgenev came in to see Flaubert to-day and said : “ I never understood until yesterday how different human races are. I have been dreaming about it all night. We here are all men of the same trade, are we not—all authors? . . . Well, yesterday, in *Madame Caverlet*, when the young man says to his mother’s lover who was going to kiss his sister, ‘ I forbid you to kiss that girl,’ I felt a movement of repulsion, and there were five hundred Russians in the hall who had the same feeling . . . and Flaubert and the people in our box did not have that feeling. . . . I thought a great deal about it during the night. . . . Yes, you are truly Latins ; there is amongst you a good deal of the Roman with his religion of law ; you, to put it briefly, are lawyers. . . . We, on the other hand, are not. . . . How can I put it? Well, suppose we are round a table, at which all the old Russians are sitting, then, behind us, are the young Russians, mixed up anyhow. Well, the old Russians may

say 'yes' or 'no,' and those behind them will acquiesce. Then imagine that in the face of his 'yes' or 'no' the law no longer exists, for law among the Russians does not crystallize as among you. For example: we have thieves in Russia; nevertheless let a man commit twenty thefts and acknowledge them, and if he states that he was hungry or in need, he will be acquitted. . . . Yes, you are men of law, of honour; we, however auto-cratized we may be, are men"—and, as he is hunting for a word, I suggest "of humanity" to him. "Yes," he continues, "we are the least conventional of men; we are men of humanity."

To-day being Sunday, the last day of the elections, I was curious to have a look at Hugo's *salon*.

There, in the almost empty room of the poet, Mme Drouet, rigid in her becoming dowager's dress, is seated to the right of Hugo in a religious attention. Mme Charles Hugo is in a corner of the sofa. The men present are Flaubert, Turgenev, Gouzien, and a little young man I do not know.

Hugo talks about the seductive eloquence of Thiers, who makes use of facts that other people know better than he, and of a mass of grammatical errors, and all this in a very unpleasant voice, which, nevertheless, at the end of a quarter of an

hour, holds you, interests you, and imposes itself upon you.

In reviewing other orators, he adds: "For instance, these speeches, these lectures, these quite nice lectures, the effects of which do not outlast their third day, are not worth reading. And yet, gentlemen," he added, getting up, "surely the ambition of an orator should be to speak to a longer time than that—to speak to the future?"

I give my arm to Mme Drouet, and we go into the dining-room, where on the table are fruit, liqueurs, and syrups.

There, with his arms crossed on his chest, his body a little bent over in his buttoned riding-coat, and with the white of a silk neckerchief at his collar, Hugo once more begins to speak. He talks in that sweet and slow voice which is not very sonorous, yet nevertheless very distinct, a voice which plays around words and seems to caress them. He talks with his eyes half closed, with all sorts of cat-like expressions passing over his pretendedly lifeless countenance, over the face which has taken on the fine and warm skin colouring of one of Rembrandt's *Syndics*; and when he grows animated, there is on his forehead a strange quivering of the border-line of his white hair, which rises and falls.

He æstheticizes over Michael Angelo, Rembrandt,

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Rubens, and Jordaens, whom he places, in a parenthesis, and very wrongly, above Rubens.

We remain alone the whole evening, without a single murmur of the politician in all this discussion of art and literature. And at eleven o'clock everybody gets up and goes away, Hugo putting on an old hat of Castelar, which the Spaniard had left him in the place of a newer one.

March 13.—Turgenev has been talking of the way in which the comic sometimes gets itself mixed up with the heroic.

He told us that a Russian General, after two attacks on a cemetery, behind the walls of which Frenchmen were entrenched, ordered his soldiers to throw him over the wall.

“ Well, what happened ? ” asked Turgenev of the General in question, a very large man.

This is what the General told him. He found himself in a puddle, in the middle of which he kept on trying to stand up and could not, and every time he fell back he shouted, “ Hurrah ! ” A French infantryman, who was looking at him, without firing, repeatedly shouted, laughing hard, “ Big pig ! big pig ! ”

But the hurrahs had been heard, and the Russians at last succeeded in climbing over the

wall, and the French were soon driven out of the cemetery.

March 21.—The domination exercised by the Academy over the intellect of France has never been more completely expressed than by a remark of a gendarme to Renan.

At the time of the Universal Exhibition, Renan was in the large hall of manuscripts in the National Library, and, in view of the large number of visitors, he had been given a gendarme as escort. At a moment when they were alone, the gendarme stretched his hand out towards some old manuscripts of the Middle Ages, bound in wood or pigskin, and said to Renan, "Sir, I suppose all these works are books crowned by the Academy?"

November 21.—This evening we were talking about the fright in which Thiers had always lived during his Presidency, always fearing he would be kidnapped, and having himself guarded at Versailles by four hundred soldiers, at a time when only about one thousand five hundred were in a fit state to fight. Even in these days one never knows what train he is going to take, or the train he will come by.

December 27.—To-day, now that my book, *La Fille Élixa*, is nearly finished, the novel with which

I hope, in my dreams, to finish off my imaginative work begins to appear, and to shape itself vaguely in my mind.

I want to depict two clowns, two brothers who love each other as my brother and I have loved each other. Their vertebral columns were, so to speak, their common property, and they used to try all their lives to perform an impossible trick, which was to them like the solution of a scientific problem. There would be many details about the childhood of the younger, and the almost paternal fraternity of the elder. The senior has strength, the junior has grace, with something of a working-class poetry which found its issue in the fantastic, which the English clown brought into play in his performance.

At last the apparent impossibility is surmounted, and the feat accomplished. On the same day, the revenge of a riding-mistress, whose love had been disdained by the younger brother, made it fail. Naturally the woman only appears behind the scenes. The two brothers had a sort of muscle-worship which made them keep at a distance women, and everything else that might diminish their strength.

In attempting the unsuccessful feat, the younger brother had both his thigh bones broken, and on

the day that he recognized he could no longer be a clown, his brother also threw up his occupation, so as not to break his heart.

Here I can introduce all the moral pains which I noticed in my brother when he felt his brain incapable of producing more.

However, the elder brother retains his love for his work, and at night, when the younger is asleep, he gets up to do tricks, all by himself, in an attic, by the light of two candles. One night his brother awoke, and dragged himself into the attic, and the other, returning, saw him with tears falling silently down his cheeks. Then he flung his trapeze through the window, and threw himself into his brother's arms, and both remained weeping, in a close and tender embrace.

The story will be very short, and will attempt to consist entirely of sentiment and picturesque detail.

1877

January 19.—Just now the Parisian lady has a taste for Gambetta. She wants him at her At Homes, to show him to her friends and acquaintances. The important politician has become, in these days, a curious animal for drawing-rooms to talk about. For a fortnight an exchange of letters, of diplomatic correspondence, has been carried on by Mme Charpentier, with the object of getting the sometime dictator to dinner. Burty is the ambassador and envoy charged to back up whatever the gossipy little notes contain. . . . At last the celebrity has condescended to promise, and to-day the Charpentier household has been mobilized, and awaits the instructions of the mistress of the house, who is damp with a little perspiration of emotion in the anxiety lest her deity may have made a mistake as to the invitation, and also in terror lest the dinner has been overdone.

As the clock strikes eight Gambetta appears, a tea-rose in his buttonhole. . . .

I notice that this man, who appears so childlike and sleepy, has an attention always on the alert; he notices every word and takes the measure of people, and seems to realize, after three sentences have been spoken, who are the people to be listened to, and who are not.

At dessert he becomes very cheerful, and says many amusing things, which are echoed by the brazen voice of the elder Coquelin.

As we leave table, Gambetta politely says to me that he is happy to meet a man made known to him by mutual friends. He adds, with a delicate tact: "Perhaps the Charpentier drawing-room will have the good luck—though it is regarded as impossible in France—to reunite and to bring into contact with one another people of different views, who may esteem and appreciate one another, every one, of course, holding to his own opinions." And he talks about England, where, in the evening, the most violent antagonists shake hands at the same gathering.

The elder Coquelin told a curious story about Diaz. When Coquelin was quite young, and was earning only 1,800 francs per year, he had with great difficulty put aside two hundred, and asked Diaz to do a little picture of him. Diaz wrote and said that the little picture was waiting, and he

found in the studio a much bigger portrait than he was expecting, in a frame which must have cost at least thirty francs. He felt a little ashamed of himself as he timidly drew an envelope with two one hundred franc notes out of his pocket. Diaz opened the envelope, unfolded the notes, then, taking him by the ear, said, "Young man, this is too much!" and returned one.

February 1.—An Englishman called on Renan.

"Monsieur Renan?"

"That is I, monsieur."

"Then, sir, do you know that the Bible says that the hare is a ruminant animal?"

"Dear me, monsieur, no, I do not; but we shall see."

Renan takes a Hebrew Old Testament, looks among the laws of Moses, and finds, "Ye shall not eat . . . the hare, because he cheweth the cud."

"That is quite right; the Bible says that the hare is a ruminant."

"I well glad," replies the Englishman, who speaks French very badly. "I am not astronomer, I am not geologist—the things I do not know do not concern me; I am a naturalist . . . Then, as the Bible says the hare is a ruminant, and this is an

error . . . the Bible is not an inspired book. . . .
I well glad. . . .”

And he goes out, rid all at once of his religiosity.
That is very English.

February 18.—It is curious what a revolution has taken place as a consequence of Japanese art among a people enslaved by Greek symmetry so far as its own art is concerned. Now, suddenly, they have begun to show enthusiasm for a plate with a flower on it which is not in the middle, or for cloth in which the harmony is not composed of transitions by half-tints, but only by the wise arrangement of colours.

Who would have dared to paint, twenty years ago, a woman in a really yellow dress? It only became possible after Regnault's Japanese “Salome,” and this authorized introduction of the imperial colour of the Far East to the eyes of Europe—yes, it is a true revolution in the colour of pictures and of fashion.

February 18.—Flaubert was attacking the doctrines, the prefaces, and the professions of Zola's “naturalist” faith, behaving all the time with the utmost politeness to Zola's talent as an author.

Zola replies to this effect: “You—you have a

little fortune which has set you free from many inconveniences. . . . I have to earn my living entirely by my pen. I have to get along with the help of all sorts of writing—yes, of contemptible writing . . . Eh! mon Dieu, I laugh at the word ‘naturalism’ as much as you do, yet, I must repeat, things need a new name, so that the public may think them new. . . . Do you know, my writings consist of two parts: there are my works, by which I am judged, and by which I wish to be judged; then there is my article in the *Bien Public*, my articles on Russia, my Marseilles letters, which are nothing to me, which I reject, and which are only written to make my books go.

“I had to drive a nail into the skull of the public, first one centimetre, then two . . . Well, my hammer is the journalism which I write around my books.”

March 21.—*La Fille Élisa* is published to-day. I am at Charpentier’s to send off a few copies in the middle of clerks who come in every moment and shout, “X— has asked for fifty copies, and wants a hundred. . . . Can we give Y— Marpon another fifteen to complete his thousand? . . . If the book is to be confiscated, he wants to have some in his hiding-place.”

Amidst the activity, the commotion of this feverish publishing, I write dedications, filled with the emotions of a gambler who has staked his whole fortune on a single turn, asking myself if the success which is appearing in such an unexpected manner is going to be killed by a Government prosecution ; asking myself, too, if that acknowledgment of my talent which will come before my death will not be once more driven away by that ill-luck which has followed my brother and myself all our lives. And every time a new face appears, or a letter is brought in, I await the terrible announcement : “ They’ve seized us.”

On my way back to the station for Auteuil, I have one of those childish joys of authorship. I see a man who, with my book in his hand, unable to wait until he has got home, is reading it in the middle of the street, in spite of the drizzling rain.

March 22.—As soon as I got off the Auteuil train I immediately went to look at the publisher’s shop window. Copies of the *La Fille Élisa* are on show there. I am not yet seized. . . .

I go into Roquette’s bookshop in the Passage Choiseul.

“ Well, how is it selling ? ”

“ They told me this morning that you had been

seized on the other side of the Seine, so I withdrew the book from exhibition."

Nevertheless I see the book with the alarming title everywhere. . . . "After all, perhaps," thought I, "the book has already been stopped at Charpentier's and not yet at the retailers'." I go into Vaton's. I cannot ask him anything. He says nothing to me. . . . Anxious inquietude . . . my mouth grows bitter with fear. Morally, I am a hero; physically, I am a coward. I am ready to undergo everything, to face everything, to accept no compromise, to go to prison, to forfeit my reputation among the middle classes and everything; but, in the name of everything, I cannot prevent my heart from beating with a woman's fears.

When I get near Charpentier's I begin to wish I could meet somebody who would tell me what has happened, and put off going in.

At last I get there, and once on the other side of the door, begin looking round for rows of copies. The rows are there, and the staff are making them up into packets and sending them off in full security. Gullet tells me that 5,000 have been sent off, and that Charpentier, who had had 6,000 printed, has given the order to reprint another 4,000 at once.

I get to Magny's, and when I have some Bordeaux and meat in me, I begin to enjoy this sale of 10,000

copies within a few days . . . 10,000 copies . . . of our books, who had to wait for years to sell 1,500. . . . Oh! the irony of the good and evil chances of life. . . . Then, in this restaurant, where my brother sat opposite to me so many times, the empty chair on the other side of the table makes me think of him, and a great sadness overcomes me in thinking that the poor boy has only known the bitterness of literary life.

March 23.—A bad day. I feel a little of Gautier's superstitiousness. Will this be the day? That would throw a damper over the dinner which the Charpentiers are giving this evening in honour of the publication of the book.

An ex-ambassador comes to see me and says, "It's a serious title!" in a tone of voice which seems to indicate a prosecution in a few days' time, of which the ambassador had got wind from high places.

March 28.—This evening, at the Princess's, there was not a word, not a mention of my book. But after dinner, suddenly breaking her bonds, and as if coming out of a long meditation, her Highness said, "De Goncourt, are you likely to be prosecuted?" I am grateful to the woman who asks

this, and in so doing shows that, in the depths of her thought, she is concerned at the dangers which overhang me.

March 31.—I feel a sort of irritated boredom in waiting, at any moment, at any time the bell rings, to hear about the catastrophe. There are moments when one would like to have done with it, and know the bitter truth.

I am alone in having had successes like that of *Henriette Maréchal*, like that of *La Fille Élis*a—successes in which all the legitimate joy of success, of reputation, has been poisoned by hisses, or by the threat of a prosecution.

There is something animating and exalting in mere brute success, in the exhibition for sale of one's book, in comparison with which one feels that other books do not exist. I have just seen on one of the new boulevards a large bookshop, in all the windows of which there is nothing but copies of *La Fille Élis*a, exhibiting my name, and my name only, to the public who stop.

Come, no more of these timid apprehensions, no more of these wretched fears. I have written a brave book, come what may. Yes, say what one will, I believe that my talent has grown in misfortune and chagrin. And we, my brother and

I, have been the first in establishing a literary movement which will carry everything before it; which will, perhaps, be as great as the Romantic movement . . . and if I live for a few more years, and if I am able to rise from the description of low and sordid things to distinguished realities, then it will be all up with the old game, and the conventional, the imbecile conventional, will come to an end.

April 2.—It is curious what ferocious hatred we de Goncourts have the privilege of exciting.

At college some of my brother's fellow-students would have eaten him raw; and the uglier students, jealous of his handsome face, several times tried to disfigure him, although there were scarcely any relations, any points of contact, between them, but simply from that mad feeling of democrats against aristocrats, of whatever sort they might be.

April 3.—I receive a little note from Burty, announcing that my book has been much examined by the Cabinet, but that there will be no prosecution.

I am only half reassured, as a caprice of the authorities, or an article in one of the important papers, is all that is needed to change all that.

April 17.—We were talking about the implaca-

bility of the Germans; of the impossibility of speaking to the humanity of these men, so reserved and inaccessible. Cherbuliez tells us that we are wrong, that the Teutons have a quarter of an hour when they may make concessions; it is the quarter of an hour which slips past between dessert after dinner and the tenth whiff of a cigar. Saint-Vallier told him that that was the only moment he was able to get what he was able to get during the course of negotiations.

April 29.—I have tried in vain to explain the intensity of the hatred against us. In my opinion, the journalists have not been critics; they have been substitutes for the Royal or Republican prosecutors. How shameful! . . . and yet . . .

October 9.—Spent a day with the Charpentiers at Champrosay, with the Daudets.

Had a very pleasant lunch, enlivened by much humour from Mme Daudet, who has the amiable notion of wanting to marry me to a charming woman who is one of her friends.

Daudet is killing himself. For the last five months he has been working from four to eight o'clock in the morning, from nine to twelve, from two to six, and from eight to midnight—in all

twenty wakeful hours, to which must be added three hours' work by his wife.

His fever has passed, and he has still three *feuilletons* to revise. His last piece of work, which was going to be his masterpiece, will not be, he says. Now he will adopt my method, and write the last chapter before the end, just when he feels it most.

We had a game of bowls in the garden after lunch. Then we go for a walk in the forest with a friend who lives in the house of Delacroix. The one-time abode of the painter is a house that might belong to a pecuniarily embarrassed village lawyer, with a country clergyman's garden, and a studio painted pea-green.

There is a nice story about this dismal dwelling. The neighbour of Delacroix, an old wine merchant, had a wall which annoyed the painter's sense of beauty. Delacroix proposed to pay him a large sum for the removal of the wall, but it was refused; then he offered to paint his portrait and his wife's, and this, too, was refused. But when the painter died, then only did the wine merchant learn the high price of his paintings, and ever since that day, although he has quite enough to live upon, he leads a hopeless existence, repeating to every one who will listen to him: "Why didn't he say that a portrait by him would sell for 100,000 francs?"

October 11.—I hate politics so much that to-day, when it is truly a duty to vote, I abstain. . . . I shall have lived my whole life without voting a single time.

November 23.—Ah, success! If only the public could see the successful in the intimacy of their lives, it would not be jealous of their triumphs.

To-day, the day after the publication of *Le Nabab*,* when already 11,000 copies of the book have been sold, Daudet comes into Charpentier's with hesitating little steps, with nervous gestures, and with a careworn face, in which amiability is an effort.

During dinner he is nervous and agitated about the reviews he will get, and the reviews he will not get. When *Hernani* was being performed, he says, he obstinately stayed in his place, for fear of overhearing a compliment which was not quite what he wanted, his ears painfully on the alert, hearing or imagining they were hearing all that was being said about him and his book; and he spends the evening in fighting, almost with terror, his wife's desire to go with Mme Charpentier to hear Sarcey lecture on the book of the day.

We go down to the publishers; Daudet shows

* By Daudet.

his wife the dedication, of which only a few copies have been printed, and which she has not yet seen. And Mme Daudet, reading it, denies her husband's acknowledgments of her talent in words which have almost the emotional sputtering of a disappointed woman in love: "No, no, it's too much. . . . I don't want it . . . no, I don't want it!"

December 28.—Yesterday at Bing's, the seller of Japanese goods, I saw a long woman, very pale, wrapped up in an endless waterproof, moving everything about, putting everything out of its place, and from time to time putting an object on the ground and saying, "This will be for my sister."

I did not at once recognize the woman, but I had the feeling that she was known to me and to the public. Then her escort came towards me and gave me his hand; he turns out to be almost a relative of mine. It is curious how this Sarah Bernhardt reminded me on this gray and rainy day of one of those elegant and emaciated convalescents who pass you in a hospital at about five o'clock, in the twilight, to attend prayers at the end of the hall.

1878

[*The sixth volume of the Journal des Goncourt, containing the entries for the years 1878-84, was published in 1892, with the following little preface.*]

It is now forty years since I began to try to write true history, and so on, by means of fiction. This unfortunate passion has raised up so many hatreds and so much anger against me, and has caused such calumnious interpretations of my prose, that, now that I am old, feeble, and desirous of tranquillity of mind, I give my hand that that is true. I give my hand to the younger men, whose blood is rich and whose joints are yet supple. }

Now, in such a *Journal* as I am publishing, the *absolute truth* about the men and the women I have met in the course of my existence is composed of an *agreeable truth*, which one desires, but which is nearly always qualified by a *disagreeable truth*, which one can absolutely do without. Well, in this last volume, I want to try, so far as it is possible,

to give the *agreeable truth* about the people I have snapshotted; the other truth, which will make absolute truth, will come twenty years after my death.

EDMOND DE GONCOURT.

AUTEUIL, December 1891.

This volume of the *Journal des Goncourt* is the last that will appear during my lifetime.*

January 6.—The Minister of Public Instruction † has done me the honour of inviting me to dinner to-day. This is the first time that I have ever been inside a Ministry.

Ministers nowadays seem to live in something of the nature of rooms in furnished hotels, where one feels that the residents have not come to stay for long.

Here I am in the Minister's drawing-room, furnished with awful buhlwork corner-pieces, with sofas and easy chairs covered in velveteen and imitations of the antique tapestries of Beauvais, with engravings in round black frames in the white panelling.

The choice of guests is quite audacious; and

* The volume ends: "End of the Sixth and Last Volume." But it was not the last volume to appear in the lifetime of Edmond de Goncourt.

† M. Bardoux.

the shades of the old and stubborn universalists, who, with their backs to the fireplace, have been, up to these last days, here with their classical guests, must be shaking with indignation in their oak coffins. These are Flaubert, Daudet, and myself, and some painters and musicians, all wearing the ribbon or the rosette of the Legion of Honour, and among whom appear Hébert and Ambroise Thomas, with purple ties and enormous crosses on their chests.

We go into the dining-room. Bardoux takes Girardin on his right and Berthelot on his left; the fabricator of *La France* is considered a more important guest than the discoverer of new elements.

The servants are sad, bored, and formal. They do their work with a certain contempt for the people they serve—a contempt which pleases me, like a reactionary demonstration.

Chance has placed me next to Leconte de Lisle, who, I had been told, was an enemy of literature. He addresses a pleasant word to me, and we talk. The man, with his luminous eyes, the marble polish of his face, and his sarcastic mouth, strongly resembles a prelate of the superior race, a Roman priest. I find him witty, delicately malicious, and perhaps a little too apt to talk about matters concerning his own *trade*, such as versification, prosody, etc.

From time to time I look round at the twenty-five heads arranged around the table. I notice with pleasure the pretty and enthusiastic little head of a young man, who turns out to be Massenet; I look at the equine head of old Bapst; I look at the astonishing ape-like head of Girondin, who chews his food with the melancholy jaw movements of a monkey, masticating nothing.

We are at dessert. They put plates in front of us on which, printed in a sad, sooty colour, are the great writers of Louis XIV., with the dates of their death. I have Massillon on my plate. This table service is very characteristic of the Ministry of Public Instruction; and when I said, "I suppose this service comes from the time of Salvandy"—"Yes, certainly," replies Bardoux; "there was one in the time of M. de Fontanes, but it was broken."

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As I am going away Bardoux affectionately took my arm, and said: "Now, you must have something to ask of me—for somebody. . . . You haven't recommended one friend to me." I went away, touched by this kind offer, thinking to myself how hardened the unfortunate Minister must have been to requests of that sort so that the idea should come to him to suggest it when it had not been made.

September 13.—This morning I received a visit from a very distinguished Russian lady, a Countess Tolstoy, a cousin of the writer of that name, who asked for "the pleasure" of seeing the author of *Renée Mauperin*. My father did not foresee, when he took part in the Russian campaign, and had a shoulder broken at the battle of the Moskovo, and whom a few Cossacks, passing like a whirlwind, forced to finish a bit of horse-flesh on the roof of a hut, while he fired pistol-shots at them—my father did not foresee that his son would, one day, come to be admired by a compatriot of these Cossacks.

September 21.—Flaubert is a very pleasant companion, on condition that he is allowed to do as he pleases, and to allow oneself to catch cold from the windows, which he keeps on opening. He has a gaiety and a child's laugh which are contagious, and he has developed from his contact with daily life a large and affectionate disposition, which is not without charm.

1879

January 8.—Labiche was telling us this evening that at Murger's funeral there was a dispute between Thierry and Maquet as to the order in which they should deliver their grave-side speeches. As Thierry was about to lead off, standing as near as possible to the open grave, Maquet said to him, in the middle of the mourners, who were under the impression that the two orators were merely being polite to each other: "If you persist, I'll fling you into the hole!" Thierry gave up his attempt to speak first.

January 18.—This is the first night of *L'Assommoir*. The public is sympathetic and applause so much that hostilities are suppressed. How time does change the generations! Thinking of my brother, I could not resist saying to Lafontaine, whom I met in a corridor: "This is not the public of *Henriette Maréchal*." Everything is well received and applauded, and only during the last scene

were two or three timid hisses to be heard ; they were all there was of protest in the general enthusiasm.

Coming away from the performance Zola asks us, with his nose shaped like an interrogation mark, and his voice quite mournful, if the play really is a success. During the performance he was in Chabrillat's cabinet, reading some novel or other which he found in his library, and not daring to show himself to the actors at all except on the eve of the performance at the last rehearsal, he said.

We went in a body with the Daudets to Brébant's, where Chabrillat had had a supper got ready for his own and Zola's friends. All sorts of people were there. And we sup quite gaily, always with a sort of preoccupation as to the next day ; while Zola and Chabrillat keep on going out the whole time to see the journalists, who are having supper downstairs, while he is reading fragments, in the midst of gossip, of a long article to be published to-morrow. . . .

January 21.—Bardoux came to dinner to-night at Brébant's. In going home, he calls me to come part of the way with him. . . .

I ask him why he has not decorated Zola. He replies that he has met a formal opposition from the Ministers. I ask him why he has not made Renan

an officer,* and he replies that the Marshal would not sign his nomination. As to the promotion of Victor Hugo, he tells me that it is the poet who has opposed it, although he was promised that, a week after he had been made Commander, he would receive the Grand Cross.

May 18.—This time I should have believed that the nature of my book and my very old age would disarm criticism. But that is not the case; I am condemned all along the line. Barbey d'Aureville, Pontmartin, etc., have declared *Les Frères Zemganno* to be a detestable book.

Not one of these critics seems to have noticed the original thing attempted by me in this book—the attempt made to move the reader by quite different means from the usual love interest, by the substitution of an interest other than the one employed since the beginning of the world.

Well, I shall be attacked and denied up to the day of my death, and probably for several years after. I must admit that this causes me a sort of inward sadness, which translates itself into a pain in the arms and legs—a physical fatigue which needs and demands sleep.

May 28.—Liesse tells me that his copy of *Les*

* Of the Legion of Honour.

Frères Zemganno has a pretty autograph on the last page ; it is signed with the tear of a girl to whom he had lent it.

October 10.—Auguste Comte was an eccentric character, according to a person who knew him.

He used to weigh everything he ate and drank. He had married some woman or other on principle, but used to relieve his love of change by nursing a platonic passion for a certain Mme D——. Well, this Mme D—— died, and every day Auguste Comte used to carry flowers to her grave. This daily visit led to a rather funny scene. His wife, from whom he was separated, and to whom he did not pay her alimony, hid herself one day behind the tombstone, and, imitating the voice of Mme D——, ordered him to be more punctual in his payments. Auguste Comte was as frightened as if all the devils were there, and never returned to the cemetery.

1880

February 1.—Yesterday Turgenev gave a farewell dinner to Zola, to Daudet, and myself, before going to Russia.

He departs for his country, this time, labouring under a curious feeling of uncertainty—such a feeling, he says, as he had once in his early youth, when he was crossing the Baltic, and the boat was completely surrounded in fog, and when he had, as his only companion, a female ape, chained to the bridge.

Then, while we are still alone, he tells me of the life he is about to lead for six weeks, his house, the fowl soup which is the only thing his cook understands, and the talks he has from a little balcony, almost level with the ground, with the peasants and his neighbours.

With delicate observation and with a keen sense of the comic, he gives me an imitation of three generations now living: the old peasants, whose sonorous and empty talk he imitates, consisting of

monosyllables and adverbs which never end ; the sons of these peasants, with their insinuating speech ; and the grandchildren, who are silent, diplomatic, and supremely destructive. When I said that these talks must bore him, he said they did not, and that it is very curious what one can sometimes get out of uneducated people whose brains work incessantly in solitude and meditation.

Zola enters, leaning on his cane, complaining of a rheumatic pain in his thigh. He confesses that when his novel appeared in the *Voltaire*, the style seemed detestable to him, and that, in an access of purism, he set himself to rewrite it completely ; so that after having worked all the morning at a new novel, he spent the whole evening going over and rewriting his serial. And this work has killed him—absolutely killed him.

At last Daudet arrives, with his success of the night before at the Vaudeville written on his face, and we sit down to dinner in the midst of Zola's phrase, which comes back like a refrain : "Decidedly, I think I shall be obliged to change my method ! It seems to me very much used . . . devilishly much used !"

We began cheerfully enough, then Turgenev spoke of a constriction of the heart which happened to him a few nights back, which was accompanied

by a great brown spot on the wall opposite his bed, and which, in a nightmare in which he found himself half awake and half asleep, was Death itself.

Then Zola began to give a list of the morbid phenomena which make him fear he will never live to finish the eleven volumes which remain to him to write. Then Daudet cried out: "A week ago I was in the fullness of life. I could have kissed the very trees. . . . Then, one night, without warning, without pain, I felt something nasty and sticky in my mouth; and after this clot, I bled three times. It was a hæmorrhage of the lung. . . ."

And in turn we all described how we are haunted by death.

February 25.—De Nittis lunches with me, and while eating he tells me the story of his life: it is one of those recitals which are only made once, under certain conditions of happiness, pleasure, or expansion.

He began drawing at the School of Fine Arts at Naples, but he was not allowed to study at the Museum. He found antique pictures very dark, and the atmosphere out of doors quite clear, and light, and cheerful. And so he went into the country on to a property of his family, and he took with

him seven bladders of colour—to use an expression of his brother, all the colours of the rainbow. Then, without master, guide, or advice, he began to paint with love and energy.

At the end of a year he returned to Naples, and exhibited with a certain success; but the opposition he met on the part of his brothers, who were hostile to his vocation, decided him to leave Naples, with the idea of going to Paris. He went to Rome, where he sold a picture for twenty-five francs; got to Florence, where he only admired the painting of the *Primitifs*; made his way to Milan, where he was robbed of five hundred francs out of the six hundred and fifty that remained to him, at an inn, by thieves whom he described as real artists.

With the hundred and fifty francs which made up his whole fortune, he travelled to Paris by third class, which cost a hundred francs. But he did not hesitate; and behold him in France, about which he knows nothing, and where he knows nobody!

He had heard that there was a Neapolitan sculptor who lived on the Place du Montparnasse. When he got off the train, he went there in an omnibus. They threw down his little trunk and his box of colours from the top; the box of colours came open, and the brushes and paints spread themselves in the gutter. He collected them as well as he could,

entered the little hotel they showed him, took an attic up above, and stretched himself out on his bed. It was one of those sunless summer days, and a gloomy light, as if from the bottom of a court, fell on his face through the skylight—a light which made him look as if he were a corpse. In this unknown great city, with no relatives, without a letter of introduction, without even the knowledge of the language, he was suddenly seized by an immense discouragement, in the midst of which he fell asleep.

It was late in the day when he awoke. He set himself to find a place where he could have some food, and discovered a place where he had to pay seven francs for his dinner. He goes back into the street, walks about aimlessly, and, at the end of two hours, finds himself on the Boulevard des Italiens. There in this movement to and fro, in this life of the Parisian crowd under the gas lamps, the sudden depression which the young artist had felt vanished away. He is transported and moved to enthusiasm by the modernity of the spectacle. Then at the end of a few moments, at the corner of the rue de Richelieu, he heard, "Ah! What are you doing here?" two or three times from fellow-countrymen, and this removed all care, all anxiety as to the future.

By asking his way, he found his hotel in the night, which, he says, he would be unable to do to-day.

March 28.—To-day we go, Daudet, Zola, Charpentier, and myself, to have dinner and spend the night at Flaubert's at Croisset.

Maupassant comes to meet us with a carriage at the station at Rouen, and here we are, received by Flaubert in a Calabrian hat. . . .

His property is really very beautiful, and I have only a quite incomplete recollection of it. This immense Seine, on which the masts of ships one does not see pass as if on the stage of a theatre; these great trees, the shapes of which have been twisted by the sea winds; this fenced-in park, this long terrace in broad daylight, this long peripatetic alley, make a true home for a man of letters—the home of Flaubert, which used to be a Benedictine monastery in the eighteenth century.

The dinner is excellent; there is a turbot with cream sauce which is a marvel. We drink a good deal of wine of all sorts, and the evening is spent by our telling one another stories, which make Flaubert burst into laughs which have something of the explosions of laughter of one's childhood.

He refuses to read us his novel ; he cannot, he is knocked up. We go to bed early in bedrooms furnished with family busts.

The next day we rise late, and we stay at home talking. Flaubert declares that walking is a useless waste of energy. Then we lunch and go.

We are at Rouen. It is two o'clock, and we shall not be in Paris until five. So the day is lost. I propose looking up the curiosity shops, to have a nice little dinner, and not to return until the evening. This is agreed to by all except Daudet, who has a family dinner. We have only walked fifty paces when we notice that the shops are shut ; we had forgotten that it was Easter Monday. But we find a half-open shop and a pair of fire-dogs, which cost me 3,000 francs.

Then we get back into the street, where soon we feel ourselves so much out of place that we go into a café, where we play billiards for two and a half hours, taking it in turns to sit on the corners of the billiard table, half dead with fatigue, and to say, " What a furnace ! "

At last it is half-past six, and we go to the Grand Hotel for the nice dinner. " What fish have you ? " " Sir, there isn't a single piece of fish in the town of Rouen to-day ! " And the solemn head waiter recommends veal cutlets.

April 22.—To-day I dine with Zola. He is sad, with a sadness which gives his rôle of host some somnambulist quality. He said, one moment: "Ah! if I had only been better, a little more fit, this winter, I should have gone away to . . . somewhere. I wanted to get away from here."

It is curious to see this distress in the midst of his immense success.

May 8.—"Are you going to M. Flaubert's on Sunday?" Pélagie had just asked me, when she placed on the table a telegram with these two words: "Flaubert dead." For some time I was so affected that I did not know what I was doing and in what town I was. I had felt that a bond, sometimes loosened, but not to be unwound, secretly united us to each other. And I remembered sadly the tear that trembled at the end of his eyelashes when Flaubert kissed me in saying good-bye, at his threshold, a few weeks ago.

May 11.—With Claudius Popelin I went yesterday to Rouen.

We were at Croisset at four o'clock, in that sad house, where I did not have the courage to dine. Mme Commanville talked to us about the dead man, of his last moments, and of his book, which

she thought still lacked ten pages or so. In the middle of the broken conversation, and quite inconsequently, she told us of a visit she had made recently, to induce Flaubert to walk, to a friend of hers who lived on the other side of the Seine, and who had, that day, her new baby placed on the drawing-room table, in a charming little pink cradle—a visit which made Flaubert repeat all the way back: “A little thing like that in the house is the only thing in the world that matters!”

This morning Pouchet took me into a side alley and said to me: “He did not die of a hæmorrhage; he died of an attack of epilepsy. You know he used to have these attacks in his youth. The voyage to the East did to a certain extent cure him: he didn't suffer from . . . any more for sixteen years. Then the bother in connection with his niece's affairs brought it on again, and on Saturday he died of an attack of epilepsy, with all the symptoms, with foam at his mouth. His niece wanted to have a mould taken of his hand, but it was impossible to do it, it was so firmly contracted. Perhaps, if I had been there, by making him breathe for half an hour I might have been able to save him.”

All the same, it gives one a striking impression to go into the dead man's room . . . his handkerchief is on the table with his papers, his pipe with ashes

in it on the mantelpiece, the volume of Corneille, which he had been reading the night before, standing out of the shelves in his library.

The procession starts. We climb up a dusty path to a little church—the church where Mme Bovary went to confession, and where one of the little boys reprimanded by the *curé* Bournisien seems to be about to walk the tight rope on the top of the wall of the old cemetery.

The presence of all these reporters, with little pieces of paper in the hollow of their hands on which they write down the names of people and places which they hear, is an exasperating feature of these funerals.

We come out of the little church, and we get to the monumental cemetery of Rouen, under the sun, by an endless road. The careless crowd, which finds the funeral a long affair, begins to welcome the idea of a little fête. We hear them discussing food, and lips murmur the names of streets of shame, with movements of the eyes which resemble those of lovelorn tom-cats. . . . We reach the cemetery, a cemetery full of hawthorn, and standing over the town, which, wrapped in a violet cloud, looks like a town of slate.

When the holy water has been thrown on the

coffin, the whole thirsty crowd goes down towards the town with festive faces.

Daudet, Zola, and I return, refusing to mingle in the revelry which is being prepared for the evening, and on the way back we speak piously of the dead man.

January 1.—At my age, waking up on New Year's Day is anxious work. I ask myself, "Will I live to the end?"

January 29.—It is the first night of *Nana*. The public at the *Ambigu* is kindly, but disposed to make merry at the expense of the play. After the third act, I pay a visit to Mme Zola, in whose eyes there are tears, which I do not notice at first in the darkness of the box; and when I express the opinion that the audience is not so bad, she almost hisses at me: "De Goncourt, you think this a good audience—you! Well, you are easily pleased!" It would indeed be interesting to write a study of the state of nerves of an author and his family during a first performance.

There is a very fine effect in the last act—that bed in the room at the Grand Hotel, surrounded by the dance music of a ball, and from which issues, from a body one does not see, in the

solitude of the room, the agonizing demand for
“ Water ! ”

The curtain falls amidst applause.

February 13.—A curious coincidence. In my novel *La Faustin* I had constructed a stockbroker whom I had named Jacqmin—a name taken from a sale catalogue of the eighteenth century, the name of a jeweller of Louis XV. To-day M. Poussin, a kindly stockbroker whom I invited to hear me read this part in case there were any blunders such as a man as ignorant of the matters of the Exchange as myself might well commit, said to me when I had finished,—

“ And you give him his real name ! ”

“ How ? ”

“ But it isn't only his name . . . he's there all over. . . . His brutality, his swagger in business, his ' bull ' temperament. . . . ”

It appeared that I had actually drawn a true portrait, and over his very name, of a broker who died some eighteen months ago.

March 12.—Who will deliver me from the dilet-tanti of art and literature, who buy pictures at reduced rates by the side of the Hôtel Drouot, and who steal the books of which they speak? Their

pretentious stupidity is more irritating than the good-natured ignorance of other people.

For some time I have been exposed to the compliments of one of these individuals. When he says something nice to me, I do not know why I do it, but I reply to him in a voice raised for a dispute.

I must say, however, that his compliments are in a taste rather like this: "Previously, I did not know you, I did not read you, I only met people who disliked your novels. . . . Now all that is changed: now I read you, I read you with great pleasure, and consider that you have really very much talent. But there, I am told that you have also published some quite interesting historical works. . . . I did not believe that was the case when I began to read your novels. . . . I found they were so good that they made me mistrust your other books. . . . I said to myself: They are too romantic to be historians. . . ."

April 9.—To-day, after the meeting of a committee to erect a monument to Flaubert, I went to have dinner, with Turgenev and Maupassant, to an old friend of Flaubert, the beautiful Mme Brainne.

After dinner we talked about love, and the curious taste of women in love.

On this subject Turgenev told us this story:

There was in Russia a charming woman, a woman whose colour, under her light dust-coloured waving hair, was like *café au lait*, in which the coffee grains which had not been dissolved made a heap of little beauty spots. This woman had been much courted by the most celebrated and the most intelligent men. And one day Turgenev asked her why, among all her admirers, she had made such an inexplicable choice. And the woman answered: "Yes, perhaps it's true . . . but you've never heard him say: 'You say . . . it isn't possible!'"

Litré, in answer to a request from Renan for some historical information, sent him a letter in which he begged him to leave him alone, in this fine and desolate phrase: "I have the right to pass for dead!"

May 31.—Oh, the difficulties of composition nowadays! I have to work for twelve hours to have three good hours. First, a lazy morning occupied by cigarettes, urgent letters, correction of proofs, and at the end of that I return to my plot which I have had waiting on the table. After lunch and a long smoke comes paper covered with a stupid writing—work which does not come to a head—irritation with myself, and cowardly wishes to throw up the whole thing.

At last, towards four o'clock, I have got into the mood. I have the ideas and the images of my characters, and I write straight on end until seven o'clock. But that is only if I do not go out, and do not have my mind preoccupied by the idea of changing my clothes and getting ready.

Then I go on until eleven o'clock, going over my work, revising, correcting, and smoking an infinite number of cigarettes.

June 20.—Daudet and family, Charpentier and family, and I, all go to spend the day with Zola at Médan.

Zola comes to meet us at the station at Poissy. He is very gay, very pleased with himself, and as soon as we have arranged ourselves in the carriage he shouts: "I have written twelve pages of my novel . . . twelve pages, by Jove! . . . It will be one of the most complicated I have yet written . . . there will be seventy characters." While saying this he waves about an awful little stereotyped volume, which turns out to be a *Paul et Virginie*, which he had taken to read in the carriage.

His property at the present time must be worth 200,000 francs to the author, and its original price was, I should say, 7,000 francs. His study is large and high, and over the fireplace one reads, "Nulla

diés sine linea." There is an organ in the corner, from which the naturalist author draws harmonies at the end of the day.

We lunch merrily, and after lunch we go on the island, where he owns fifty acres, and where he has had a chalet built, on which the painters are still working, which contains a large room all in fir-wood, with a huge faience stove of beautiful simplicity and in fine taste.

June 26.—When one gets old, something slips into the eyes which takes away something of the real life from the men and women one sees, and to-day I seemed to see along my road, in the sunlight, people, not as they really were, but as men and women appear to be through lace curtains at a window.

June 27.—Dinner at the Charpentiers'. Alphonse Daudet is such a captivating talker, such a clever mimic in the droll stories he relates, that as I rise to ask if it is yet eleven o'clock, I hear it strike one a.m.

October 13.—The manager of the *Voltaire* comes to see me, telling me that he is going to cover Paris with posters, and the day the first instalment of *La Faustin* appears, he will give away a hundred

thousand chromolithographs of the lady in the streets of Paris.

Then he laments that the police do not allow sandwichmen, which are one of the principal methods of advertising in London. But he has some great scheme in his head. And on the staircase, unable to keep his idea a secret, he suddenly turns back, and leaning on the banisters, says: "Well, here's my idea . . . there is a lot of timber on the boulevards . . . the question is to get it, and to print on it: '*La Faustin*, on November 1st, in the *Voltaire!*' and to set it on fire. The police will certainly intervene and have it removed, but the fire will last one whole day."

I listened to this scheme with a little shame, but, I must admit, not really very much revolted by this advertisement *à la* Barnum.

October 31.—Posters of all colours and all sizes cover the walls of Paris, and everywhere display, in colossal letters "*La Faustin*." At the railway station there is a painted advertisement measuring 275 metres in length, by 40 metres in height.* This morning 120,000 copies of the *Voltaire* were printed and given away. This morning, too, a coloured picture representing a scene from the novel was

* That is, about 940 by 124 feet.

given away on the boulevards, to the extent of 10,000 copies, the distribution of which is to go on for a week.

November 3.—Black sadness. Deep discouragement. I saw Laffite at the *Voltaire*. In spite of his politeness I feel that he has not gained the success for which he had hoped, and is almost ashamed at the audacities of my book. In the evening, during the few minutes I spend at the Odéon with the Daudets, Rousseil, from the stage, blackguards my literature in verse.

1882

January 17.—*La Faustin* came out in book form to-day.

January 19.—*La Faustin* is having a splendid show everywhere. Suddenly, in the midst of my contemplation, I hear the boulevard re-echo with "The dismissal of Gambetta." Am I condemned to remain, for the whole of my life, the man who published his first book on the day of the Coup d'État?

March 9.—Dinner at Zola's. A gourmet's dinner, flavoured by an original conversation on matters pertaining to food and to the imagination of the stomach, at the end of which Turgenev undertakes to provide us with Russian snipe, the finest game-bird in the world.

From the food the conversation passes on to wines, and Turgenev, with that pretty art of description, with the artistic little touches which he alone of

us all possesses, tells us about a draught of an extraordinary Rhenish wine drunk in a certain German inn.

First, the introduction into a room at the back of the hotel, putting distance between himself and the noise of the street and the rolling of carriages; then the grave entrance of the old innkeeper coming to be present, as a serious witness of the operation, at the same time as the arrival of the innkeeper's daughter, a true Gretchen, with her hands an honest red, and marked with little white freckles, like the hands of every German school-teacher . . . and the religious uncorking of the bottle, spreading an odour of violet through the room; then, finally, the scene in all its details, described with the minute observation of a poet.

This conversation and the succulent food are from time to time interrupted by moans and complaints on our "beastly trade," on the little happiness which good luck brings us, on the profound indifference which overcomes us for our successes, and on the annoyances which the least things opposed to our life can cause us.

March 14.—"Skobeleff* is a savage . . ." says

* A Russian General, best known for his prowess in the Russo-Turkish War, who died mysteriously later on in 1882.

Gambetta. For the old literary dinner at Magny's has become quite a political dinner, and a dinner which Ministers, whom one hardly ever sees, honour with their presence when they are out of office.

Then Gambetta has developed eloquently, very eloquently indeed, the idea which Skobelev has of throwing into Germany all the warrior races of Asia, of crushing Germany by weight of numbers, and by the gallop of wandering hordes, always ready to make war for the sake of being able to loot.

Then the conversation passes from Russia to Italy, and Gambetta said, very prophetically, in my opinion, that the Papacy alone can still bring the House of Savoy into power, but that the day the Pope leaves Rome, it is more than probable that the monarchy will be replaced by the Republic.

Then the dictator returns to France, and proclaims that, although we are a rebellious nation, we demand to be governed, and suddenly says : " Do you know that the word *anarchy* is beginning to be used ? "

Gambetta continues : " Still the stars have been friendly to us . . . First, a man of merit (Thiers) comes to us, and brings us his authority to start our show . . . then the misfortunes of the nation force the old and the new republicans to behave to each other . . . and lastly the three Pretenders come and destroy one another."

There he stops, thoughtful, having put into his last words something like a veiled apprehension of the future, as if he feared that, after all, the Republic had not been once and for all established.

April 11.—Dinner at Daudet's, then the reading of the play *Les Rois en Exil*, adapted by Delair from the novel, under the wing of Coquelin *aîné*.

At dinner the guests are Coquelin, the Charcots, and Gambetta, who comes in late, as usual, and whose lateness causes us to cut the end of the meal on account of the impatience of those present. Coquelin is quite amusing on account of his childish admiration for the work he has hatched: "You will see how it is done . . . it's a real play!" And he begins to read the thing as if he had a piece of sugar in his mouth.

Gambetta has wedged himself into a corner between two doors and hears the whole play standing, looking like a caryatid. He is a good sort, and really I must acknowledge that among politicians he is the only man who is gifted with a social charm, a charm which at times leaves no trace of his personal mediocrity.

April 25.—To-day, at the sale of Mme de Balzac's property, I carried the bidding for the manuscript

of *Eugénie Grandet* up to 1,100 francs. At one moment I thought it was mine; nobody else had offered for it for five minutes.

December 23.—"Seymour Haden and Whistler aren't bad . . . they are pretty, amateurish etchers," Legros said to me.

That is rather a stiff opinion to be pronounced by a fellow-worker!

1883

January 1.—In the afternoon Daudet, who came with his wife and children to wish me a Happy New Year, told me that Gambetta is dead.

January 7.—I have a poor devil of a distant cousin who lives on 1,900 francs, which he earns in a Government office. When I asked him to-day where he lives, he said, “21 rue de Visconti . . . I live in Racine’s room—a room where it is very cold, and where there is so little light that it is a great trouble to shave myself.” Racine’s room costs 300 francs per year.

January 9.—Dinner of the staff of *Le Temps*. This evening’s conversation is entirely devoted to Gambetta. We talked about his brain, which is in the possession of so-and-so, of his arm, which somebody else has, and of some fraction or other of his body which is in the hands of a third. The contemporary manner in which a celebrated corpse is dispersed is horrible.

Spuller is overcome : “ He was as great as he was good, for he was the best of men ! ” He adds, “ It is not known generally, but what he really loved was science and philosophy. . . . ” Then followed a discussion on his brain, which weighs distinctly less than that of Morny. Everybody is humiliated, very much humiliated by this, and proclaims that mere weight is nothing, and that the beauty of the convolutions is everything, and that Gambetta has the most beautiful convolutions in existence.

January 25.—An immense room, with white panelling, green curtains, and a chandelier of a provincial café in the middle, and through a crevice in the closed curtains a thin stream of sunlight falls in quite a Rembrandt-like fashion on the heads of a row of pale men, of yellowish men, lighting up a corner of a terrible Alpine picture, which seems to be painted with decomposed colours. Such is the extraordinarily bourgeois room in which the friends and acquaintances of Doré have met to take him to the cemetery.

This death has surprised me, although, the last time I saw him, Doré complained of a continual stifling.

February 16.—This evening, in the midst of empty verbiage, a politician said that the only dining-

rooms in Paris where foreign statesmen ate, and so gave their hosts extraordinary power, were the dining-rooms of Girardin and Gambetta.

He attributed to Gambetta's lunches, invitations to which snapped up every man of mark who stayed at Paris hotels, his European popularity, a popularity which was greater beyond the frontiers than that of any other Frenchman, and he declared that it was by these lunches that he had entered into intimate relations with members of the English, Italian, Hungarian, and Greek Parliaments.

February 20.—This evening, after dinner, Zola began to speak of death, the constant thought of which is still more with him since the death of his mother.

After a silence, he adds that her death has made a hole in the nihilism of his religious convictions, so terrible does the thought of an eternal separation appear to him. And he says that he thinks this haunting fear of death, and perhaps a development of the philosophic ideas induced by the decease of a loved one, might be introduced into a novel, to which he would give some such title as "Grief."

He is trying to invent this novel now, while walking about the streets of Paris, but without

having found any plot for it yet, for, he says, he needs a plot ; he is not at all an analytical writer.

April 10.—Zola's nose is quite peculiar ; it is a nose which interrogates, approves, condemns ; a nose which is gay or sad ; a nose which is inhabited by its master's physiognomy ; a real hunting dog's nose, which impressions, sensations, and desires divide at the end into two little lobes which seem to twitch at moments. To-day, he does not twitch the end of his nose and repeats in a tone of, " Brother, we must die," his opinion as to the sale of our future books : " Large sales . . . our large sales are over ! "

The dinner ends up with a discussion on poor Turgenev, whom Charcot declares to be lost. We talk about this original tale-teller ; of his novels, which seem to begin in a sort of fog, and at first promise nothing very interesting, and which become, later on, so arresting, so captivating. They are beautiful and delicate things, passing slowly from shadow to light, with a gradual and successive development of their most minute details.

April 21.—The English poet, Oscar Wilde, told me this evening that the only Englishman who has read Balzac at the present day is Swinburne.

Our old Turgenev is a true man of letters. A

growth has just been removed from his stomach; and he said to Daudet, who went to see him one of these days: "During the operation I thought of our dinners, and I struggled to find the words with which I could give you the exact impression of the steel cutting up my skin and entering my flesh . . . like a knife cutting up a banana."

May 5.—Dinner with the poet Oscar Wilde.

This poet, among other unlikely stories, gave us an amusing picture of a town in Texas, with its population of convicts, its revolver-bred morality, its places of amusement, where one can read on a placard: "Please don't shoot the pianist; he is doing his best." He told us about the theatre hall, which, as the largest hall in the district, serves for assizes; and where people are hanged on the stage after the performance; and where he saw, he says, a man who was being hanged catch hold of the scenery uprights, and on whom the spectators shot from their seats.

In this country, it would also appear that, for the criminal parts in plays, theatre managers look out for real criminals; and when it came to acting *Macbeth*, the management made proposals to engage a woman-poisoner at the moment that she was leaving prison, and so one saw bills as follows: "*The*

part will be filled by Mrs. X— (ten years' hard labour)."

May 29 (Sunday).—Daudet had told me, on leaving me on Thursday, that he would write to me the next day. I had received nothing, and I believed the affair with Delpit* had been arranged, when I received this letter last night :—

“MY DEAR GONCOURT,—I am writing to you from the Gare de l'Ouest; the swords are ready; the doctor is coming. We are going to Le Vésinet.”

And he tells me, “if an accident should happen,” to take his dear wife a little note contained in his letter, which he concludes with this tender phrase :—

“After her husband, her children, and her parents, you are the person she loves best.”

This letter moves me. I sleep badly. I am awakened in the morning by this telegram :—

“I am back from Le Vésinet. I have stuck my sword into Delpit.”

I immediately jump out of bed and rush off to kiss him. Here he is, while friends keep on coming into his room to shake his hand and going away, telling me all about his duel, describing, with that pretty southern exaggeration, the queer person

* Delpit had written an article opposing Daudet's nomination to the Academy, and making certain insinuations. Daudet thereupon had challenged him to a duel.

who supplied both the swords and the garden of his country house, the solemn departure for Le Vésinet, and the entrance into the borrowed garden between two green trees, which he prettily compares with the entrance to a cemetery, and the putting on of the formidable spectacles, which he asks to be taken off as soon as he is wounded.

July 12.—The Daudets and their children come to lunch with me. I read them a few notes from my memoirs; they seemed sincerely astonished at the life in these pages speaking from the dead past.

September 7.—To-day the religious ceremony around Turgenev's coffin took place, which made a whole crowd of gigantic persons, with flattened features and long white beards, emerge from the houses of Paris—an entire little Russia, whose existence in the capital one would never have suspected.

There are also many Russian, German, and English women, pious and faithful readers, coming to pay homage to the great and delicate novelist.

December 5.—Gladstone, who was dining at Girardin's, was understood to say that the Conservative party of France was the stupidest of all the Conservative parties in the world.

December.—My real home, during the last months of the year, has been the dining-room and the little study of Daudet. There I find, in the husband, a man who can understand my thought promptly and with sympathy; in the wife, a tender respect for the old writer; in both, a calm, continued friendship with no ups and downs of affection.

1884

February 5.—To-day, at the dinner at Brébant's, we were talking about the crushing out of the intelligence of the child and the youth by the enormous number of things taught ; somebody said that an experiment was being carried out on the present generation whose future results could hardly be foreseen. And in the middle of the discussion some one develops the ironic idea that universal and general instruction may well deprive future society of the educated man and settle the educated woman upon it—not a reassuring outlook for the husbands of the future.

February 10.—The author of the masterpiece entitled *Le Mariage de Loti*, M. Viaud, in mufti, is a little man, thin and slender, with deep eyes, a sensual nose, and a voice with the tones of a dying man.

He is taciturn, as if he were horribly timid ; his words have to be forced from him. One moment he

spoke of a sailor falling into the sea during a storm, and the absolution given by the priest from the bridge to the unfortunate man abandoned to the waves, as the most ordinary thing, and in very few words.

Daudet asked him if he came of a family of sailors, and he replied with the utmost simplicity, "Yes, I had an uncle who was eaten on the raft of the *Méduse*."

February 23.—Exhibition of this century's art. I have eyes which see not only the beautiful things of the eighteenth century, but those of the present as much as of the past. And I consider that the paintings of Millet are marvellous and unprecedented. Yes! but at the same time I maintain that the most admired of all Meissonier's sketches, great draughtsman as he undeniably is, cannot be compared to a picture by Gabriel de Saint-Aubin, the vignette, *L'Intérêt Personnel*, for example, which I was looking at this morning at home. Here is no question of niceness, but of science, of technique. And the poor little lead mines of M. Ingres are very feeble things by the side of the work of La Tour, Chardin, and Raynal, which are in the end room. Bracquemond, whom I meet at the exhibition, and before whom I cannot restrain myself, tells me that

La Tour's pictures are "rocks." Well, I prefer those rocks to little patterns worked out with such a fine, such a very fine little pencil.

March 22.—The Ribot banquet took place this evening. In spite of my dislike for banquets, Fourcaud almost drags me there by force. A hundred and forty-four diners were in the room. Above the entrance an immense palette is hung up, which is supposed to be the palette of the head cook. Among painters, envy is tempered by a certain boyishness, by a childhood which lasts through life, and makes this envy less black, less bitter, than amongst literary men. After the dinner there is an avalanche of speeches, which ends up with a very good, if peevish, speech by Fourcaud, delivered with the anger of a timid man.

This banquet, against the *Institut*, given in honour of Ribot, turns out to be also given to a certain extent on my account, and in the corners where I hide myself, young men, whose names I vaguely know, keep on being introduced to me, and seem much inclined to greet "the great independent writer" in old Goncourt.

April 10.—I met Mistral* this evening at Daudet's. He has a fine forehead, the limpid eyes of a

* 1830-1914. Provençal poet.

child, and something good, smiling, calm, caused by a life in the open air of the south, with good wine, and the easy production of songs and troubadour poetry.

April 14.—All the men with whom my career or my tastes have brought me into relation, go out of my life, one after the other, leaving behind invitations to their funeral, as if to say to me, “ We’ll see you again soon.” Yesterday it was the expert Vignières ; to-day it is the publisher Dentu.

April 29.—At dinner, Mistral described Daudet very nicely as the man of disillusion and of illusion, of a senile scepticism and of a juvenile credulity.

Then he told us about his method of working, of that easy labour of the southern poet which consists in the manufacture of a few verses at twilight, when nature is going to sleep : the morning, in the fields, according to him . . . being too full of the noisy awakening of life.

June 27.—This evening, a foreign General was saying that, before 1866, Bismarck was talking to him about his plans, and made a very disrespectful allusion to his master, the King, saying : “ I’ll take the old hack up to the ditch, and he’ll jolly well have to jump ! ”

[*De Nittis also died in the course of this year.*]

1885

January 26.—What diplomatists these Jewish merchants would make ! To-day, one of them, putting aside his Jewish reserve, and in a confidential mood, told me the conditions under which to do business advantageously. First, it is of the greatest importance to have one's own face in the shadow, and that of the other man in the light, so that his arm-chair is arranged in such a manner that by turning slightly to the right, when somebody enters the office, he turns his back to the window. But that is done by all shrewd office chiefs. Where my man showed himself quite superior was when he spoke of the utility of making business callers wait a long time, because while a man is waiting he softens down, because the arguments which he has all prepared while he is going upstairs, in support of his case, lose their complete conviction during his nervous impatience, because he himself comes to suspect his own bluff, and that the seller who has waited for three-quarters of an hour is quite willing to

make a concession he would never have made if he had been received at once.

February 12.—There is a great deal in the papers about the revival of *Henriette Maréchal*. We shall see what effect this will have on the number of performances.

March 3.—When I woke up, I read an article in *L'Événement*, which, under an appearance of politeness and even of reverence, reveals a blind hostility. Then I read an article in the *Gaulois*, which prints in the forefront of the paper an appeal to Republicans to hiss our play again to-night. . . .

I feel the need of spending the hours before the performance with people who like me. . . . “Would you give me a plate of soup?” I remark, entering the Daudet household.

And there I am in the delightful comfort and warmth of a house that is dear to me, and we dine at the end of the table, which is already laid for the supper to be given in honour of the revival of *Henriette Maréchal*.

I let the Daudets go into the Odéon all alone. I wander round the brightly illuminated building, without daring to go in; waiting for the end of the first act, which I dread; thinking of the Princess,

who is in the front of the house; and imagining myself insulted and abused in the bursts of noise which shake the closed doors and windows of the theatre at times. At last I can restrain myself no longer; I walk round the Odéon ten times, and decide to walk in through the stage door and go upstairs. I ask Émile,—

“ Is it a good house ? ”

“ Excellent.”

The reply only half reassures me, and I go behind the scenes still quivering; there I hear the broken sounds of applause, which seem at the moment to be hisses. But this impression only lasts for a moment. It is to real applause, to frantic applause, that the curtain falls after the first act.

And the play goes splendidly through the other acts, with just the least bit of coldness during the second act, which had been the success of the final rehearsal, but with an enthusiastic ovation at the end of the third.

The Princess asks for me; but, as I refuse to go into the front of the theatre, she comes with her friends to find me in the green room, and, a trifle intoxicated by the applause, says: “ It’s superb; it’s superb . . . may I kiss you ? ”

And after kissing all round we move on to Daudet’s, where they put me at the head of the table.

And we have supper in the midst of a delightful gaiety, and in the hope that my success will throw the doors of the theatre open to the realist drama.

When I reach home at four in the morning, Pélagie, who is getting up again, confirms the success of the evening, saying that at one moment she and her daughter were afraid that the third gallery, full of students and young people, was going to fall on their heads on account of the delirious stamping.*

April 6.—I must confess I only like modern writers. When I take my literary education out for an airing, I find Balzac a greater genius than Shakespeare.

April 23.—Mme Commanville consulted me last year on the subject of the publication of Flaubert's letters, and asked me whom she should ask to write the introduction. I told her that she had no need to go and look for a biographer for her uncle when she herself had been brought up by him, and had lived all her life, as it were, at his side. To-day she has just read me her notice, and her biography of Flaubert is really quite charming in its intimacy—with its details about the in-

* The play had a run of thirty-eight performances.

fluence of an old nurse, of Mignet's story-telling; with the rather sinister interior of the hospital-like dwelling at Rouen, and the life at Croisset; with those evenings spent in the summer-house at the bottom of the garden, which used to end up by Flaubert saying: "Now I've got to go back to Bovary!" a sentence which made the child imagine that her uncle was referring to some place where he was to spend the night.

The end of the task is slightly too short. I feel the weariness of a writer who is not yet used to writing, and who has had enough of it at the end of a certain number of pages. I persuaded her to rewrite the conclusion, and to dilute it a little, especially the part dealing with those unhappy years in which Flaubert's life came to be once more completely in touch with her own.

The history which Daudet is writing of his books makes me think that some day there will be, for those who love our Memoir, a pretty and revealing history of our novels—from their original idea to the publication of the book—to be got out of this Journal by extracting all that refers to the writing and to the composition of each of our books.

May 2.—We were talking about superstitions this evening. Zola is very curious; he speaks of these

things in a low tone of voice, mysteriously, as if he were afraid of some terrible ear which was listening in the shadow of the room. He no longer believes in the virtue of the number 3; it is number 7 which brings him luck at the moment. And he gives us to understand that, in the evening at Médan, he shuts his windows with certain hermetic combinations.

May 5.—First performance of *L'Arlésienne*. The public is chilly, almost frozen. Mme Daudet's fan waves with something of the angry beating of wings of birds that fight. The audiencé persists in treating the play coldly, to the point of sneering, and applauds the music wildly. Suddenly Mme Daudet, who is leaning in a woe-begone manner against the wall of her box, bursts out with violence, "I'm going to bed; I can't stand being here!" But, thank goodness, now that we have come to the third act, the play goes better, and both its own quality and the acting of Tissandier evoke applause during the last scenes.

May 12.—Dinner at the Daudet's with Barbey d'Aurevilly, whom I meet for the first time in private. He is dressed in a long riding-coat, which makes his hips look as if he were wearing a crinoline; and

he wears white woollen trousers, which look like soft flannel under-garments. In this ridiculous costume is a man of excellent behaviour, with the mincing voice of a man who is used to speaking to women, and whose lack of teeth recalls at times the guttural intonation, but in a minor key, of Frédéric Lemaître.

He eats extremely little, drinks a good deal of wine; and when we come to the coffee, he holds his half-emptied cup out to Daudet, who has a decanter of cognac in his hand, and says: "You might fill up my cup; fill it as if it were the cup of a Low-Breton priest!"

May 17.—Berendsen has revealed to Huysmans the sort of literary adoration which they have for me in Denmark, in Bothnia, and the other countries around the Baltic—countries where every man who has literary tastes, and who respects himself, would not go to bed—this is what Berendsen says—without reading a page of *La Faustin* or of *Chérie*.

May 22.—The French are a strange people. They want no more God, no more religion, and they unsanctify Christ on the one hand, while they deify Hugo and proclaim a Hugo-worship on the other.*

* Victor Hugo died this day.

June 1.—This beanfeast * disgusts me, and I am grateful to my ill-health for disabling me from mixing with it. It seems to me that the Parisian population, cut off from the fêtes that it loves by the Republic, has replaced the "procession of the fat ox" by Hugo's obsequies.

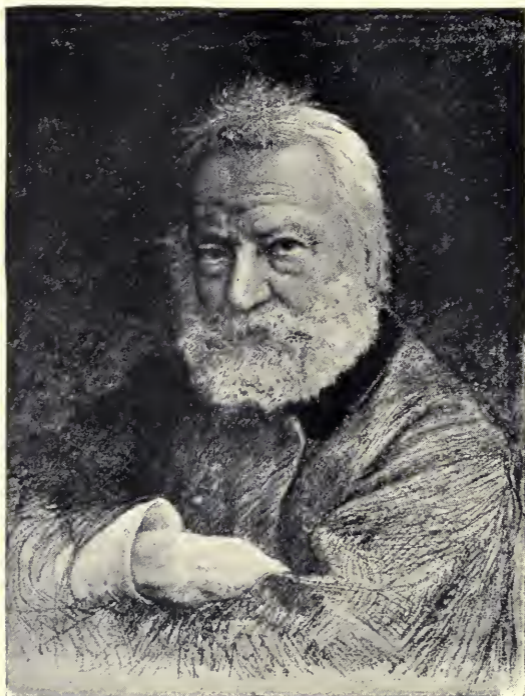
June 2.—Dinner at Brébant's. Somebody states that the Government has helped the funeral celebrations as much as possible, in order to diminish, if not to wipe out, from the popular memory the recollection of Gambetta's burial.

Renan sets himself to immolate Lamartine to the profit of Hugo, talking about his abstraction in his own ideas, the rigidity of his principles, and his clumsy behaviour, which made his old age gloomy and solitary, while Hugo's conduct resulted in such a funeral as we have seen.

July 2.—Barbey d'Aureville, in a strange costume, as usual, and with the hard colouring of his beard and hair, which gives the appearance of a wax figure of Curtius, tells us about his youth.

He tells us of the severe Jansenist appearance of his father's house, in which he began to be much bored when he was seventeen years of age. His father was an out-and-out Legitimist, and did

* Hugo's funeral.



Victor Hugo

not allow him to serve Louis-Philippe. He then wanted to study law, to which his father agreed, but on the condition that it should not be in Paris, because too many things could be done there. So he read law in Caen, where he fell in love, and his father then insisteded that he should choose between him and the woman. He did not hesitate for a moment in making his choice.

So at seventeen years of age he started off on life on his own. His father did not send him a penny. And it was not easy to earn a living in those days, when so little was paid, and when, he said with pride, he "never consented to suppress a sentence in an article—which the newspaper editors knew, and made use of to print only two articles out of four which had been agreed upon."

He had to run into debt . . . with creditors who, he says, were themselves very wealthy. He passed some hard years, during which he did not receive a line from his mother, who so adored his father that, in the fear of opposing him, she did not give her son all this long time a sign of life or of maternal tenderness. Reconciliation took place only after the publication of his *Ensorcelée*, that Chouan novel in which his father's principles were upheld, and which decided his father to write to him, "Come back, sir."

I need not say that, excepting his fine literary pride, there is perhaps as little convention in this story as in his clothes.

September 22.—I depart for Avignon, where I am to be met and taken to Daudet, who is staying with Parrocel.

September 23.—I awake in the laughing gaiety of the sunshine of the south, where squat trees, that look as if they had been overcome by the wind, and houses built of coarse stones and which have the appearance of rocks, pass under my eyes.

I had a walk at sunset along little paths, between hedges of reeds which shook their lances at the rose-coloured sky; along by these tall screens of dark green cypresses put up against the mistral; with here and there, in this land which is not closed in by walls, orange-coloured buildings, in the midst of pale olive trees, which seem at this hour to be draped in violet vapour.

September 24.—A gallery on the ground floor, with white walls striped with blue, and on the wide surface of which a vague *Assumption* has been painted in Lesueur's colours by the master of the house.

In here a little man with a Socratic brow, with

blood-red ears, with a sensual nose on one of the nostrils of which a wart is dancing, recites us his poems in the musical language of the district. It is Aubanel, who is reading his *La Sereno* and *Li Fabre* to us.

He is a Provençal, who is not, like Mistral, a continuer of pure Troubadourism, but a poet in whom there is an infiltration of modernity, and who is at times something of a southern Heinrich Heine.

This afternoon, while we were coming back along the narrow ridges, like donkeys' backs, across the partly flooded fields, Aubanel, in the midst of the interruptions due to the difficulty of transit, talked to me about his first book, *La Miougrano*.

This book is the story of a boy's love for a girl, whom he never told of his little passion, and who suddenly one day told him that she was going into a convent. This announcement gave the author, who has analyzed himself in the book, such pain, that at first he did not dare to approach a window for fear of being tempted to throw himself out. He never tried to communicate with her. But she went on living, and a few years ago, from her convent in Constantinople, she sent him this message by a nephew: "Sister So-and-so wishes you good-day."

September 26.—An excursion to Baux. An eternal chain of rocks with strange jags, and at the end of this chain a town, the houses of which are partly hollowed out of the rock—a town where one cannot tell where the stone ends and the building begins, and an abandoned town, which fire and plague seem to have visited at the same time.

Here is a Roman temple, there a window with a Renaissance frame; farther on, the pediment of a Protestant church; still farther on, the cistern of a fourteenth-century castle; and at the top of a staircase of which not a single step remains is a little door almost covered by two trees, which have grown up from seeds carried by the wind on to the stone at the threshold. In walking here you are taken, seized, carried away from your own time by the mediæval past, as the Roman past carries you away when you walk along the streets of Pompeii, and in going along the wheel-tracks of its carts.

Everywhere are abandoned ruins, and as specimens of the living life in all this dead stonework are a few dried-up old men, a few yellow children, some thin cats—a poor and strange creation of bandy-legged men and beasts.

After dinner in the poor local inn, Mistral recites his poem, *La Chatouille*, to us. He strikes me as a

fine, solid peasant who has taken off his blouse. His chin and neck have something of the deformation which comes to singers at café concerts.

Daudet, who has treated himself kindly to local wine, on top of a great deal of sausage, and whose hat Mistral has adorned with a sprig of rue, looks, in our brake, like a slightly gay, young, and handsome Catalan, his shoulders covered over, as they are, with a variegated travelling rug.

October 2.—Visit to the Papal Palace at night-fall. We rapidly walk through the mysterious and confusing immensity of the Palace, through shadows in which a little of the yellow after-glow of the sun still lingers.

There are courtyards as deep as wells, corridors that never end, staircases with innumerable stairs; then, suddenly, ingenious and barbaric paintings, imperfectly visible in a corner of the ceiling; then, again suddenly, a hole of light; a window, with its seat of stone underneath, opening up above a town of rose-coloured steeples under a mauve sky; and then the memory of the massacre, the sanguinary slaughter of 1793, comes to the confusion of your thoughts amid these walls.

And the ecclesiastical past mingles with the military present. The sounds of bugle-calls rise

from the courtyards like the noise of the sea; with these soldier-phantoms, in their gray setting, descending the stairs, or lying on camp-beds in poses like those of the Etruscans on their stone tombs. And all the time, through the ever-growing darkness, there is a rapid and breathless walk across halls cut down to half their height, across disfigured blocks of building, across unfinished fragments that I cannot understand, across stonework of an enigmatic construction, across a chaos of rooms and apartments, across narrow passages which seem to close up at their ends in the shadow as in a dream; yes, a dream—that is certainly the word to describe this walk in the twilight—and a dream which has just a trace of a nightmare.

October 4.—Arles. Les Arènes, a little Colosseum where the blackness of a modern crowd goes so well with the orange and the gray of the worn stonework; and here and there the gentle lightness of an Arlesienne in her dress, which is a marvel of arrangement and of harmony.

Look at these girls of Arles, with tea-rose complexions; with that head-dress made out of a black ribbon around a base of tulle the size of a flower, and placed on the very top of the head over the hair in bands, which waves easily and lightly, as

if it would at any moment come undone over the temples.

October 8.—This south, with its houses with closed shutters, its rooms which are always dark to keep away the flies, its inexplicably cloisteral interiors, and its interminable cypresses along the roads is sad, and often enough brings ideas of death. And when the sun is not shining, and in its absence the mistral irritates your nerves, oh, then . . . !

November 24.—Paris. Young men need that the advice whispered to Daudet be repeated to them. It was at the beginning of his career, and he has remembered it ever since. He had just recited a little poem in a drawing-room, and he had been covered with applause. An old gentleman with a German accent approached him, and said : “ Young man, you will have success, but beware of drawing-rooms ! ”

November 25.—Jewish society women, it must be acknowledged, are at the present moment great readers, and they alone read—and they dare to say so—the books branded by the Académie and the correct classical people. They read Huysmans and the young writers.

December 11.—The battle of Inkermann supplied General Schmitz with this anecdote.

In the evening he was with Canrobert, Lord Raglan, and an English general whose name I have forgotten—a most elegant general, who spoke French pretty badly, with an incredible Directoire accent, and who drew the attention of Canrobert to the movements of the Russian army in the distance, at nightfall, and asked: “Do you not think, General, that this is just the moment to pursue the Russians? . . . I believe we could wipe them out.” Whereupon Canrobert turned to Lord Raglan, and said: “Don’t you think so, my lord?” And Lord Raglan replied: “Perhaps, perhaps; but it would be more prudent to wait till to-morrow morning.”

By the next day the Russian army had carried out its retreat, and avoided extermination. And Canrobert said quite frankly before the staff-officers of both armies: “Only one man among us all, gentlemen, saw clearly yesterday,” and he quoted the English general’s name.

December 18.—First night of *Sapho*.*

The first three acts, with the exception of the scene with the coachman, were received by a public

* By Daudet.

that was charmed, subjugated, conquered—three acts of which every word, every intention, every point was caught, understood, underlined by little ohs, laughs, and applause, as I have never seen in any play.

Then the great separation scene on which we had counted so much was received coldly, and this had its effect upon the fifth act. This was a bitter disappointment for the friends who had been expecting the play to end up with acclamations, triumph, and frantic enthusiasm, and who saw it end up merely as an ordinarily successful play.

All the while the play was going on, Daudet, not wishing to show himself in the theatre—I had to act as telephone between husband and wife—and having been seized with pain at dinner, quite at the wrong moment, took some chloral, and kept himself shut up in Koning's room, deaf to the applause. There, after having smoked seven or eight cigarettes, the tobacco and the chloral began to take effect, and Daudet dozed a little. When he was awakened by the excitement of Belot and the actors, who had lost confidence by the cold reception of the fourth act, he nearly thought the play had failed.

A few friends and myself raised the spirits of Daudet and Belot, who at last exclaimed: "Yes,

yes, we have fifty performances before us; they'll bring in money all right!"

After this we went to supper in the rue de Bellechasse, where some forty persons assembled, amongst them the Koning family. This Jane Hading is a most seductive person, with her luxuriant hair, which resembles the reddish-brown hair of Venetian courtesans, with her quite peculiarly white skin, which reminds me of the white throat of Titian's mistress.

We sup absorbed in thoughts of the morrow, in the general weariness of spirit of first-night suppers which have not been preceded by brilliant successes. After supper we are all truly grateful to Gibert for his comic imitations, which, as Mme Charpentier put it, even thawed Zola, who was looking very bored and sick.

1886

March 27.—Dinner at Zola's. While we are at coffee Zola and Daudet talk about the hardships of their early days. Zola recalled the times when, very often, he pawned his coat and trousers, and stayed at home in his shirt.

But he hardly noticed the hard conditions in which he used to live; his brain was occupied with an immense poem in three parts, "Genesis, Humanity, the Future," which was to be the cyclic and epic history of our planet, before the appearance of humanity, during the long centuries of its existence, and after its disappearance. He has never been so happy since as then, however poverty-stricken he may have been. To begin with, he never for a moment had any doubt of his future success—not that he had any definite idea of what would happen to him, but he was convinced that he would succeed, adding that it was difficult to explain this feeling of confidence with us sitting opposite him, so he de-

fined it by saying that "if he had not faith in his work, he had trust in his effort."

Then he talked of an ice-cold lodging, of a sort of turret in which he lived for some years, on the seventh floor, and of his going up to a corner of the roof on the floor above, in company with his friend Pajot. All Paris could be seen from this eighth story, and there Zola would rest in contemplation, and before the capital displayed beneath his eyes the idea of the conquest of Paris began to slip into the mind of the literary beginner.

Daudet, too, talked about his frightful poverty, and of the days when he literally had nothing to eat . . . but sometimes finding this poverty pleasant, because he felt his shoulders free, he was able to go where he pleased, to do as he liked, because he was no longer a school usher.*

April 17.—In the afternoon, Bracquemond took me to visit Rodin. He is a man whose face shows that he comes of the people, with clear eyes that wink under sickly red lids, with a long yellow beard, hair cut short, and a round head—a head which indicates a fine and obstinate enthusiasm—a man such as I imagine were the disciples of Jesus Christ.

* When Daudet was sixteen he became a school usher for a year. He loathed the job and the memory of it.

I find myself in his study on the Boulevard de Vaugirard, an ordinary sculptor's studio, with walls splashed with plaster, with an unfortunate melting oven, a damp coldness coming from all these great bodies of wet clay done up in rags, and with all these mouldings of heads, arms, and legs, in the midst of which two dried-up cats are scratching fantastic figures out with their claws. And there, too, is a model, whose bare chest looks like a navy's.

Rodin turns round, on their revolving stools, the life-size figures of his six *Burghers of Calais*, modelled with a powerful realist objectivity, and with fine hollows in their flesh, such as Barye used to put into the sides of his animal figures. He also showed us a robust sketch of a nude, an Italian woman, short and elastic, a "panther," as he described her, which, he said, with a note of regret in his voice, he was unable to finish, because one of his pupils, a Russian, had fallen in love with her and married her. This Rodin is a true master of flesh. His bust of Dalou is a marvel of sculpture, executed in wax, in a green, transparent wax like jade. I cannot describe the delicate touch of the boasting-tool in the modelling of the eyelids, and of the fine lines of the nose.

The great artist has really no luck with his *Burghers of Calais*. The banker who had ordered it has

bolted, and Rodin does not know if he will be paid ; and yet the work is so far advanced that it must be finished, and to finish it will cost 4,500 francs, in models and studio rent.

From his studio in the Boulevard de Vaugirard, Rodin takes us to his studio close by the Military School to see his famous door, intended for the future "Palace of the Decorative Arts." On these two immense panels there is a confusion, a mixture, something like the growths on a coral reef. Then, at the end of some seconds, one sees in this apparent coral reef one notices, a mass of carvings—indentations and protuberances of a whole mass of delightful little bodies of men, which Rodin's sculpture seems to have borrowed from the *Last Judgment* of Michael Angelo, and perhaps from some of the hordes of people in Delacroix's pictures ; and all this is in an unprecedentedly high relief, which only Dalou and he himself have attempted. The studio of the rue de Vaugirard contains within it a very real humanity ; the other studio is like the dwelling of a poet's world, from Dante or from Hugo.

November 18.—Here I am with the Daudets in Porel's box, at the play adapted by Céard from *Renée Mauperin*. The audience loses its chill as soon as Cerny and Dumény come on the stage, and

is frankly amused and likes the spirit of the play. There are calls and applause, everything that makes one expect a great success.

The Daudets are the god-parents of my play, and we have supper at their house, where there are four tables in the dining-room, and a table in the ante-room for the young people. Porel and I congratulate each other tenderly and affectionately. I am very happy to have brought him a success, and he says to me very kindly : “ You know, you are now at home at the Odéon.”

Supper is enlivened by the success of this first performance, and by the hope of a run of a hundred shows—and by the imitations of Gibert, that delicate and clever satirist of the rottenness of Paris.

November 19.—The press notices are execrable this morning. They complain that only makers of books are now to be seen at the theatre, and there is a sort of cold anger among the journalists at seeing novelists take possession of the Odéon . . . and I think they have decidedly killed poor *Renée!*

This evening, I find Porel in his office, quite, quite alone, seated in his chair of state, with his arms hanging limply around him, and who receives me with these words : “ The press has been too bad, the *Petit Journal*, *Gil Blas* . . . it’s unfair . . . they take

care not to acknowledge that last night was a success . . . it simply kills advance bookings."

I went to wait for him in his box, where he promised to come, but he never came.

The audience is very interesting from the spectator's point of view. It neither dares to laugh nor to applaud. There are intervals during which nobody speaks or moves or even breathes : it is an audience that seems to be doing penance, a crowd of consternated folk, afraid to give way to the least manifestation of life of any sort, as if it were going to be scolded. It is absolutely true that the intelligent Parisian has no personal opinion at all ; he is completely the slave of the opinions of the paper he happens to read.

November. 20.—My birthday. Am at the Odéon in the evening, with the Daudets. Theatre nearly empty.

November 23.—It appears that Sarcey has received letters reproaching him with having abused *Renée Mauperin* too violently, and praised another play extravagantly. He excuses himself by saying that in the play and in my novel there are " literary pretensions." Now an author who has any high ideal of art, who tries to write, and to create new

types, even if he does not succeed . . . is that a reason for killing his work? But long live the pot-boiler, the man who writes for money, with no aspirations! This seems to be the point of view of the critic of the *Temps*, of a pretty base critic.

November 28.—To-day I read that *Renée Maupérin* is coming off, and will be followed by classical plays.

December 10.—I learn that Berthelot has been appointed Minister of Public Instruction. In spite of my friendly relations with him, and my high esteem for the personal value of the man, I think that the choice of a savant to be Minister of Public Instruction is the choice which literary men will dislike most: for a savant both regards their work with thorough contempt, and is heartily envious of their widespread reputation.

After all, I think that, if I had to ask him for a favour, it would be to strike my name out of the Legion of Honour.

1887

January 1.—Dinner with the de Béhaines, with the husband, the wife, and their son, who has come from Soissons, where he is in garrison.

We talk with Francis about the army, and he tells me that there are no more resignations taking place for political reasons: the Legitimists have been choked off by the death of the Comte de Chambord, the Imperialists by the death of the Prince Imperial, the Orleanists by the giddiness of the princes of the Orleans family. But if the army is not Legitimist, or Imperialist, or Orleanist, it is getting every day more Conservative by recruiting the young men who have sprung from an administrative and legal stock. Francis believes that, before long, the army will become the most influential body in the State.

January 3.—On 1st January there appeared an article in *Gil Blas*, by Santillane, on the performance I asked for from Porel, to finish up the sub-

scription for the monument to Flaubert: this article reproaches me with begging, and lays it to my discredit that I do not myself make up the necessary 1,200 francs. What was my surprise to read in to-day's *Gil Blas*, hardly a month after the kind letter which Maupassant sent me after the first night of *Renée Mauperin*, a letter by him, in which he gives the support and authority of his name to Santillane's article. I immediately send him my resignation in this letter:—

“*January 3, 1887.*”

“MY DEAR MAUPASSANT,

“Your letter in this morning's *Gil Blas*, bringing the authority of your name to the last article by Santillane, leaves me with only one thing to do, and that is to send you my resignation as president and member of the committee for Flaubert's monument.

“You are not ignorant of my aversion to committees and their offices, and you must remember that it was only on your account that I accepted this presidency, which has caused me a thousand annoyances, and put me into contradiction with myself and my profession of faith in ‘statuomania,’ with reference to Balzac's statue.

“Now here is the history of the performance for which I asked.

“ On September 10, I received, in a letter from you, an extract from the minutes of the August meeting of the Conseil Général de la Seine-Inférieure, when M. Laporte, a member, stated that: ‘ The subscription for the monument to be erected to the memory of Gustave Flaubert amounts at the present moment to the sum of 9,650 francs, including the 1,000 francs voted by the Conseil Général, which were authorized on March 13, 1882. This sum, which is on deposit in a bank in Rouen, is insufficient. But we hope to get the necessary balance, about 2,000 francs, easily, by means of a benefit performance in a Paris theatre, or otherwise.’

“ I was asked to proceed as quickly as I could with the plans of the monument. As I could not afford to supply the deficiency myself, and as the committee had not suggested that the sum might be found by a few friends, and as I did not wish again to open a subscription which had only brought in 9,000 francs during several years, I yielded to the desire of the Conseil Général, and last month I asked the Théâtre Français for a performance.

“ No complaints were made as to this either by the committee or by Flaubert’s family.

“ The manager of the Théâtre Français sent me a refusal, based on the statutes of the theatre.

“ Then, at a dinner at Daudet’s, I proposed to

him that the subscription should be completed by Daudet, Zola, you, and I each giving 500 francs ; and this suggestion was reported in the *Temps* the next day by one of its staff who was dining with us.

“ It was to be definitely settled, and I was going to ask you, as well as Zola, for the 500 francs, when, at another dinner at Daudet’s, where Porel was present, we were talking about the Théâtre Français performance which had collapsed. On hearing of my regret, Porel nobly offered us his theatre, and we three improvised on the spot the performance which was announced in the papers, and which I personally thought a very pretty tribute of personal affection, and the money from which was, to my eyes, no more derogatory to the memory of Flaubert than the sum raised by public subscription.

“ As this performance did not take place, I hold at the disposal of the committee the sum of 500 francs which I promised to subscribe to Flaubert’s monument, regretting, my dear Maupassant, that you did not write me directly, delighted as I should have been to get rid of all personal initiative in these delicate affairs, where I have only been the instrument of wishes and desires which have not always been my own.

“ In any case, please accept, my dear Maupassant, the assurance of my affection.”

January 9.—There is only one thing now which makes me come out of my shell and take a little interest in life; that is the first proofs of a new book.

Margueritte met Anatole France the other day, who said to him: "Yes, yes, we all agree that Flaubert is perfect, and I have not failed to say so. . . . But his great defect is that he was unable to do articles to order. . . . That would have given him a suppleness he lacked."

I think the *Temps* critic is right.

February 1.—Dinner at Brébant's. Somebody said that Kaiser Wilhelm and Bismarck had continued, after the war of 1870, to regard France, beaten as she was, as a great power, but now regard her with complete disdain, since this succession of Ministers with no authority. Freycinet himself says that foreign Ministers say to him: "Yes, we are perfectly ready to come to an arrangement with you, but who can tell us where you will be to-morrow?"

February 2.—Maupassant comes to see me, and decides me to withdraw my resignation from the committee for Flaubert's monument. This I do rather than discuss the matter, from personal cowardice, and to save myself the bother of bringing the

public into the matter. It is a bit thick, all the same, for him to have given that article his support without, he says, "having read it!"

March 17.—Mme Commanville has just read me the revised preface which she has written, on my advice, to put in front of the *Correspondence of Flaubert*. This little biography seems curious and interesting to me, on account of the intimate light which she alone could throw on the life of the man who brought her up.

March 27.—It is extraordinary that in spite of my retired life, my reputation for hard work, and still more the publication of forty volumes, the *de* which comes before my name, and perhaps a certain personal distinction, continues to make my colleagues who do not know me, and who work a hundred times less hard than I do, regard me as an amateur.

With reference to my *Journal*, some people are astonished that this work can come from a man they consider a simple gentleman. And why is it that in the eyes of some people Edmond de Goncourt is a gentleman, an amateur, an aristocrat who plays with literature, and why is it that Guy de Maupassant is considered a true man of letters? I should like to know.

March 31.—Mme Daudet returns from the meeting of the Académie, interested, amused, cheerful. She says it was almost a family party, that the five hundred people whom one meets all over Paris were there in a body, and that in this crowd curious currents of opinion set up.

She was asked what Coppée was doing during the speech of Leconte de Lisle, and she answered that he was looking upwards at the dome. I think that "looking upwards at the dome" very well expresses the abstraction of an Academician during a meeting of the Académie, the dissimulation of his impressions and sensations when a man he dislikes is speaking.

Mme Daudet came back full of praise for Leconte de Lisle . . . As to Daudet, after he had excited himself but said nothing, he burst out that he thought these proceedings quite extraordinary, and that if he had been there he would have been seized with a desire to hiss, or even, in the midst of idiotic applause like that of Mme X . . . and Mme Z . . . to commit an even greater impropriety, and to have himself put out of the door while he shouted: "Yes, it is I!"

April 2.—As a criticism of my *Journal*, I give this extract from the *Temps*. These articles are lost and

forgotten, and when they are quoted from memory they sound incredible. It is just as well that a little of the authentic text should remain, so that people can judge later of the intelligence of the Conservative and Catholic party—of the literature of our own side, my brother's and my own.

“ A masterpiece of infatuation of this sort is the *Journal des Goncourt*. A first volume has appeared : there is no less than four hundred pages, and it will be followed by eight hundred more. It is impossible to find an interesting chapter, a line to teach us anything at all.

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“ Would you like to become an author ? Would you like to see, in a few years' time, your name on a cover the colour of fresh butter, with a line showing the number printed ? Then begin to-day, and boldly put into your diary : ‘ *March 27.*—Breakfasted at eight. Read the papers . . . rain, sun, showers . . . dined at X . . . there were twelve of us at table ; the six men had their beards pointed, the six ladies had red hair.’ Call it the ‘ *Journal of my Life,*’ or ‘ *Documents about Paris,*’ or anything you like. Add ‘ *third thousand ;*’ and I guarantee you a sale of forty copies.” *

* Eight thousand copies, in point of fact, of Volume I. were sold within seven years of publication.

April 14.—Porel, who was dining at Daudet's to-night, took me into a corner and asked me to dramatize *Germinie Lacerteux*.

May 7.—I am at the end of my intellectual life. I can still understand, and even imagine construction, but I have no more strength left for execution.

June 2.—I read an extract from Hugo's *Choses Vues* in which I seemed to be able to recognize, with a certain pride, a very close resemblance in the vision of things to that of my *Journal*.

July 21.—At dinner, Daudet told us that when he was twelve years of age, after an absence from home—it was, I think, his first love-prank—on getting there he was expecting a terrible wiggling, when, on seeing his mother open the door to him, he suddenly had the inspiration to say to her: "The Pope is dead!" And, in the face of such a misfortune for this Catholic family, Daudet's own case was forgotten. The next day he announced that the Pope, who was believed to have died, was getting better, and, thanks to this amazing inventiveness, he escaped the indignation and severity of the first moment. That is very like Daudet's imagination.

October 25.—It is extraordinary.* I've never had press notices like this before: from Delpit's upwards, they all treat us, my brother and me, as great writers!

September 29.—Rodin has been telling me about his working life. He gets up at seven o'clock, he enters his studio at eight, and he goes on working, with an interval for lunch, until night, standing upright or perched on a ladder—which tires him out for the evening, and makes him want to go to bed after he has read for an hour.

He talks about the illustration of Baudelaire's poems which he is making for a collector, and into which he wanted to go deeply, but the payment does not allow him to give enough time to it. Then this work, which will have no publicity, which must remain shut up in the collector's cabinet, does not stimulate him, like illustrations ordered by a publisher.

* Volume II. of the *Journal* was published the day before.

1888

January 10.—In the preface of his new novel Maupassant attacks “the artistic style of writing,” and aims at me—without naming me. Some time ago I found him lacking in frankness over the matter of the Flaubert subscription. To-day I received the attack by the same post as a letter in which he talks about his admiration and his attachment. He is a very Norman Norman.

January 15.—Finished the play *Germinie Lacerteux* this morning.

March 7.—The Princess was saying this evening of the Prince of Wales,* with whom she dined a few days ago: “He is open; when he talks, he says what he feels; he is not like other princes, who always give the impression that they have something to hide!”

May 16.—I said to myself this morning, “If I

* Afterwards Edward VII.

make a hundred thousand francs this year with *Germinie Lacerteux*, I'll buy the house opposite and put this notice on it: 'To be let to people who have no children, who do not play any musical instrument, and who will be permitted to keep only goldfish as pets.' "

July 12.—Porel tells me that Réjane has been booked for *Germinie Lacerteux*.

September 7.—The present vogue of Russian novels is largely due to the nervous irritation felt by our more spiritual writers at the popularity of the French "naturalist" novel, and they attempt by this means to wipe out its success. For it is undeniably the same class of literature: the truth of human things seen from the sad, un-lyric side, from the human, and not from the poetic, fantastic, polar side of Gogol, the most typical representative of Russian literature.

Now neither Tolstoy, nor Dostoevsky, nor the others of their following, have invented this present-day Russian literature. It is a mongrel, bred from us and Edgar Allan Poe. The man who has best served this hostility between classicism and romanticism has been M. de Vogüé, who has attributed to a foreign literature an originality which it did

not possess, and brought it a glory which was legitimately due to us.

Wherefore the Academy will shortly call him to its bosom.*

September 15.—This evening Daudet says that there is not a book of which his opinion remains unchanged when he rereads it after ten years, and jokes a little at the rigidity of his wife's literary cults. She is constantly and faithfully attached to Leconte de Lisle, the Goncourts, etc. Daudet makes use of the word "mania" in characterizing this want of evolution in his wife's mind. Mme Daudet gets a little angry, and there is a great argument.

November 14.—To-day *Germinie Lacerteux* is read to the last at the Odéon.

I feel an excitement which brings me out of bed very early, and am in a nervous state which makes riding in a carriage insupportable, because I cannot move about in it, and so I get out long before I reach the theatre.

Porel reads the play, and reads it very well. The reading produces a great effect. They laugh till they cry. Dumény, who had given me to under-

* Le Vicomte E. M. de Vogüé became an Academician in the following November.

stand that he rather dreaded his part before he had seen it, now accepts it merrily. As to Réjane, she seems quite fascinated by her part, and with a brave curiosity.

November 22.—This *Germinie Lacerteux* puts me into a nervous state which wakes me every morning at four o'clock in a feverish state, in which I see, while perfectly awake, a performance of the play amid the enthusiasm of an imaginary audience.

Daudet is at the moment entirely absorbed in reading Eckermann's *Conversations with Goethe*. He laments that none of us has an Eckermann, an individual with absolutely no personal vanity, to put down what "flows" from us—as I should put it—in the moment when we abandon ourselves to conversation; moreover, all this expansion of the brain or of the heart is distinctly superior to what we put into our books, where the expression of our thoughts is, as it were, concentrated by being printed.

Daudet says that there are admirable people who have been prevented by circumstances or by laziness from showing their qualities, and who die absolutely for want of an Eckermann, and he names a friend as a man of this sort, full of delicate thoughts, and who will live and die without leaving a trace of himself.

November 30.—Rehearsal at the Odéon.

Réjane is wonderful on account of her quite simple, quite natural dramatic power. She talked to me about the nervous strength which she gains from being on the stage, and of her fear of throwing Adèle, a large woman, into the orchestra, when she jostles her at the end of the scene at the fortifications. She says that once, when acting with some man, she was astonished to find that her arms were quite blue, as the result of a little blow of the fingers which he had struck at a moment of the play.

December 4.—Already war is declared against my play. The papers are drawing pictures in advance of the mental anguish of the actresses who are to interpret *Germinie Lacerteux*. The café-keepers of the Latin Quarter are uniting with the journalists in fury at the only interval which I shall allow, which will reduce to one drink the five which they would otherwise be able to allow themselves.

Porel announces that the first night will take place on December 15.*

December 5.—Yesterday I gave a copy of the illustrated edition of my *La Femme au XVIII'*

* Postponed afterwards, on account of objections made by the censorship.

Siècle to Réjane, who sent me to-day a charming little letter of thanks, in which she is so good as to say that *Germinie* is her "passion," and that she will put all there is of life and truth in her into the part.

December 9.—Had quite an unexpected telegram from St. Petersburg to say that *Henriette Maréchal* has been produced at the Michel Theatre with great success.

1889

January 13.—This evening Porel came into the box where I was sitting with Daudet and his wife, who was desirous of seeing the play again. He told us that things are happening which we cannot possibly conceive, and which he will tell us at length some day. But he also tells us that the day before he had received a telegram warning him that as a consequence of a decision arrived at by the Conseil des Ministres, the matinée performance on the next day, which had been advertised for some days, would be suppressed. He immediately went to the Minister concerned, asking that he should be permitted to advertise "By order." But the Minister did not have the courage of the decision which he had adopted at the demand of Carnot, and so he was refused the "By order."

Here is an incontestable proof of the hostility of Carnot to the play. He went to the first night of *Henri III.*, and there, in his box, he had the Manager of the Théâtre des Beaux-Arts called, and, before

everybody present, said that it was a shameful thing to have permitted the performance of *Germinie Lacerteux*.

Finally, Porel is positive that police have been present during performances to study the audiences, and to give evidence as to whether the suppression of the play would meet with the approval of the public.

January 14.—I can undergo the emotion of the battle around the theatre very well, except in the theatre itself; there my moral courage cannot keep my body in order. Yesterday, at the Odéon, I felt my heart beating quicker, under a heavier strain.

They will end up by exorcizing me, as the evil spirit of the theatre. Pélagie blushed unconsciously when she was serving me, and could not resist saying: "Really, everybody at Auteuil thinks yours isn't a nice play!" and this sentence from her mouth is like a reproach for her own humiliation. Ah, it is hard lines to be a revolutionary in literature, in art, or in science!

January 16.—M. Marillier, lecturer in philosophy, who has written an article in support of *Germinie Lacerteux*, came to see me. He has been to six or seven performances, and studied the audiences, and

given me some curious information. I have all the students of the School of Medicine and all the students of the School of Law on my side but those who do not go regularly to the theatre, those who are not very much in the swim of things, or very well off. The public that goes to the cheap seats is also very much impressed by the play, and M. Marillier told me that the students with whom he had talked were enthusiastic about the work.

January 22 —I was talking with Zola for a minute about our life, given up to writing as perhaps nobody of whatever age has ever given up theirs, and we acknowledged that we have been true martyrs to literature, perhaps to the point of insanity. And Zola confessed that this year, when he is just on fifty years of age, he once more feels alive and young, he once more needs material enjoyments; and, suddenly interrupting himself, he says: "Yes, I can't even see a young girl, like that one over there, go past without saying to myself, 'She's a lot nicer than a book!'"

January 24.—Larousse brings me a glass case for the collection with which I am amusing myself. It consists of the little things used by women in the eighteenth century, objects of work and of the

feminine toilet; and when the case is almost filled with Saxon, Sèvres, and Saint-Cloud china, with these white porcelain things with little flowers, mounted in gold or bronze gilt, these porcelains so clear, so luminous, so shining, and of an altogether enticing appearance under the glass of the showcase, I ask myself if my passion for Japanese things has not been all a mistake, and I think of the wonderful collection of pretty European things of the century I love I could have made, if I had put the money into it which I laid out on my Far-Eastern collection.

February 5.—This was the last night of *Germinie Lacerteux*, and I went to the Odéon. I found Réjane in the intoxication of her part. She took me into her little box and thanked me very warmly indeed for having given her the part.

February 9.—At dinner at the Daudets' they were talking about the plays of Shakespeare—of those highly philosophical plays; especially of those two plays of Æschylean humanity, *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*, of which the modern theatre bears no trace in its intellectual flatness, in which individualities are so slight and so mediocre. Then we talked lovingly of the theatre which provided Weimar with its intellectual pleasure; and that led us on to say

that it is only in little centres of population that distinguished literature can be enjoyed; and the little republics of Greece were quoted, and the little Italian courts of the Renaissance period. Everybody agreed that great accumulations of population, like Paris—capitals with an innumerable audience—preferred to make successes of low and bad works.

February 16.—In spite of all the humanity collected by Shakespeare from his own neighbours, and disposed of in his plays on men and women of other centuries, I cannot help feeling that this humanity has something chimerical about it. His men are sometimes terribly argumentative and sophistical; they are sick with that Anglo-Saxon sickness—controversy, especially scholastic controversy.

The one thing which annoys me in the work of the incontestably greatest man of letters of the past is his lack of imagination. It cannot be denied that the dramatists of every country, from the most famous of the ancients up to Sardou, are lacking in imagination, and create at the expense of others. We have the incomparable Molière, and it is a fact that almost all his plays, his great scenes, and his happy sayings which are in everybody's mouth, are nearly always thefts—yes, thefts which critics regard as meritorious; but not so I.

Shakespeare is another such gentleman: he too, alas! takes his characters out of old books, and in spite of all that flavouring of genius which he adds to them, it irritates me, I repeat, and I consider that one who invents his own characters is a greater writer. That is why Balzac seems to me the greatest of the great.

To sum up: I only find, in the four or five best plays of Shakespeare, two quite wonderful scenes; they are the sleep-walking scene where Lady Macbeth tries to wash away the spot of blood from her hand, and, especially, the graveyard scene in *Hamlet*, where Shakespeare reaches the summit of sublimity.

February 28.—I read in the *Temps* this evening these words addressed to working men by President Carnot, on his visit to the tobacco factories,—

“I thank you deeply for the welcome you have given me, my dear friends—for you are my friends, since you are working men.”

I wonder if such fawning words as these have ever been spoken by king or emperor!

March 6.—The Seine, at five o'clock, from the side of the Point-du-Jour. The sun is a diffuse mass of rubies in a milky sky, the colour of mother-of-pearl, up which the spiderish architecture of the Eiffel

Tower is climbing. The landscape is the colour of a Scotch mist.

Maupassant has just returned from his excursion in Africa, and is dining at the Princess's. He declares that he is perfectly healthy; and indeed he is animated and talkative, and under the tan of his slightly thinned face he seems less vulgar than usual.

He does not complain of his eyes or his sight, and says he only loves sunny countries, and that he has never been warm enough, and that he found himself once, when travelling in the Sahara in the month of August, in 53 degrees in the shade,* and that he did not suffer from the heat.

March 12.—The Eiffel Tower makes me think that iron monuments are not human monuments, or the monuments of an old humanity, which only knew about the use of wood and stone for construction of its dwellings. In these iron monuments the flat surfaces are frightfully ugly. When one looks at the first platform of the Eiffel Tower, with that arrangement of double covered seats, one could not dream of anything more offensive to the eye of a member of the old civilizations. The iron

* This would be on the centigrade thermometer—that is, equal to about 125 degrees on the Fahrenheit.

monument is only tolerable where it is pierced with holes and resembles a trellis-work of ropes.

*March 19.**—The curtain rises. I am in a little stage box, where there is hardly room for a chair to stand between the whitewashed walls, and before my eyes I have an entanglement of rubber tubes, through which I see the stage on the left, and under which I can see five or six heads of the first row of orchestra stalls. I am there feeling not exactly unhappy, but more emotioned than usual.

The witty remarks of the first act are spoken in an ice-cold silence, and Antoine says to me: "The audience is on its reserve, quite disposed to be nasty, no matter on what account—a phrase, or a wig, or a dress!"

This coldness increases in the second act, during the pathetic scene between the two women while the attack on the Tuileries is going on, and it comes to an end in very feeble applause.

Some friends come to me and say: "Oh, this audience! it's beyond words!" I feel that the actors are nervous, and fear that Antoine is not acting as well as yesterday. Hennique is very indig-

* First night of *La Patrie en Danger*, a play of Royalist tendencies, written many years before by Edmond and Jules, but not produced until 1889, at the *Théâtre des Menus-Plaisirs*.

nant, and walks about in the corridors shouting :
“ See what comes of writing French ! ”

The play succeeds better and is very much applauded at the end of the third act.

I am uneasy about this improvement in the reception of the play, fearing that there will be a reaction during the fourth act among this audience, which wants the play to fail, and will certainly make merry over it, if it cannot hiss it. They are doing their best. They laugh at such things as this : “ You are not Swiss ! ” or, “ He spoke . . . he spoke as I have never heard a man speak ! ” What a beautiful article could be made on the heavy silliness and ignorance of these young first-nighters ! These people have not a pennyworth of intelligence : what they might have made fun of, had they any intelligence, was the resurrection of Perrin, and they did not do it.

At last comes the fifth act, which is performed in the midst of general hilarity, caused by the face of Pierrot, who is a prisoner. But the dramatic power of the act finally captures the crowd, and the curtain goes down amidst applause, after the names of the two authors have been announced.

Zola comes in for a moment to congratulate me warmly on having such an audience, to congratulate me on not being recognized, on being opposed, even

with violence, that proves that I am young, that I still have some fight in me, that . . .

“ They do hate and detest you,” says Rosny, who follows Zola; “ it can’t be imagined how enraged they are against you in the corridors; and it is not the writer so much as the man who is abominated ! ”

“ Yes, yes, I know; my separation from the lower order of writers, my attacks upon the Jews who rule over us to-day, my contempt for the crowd of men and women who come to a first night, the honourable course of my existence . . . That all makes me hated. You won’t teach me anything new ! ”

March 23.—It was hard to go to the theatre this evening, where they are brutally taking off the play to-morrow; but I went to thank Antoine and those poor devils of actors, so that they should not for a moment believe that I attribute my failure to them.

The rumour is about that Claretie is in the theatre, whereupon everybody acts to the very utmost of their endeavours, in view of the possibility of an engagement at the Théâtre Français.* Antoine himself was superb in the fourth act—half on my account, and half on Claretie’s.

* Of which Claretie was director until 1914.

March 24.—I was reading in some paper or other that my life was spent in the midst of a society of admirers. This society has few members, for nobody in literature has been attacked, insulted, and abused as I have. And where was this Admiration Society on the first night of *Germinie Lacerteux*, when the audience refused to hear my name, or on the first night of *La Patrie en Danger*, in which an historic epoch was reconstituted, I may affirm, as in no other French play, and which the audience, by its contempt, its foolery, and its affectation of boredom, declared inferior to anything? And, in my thoughts, I brought together those two first nights, exceptional and peculiar to the Goncourts as everybody said they were, with the first night of *Henriette Maréchal*, when they wanted to tear my brother and myself to pieces.

March 28.—Daudet confessed that in 1875, in view of his poor literary gains, he was almost on the point of entering an office or a library, and to exchange the 120,000 francs which he earns now for a wage of 3,000 francs.

Then, by what road I forget, he went on to talk about his books, and he said that there was only one thing that wounded his self-respect, and that was that his *Tartarin* was regarded merely as a

comic phantasy, and that it was not recognized that this was a serious presentation of the south of France—a broader figure of Don Quixote.

“ Yes,” I said, “ a Don Quixote blended with Sancho Panza.”

“ That’s it. . . . Well, this Numa Gilly is a true Tartarin . . . he wanted to kill everybody, to swallow everybody; and who, in the face of the duels and law-suits brought upon himself by his pamphlet, sat down and began to weep.”

April 28.—Daudet was amusing us to-day by repeating to us some of Barbey d’Aurevilly’s hyperbolic stories about himself, his genealogy, and his noble infancy; describing the priest who was entrusted with his education, and to whom he used to shout, before fencing with him, “ Come, l’abbe, turn up your cassock ! ” Then there was the riding lesson, when a louis used to be placed by his father on the saddle, into which young d’Aurevilly had to vault without letting the coin drop, and then it was his. But he was so nimble that this exercise had to be given up, or, he said, he would have ruined his father.

The worst of all these yarns was that Papa Barbey had neither priest, nor horse, nor saddle, nor even a louis. One day, when drunk with champagne, Barbey acknowledged that during his whole life

he had only been able to draw forty francs out of his father, and with what effort !

May 1.—A great talk about Balzac with M. de Lovenjoul, at the Princess's.

In this century, when so much respect and attention is paid to autograph documents, the general consignment of Balzac's letters and manuscripts to the dustbin is even more extraordinary than the story of it all. Balzac dead, the creditors rushed into the house, put his wife out of the door neck-and-crop, and rushed on the furniture, which they emptied, and the manuscripts in which would have sold for 100,000 francs. All these were bundled out into the street for whoever wanted them.

That is how M. de Lovenjoul came to discover in the cobbler's shop opposite the house the first letter from Balzac to Mme Hanska,* or at least the first page of that letter, and with which the cobbler was about to light his pipe at the moment when M. de Lovenjoul entered. The cobbler was given an interest in the recovery of everything that had been thrown out into the street ; and this enabled him to lay his hands on two or three hundred letters, on the outline sketches, beginnings of novels, which were all about to become bags and wrappings

* Who became his wife shortly before his death in 1850.

for pennyworths of butter among the local shopkeepers; and lastly was found a cook, who took many years to make up her mind to sell him a large packet of letters. The hunt was amusing, because in the scattering of the correspondence he found in one shop the end of a letter, the first part of which he had found in the shop next door, and he was really happy one day when in an out-of-the-way shop he laid hands upon the middle part of the letter which the cobbler was about to set alight.

M. de Lovenjoul spoke with enthusiasm about this correspondence, which, in addition to that already existing, is the intimate history of Balzac's life. He regretted that he was unable to publish it, because Balzac was by nature extremely credulous, and those people who seemed to him angels the first time he met them became worse than devils on the second or third meeting, to such an extent that he seems terribly hard upon his contemporaries. His lack of reticence as to his love affairs, also, made the correspondence unfit for publication.

May 6.—While the guns were thundering away, celebrating the anniversary of 1789, I thought of the fine article that might be written on the size France would have been to-day, with its frontiers on the Rhine, if neither the Revolution of 1789, nor the

victories of Napoleon I., nor the revolutionary policy of Napoleon III. had ever taken place. It is quite likely that France would be under the rule of a feeble-minded Bourbon, a descendant of an entirely effete race of kings; but would his government be so very different from that of Carnot, who was chosen by the consent of all on account of the mediocrity of his personality?

May 15.—Two sisters—children they called themselves in their letter to me—asked to see the author of *Les Frères Zemganno*. They came to-day, these two little daughters of a middle-class family, in black woollen dresses, with silk gloves on their hands a little worn at the finger-ends. At the end of the visit the braver of the two asked me in what cemetery my brother was buried. I was deeply moved by this touching farewell! It is curious that although I am denied, hated, and insulted, I have enthusiasts, and especially among the women of the middle classes. And in these days, when there is no more religion, I feel that in their imagination I occupy the place of a priest, of an old man who claims a slightly tender, religious respect.

June 15.—Octave Mirbeau, just back from Mentone, dines next to me. He talks with verve,

with wit. He talks about the fear of death which haunts Maupassant, and which is the cause of his perpetual travelling by land and by sea in order to escape this fixed idea. Mirbeau says that on one of Maupassant's landings at Spezzia, if I remember rightly, he heard that there was a case of scarlatina there, and abandoned the lunch we had ordered at the hotel and went back to his boat. He also said that a writer who felt himself insulted by something written by Maupassant, and having to dine with him, had, during the days before this dinner, looked up some medical works, and at dinner gave Maupassant all the cases of death brought about by diseases of the eyes, which literally made Maupassant's nose fall lower and lower, until it was on his plate.

July II.—I dine to-day at Levallois-Perret with Mirbeau and his charming wife in a dining-room on one wall of which is a study painted by the husband, opposite it a study painted by the wife.

Mirbeau is so kind as to accompany me back to Auteuil, and, in a friendly expansiveness, tells me, in the cab, fragments of his life, while I look at this young man with newly shaven face and neck, in the fugitive rags of light which enter the vehicle.

When he left the Jesuits' College at Vannes,

at the age of seventeen or so, he went to Paris to study law, but spent his time in amusing himself. About this time Dugué de la Fauconnerie founded *l'Ordre*, and asked him to contribute to the paper, and he remembered—he had just written the notice of the exhibition of Monet's paintings—that the first article was a lyrical praise of Manet, Monet, and Cézanne,* with a good deal of insult for classical artists. He went on to dramatic criticism, but his frivolity, at the end of a few months, had made all the theatre managers annoyed with the paper.

After that he lived for four strange months smoking opium. He met somebody just back from Cochin-China who told him that everything that Baudelaire had written about opium-smoking was sheer nonsense, that, on the contrary, a charming feeling of happiness was to be procured that way; and the enticer gave him a pipe and a Cochin-China robe. And there he was for those four months, in his flowered garment, smoking pipe upon pipe, up to twenty-four a day, and not eating at all, or, at the most, a soft-boiled egg every twenty-four hours. At last he reached a complete self-forgetfulness, and said that opium gave a certain hilarity at the end of twenty-four hours, but that when

* The founders of Post-Impressionism. M. Mirbeau also "discovered" Maeterlinck, and, more recently, Marguerite Audoux.

that was over, smoking led up to an emptiness and a sadness impossible to describe. It was then that his father, to whom he had written that he was in Italy, found him, took him out of his robe and his rooms, and walked him up and down Spain for some months.

May 15th arrived. Through the influence of Saint-Paul he was nominated Sous-Préfet of l'Ariège, and he told me how deceitful manhood suffrage was, saying that in one district, where Saint-Paul received unanimous support, a few months later Gambetta's candidate received the same unanimity.

So in the month of October of the same year, the Sous-Préfet is on the streets, and once more he took to journalism, on the *Gaulois*.

Then came that great love affair, which made him a stockbroker of all things, earning 12,000 francs a month for the woman he loved; then his cruel deception, which made him buy, with the money got from his last liquidation, a fishing smack in Brittany, on which he lived for eighteen months the life of a sailor, in horror lest he should meet anybody of the upper classes.

And then he returned to literature.

July 12.—Centenary exhibition. I should think that this is the time to exhibit machinery rather

than pictures. The pictures from David to Delacroix all seem to me to be paintings by the same painter. It is a bilious painting, with gloomy yellow suns, as one sees them in Italian majolica. Yes, we think too much of our contemporary painters. There has been a primitive German and Italian painting; then there has been real painting, which counts four names—Rembrandt, Rubens, Velasquez, Tintoretto; and after this school of ingenuity—this school which did big and real things—there came some pretty and clever French artists, and after them only a few poor people who started all over again, except the landscape artists of the middle of this century.

July 19.—Daudet tells me, as we are walking this morning in the park at Champrosay, that I missed an extremely interesting conversation with Mistral yesterday—a sort of running autobiography.

Daudet speaks very nicely about this peasant poet, belonging entirely to his bits of fields, to his little estate, to his house, to his relatives, to his province, and still more to that old and rural France from which he has drawn his poetry. He told me that the child ran away from college four times, and at twelve years of age manufactured two minute ploughs,

which were the only objects of art in his house. He described him getting some taste for his studies, and only being able to stick to his college when he had got to know the *Georgics* of Virgil, and the *Idylls* of Theocritus. He is a peculiar type, this peasant of superior race, of aristocratic race, among whom work in the fields, under the beautiful southern sky, takes an ideality which it has never had in the north.

In this biography, plastered all over with Provençal expressions, which the narrator threw about while walking in the alleys of the park, there were two marriages in question—a marriage with another Mistral, who would bring him great wealth, and with whom he had broken in sadness of soul, returning to his property, on account of the feeling he had that his own wealth and that of his wife would be too unequal, and that her great fortune would make him lose the elements which inspired his poverty.

The story of the marriage, which did at last take place, is really charming. Lamartine's article on *Mireille* had brought about a correspondence between Mistral and a lady in Dijon, and one day that he was going through Burgundy he paid a visit to his correspondent. Years, many years, went by, and every evening, while having supper with his mother,

he had to listen to sentences like this: "Men were made to marry, to have children . . . what sort of a life will you have when I am no more?" One night, after one of these scoldings, Mistral remembered quite a little girl who looked at him out of beautiful large eyes when he was paying that visit to the lady of Dijon, who was her aunt. He asked himself how old she could now be, calculated that she must be nineteen, went to Dijon, got to the house where he had paid his visit ten years or so before, and asked the young girl's hand in marriage, which was given him.

Daudet, feeling in himself a certain relationship with Mistral, declares that he came into the world with a taste for the country, and that he had no appetite for Paris, that he had no ambition to become celebrated, and that he had been taken to Paris against his will, and that the ambition to become celebrated had come to him from the people amongst whom he had fallen.

As we were walking, and after Daudet had been expanding before the fields of corn, all red, and golden, and black, I said,—

"Daudet, you love the soil, don't you?"

"Yes, greenery does not overwhelm me with joy . . . We southerners love broiled things of

every sort, and we are stupefied when we go north and see all that green.”

August 19.—To-day, at the exhibition, I saw a relic of the past that was more interesting to me in its way than the chariot of Attila. It was a little model of a yellow stage-coach, with rue Notre-Dame-des-Victoires written upon its front. Looking at it, I lived over again in imagination my happy departures for country holidays, the victorious exits from Paris along narrow roads, where white horses' tails jumped about in front of the carriage windows, the exciting changes of horses at the different stages, the villages and their pale inhabitants, passed in the twilight at full gallop. And the little yellow stage-coach recalls one of my deepest sorrows; it was in the rear of the stage-coach that it happened. When I was twelve years old, I was coming back to Paris all alone from a holiday spent at Bar-sur-Seine, and I had bought Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* for twopence. Postillion, conductor, my neighbours in the coach, the places where we stopped to change horses, the inns where we ate, were all lost to me. I saw nothing. I have never been so absent from real life and belonged so completely to fiction—except just once, when I was still younger, when, hidden

in an old easy-chair, I read *Robinson Crusoe*, which my father had bought for me from a country pedlar.

August.—How far the world is from being infinite! To-day I ventured the name of Octave Mirbeau in front of my cousin, who said: "But, Mirbeau . . . let's see . . . why, he is the son of the doctor of Renelard, where our estate is . . . well, I've hit him on the head with a whip a few times. He was an impudent little beast when he was young . . . he had a mania for throwing himself under the hoofs of my carriage horses out of sheer bravado."

September 11.—When we ask these country labourers what they think of the present Government, they reply: "We are very tired!" "Then do you want a Prince d'Orléans? or a Napoleon? or General Boulanger?" They shake their heads and reply firmly, without adding another word, "We are very tired!"

October 20.—The Danish critic, Brandes, visited me this morning, and talked to me about my popularity in his country and in Russia. He is a little astonished at the snobbery of some of our more distinguished authors.

November 1.—I shall never again, I think, wear my decoration, for to-day, in the list of the new Chevaliers of the Legion of Honour, I read, “ Durand (preserved fruit).” Well, now, ought the manufacture of preserved books and of fruit to have the same reward ?

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January 2.—At dinner the name of Blowitz was pronounced, and, upon that, somebody acquainted with the secret history of to-day described how Blowitz became *The Times* correspondent. Blowitz, he said, whose real name is Oppert, and who took the name of his town, was a poor devil of a teacher in Marseilles and quite unknown, with the rank of Sergeant-Major in the National Guard, who in the insurrection at Marseilles saved the life of the prefect, who would otherwise have been massacred. With this recommendation he got to Versailles at the moment of publication of the treaty with Bismarck.

The Times correspondent then, with a salary of £3,000 and the standing of an ambassador, was Lawrence Oliphant, that extraordinary person, who had been a sort of Brummel, a friend of princes, a diplomatist in China and Japan, a martyr who still bore on both wrists the stigmata of martyrdom, the founder of a religion to which he had given all his fortune, a man who for some time had descended to

taking dead leaves about in a wheelbarrow, and had become in *The Times* the intermediary between England and France at the time when France was going through her tragic years. Oliphant came to employ Blowitz for reporting, for which he had an unexampled audacity, and just at that moment, when all European diplomacy was on the sharp look-out for news at Versailles, and was nevertheless unable to approach Thiers, he, Blowitz, got at him by the backstairs and kitchen.

Now, at the moment, this is what had happened : one day Thiers was so fractious, while talking things over with the Comte d'Arnim, that the Comte had been unable to resist saying : " To hear you talk, one would really imagine that you had won the Battle of Sedan ! " Whereupon Thiers began to weep, saying that the Comte was insulting a beaten man. As a result of this it was impossible to make Thiers and Arnim come to an agreement, Thiers being sulky towards the Comte, and the Comte, a well-bred man, not feeling anxious to come to terms with this debilitated cry-baby. So Oliphant took Thiers's place, after some discussion with him, and the seventeen articles of the treaty—a fact of which the public is absolutely ignorant—were arranged between *The Times* correspondent and the Comte d'Arnim. In this diplomatic kitchen Oliphant

found Blowitz a great many little things to do, and as soon as the treaty was signed, when Thiers, in order to thank his substitute, offered him a Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour, Oliphant declined that honour, but asked for the nomination to the consulate of Venice of *The Times* correspondent in France before the war—and Blowitz took his place.*

February 9.—To-day I gave Ajalbert the idea of making a play out of *La Fille Élixa*, with these points in view. In the first act, which would take place in the abandoned cemetery in the Bois de Boulogne, the girl kills her soldier-lover. The second act, the great one of the play, which made me apply to Ajalbert because he is at once an author and a barrister, and well acquainted with the courts, is to begin with the words of the judge calling upon the defence to be opened. In the speech for the defence the whole life of the woman is to be described, and that is an original idea. Then comes the death sentence, much as it is in my book.

The third act will be in the penitentiary, but no death. This might be the end. The woman stands up on a stool and finds the parcel containing the clothes she wore when she was free. She reads the two dates of her entry and her release—of her

* Blowitz's own *Memoirs* give an entirely different version.

release that she feels will take place at a distant date when she will be no longer.

February 22.—It is miraculous that a play, *Les Frères Zemganno*, so seldom acted with scenery, so unconventional, so unknown, is to be acted in two days' time.

February 25.—I reached the *Théâtre des Menus-Plaisirs* early, and watched the stage set for the first act. The firemen and scene-shifters amused themselves by playing about with the trapeze and the dumb-bells.

I did not hear a word of the first act, on account of the doors opening and closing, the movement in the pit, the late arrivals of the subscribers, who came in like diners-out who wish to make themselves noticed by coming late.

The second act was very much applauded indeed.

The third act was received a little more coldly, but still with a great deal of applause, and with hearty calls for the actors.

I remained all the time in my box, without mixing with the audience, and thought the play a success. But when I went behind the scenes I saw Métenier looking paler than usual, and Paul Alexis collapsed on the staircase listening to his wife, who

was telling him that one of his company had spent the evening crying that the play was a failure.

February 26.—The whole press is unanimously hostile. As far as the play is concerned, I think it as well done as I could have done it myself. It is extraordinary that the feeling of brotherly love with which it deals, and which is presented so delicately, so movingly—this emotion which is an absolutely new thing to the theatre, and which here takes the place of the love interest of plays generally—has not been noticed as original by a single critic.

February 28.—In view of the non-agreement of theatre criticism with the sincere feeling of the general public, I had the idea of once again entering into a theatre battle, and of having printed, under the posters advertising the play which cover the streets of Paris, these words: “I address myself to the independence of the public, and ask it, if the public thinks right, to come and reverse the verdict of the dramatic critics of the newspapers, as was done in the case of *Germinie Lacerteux*.”

March 23.—This young German Emperor,* this neurotic mystic, this enthusiast for the religious

* Wilhelm II., the present Kaiser.

and warlike operas of Wagner, this man who, in his dreams, wears the white armour of Parsifal, with his sleepless nights, his sickly activity, his feverish brain, seems to be a monarch who will be very troublesome in the future.

April 18.—This is a practical age, and a group of intelligent Frenchmen might well have this as their programme at the next general election: "We don't care a tinker's curse for Legitimism, Orleanism, Imperialism, the Republic, whether Opportunist, or Radical, or Socialist. What we want is a Government of no matter what colour, which will govern at discount terms, a Government which will undertake, in a signed contract, to govern France for the lowest possible price."

July 9.—At Champrosay. We talk on the terrace about Hugo, and Mme Lockroy gives some details of his life in Guernsey.

Hugo used to get up at three o'clock in the morning in the summer, and work till midday. After midday he did no more; he read the papers, attended to his correspondence—he never kept a secretary—and went for walks. A thing to note is the extraordinary regularity of his life. Every day he went for a two-hour walk, but always by the same road, so as not to be a minute late; and Hugo said

to Mme Lockroy, who was tired of always going the same road, "If we should take another road, we don't know what would happen if we were to be late." Everybody went to bed when the gun was fired at half-past nine. The head of the house wanted everybody to be in bed, and was very much annoyed to learn that Mme Lockroy remained up in her bedroom.

He had an iron body. When he died he had all his teeth, and he could crack a plum stone with them six months before his death. And his eyes were wonderful. In Guernsey he used to work in a glass cage without blinds, with a reflection enough to blind one and to make the brain melt away inside the skull.

August 4.—When one thinks about the wonderful things, such as the phonograph, etc., discovered by this century, I ask myself whether later centuries will not discover even more supernatural things, and if we may not find a means, by scientifically cooking the cranium of an Egyptian mummy, or of another ancient corpse, to revive the memory of the books read by the possessor of that cranium.

October 3.—The methodical regularity of Hugo's life was something incredible. After sunset he

would never read a line, whether of a paper or even of a letter by artificial light, but would put it into his pocket, saying that he would read it the next day. Mme Lockroy this evening told us that when the war broke out, and everybody was panting for news, one foggy day, when the papers came late in the evening, and everybody snatched at them, he did not touch a single one of the sheets before him, but asked to be told what there was in the papers.

October 4.—One might make a fantastic story, after the style of Edgar Allan Poe, out of this. It has been calculated that with gold stoppings for teeth, customary in the United States, the cemeteries contained thirty million pounds' worth of gold. Suppose that some years ahead, when these millions have to be multiplied by ten, a financial crisis takes place, and an impious and gruesome search for this gold occurs.

October 18.—It is glorious. The journalists are accusing me of having neither patriotism nor heart, nor even fraternal love. Why? Simply because my patriotic sufferings and my sorrows are in print. If this were not the case, I should have, and to spare, everything I am said to lack.

October 28.—It is wonderful how, all my life, I seem to have worked on a separate branch of literature, the literature that produces quarrels. First it was the naturalist novels I wrote, then it was the revolutionary plays I had performed, and now it is the *Journal*. There are so many people to-day whose nerves are only to be injured by literature.

To-day, at my suggestion, the *Echo de Paris* sends along a reviewer, who is to reply to the attack of Renan upon me, and to whom I give the outlines of his reply.

Here is the little bit of prose which he ought to have put into dialogue form, without changing it, or adding to it:—

“ Have you read the interview in *La France* on the subject of your *Journal* on the Siege of Paris and the Commune ? ”

“ Yes, I read it with a certain astonishment, for in the volume which appeared before the last, I said of Renan, ‘ The man becomes more charming and more affectionate as one gets to know him and draws nearer to him. He is the type of moral grace in physical disgrace ; this apostle of doubt has the lofty and intelligent charm of a priest of science.’ ”

Yes, I am, or at least I was, the friend of the man, though at times the enemy of his beliefs, as I told him in a dedication to him of one of my books.

Everybody knows that M. Renan belongs to the great thinkers, who hold in contempt many human convictions which more humble people, like myself, still venerate a little.

I do not wish to enter here into a discussion as to the authenticity of the conversations reported in the last volume, which M. Renan anyway says he has not read, but I affirm upon my honour—and those who know me will admit that they have never known me to lie—I affirm that the conversations given by me in the four volumes are, so to speak, taken down by shorthand, and reproduce not only the ideas of the speakers, but very often their actual expression ; and I believe that every disinterested and perspicacious reader will recognize that my wish and my ambition has been to make the men whose portraits I have drawn true to life, and for nothing in the world would I have put words into their mouth which they had not spoken.

M. Renan says I am an “ indiscreet gentleman.” I accept the reproach, and I am not ashamed of it, the more so as my “ indiscretions ” are not divulgations of private life, but of the thoughts and ideas of my contemporaries—documents for the intellectual history of the century. Yes, I repeat that I am not ashamed, for, ever since the world was created, the most interesting recollections have been those of

“ indiscreet ” people, and my crime consists only in this, that I am alive twenty years after they were written—for which I cannot be really sorry.

November 23.—In weather during which one would not let a dog out, I get up at five o'clock, and am soon in the train to Rouen, with Zola, Maupassant, etc., etc.

I am struck this morning by the sickly appearance of Maupassant, whose face has lost all its flesh, whose skin has turned a brick-red colour, and whose look has an unhealthy fixity. He does not look as if he is going to live very long. As we cross the Seine, just as we are getting into Rouen, stretching his hand towards the river covered with fog, he shouts, “ It is to my boating down there that I owe what I am to-day ! ”

We have lunch at the Mairie.

Outside it continues to be foggy ; it rains and blows. This is the usual weather in Rouen for inaugurations, and here is a population which is quite indifferent to the ceremony which is to take place, and takes all the roads which do not lead to it. In all there are about twenty literary Frenchmen here, and a fête, with a pavilion for the authorities, with music, as in the meeting for the improvement of agricultural interests in *Madame Bovary*.

First we walk through the museum, past the Flaubert manuscripts, over which a deputation of students is leaning; then at last the unveiling of the monument.

I, who cannot read a page of my prose to two or three friends in my own house without my voice trembling—I am, I admit, filled with emotion and fear that my speech will stick in my throat before I have pronounced ten sentences.

“Gentlemen,—After our great Balzac, the father and the master of us all, Flaubert was the inventor of a realism perhaps as intense as that of his predecessor, and incontestably of a more artistic realism, such a realism as one might expect from a perfect instrument, such a realism as one might define as a rigorous striving after nature, expressed in the prose of a poet.

“And these characters with which Flaubert has filled his books, this world of fiction so real in its appearance, are the work of an author possessed of a creative faculty given only to few, the power to create, a little like God. Yes, it has enabled him to leave after him men and women who will not be mere book-characters to those who will live in the centuries to come, but they will be real dead people, for the material traces of whose passage on this earth men will be tempted to search. And it

seems to me that one day, in that cemetery at the gates of the town where our friend is at rest, some reader, still under the moving and pious hallucination of what he has been reading, will distractedly look for the tombstone of Madame Bovary in the neighbourhood of the illustrious author's grave.

“ In his novels Flaubert was not only a painter of his own day, he was also a resurrectionist, like Carlyle and Michelet, of dead worlds, lost civilizations, and past humanities. For us he made Carthage and the daughter of Hamilcar live once more ; the Thebaid and its hermit, mediæval Europe and its Julian the Hospitaller. Thanks to his descriptive talent, he has drawn for us places, perspectives, and surroundings which we should not have known without his magic evocation.

“ But especially do I love, in common with everybody, the talent of Flaubert in *Madame Bovary*, in that study, done by a genius, of middle-class morality, in that absolute work which, to the end of all literature, the author will allow nobody to rewrite.

“ And I want to pause for a moment, too, over that marvellous story, on that moving study of the humble soul of a woman of the people which is entitled, *Un Cœur Simple*.

“ In your Normandy, gentlemen, at the bottom

of those antique chests which are used as linen presses, and which are the most precious belongings of the poor people who live among you, there are sometimes a few words traced on the inside panels, by fishermen or by peasants---traced in a clumsy hand by stiff fingers---to record a storm, a child's death, a score of big and little happenings; they form the history of an entire life of poverty. Well, gentlemen, in reading *Un Cœur Simple* I had the sensation of reading a story taken from these tablets of old oak, with the *naïveté* and touching simplicity of what your peasants and your fishermen have written there.

“ Now that he is dead, my poor old Flaubert, we grant that he had genius, as much as his memory might desire. But let us now remember that, when he was alive, criticism even resisted granting that he had talent. Resistance to praise . . . ! His life was filled with masterpieces, and what did it gain him? Denial, insult, and moral crucifixion. Ah! what a book might be made out of the errors and the injustices committed by criticism, from Balzac to Flaubert! I remember an article, written by a political journalist, stating that the prose of Flaubert dishonoured the reign of Napoleon III. I remember another article in a literary paper, reproaching him with his ‘ epileptic style ’---and

you know now how much bitterness this epithet contained for the man to whom it was addressed.

“ Well, Flaubert remained kindly under all these attacks, and under the silence which followed it, keeping to himself the bitterness of his career, and not allowing it to rebound upon others. He had no envy for those favoured by literature ; he kept his fine, affectionate laugh, like a child’s, and always sought to praise his fellow-workers, bringing to us, in our hours of discouragement, words of hope and inspiration, words of one we cherished, which we so often need, in the ups and downs of our profession. Is that not so, Daudet ? Is that not so, Zola ? Is that not so, Maupassant ? Was not our friend like that ? And have you ever known him to be bitter except under the stress of the greatest stupidity ?

“ Yes, he was thoroughly good, and he practised, I should say, all the middle-class virtues, were I not afraid of troubling his shade with that word, sacrificing one day his fortune and his happiness to the interests and affection of his family, with a simplicity and a distinction of which there are few examples.

“ Finally, gentlemen, in this age when money threatens to commercialize art and literature, Flaubert always, always, even after the loss of his fortune, resisted the temptations, the solicitations

of money ; perhaps he was one of the last of that old generation of disinterested workers who refused to fabricate books that were not the products of much labour and thought, books which absolutely satisfied their taste, books which sold badly, but were paid for by some degree of posthumous glory.

“ Gentlemen, in order to consecrate, to propagate, and to spread this glory, to give it some material symbol which the least of his fellow-citizens can notice, some friends of the man, admirers of his talent, have ordered from M. Chapu, the sculptor of so many celebrated statues and busts, the bas-relief in marble you have before you. This monument, in which the sculptor, in copying the energetic head of the writer, and in the pleasing allegory of Truth about to write the name of Gustave Flaubert in the book of Immortality, has shown all his cleverness, all his talent—this monument is offered through me by the committee of subscribers to the town of Rouen, and entrusted to the care of the Maire.”

All this went down better than I expected, and my voice held out to the end in an impetuous wind which made my fur coat stick to my body, and which made the manuscript of my speech dance under my nose, for the oration was an open-air harangue ; but my emotion, instead of working itself out upon my throat, went down into my legs,

and I felt a *tremolo* which made me fear I was falling, and forced me to keep on changing my weight from one foot to the other for support.

After me, the Maire made a tactful speech, and after him spoke an Academician of the Académie of Rouen, about twenty-five times as long as mine, containing all the stereotyped expressions, all the commonplaces, all the out-of-date phrases imaginable—a speech which will procure him a good hiding from Flaubert on the Resurrection Day.

To be quite frank, the monument by Chapu is a pretty, sugary bas-relief, in which Truth looks as if she is going to dive down her well.

After lunch at the Maire's, Zola had suggested that Céard and I should be reconciled, and knowing how much the Daudets disliked our quarrel, and how irritating it was to ourselves to have to pretend not to notice each other when we were in the company of mutual friends, I answered that I was quite ready to be reconciled; and when the ceremony came to an end Céard came to compliment me, and we kissed each other in front of the medallion of Flaubert, reunited, as it were, by the intermeditation of his shadow.

When the ceremony was over it was half-past three, and the rain came down with doubled force, and the wind became a hurricane. Maupassant had

been promising us a meal all the time we were in the train this morning, but we gave up all hope of that when he disappeared into the house of a relative. I had to shut myself up with Mirbeau and Bauer and have a grog which lasted us the two hours we had to wait for dinner. At six o'clock, at last, thank goodness! we sit down at table at Mennechet's to a dinner which is neither good nor bad, of which the official dish is, of course, the famous Rouen duck—a dish for which I do not care.

But it is an amusing meal because of the casual, rambling character of the conversation, which goes from the future invasion of the world by the Chinese race, to Dr. Koch's cure for consumption, etc., etc.

November 29.—At ten o'clock this evening, Ajalbert read his play, *La Fille Élis*a, and read it very well. This was at Antoine's. Everybody present was deeply moved.

December 23.—There is only one dress rehearsal of the court scene of *La Fille Élis*a, but even then a number of things are missing. There are no benches, for instance; they have to be made, painted, and dried to-morrow morning. Antoine has a frightful confidence in the success of theatrical apparatus improvised in this manner.

December 26.—First night of *La Fille Élisa*. There is a curtain-raiser, a Christmas story about a child given to the pigs, which, with the eternal repetition of a song about the big bells and little bells of the worshipping night, so exasperated the audience that Antoine comes into my box two or three times, saying, "I've never seen such a house!"

Well, after the success of the last rehearsal, here we are threatened by a failure. Ajalbert and I, both of us very nervous, go and have a glass of Chartreuse at the café next door, and I say to the author of the play: "With that audience, you need not for a moment doubt it: the first act will go to pieces, and our only chance is that Antoine may be able to pull the play together in the second act."

When the curtain goes up, I am at the back of a box, and in front of me I see some young people who begin to make ohs and ahs at the lively things said in the first part of the act. But they soon become quiet and calm, and a little later on they applaud violently.

Nau is the ideal actress for her part. She is very much the Élisa type of girl in the first act, and finely and modernly tragic in the third. Antoine shows himself to be quite a superior actor. Rodenbach, when crossing the boulevard yesterday, heard a man who had been present at the final rehearsal

say of him : " There isn't a single barrister at the courts to-day capable of pleading in the way Antoine pleaded yesterday."

In the corridor I heard a typical phrase : " It is not a play, but it is very interesting ! " No, it doesn't belong to the old theatre, but to the new. I have seldom heard a scene applauded so much as the court scene. *La Fille Élisa* is undoubtedly one of the big successes of the *Théâtre Libre*.

December 27.—This evening, Octave Mirbeau told me with an accent of sincerity that he had never been so much moved at a play as at *La Fille Élisa*, and that never had he noticed an audience so overcome by pity as at this play.

1891

January 4.—Daudet this evening again takes up his idea of starting a review, to be called the *Revue de Champrosay*, into which he is ready to put 100,000 francs, and in which he will group our crowd around him, and pay them as never editor has paid for copy before. In the interview he sees an entirely new method of intellectual propaganda—a method he intends to use a great deal, not confining himself to the interrogation of men of letters.

And this review will be a relief for his mental activities.

The idea is good, and with the storehouse of ideas that Daudet possesses he should make a good editor. “But why call it the *Revue de Champrosay*?” I ask him. “It is a very insignificant title for a mind like yours.” To which he replies by talking about Voltaire at Ferney, and Goethe at Weimar, and of the literary independence which comes into existence in little places outside the great centres of population.

January 7.—Heredia visits me, and talks about a book he is just writing about Ronsard for Hachette's. He says that this poet had, in his time, a popularity greater than that of Hugo in his own century. Then he reads me some verses by his second daughter, whom he describes to me, with little head, with long hair, eyes at times rather sunk in—altogether like a face drawn by Leonardo da Vinci—a little girl of fourteen, who still plays with her doll and who only occasionally, when it is raining, amuses herself by writing quite extraordinary verse.

This is an occasion for her father to talk about atavism, and to ask himself whether style does not proceed from a certain mechanism of the brain which can be transmitted, and which his daughter has inherited; for she has all his own qualities of composition, with a "poetic essence" he confesses he himself has not, and which may make of her a remarkable poet if she goes on. But . . . at the moment she writes no more poetry. He was so silly as to buy her a guitar, and now that takes up all her attention.

January 8.—At dinner I lose my temper and allow myself to tell the younger writers there that they are literary cowards, that Daudet and I have always fought our own battles, with no assistance from the

smallest body of critics, and that such a book as *L'Immortel** did not receive the help of a single friendly pen, and that the play *Germinie Lacerteux* was defended and upheld only by strangers.

January 19.—I receive a note from Ajalbert saying that *La Fille Élisa* has been prohibited.

January 22.—After the ups and downs of hope and despair during these last few days, I get a letter from Ajalbert writing to say that Bourgeois, the Minister of the Interior, is opposed to a formal withdrawal of the prohibition, and that Millerand is going to raise the matter in the *Chambre* on Saturday. In his speech he should read the praise of M. Yves Guyot of *La Fille Élisa*, and this Yves Guyot is a Minister who counts for something in the present Government.

January 23.—Sarcey is indeed a marvellous man : after having written a kindly notice of *La Fille Élisa*, here he is, elaborating the most damnatory notice of the play, with the noble intention of furnishing the Minister and the censorship with arguments for their case.

January 24 (Saturday).—What a battle I am

* A novel of Daudet's attacking the Académie Française.

living in ! While Millerand interpellates Bourgeois as to the prohibition of *La Fille Élis*a, I am writing my reply to Renan.

I am really a little sorry not to have accepted Ajalbert's invitation to the *Chambre*. The debate would have made a fine note.

At five o'clock, Ajalbert and Mlle Nau burst in upon me, coming back from the debate. Mlle Nau got in by sending in a card to Millerand with "*La Fille Élis*a" on it. Everything went as it should. The interpellation was made in the midst of the startled mock modesty of the *Chambre*, and Bourgeois made a reply to it in fairly good taste.

I am distinctly not loved by politicians ; which is as I deserve, considering the contempt I have for them. One of them said to Millerand, in a tone which cannot be described, " Then you are a friend of that de Goncourt ? "

January 31.—*La Fille Élis*a, the play banned by the censorship, has had a great success. It has been making Paris deaf, during the last few days, on account of the street-hawkers : a first edition of 300,000 has been sold out, and *La Lanterne* * has had to reprint it.

February 10.—This morning the Daudets signed the

* Rochefort's paper.

marriage contract of their son Léon* with Jeanne Hugo.

February 28.—During the excitement of these last days I have one little satisfaction: I read in an art journal that in London, at the Burlington Fine Arts Club Gallery, there is an exhibition of French water-colours where, among the works of the most famous water-colourists, appear those of my brother. The *Bull*, by Fragonard, is also there.

March 12.—At last a letter bringing good news. On coming home, I find a letter from the Odéon asking for books of words to begin rehearsals of *Germinie Lacerteux*.

March 21.—At half-past eight, Daudet and I go off to see the revival of *Germinie Lacerteux*. I must say I feel a little emotion, and a little afraid lest the fight should begin all over again. No; the scenes pass by, and not a single "Oh!" not a movement of annoyance, not a timid whisper, not a hiss. There are three calls after every act. The only man in the theatre who disapproves is Sarcey, whose large face pretends to indicate boredom.

† Léon Daudet, who is still living, is now best known as a Royalist hotspur.

March 24.—Everybody at the Odéon is cheerful and gay, from the author to the scene-shifters. What an atmosphere of intoxication one gets out of a theatrical success! This place, once so slow, so critical in its applause, now applauds for all it is worth.

April 27.—They produced Ibsen's *Wild Duck* at the *Théâtre Libre* to-night. . . . Foreigners make the most of their distance from us . . . It is just as well the play is by a Scandinavian . . . if it were by a Frenchman . . . The dramatic power of it is not bad . . . but the humour is like a polar imitation of French humour . . . and the language gets distinctly bookish when it rises a little.

May 7.—At dinner I let myself go, in a sort of anger, against this absorption which is going on at present of foreign ideas by the French: the irony which is in favour at the moment is not the irony of Chamfort, but that of Swift; criticism has become Swiss, German, and Scottish; a religion of Russian novels and Danish plays has been accepted. If Corneille borrowed his plays from the Spanish, at any rate he placed a French seal upon his borrowings; while to-day the borrowing we make, in our servile admiration, amounts to a real denationalization of our literature.

May 31.—In my *Attic* * to-day's conversation once more turns to the conquest of French literature by foreign literature. We agree that the young generation of authors have a tendency to prefer the cloudy, the nebulous, and to despise clearness. Daudet quotes a curious fact regarding the revolution which has taken place in people's minds. It is that formerly the best students attended classes in rhetoric—that is to say, all the future professors and those who might be expected to have a great career before them; now, since the war with Germany, the most intelligent ones attend classes in philosophy.

Daudet and I express our humiliation at seeing our literature Germanized, Russified, Americanized; but Rodenbach, on the contrary, puts forward his theory that these borrowings may be good on the whole, because they are the food supply with which a literature is nourished, and that after a little time, when the foreign elements have been properly absorbed, they will have increased our range of ideas while at the same time becoming infused into the general stock of ideas.

These borrowings lead us on to talk about the cunning of our young authors, who, in this age of imitation, do not borrow from their old fellow-

* Edmond de Goncourt had some time back started a series of literary and artistic "At Homes" in what he called his "Attic."

citizens, as did their innocent forerunners, but now they rob on the sly unknown and unexplored Dutch and American poets, and they get their plagiarisms received as new creations, in the absence of all informed, erudite, and well-read criticism.

Before dinner, while I am chatting with Daudet, he gives vent to his admiring astonishment for the three philosophical dialogues which his son is about to publish, finding in them, as he says, the "externals" of his father and the intuition of his mother. It is true that Léon is a mixture of North and South; and the boy is curious too, because, while he is a child in the conduct of life, he seems to have the brain of a developed man in matters of the intellect. Daudet is especially struck at the quantity of the ideas in his son's book.

July 16.—Halperine Kaminsky, the Russian translator of his compatriots, tells us that Dostoevsky was an epileptic like Flaubert.

And when I talked to him about the way the Russians worship their authors, he said that when Dostoevsky was buried, so enormous was the number of people present that a peasant asked, "Was he an Apostle?"

[During the remainder of this year Edmond de Goncourt suffered on account of his health. To the pains

of rheumatism and of internal bleeding was added the anxiety that his sight was beginning to fail. As before, during the past ten years, he spent the summer months in the company of the Daudets.]

1892

January 5.—Had a surprising letter from Magnard, the editor of the *Figaro*, which has always been so hostile to me. In this very kind letter he offers me the post just vacated by Wolff: the art-editorship, with all the independence, all the liberty I can desire. I refuse it, but I cannot help thinking of all the people whom my acceptance would bring to my feet, the respect I should have gained in the house of the Princess, and the ease with which I should have found publishers to illustrate my books.

January 7.—Great dinner at the Daudets'.

Coppée, who is there, is quite extraordinarily witty: he gave us a firework display, which lasted the whole evening, with his jokes, some of which were pretty, some of which were not. Yes, Coppée is the most admirable talker in Paris in this century of irony and jest; his conversation has a delightful undercurrent, sometimes expressed by sentences finished off by a sly wink.

At Maupassant's there is only a single book on the drawing-room table: the *Almanach de Gotha*.* That is a symptom of the beginning of madness!

February 3.—This evening, at the Princess's, I hear bad news of Maupassant. He believes, all the time, that he is being swindled. He is either depressed or irritated. He imagines that there is a conspiracy of doctors against him: that they wait out in the corridor to inject morphia into him, which will make holes in his brain. He is obstinately convinced that everybody is stealing from him: that his servant has taken 6,000 francs from him; and a few days later this sum becomes 16,000 francs.

February 28.—This evening, at Rodenbach's, we were discussing waltzes, and I maintained that the people who waltz best are the people who habitually skate. French women waltz with their bodies quite erect, while Dutch women and women from other countries where skating is common waltz with a slight bend of the body as if they were running over ice.

Stevens was talking in a corner of the room about the enormous quantities of beer and alcohol which Courbet used to consume—as many as thirty drinks

* The European equivalent of Debrett.

in one night, and wine with his absinthe instead of water.

March 6.—Dinner at the Charpentiers', with a crowd of musicians, all old, all ugly, all fat, all chewing away in a bad temper.

Zola tells me that he finds it extremely difficult to finish *La Débâcle*. The enormous manuscript of the book (which will run to six hundred pages) will consist of about a thousand pages of thirty-five lines each. When somebody asks him what he will do after *Les Rougon-Macquart* and *Le Docteur Pascal*, he hesitates for a moment; then he confesses that drama, which used to attract him a great deal once upon a time, does not please him so much now that he is free to write it. He says that every time he enters a theatre where a play by him is being acted, he is a little disgusted. He says, in this connection, that one evening, when he went in to see the tenth or so performance of *L'Assommoir*, Dailly, intoxicated by his success, changed his part in an odious manner, adding words to such an extent that Zola was almost on the point of applying for an injunction against him.

There he interrupted himself to tell us that he had been to Lourdes, and that he was struck, stupefied, by the sight of that crowd of hallucinated believers,

and that a fine thing could be written on this renewal of faith which has introduced mysticism into religion and elsewhere in our own day.

Leaving Lourdes, but still talking about his future work, he said he would be glad to do a year's work for the *Figaro*; he would like to write a chronicle, as he had some ideas to express on the subject of M. de Vogüé and others.

March 12.—*Germinie Lacerteux* was performed to-day. Réjane has never acted better, been more applauded, or more completely subdued the public.

March 15.—This evening, in the little temporary box at the back of the stage, made to allow her to change her dresses quickly, Réjane told me that yesterday, at the performance of *Germinie Lacerteux*, Sarcey replied to somebody who had remarked that the audience was applauding a great deal: "Yes, they applaud, but they don't like it!"

March 18.—The day is almost ended, and to-day my thoughts have insensibly wandered sadly back to the past, seeking to see once again those dear ones who are no more. I had let the twilight come into my study without asking for a lamp, and little by little the image of my father, whom I had lost when I was twelve years old, appeared to me in the

glowing coals of my almost extinguished fire—appeared to me in the mysterious fog and pallor of a picture which hangs behind one, and which is reflected into a mirror in front.

And, in the vague memory of my eyes, I saw again a long body, a thin face, with a long, fleshless nose, with narrow little mutton-chop whiskers, and with living and clever dark eyes—"the pupils of M. de Goncourt" people used to call them—with his hair brushed upwards, where the seven sword-cuts which the young lieutenant had received in the battle of Pordenone had left furrows under the upturned tufts. His was a face in which, in spite of fatigue and pain, the warlike energy of his features still remained.

I saw him again with his military walk, when, after he had read the newspapers in that old reading-room which still exists in the Passage de l'Opéra, he used to walk up and down the Boulevard des Italiens, from the rue Drouot to the rue Laffitte, in the company of two or three gentlemen, wearing the rosette of an officer of the Legion of Honour. I could see his military figure with his long Napoleonic overcoat obstructing the boulevard every twenty steps, by stopping to make the most of an enthusiastic conversation, and making the ample movements of command of a cavalry officer.

I saw him again in the drawing-room of the de Villedeuil sisters, the daughters of the Minister of Louis XVI. and the cousins of my mother—in that cold and immense room with bare white wainscoting, with valuable old furniture hidden under covers, and where one of the two sisters used always to forget her work-bag on the back of a chair, with the rectangular flower-bowls holding some poor faded flowers, with the what-nots on which Royalist objects of art were displayed. I saw him again in this drawing-room, which one might have thought was the drawing-room of the Duchesse d'Angoulême, standing with his back to the fireplace, his devilishly dark eyes full of irony, and every now and again, bored by the solemnity of his surroundings, he would make some remark which would cause the dry old age and the dresses of the two antique ladies to shake with laughter.

I saw him again in the Haute-Marne, at Breuvannes, where the summer holidays of my childhood were spent, walking, on sunny July and August mornings, with his long steps that my little legs could scarce follow, carrying in his hand a stick torn from a vine, and taking me with him to drink a glass of water from the "Fountain of Love," a spring in the midst of meadows covered with daisies, which had a good and fresh flavour,

comparable, in his opinion, with the *aqua felice* of Rome. Sometimes, instead of a stick, he carried a gun on his shoulder, and, without game-bag or dog, I used to see him suddenly aim at something my shortness of sight prevented me from seeing: it was a hare, which his shot knocked over, and which I was given to carry.

I saw him again at Breuvannes the day the fruit was brought in, enframed in the round window of an attic, and throwing apples into the yard of our house, where all the boys of the village, baptized by him with funny names, fought and jostled each other around the missiles, which seemed, to my father, an amusing little version of war.

I saw him again . . . no, I looked in vain, I could not see his head as it was that day . . . I remember only a sheet, a still living hand, of unspeakable thinness, which they gave me to kiss. And that evening, when I returned to the Pension Goubaux, in a dream which was almost a nightmare, my aunt de Courmont, the intelligent woman on whom I based *Madame Gervaisais*, she who had given me a taste for beautiful things when I was still a child, appeared to me, so true to life, that I wondered whether it was a real apparition, and said to me: "Edmond, your father will not live three days!"

That was on Sunday night, and on Tuesday night they came for me to take me to his funeral.

My mother . . . her appearance is reanimated in my memory by the miniature on the corner of my fireplace, a miniature of the year 1821, the year of her marriage . . . I hold it now in the hollow of my hand.

An open face, with sky-blue eyes, a little mouth but serious, yellow hair in curls, three rows of pearls round her neck, a white lawn frock with satin stripes, and a belt and bracelets, and a bunch of ribbons in her hair, all the colour of her eyes.

Poor mother, she had a life of pain and sorrow ! The loss of two little girls, life spent with a husband constantly suffering from his wounds, his health ruined by the Russian campaign, his right shoulder broken, still quite young, eager to do things, irritable because he was unable to return to military life, unable to accept the post of aide-de-camp to the King, like his comrades d'Houdetot and de Rumigny, unable to take part in the African campaigns. . . . Then she became a widow, with a little income from lands with rents difficult to collect. In what she undertook as mother of a family for the benefit of her children she was most unfortunate ; her investments, made by means of her economies and savings, came to nothing.

And I saw again her sweet and sad face, with changes of expression which a portrait cannot give, under three or four sets of circumstances, which somehow leave in one a permanent impression of the loved one in the surroundings of one particular day.

Yes, I saw again her sweet and sad face, as it was one day when I was a child and very ill as the result of a whooping-cough that had been badly treated. I was lying in her big bed, and she was bending over me, and by her head was that of her brother Armand, the fine curly head of an officer of hussars—for in our two families they were nearly all soldiers—when suddenly to my surprise, after having replaced the blankets over the corpse-like thinness of my poor little body, she fell into her brother's arms, bursting into tears.

I saw my mother again as she was on those Shrove Tuesdays when, every year, she used to give a treat to the children of the family, and to their little boy and girl friends, and when all these little Pierrettes, and Swiss shepherdesses, and oyster-women, and Guards, and Harlequins, and sailors, and Turks, filled the calm rooms in the rue des Capucines with their noisy gaiety. On that day alone a little of the joyousness of that

children's carnival going on around her rose to her face and put a charming radiance upon it.

I saw my mother again as she was during those years, when, retired from the world, going nowhere, in the evenings she would become the tender schoolmistress of my brother. I saw her in her middle-class bedroom, with its old family furniture, with its Empire clock, sitting in a little arm-chair, opposite my brother doing his lessons, his head nearly buried in the old mahogany writing-desk, and lifted up, when he was small, on a big dictionary placed on a chair. She used to sit with a book or some embroidery in her hands, which she would soon let drop on her knees, remaining in a dreamy contemplation before her pretty child, before her little school prize winner, before the dear adored one who was the life and soul of those friendly houses where she used to take him—and the pride of her heart.

I saw her again, my poor mother, in the Château de Magny, on her deathbed, at the moment when the noise of the large shoes of the village priest, who had just administered extreme unction, could still be heard on the stairs ; I saw her again, without the strength to speak, putting my brother's hand into mine, with that unforgettable look on a mother's face, tortured by anxiety as to what would happen

to that youth, left at the beginning of his life, in the full possession of his strength but not yet started upon a career.

July 26.—I dine with the Zolas and the Charpentiers.

When somebody mentions the book Zola is said to be writing about Lourdes, he says: "I found myself at Lourdes in the rain, in a terrible down-pour, and in a hotel where all the good rooms had been taken, and I wanted, in my bad temper, to go away again the next day . . . But I went out for a moment, and the sight of these sick wretches, these dying children taken up to the statue, these people prostrate on the ground in prayer . . . the sight of this city of faith, come into existence as the result of the hallucination of a little girl of fourteen . . . the sight of this mystic city in an age of scepticism . . . the sight of that grotto, of those processions, of those crowds of pilgrims from Brittany and Anjou . . ."

"Yes," interrupted Mme Zola, "it had a colour . . .!"

Zola rudely continued: "I wasn't speaking of colour. Here it is the activity of those souls which is to be painted. . . . Well, that gripped me to such an extent that at Tarbes, where I went

later, I spent two whole nights in writing about Lourdes."

Later on in the evening he talked of his ambition to be able to speak, snapping at his wife, with a sort of wave of his nose: "Novels, novels, it's always the same thing!" And after a silence he exclaims that he has not the gift of speech; that he does not experience the joy of being inspired; that he is injured by the fear of common things . . . and it becomes evident that he is passionately anxious to add to his talent, in order to make a complete success of his career, the eloquence of a Lamartine, and to double his part in life by being a politician as well as an author.

August 30.—One of these days, as I was correcting the proofs of a new edition of *Madame Gervaisais*, I felt that I wanted to portray the real Madame Gervaisais, who was an aunt of mine, and to describe the influence which Mme Nathalie de Courmont, that able woman, had on the tastes and aptitudes of my life.

When I go down the rue de la Paix nowadays, it often happens to me that I do not see it as it is to-day. I do not read the names Reboux, Doucet, Vever, or Worth, but I try to find, by means of names which are buried in my memory, the shops

and businesses which are not those of to-day, but were there fifty or sixty years ago. And I am astonished because I cannot find the shops of the jeweller Rivaut, or of the perfumer Guerlain, or the English chemist who used to be either to the right or to the left of the big doorway numbered 15.

Above, on the first floor, was, and still is, the large flat in which my aunt used to live, under lofty ceilings which gained my respect during my childhood. My eyes have preserved the distant memory of my dear aunt, the memory of her hair making a halo around her, her rounded and pearly forehead, her eyes deep and vague in their envelope; her delicate features, the youthful thinness of which phthisis preserved all her life, her slight bosom, and lastly her clever beauty, which I mixed up in my novel with the psychic beauty of Mme Berthelot.

Nevertheless, I ought to say that the slightly severe face of the woman, her serious expression, the surroundings of melancholy gravity which she kept up around her, made me fear her a little when I was quite a small child, because I felt that she was not living enough, not human enough.

Of that room in which I saw my aunt for the first time I now remember only a dressing-table, fitted with innumerable flasks of cut crystal, from

which the morning light reflected sapphire, amethyst, and ruby rays, and which gave my youthful imagination, fresh from reading *Aladdin*, a sort of sensation as if my whole being had been transported into a garden of precious stones. And I remember—I do not remember the circumstances, but I had stayed two or three nights at my aunt's—the physical pleasure of washing my hands up to the elbows in almond cream—the fashionable way of washing one's hands among the women of the generation of Louis-Philippe—in that room of fairy lights.

Some years later it was, at the end of the rue de la Paix, the second from the house at the corner of the rue des Petits-Champs and the Place Vendôme, that my aunt inhabited a charming old apartment, which in those days must have cost about 2,500 francs.

In the nice drawing-room looking on to the Place Vendôme, where my aunt used to be found; always reading, underneath a portrait of her mother, which looked like a portrait of her sister, of a worldly sister, there was one of the finest pictures by Greuze that I ever saw, in which the beauties of the French master's art were combined with the flowing colouring of a Rubens. The painter, who had given her lessons when she was young, repre-

sented her here as she was when married, with all the elegant slightness of her pretty face and body, and with her back to a harpsichord, on which one of her hands, held out behind her, was trying to strike a chord, while the other held an orange, with three little green leaves ; a relic, no doubt, of her stay in Italy, and of the diplomatic career of my aunt's father in that country.

When one came into the drawing-room, she would slowly raise her eyelids, as if she were emerging from the depths of her reading.

As I grew older, I began to lose the timid little nervousness which I used to feel in the neighbourhood of my aunt ; I began to familiarize myself with her sweet gravity and her serious smile, and at college I used to find myself recalling the hours spent with her, without being able to explain to myself why these impressions should be the deepest, strongest, and most enticing of any that I had during the week.

Of the second apartment, my memory has preserved a dreamlike recollection of a dinner with Rachel, who had then only just begun her career. Only Andral, my aunt's doctor, his brother and his wife, my mother and I were present, and the talent of the great artist was for us alone, and I felt myself very proud to be one of the guests.

But this dinner was in the winter, when I used only to see my aunt for a few hours on the day I left college; while in the summer, during the holidays, my life and hers were spent together, from morning to night.

In those days my aunt used to possess a little house at Menilmontant, which the duc d'Orléans had given to Mlle Marquise, or to some other notoriously improper person.

Oh! an enchanting place has rested in my memory, and in the fear of being disenchanted I have never wished to return to it since! The beautiful seignorial house of the eighteenth century, with its immense dining-room, decorated with large, still-life paintings, with those fruit-stalls run by Flemish women with light skin who had certainly been painted by Jordaens; the beautiful seignorial house with its three drawing-rooms with polished wainscoting, with its large garden in which stood two little Temples of Love, and with its kitchen-garden with Italian vine-arbours, fiercely guarded by the old gardener, Germain, who used to throw his rake at you if he caught you stealing grapes; and with its little park, and at the end of the park its shady wood of green trees, in which my aunt's father and mother were buried; and, lastly, with labyrinths of outhouses and stables, somewhere in

which one might find an eccentric member of the family occupied in manufacturing a carriage with three wheels, which was to go by itself.

But in this house my favourite place was a ruined hall which had become a store-place of gardening implements—a hall with broken-up seats, like one of those open-air circuses of ancient Italy. Here I used to sit for hours upon the loose stones and watch the plays which were being acted in my brain against the black hole which had been the stage.

In this one-time princely abode, my aunt, the wife of her brother—the mother of the present ambassador at Rome—and my mother used to live together during the summer.

There, as my aunt did not regard me, a child, with contempt, whenever she saw traces of intelligence in me, she used to have me about her the greater part of the day, giving me lots of little orders, making me accompany her in the garden, carry the basket in which she put the flowers which she chose herself for the vases in the drawing-rooms, amusing herself with my eternal questions, and doing me the honour of answering me seriously. And I kept myself a little behind her, as if I felt a certain adoration for this woman, who seemed to me of another essence from that of the women of

my family, who, in her gestures, her carriage, her speech, the play of her features when she smiled on you, had a command over you like that of no other woman. And it used to happen that my mother, finding herself without authority over me, when I had committed some misdeed, used to ask her to scold me, and my aunt, with just a few words of disdain, put me into such confusion that I felt truly ashamed of my peccadillo, without ever feeling within me the instinctive revolt of the naughty boy.

It is not only the taste for art that I owe to my aunt. I also owe to her my taste for literature. My aunt had the reflective mind of a woman who had read well, and whose words, when she spoke about philosophy or painting in her beautifully feminine voice, in the midst of the commonplace voices around me, had an action on my understanding, ensnared it and charmed it. I believe it was from her mouth that I heard for the first time, long before they had been vulgarized, the words *subjective* and *objective*. From that time forward she planted in me the love of words, chosen, precise, imaged; of luminous words like "the mirrors in which our thoughts are visible," as Joubert beautifully puts it,—a love which, later, became a love of the well-written thing.

October 27.—Daudet told us that, when he was seven or eight years old, he lost his nurse one night in Nîmes, and wandered about the streets in a state of mind that can be imagined. When he had at last got to his house, and saw its lighted windows, before going in he kissed the door-knocker in his happiness, saying to us: "I was already a poet."

December 6.—One of my friends, who is being treated by Gruby, repeated a conversation with the old Hungarian doctor about Heinrich Heine.

Gruby was asked to attend a consultation with some other doctors at Sichel the oculist's, to give his opinion on an eye complaint from which Heine was suffering, at a time when he had not yet become the celebrity he was later. Gruby attributed this complaint to an incipient affection of the spine and prescribed a treatment, but he was in a minority and his advice was not taken.

Ten or twelve years passed, at the end of which a doctor came to him, and recalling the consultation, took him to see Heine.

On opening the door, Gruby's introducer said to Heine, "I bring you the man who will save you," and Heine turned towards him and said: "Ah! doctor, why did I not listen to you?"

Gruby with difficulty restrained his emotions at finding, in the place of the young and vigorous man he had formerly seen, a nearly blind paralytic, lying on the ground on a carpet.

Nevertheless Heine, in spite of his sufferings, had preserved the keen wit which was his to the very end. And when, after a lengthy examination, he asked Gruby, "Well, am I good for long?" and Gruby had replied, "Yes, for very long," Heine said, "Then don't tell my wife so!"

Before going, in order to ascertain the degree of paralysis of the muscles of the sick man's mouth, Gruby asked him if he could hiss, and the poet, lifting his inert eyelids with his fingers, said to the doctor: "Not even Scribe's best play!"

1893

March 6.—Ah, my contemporaries, how they pass away! Yesterday, while Heredia was at my house, talking about his last interview with Taine, with his cab waiting at the door to take him to him, Taine died.

April 5.—Montesquiou tells me that he has been collecting a great many notes on and particulars of Whistler, and that he hopes one day to write a study of him. He expressed admiration for that man who arranged his life in such a way as to gain for himself victories while he was still living, while others have to put up with posthumous glory. And he came back to the lawsuit of the painter with the English critic,* who had spoken of the "impertinence" of demanding a thousand guineas for throwing "a paint-pot in the face of the public." And the reply of Whistler is truly fine. When he was asked how long it took him to paint the

* John Ruskin.

picture, he answered disdainfully, "An hour or two;" and when people said "Oh!" he added, "Yes, I only had to paint one or two mornings, but the canvas was also painted with the experience of my whole life."

October 10.—Lunch with Sarah Bernhardt at Bauer's, who is very kindly acting as intermediary to get her to act in *La Faustin*.

As we sit down at table, she complains that she is very short, and all the time she sits across a corner of her chair, absolutely like a little girl at a large table. She talks with a certain vivacity and brightness about the history of her journeys round the universe, giving us a curious detail, that when her future appearances in the United States are announced, always a year in advance, a boat-load of French teachers are sent for to bring the young people and the misses of that country into a condition to understand and to follow the plays in which she is to appear. Then she talked about her robbery at Buenos Aires, where the eight men who were supposed to guard her had fallen asleep so soundly that they heard nothing, and that she herself had to be thrown out of bed to be awakened, and that her dog slept for three days on end.

I sit next to Sarah, and this woman, who is just

on fifty years of age, has a skin like a little girl's. To-day there is no make-up or even rice powder on it, and it has the rose tint of a child. Her face has a delicacy, a curious transparency about the temples, under the network of tiny blue veins.

Sarah talks about her health for a moment. She takes dumb-bell exercises every morning, and an hour's hot bath every night. Then she talks about the people she has known—Rocheport, Dumas *filis*, etc.

This woman has undoubtedly an innate amiability, a desire to please which is not put on, but natural.

October 17.—Dinner at Sarah's this evening for the reading of *La Faustin*.

The little hall, or rather the studio, where the tragedian receives us looks a little like a theatre stage. Pictures are lined up against the wall two or three deep; they are not fastened up, and have some of the appearance of a picture sale in preparation at an expert's. The picture which dominates the room is a life-size portrait of her by Clairin. In front of the pictures stand all sorts of pieces of furniture—mediæval chests, inlaid cabinets, a multitude of objects of foreign art, statuettes from Chili, instruments of savage music, great baskets of

flowers, of which both leaves and petals are made of birds' feathers. There is only one thing which one feels to be personal amongst all these—a quantity of large white bear rugs, which make a luminous whiteness in the corner where she stands.

In the middle of this hall is a cage in which a parrot and a monkey live together. The parrot has an immense beak, which the little monkey torments and picks at. It is always on the move, always jumping around the bird, which could snap the creature in two with one blow of its formidable beak, but is content to utter terrible cries. When I began to lament the terrible life the parrot had to undergo, I was told that they had been separated once, and that in consequence of this separation the parrot had nearly died of grief, and so it had been absolutely necessary to put him back again with his tormentor.

At eight o'clock Sarah arrives from her rehearsal, and says she is dying from hunger.

She is dressed in white, with a sort of large bib floating on her bosom, and her dress, with its long train, all spangled with gold, encircles her in gracefully-waving lines.

The dinner is dainty; the mistress of the house drinks only one beverage, the English name of which escapes me, and which is made up of Bor-

deaux, orange and pine-apple juice, and peppermint. Sarah appears very amiable, very attentive on my account, very much concerned that I should not be cold.

At last we go into the studio for the reading. There is no lamp; the place is lighted by candles, and the play has been reproduced from the manuscript by some mechanical process, which has resulted in thin letters, far less legible than the large round-hand of a copyist, which makes Bauer very slow in his reading, and it is cold, very cold.

After the seventh scene I ask to read the eighth and last. I do not read well, but nervously, and Sarah seems to be attracted by the last scene.

Then tea and refreshments, while we all forget all about the play.

Then Sarah sits down by me, and tells me that the play is full of passion, that the last scene seems superb to her, and asks me to leave her the fourth and fifth scenes, which have not been read. Then Sarah uses words which seem to express her desire to appear in the play, and there is even one phrase in which there is something about putting me into touch with her manager, but at the end of this conversation there has really not been a word spoken definitely.

Now there are a good many things which are

against me. Sarah is a romantic, but at the moment the commotion which has been taking place around Réjane has given her the desire to try her hand at modernity ; but her literary temperament is against it. Again, in my play she has to possess a disreputable sister, and she herself happens to have a sister, which I did not know at all.

October 25.—Jean Lorrain asked, “ What do you think of that play of de Goncourt ? ”

The son of Sarah Bernhardt replied, “ I like it very well, but do you really think my mother could act in it ? ”

November 9.—Coming away from dinner, Léon Daudet, with his usual hot-headedness, proclaims that Wagner is a greater genius than Beethoven, and, going higher and higher, finally affirms that he is a genius as great as Æschylus, and that *Parsifal* is equal to *Prometheus*.

Whereupon his father told him that in “ inarticulate language ”—which is music—Wagner has given him sensations such as no other musician has done, but that in “ articulate language ”—which is literature—he knows people infinitely above him, and he specially picks out Shakespeare.

Then Rodenbach, who is there, takes up the con-

versation—and he talks marvellously this evening—and declares that the truly great are those who set themselves free from the fashions, the enthusiasms, the epileptic infatuations of their time. He thinks that the superiority of Beethoven lies in his addressing himself to the brain, while Wagner only speaks to the nerves, and declares that one comes out of a Beethoven recital with a feeling of serenity, while after hearing Wagner one comes out saddened, as if one had been rolled about by great waves one day when the sea was rough.

November 26.—I wrote to Sarah Bernhardt to send me back my play, and to-day I received an express letter from her, in which she says that she very much wants to appear in a play of mine, and asks me if she can keep it for another six weeks, so that she can read it at her convenience. My belief is that, although she has a certain wish to act in it, she will not do so.

1894

January 3.—An unexpected visit. M. Larroumet comes to see me, and tells me this. He had published a large book on Marivaux, and was attending an examination—for his doctorate, I think—when his examiner said to him,—

“What made you write a book of six hundred pages on a second-rate author?”

“Do you think, sir, that if these six hundred pages had been devoted to the elder Crébillon, my book would have been worth more?”

The examiner did not reply, and continued to turn over the pages of the enormous monograph, when he suddenly came upon our name at the end of a note, and exclaimed: “Ah, this is too bad, putting this name into your book. . . . It was the Goncourts, was it not, I read in an article by Sainte-Beuve, who said that antiquity was probably an invention designed to enable professors to earn their bread and butter? The names of these writers

should never be mentioned by any self-respecting author ! ”

It is really curious how a little joke like that manages to evoke such intense feeling among a certain class of men.

January 21.—Had a visit from Bonnetain to-day, whom I had not seen since his return from the Sudan.

He says that one can go from one end of Africa to the other with a walking-stick, and run less danger than in the outskirts of Paris. “ My ! ” he adds, “ when soldiers are sent out they absolutely insist on rifle-shots, and all the complications come from them. ”

He talks of French policy out there, of its submission to the requirements of England, and he tells me that an important official out there told him, in a confidential moment, “ If I could read you the dispatches I have in here on our humiliating attitude towards England, we should both weep ! ”

He gives some sad details of the waste and the general dishonesty prevailing in the region, and this sentence keeps on coming into his remarks like a refrain : “ You know, out there one catches a complaint which makes one see things from another angle than in Europe . . . they call it *Sudan-*

itis." And Sudanitis makes people do beastly things.

February 22.—At last I received to-day, without a line, a single word from Sarah Bernhardt, the manuscript of *La Faustin*.

June 25.—This morning, on opening the *Écho de Paris* in bed, my eyes fell on this line printed in large letters: "Assassination of M. Carnot."

The newspaper of to-day is a tragic document of the instability of human things. It gives up three pages to the menu of a lunch and to the glorification of the lifework of the man whose death "at 12.45 a.m." is announced on the fourth page.

I really have no luck, no luck at all, with the publication of my books. *En 18..*, my first volume, appeared on the day of the *Coup d'État* of Napoleon III., and now the seventh volume of the *Journal des Goncourt*, perhaps the last book I shall publish in my life, has all its notices put back by the assassination of the President of the Republic.

July 27.—A long carriage ride with Daudet in the Forest of Sénart. He acknowledges his sensibility to attacks made on him in the press, and says that he has not read a single one of the last

articles against him, which he knew were hostile. I told him of my plan for neutralizing literary attacks : it is to place the articles in a sealed envelope and to read them two or three months after their publication. By that time they have no effect—their venom has evaporated.

August 2.—The musician Pugno, who dines with us this evening, speaks quite eloquently of the little dramas which take place in the life of executives. He declares that at every concert he gives he feels the anxious, sickening emotions of his first concert, and all those fears that he will be prevented from performing—which continue to the last note—by the palpitations of his heart, the nervous contractions of his upper arms, the warmth of the hall which may make the piano keys damp, or a groove in the floor which may cause the leg of his chair to slip. After his performances the outflow of emotion has been so heavy that he has terrible attacks of cramp in the stomach.

But when he was giving concerts in London, which lasted two hours and at which he was the only performer, the worst fear of all was that he might lose his recollection for a moment, and that, as he put it, “a black hole” might appear in his memory.

October 24.—I hear the voice of Zola downstairs. He has come to ask me for a letter of introduction to de Béhaine. He tells me that he wants to have his advice, whether or not to ask for an audience of the Pope. He says that, as an old Liberal, the ceremonial of an audience disgusts him, and that at heart he hopes it will be refused to him, but that he finds himself forced into it by the announcement he made. And the face of the Pope, and the series of papal rooms through which one has to go to see him, have a great interest.

Then he changes the subject. He talks about Lourdes, complaining that the Catholic campaign against his book, which would have been a good thing for a book of which 30,000 copies were printed, is very prejudicial to a book of which 120,000 copies are printed, because it deprives him of the 80,000 purchasers who would raise the figure to 200,000. Thence, returning to the Pope, he assures me that the Pope is to a certain extent the slave of the Lourdes priests, because he receives 300,000 francs from them, and this dependence of his Holiness is perhaps one of the causes of an audience having been refused him. As he goes away he is so kind as to tell me that he has just read *Madame Gervaisais* for the second time, and

that he is astonished that the book did not have a very great success.

Doctor Michaut pays a visit. He is just back from a little trip to Haiti. He describes the deathly condition of that country since it was abandoned by the French, and talks about the ruined buildings and roads, and the absence of any industry of any description whatsoever, the negroes being, in his opinion, incapable of civilization.

The conversation goes on to the poisons in the manufacture of which the natives of that country excel—among others, of a poison got from corpses buried in cemeteries, which leaves no trace. It is from Haiti that that white powder comes which burglars blow into a room in order to stupefy people, and to be able to rob them in all security, as they did to Sarah Bernhardt. This is what happened to a European of his acquaintance. This European used to go to sleep with a revolver at his bedside, and with his papers and money under his pillow, and he saw his burglar help himself to his revolver, lift his head up from the pillow, and take his money, without being able to cry out or to say anything for eight or ten hours afterwards.

October 30.—Dinner to-night with Ajalbert, Gefroy, Carrière, and Clemenceau.

Clemenceau is a fine, nervous talker, whose words carry colour. He has a delicate and keen sense of observation:

He says that once, coming back from hunting, when he was young, he had a look at a chestnut tree, the chestnuts of which were stolen every year, to see if they were yet ripe. This chestnut tree stood in a thorn bush ten feet high. "There's a man there, look!" suddenly shouted the little servant who was accompanying him, and there, sure enough, Clemenceau saw a man lying flat on his stomach, and who did not reply when he was called to, but proceeded to crawl away on all fours. He could only be followed by the movement of the twigs above him. Clemenceau and his servant then threw themselves in pursuit, hoping to catch hold of him from above, where there was a little space in the bush; but when the man suddenly came into sight he showed his head on the opposite side of the bush, and he only showed it as a swimmer might do in a stream, without letting Clemenceau see his face. Many years later he became a Deputy. An old man one day made his way into his house, and came to ask him for his protection for his son shut up in a convict prison, and who was the peasant he had once pursued. He was a man who had killed his sweetheart, and was in hiding.

In the street Clemenceau confessed to literary yearnings, and declared that he would write a novel and a play if he did not have to do an article for the *Justice* every day, and two articles a week for the *Dépêche*. If only he had half his days free, he cried, he would write that novel and that play.

December 2.—This evening Loti drops in at Daudet's, and talks about his journey of forty-eight days in the desert, describing his joy at the sunrises and the sunsets in the pure light, unaffected by water vapour; and all this while he was in perfect health—which, as he says, he owes to his "Bedouin temperament."

December 28.—What an active, what a volcanic, what a deafening man is Mistral! He alone makes as much noise as ten from the North. But he is really very amusing with his witty exuberance. To-day he tells us, with imitation in every word and over all his body, the story of Adolphe Dumas, the lame poet, who was destined to become a tailor, the trade of all the lame men of his region. Now, at the wayside inn kept by his parents, there one day arrived a troop of wandering comedians, and as a result of their performance in the large room

of the inn, the innkeeper's daughter, a beautiful girl, captivated by the spangles of the comedian who took the part of Prince Charming, decamped with him to Marseilles, whence, suddenly disenchanted, she went to Paris. On getting out of the coach that brought her, she found, so to speak, an old Englishman in the street, whom her story interested, and who first sent her for some time to a convent to be polished up a little, and then married her. As soon as she was married she sent for the apprentice tailor, for whom she had a great affection, and set him at his studies, at the end of which he became the literary man Adolphe Dumas, with relations with Lamartine, whom he introduced to *Mireille*, upon which Lamartine wrote the article which made Mistral celebrated. Then—and this distinctly belongs to those Catholic-Romantic days—to thank God for the article, Adolphe Dumas received the communion in Mistral's company and that of two other writers at Notre-Dame, after which they confessed themselves to Père Félix, and then had a feast and made themselves very drunk.

“A relapse into religion like that happened to me too,” cries Daudet. “It was when I first began to write for the *Figaro*, when I was about seventeen. I don't know what was the matter, but one

day I went to find Père Félix, and asked him to confess me and to grant me absolution. He refused to do it unless I first read four large volumes of his sermons. Well, they were very nicely bound, and a few days later, when my access of religion had gone off a little, and being hungry, I sold the four volumes of Père Félix, which kept me in food for two or three days.

“But that doesn't conclude my dealings with Père Félix. In 1860—eh, Mistral, I was just coming to you!—at Lyons, I found myself short of money, and so I offered a paper an article on my contemporaries, in which, after a description of Père Félix, I related my misdeed. This sketch of him was followed by one of Rigolboche.*

“When I went to collect payment for the article I received it, but the editor told me that I had better leave Lyons, because people whose appearance was not altogether well disposed, and who were indignant at this mixture of Père Félix with Rigolboche, had been to ask for my address.”

In the noise of the discussion I can vaguely hear Mistral continue his biography of Adolphe Dumas to the end. Adolphe Dumas never ceased to repeat, when referring to the poor inn kept by his

* A none too reputable Paris dancer, who published, in 1860, a little book of reminiscences, being then eighteen years of age.

father: "All the same, I had a grandfather who used to wear silk stockings!"

"Who was your grandfather?" Mistral at last asked him.

"Captain Perrin," proudly answered Adolphe Dumas.

Now Captain Perrin, so Mistral told us, was ruined by supplying garlic to the value of 300,000 francs to the army of the Pyrénées-Orientales, which was paid for in paper money which at the time had no value at all.

1895

January 26.—M. Maurice Talmeyr, in a severe criticism of my *Journal*, accuses me of belittling my brother's place in our work. This, just at the moment when I have managed, after some trouble, that a street in Nancy, which was to be called rue Edmond-de-Goncourt, should be the rue des Goncourt.

February 2.—I had a letter from Huret, who offers me the opportunity of replying, directly or indirectly, to Talmeyr, in the *Figaro*. I reply with this letter :—

“DEAR SIR,—I thank you for your offer. One of my principles is not to reply. If I were accused of having murdered my brother—which will perhaps happen some day—I should still keep silence. I leave it to time to deal with the true and the false, the justice and the injustice, of the attacks made against my writings and myself.”

February 3.—This evening somebody was saying

that the clumsy hand-shake made with the elbow turned back against the body comes from the hand-shakes of the Prince of Wales at a time when he had rheumatism in his shoulder. The dull fashion of covering up women's necks arises also from the jewellery with which the Princess of Wales hid marks of scrofula. And these fashions, already buried by London, are adopted by us, just as Paris fashions find their way later on into the provinces.

February 8 (Friday). — At a dinner at Fasquelle's, I talk with Zola about his novel *Rome*, in the enormous notes of which he feels himself a little lost, and who declares that he does not feel as wildly energetic about this book as he did for his other works. And, at the moment, this man, who generally does his work in the morning, can only get up at eleven o'clock, as the result of neuralgic pains which change to frightful toothaches at one o'clock in the morning. On top of all this he has the anxiety of three lawsuits: a libel action on account of *Lourdes*, an action in Brazil on account of some infringement of copyright or other, and an action against *Gil Blas*, which has not yet paid him a penny of the 50,000 francs due to him for his novel *Lourdes*.

Then he turns back to Rome, and says that, when he was there, he kept on thinking about the death of the Pope, and imagining a conclave, which he is now writing up, with a very dramatic effect.

February 10.—At the end of the evening, Daudet said to me, from the arm-chair in which he was writing,—

“ At the dinner at Fasquelle’s last Friday, did the Charpentiers tell you anything ? ”

“ No.”

“ Are you quite sure they didn’t ? ”

“ No, on my word of honour ! ”

Then Daudet came and sat down next to me and almost whispered into my ear,—

“ I ought not to tell you this, but since Zola did not keep it secret, but told Mme Charpentier, in spite of our understanding not to talk about it to any one, I may as well tell you. Well, the President of the Republic has obtained for you the Cross of an Officer of the Legion of Honour, and Poincaré has asked to preside at the banquet, to give it to you. I must say that Zola has behaved very well about it, and has put a great deal of energy into getting the thing ; he wanted to go to the Minister by himself about it, but I didn’t want him to do that, so we went together.”

Then he described the funny visit paid by Zola and himself to the Minister. Zola carried Daudet's hat so that he could lean on his stick and on his arm, and delivered his speech with both their hats in his hand.

February 11.—Frantz Jourdain shows me a letter from Rops accepting the invitation to serve on the banquet committee, a warmly sympathetic letter, in which I read,—

“ A few days ago, as I was going through my old notebooks, full of those notes which one addresses to oneself, I came across this : when, in your work, cowardly fear makes you want to do something merely clever, and you feel yourself slipping away into facility and a banal lightness of execution, think of the de Goncourts, of the sincerity, the honesty, and the rightness of their work. That is why Edmond de Goncourt has been my master, however unworthy I was to be his pupil.”

February 20.—So I am to be made an Officer of the Legion of Honour. I ask myself whether this gives me any real pleasure, and truly it does not. When I think about it, I do not stop there, as in thinking about those events which give one sincere joy, but pass on at once to something else.

I confess it would give me a deeper pleasure to

have one of my two plays performed by actors with talent.

In reading over the *Gaulois*, which I only skimmed this morning. I ran across a rumour to the effect that the banquet will quite possibly be postponed, on account of the death of Vacquerie, who is a member of the committee. I hope this will not be the case. This life I am leading just now, with honours on one side and damnation from critics on the other, puts me into a nervous state I wish to see finished, so that I can go on correcting the eighth volume of my *Journal* and with the composition of a book on Hokusai.

In the rue de Berri I was surprised by meeting the orators of my banquet—Heredia, who is to speak in the place of Coppée, who has bronchitis; and Régnier, who will speak in the name of the young generation of writers. They tell me that Poincaré is suffering from influenza, and they ask me whether the banquet can take place the day after to-morrow, in view of the fear expressed by the *Gaulois* and repeated by several newspapers. I do not know, but I am getting heartily tired of this banquet, and have an irritated desire to get it over as soon as possible.

February 21.—This life of excitement does not

make one ill, but physically uneasy, and this reacts on one's sleep and digestion.

I went to see Daudet this evening, and said: "I am very grateful to you for having announced in the *Figaro* that the banquet will take place in spite of everything."

"Then you haven't seen Geffroy," said Daudet, interrupting me. "Well, it's all upset. . . . There was an article in this morning's *Rappel* . . . on account of which I had a letter from Catulle Mendès, who did not think that banqueting was quite desirable to-morrow . . . and Claretie wrote to say he couldn't come. . . . And at last Clemenceau, seconded by Geffroy, came to insist on a postponement, with much eloquence. Well, I fought up to three o'clock . . . but, after that, I was afraid that you might be placed in an uncomfortable position, and so I announced that at your desire the banquet was postponed. Then Geffroy ran round to Frantz Jourdain's, but as he was not at home and would not be back before seven o'clock, he sent a message by his wife to the Grand Hotel."

Well, this really is an unlucky banquet. In my opinion, the postponement is due to greatly exaggerated demands. Why should a banquet given in my honour by the *Écho de Paris* not take place on the day after the funeral of a gentleman whom

I only met once in my life! And everybody has influenza now, and who knows whether a second member of the committee may not die between now and next week? If only he had been a reactionary and not a republican, this would not have happened!

February 24.—Daudet came early and talked about the importance which the banquet has now attained, of the noise it is making, of the articles which it inspires, of the complete change of front of the critics in the face of the postponement asked for by me. He says that if I had published a masterpiece it would not have produced a hundredth part of all this excitement, and he agrees with me as to the imbecility of the things which in Paris produce success.

Heredia comes in and gives us a few samples of his Académie speech, written in a condensed prose, in which he reduced little Thiers to his right size. Some of the people of the Palais-Mazarin.* are indignant about it, and demand the suppression of a highly disdainful phrase about the said politician. Heredia contrasts opportunist politicians, such as Thiers, with Lamartine, a politician who took long views, who saw into the future, who was a miraculous

* That is, Academicians.

prophet of all that has happened, since his death, in our old society.

In the evening I dined with Léon and Lucien, who have come back from Stockholm for the banquet, both amazed at those northern landscapes, and Léon quite at the mercy of that "snow-madness," having once been tempted to go on to the North Cape.

February 28.—This morning I received a letter from an unknown woman which truly touched me. Associating herself with the tributes they are to pay me to-morrow, she tells me that one day she had fled from a home in which all the hopes of her girlhood and all the faith of her womanhood had been lost, and she took away with her only our dear books, which had given her great literary joys. She adds that, though she has lived in Paris for some years, she never thought to see the survivor of the two brothers, but that many times she has been to kneel down by the grave of the dead one, and that to-morrow, while rejoicing with me in the honours which will be given me, and sympathizing with me in having to receive them alone, she will return to the cemetery.

In the evening I find Daudet preoccupied. At last, at the end of some time, he unbosoms himself.

He is still unable to get over the shock of the news that Coppée is down with pneumonia, and "very low," as his house-porter said yesterday. And my dear friend is afraid of another postponement of the banquet. Happily, to-day brings good news. I cannot stop myself saying, "Except for your death, there will be no further postponement, or I'll disclaim the banquet."

Toudouze describes the rumpus produced in the house of Frantz Jourdain by the postponement of the banquet last Friday. That day more than a hundred people rang his bell, and the servants literally had no time to eat.

March 1 (Friday).—I received a charming attention from Mme Rodenbach. This morning she sent me a large bunch of roses by her blonde baby, who came in his nurse's arms, with a note from his father: "Constantin Rodenbach brings to M. de Goncourt the respect and the admiration of the coming century, which will give them both."

After the baby had gone, I opened the *Libre Parole*, and was pleasantly surprised to find an article there like those of the time when I was in agreement with Drumont, in which he associates himself with those who are banqueting me.

Then come long hours of waiting for the close of

the day. I find it impossible to stay at home, and feel the need of going out, with eyes that do not see and legs that do not know where to go.

There is an interminable line of people, and admission to the banquet has been so badly organized that, after forty minutes on the staircase, Scholl loses courage and gives up the banquet. At last, in spite of a waiter who refuses to let me in, I manage to slip into the drawing-room upstairs, while Daudet goes down below into the banquet hall.

Warm and nervous hand-shakes greet me, and one of those hands is the hand of Lafontaine, giving me a little bunch of violets, with a card from his wife, on which is written: "Henriette Maréchal—the part played in 1865."

We go down to dinner, and I am one of the last to go in. As I look down from the staircase into the hall, I am struck by the fine and grandiose appearance of this room, two floors high, with its brilliant lighting, with the clever arrangement of its tables with three hundred and ten covers, and the pleasant and joyous noise of the guests who are sitting down.

Daudet is on my left and the Minister on my right. Poincaré is still suffering from influenza, and he tells me that he refused to dine with the President of the Republic last night, as he wished to reserve himself for my banquet.

We get to the dessert, and Frantz Jourdain gets up and reads messages from Belgium, Holland, from the Italian "Goncourtists" Cameroni and Vittorio Pica, and from Germany, among which are two lines from Georg Brandes: "Every Scandinavian writer will be with me to-day in exclaiming, Glory to the master originator!"

In the midst of these messages comes a tribute from a Haarlem florist, asking my permission to baptize a new hyacinth with my name.

Then come letters and messages from French literary friends who are unable to be present at the banquet; letters and messages from Sully Prudhomme, Claretie, Philippe Gille, Déroulède, Margueritte, Henri Lavedan, Theuriet, Larroumet, Marcel Prévost, Laurent Tailhade, Curel, Puvis de Chavannes, Alfred Stevens, de Helleu, Alfred Bruneau, Gallé de Nancy, Colombey, and Mévisto.

Then the Minister gets up and makes a speech such as never has been made before by a Minister decorating a man of letters, excusing himself from being there as Minister, and asking me, almost humbly, on behalf of the Government, to do him the favour of allowing myself to be decorated.

And here, putting myself out of the question for a moment, it is good to be able to note that up to the present the Government has always given crosses

to authors and to artists very condescendingly, and that this is the first time that they have appeared to deem it an honour to give a cross to one of us. It was impossible to put more delicate praise and respectfully affectionate friendship into this truly literary speech, which, I admit, made my eyes damp for a moment.

I cannot resist quoting a passage of this speech :—

“ The time of theories made to order, of obligatory aesthetics, and of State literature has passed. In a free democracy, which makes fruitful the variety of individual inspirations, the Government has nothing to decree, nothing to direct, nothing to thwart ; it can only act if it pleases, and as well as it can, the discreet part of a clear-sighted amateur, respecting sincere talents, fine passions, and a generous will.

“ Now, a talent more proud than your own, passions more ardent than those you have cultivated, a will more sovereign than that which you have applied to researches into art and into the labour of style, seems to me difficult to discover ; and it is truly an author's life in the highest sense that you have lived, a life so just and so full, which you began when you were two, side by side, in the joy of your twin hearts, and which you took up again, with an indomitable courage, in the melancholy of solitude.

“ You have lived only for the things that pertain to the intelligence, and, not content with seeking, in the observation of one corner of nature and humanity, the material for your studies and for the satisfaction of your tastes, you have widened the contemporary horizon, you have brought back to life the charm of a vanished century, you have brought into our lives the fantasy and the mystery of distant arts.

“ You have had no dearer ambition than to know and to see ; you have never known more exquisite joys than those brought by ideas, lines, and colours ; and the sensations that you have come to love you have sought to render by the labour of new signs, and by the quiverings of a personal notation. You have made your language capable of the complicated exigencies of painting observed realities, of the changing requirements of a soul in translation, even of the caprice of the most transient impressions. Into your style you have put the play of light, the trembling of the living air, the colour and the life of the external world ; you have also put there the internal shocks, the subtle emotions, the secret troubles of the moral world ; and, desirous of retaining in your writing a little of the gleam or the vibration of whatever loves and suffers, you have sought by richness and diversity

of forms the art of faithfully expressing the infinite multiplicity of nature.

“The Government owes it to itself, my dear master, to bow before your life and before your work; and, indifferent as you are to official attestations, it has considered that you would not refuse a distinction which you have never sought for except for others. The President of the Republic has granted my request and confers upon you the rank of Officer of the Legion of Honour, and I trust that you will believe that it is very cordially that I hand you the insignia.”

The emotion that I felt was shared by all present, whose applause was frantic.

People who had been present at numbers of banquets said to me, “No, no, we have never witnessed such a complete unanimity among those present.”

Then Heredia toasted my golden wedding to literature.

Then the awaited speech of Clemenceau, the eloquent speech in which he showed himself the true knight of Marie-Antoinette,* brought by the love of beauty and of truth to be the apologist of one Germinie Lacerteux, of an Élisabeth, who may have been

* The subject of one of the historical works of Edmond and Jules de Goncourt.

the women of the crowd who accompanied the Queen to the scaffold; and he ended his speech with these fine words:—

“The peasant turns over the soil, the workman forges his tool, the scientist calculates, the philosopher dreams. Men hurl themselves into painful conflict for life, for ambition, fortune, or glory. But the thinker, writing in his solitude, fixes their destiny. It is he who awakens in them the sentiments which bring into existence those ideas for which they live, and which they endeavour to implant into social realities. It is he who spurs them on to action, to the great satisfaction of justice and truth. . . .

“To have laboured at such a work for a day, for an hour, would suffice for the glory of a lifetime.

“Let us honour the Goncourts on that account.”

Then Céard speaks movingly on our old literary relations.

Then a delicate literary fragment from Henri de Régnier.

Henri de Régnier is followed by Zola, who loyally acknowledges that his writing owes us something, and that he, who is preparing to write *Rome*, has to bear *Madame Gervaisais* in mind. After Zola, Daudet speaks as an intimate friend, a speech full of tenderness:—

“ We have drunk to the health of an illustrious man, to Goncourt the novelist, historian, dramatist, and art-critic. But I want to drink to my friend, to my faithful and tender companion, who has meant much to me in very bitter hours. I want to drink to an intimate Goncourt, whom some of us know; cordial and gentle, indulgent and simple, simple with keen eyes, incapable of a low thought, and even of a lie when he is angry. . . .”

Then I get up and say :—

“ Gentlemen, and dear colleagues in art and literature,—

“ I am incapable of saying ten words in front of ten persons. . . . And you are very numerous, gentlemen. So I can do no more than thank you, in a few short words, for your affectionate sympathy, and to tell you that this evening, which I owe to you, repays me for many hardships and sufferings of my literary career.

“ Thank you once more !”

We get up, take coffee and liqueurs, and we kiss one another. People whose names and faces I have forgotten are recalled to me; Italians, Russians, and Japanese are presented to me; Rodin laments that he is tired and wants to rest; Albert Carré asks for an interview to discuss *Manette Salomon*; and finally I am embraced by that great idiot

Darzens, who has dedicated a book to me and never given me a copy. In the midst of all this I seem to see myself in a mirror, with a pleasant stupidity on my face—something of the happiness of a Buddha.

The clock strikes eleven. I am dying of hunger, having eaten absolutely nothing. I know that the Daudet brothers are going to have supper with Barrès and the young Hugos, but I am afraid of introducing a chillness by bringing in my old head in the midst of these turbulent youths. Then I hope there will be some chocolate left for me at home, where I told my servants to make some for themselves while waiting for me to return; but when I get there, there is no more chocolate, no more cakes—all is eaten.

I come back with a splendid basket of flowers in my hand—a basket placed in front of me during the meal, and which in my emotion I did not look at with much care, having only seen the note from Mme Mirbeau who had sent it to me. At home, when I look properly at it, I see that it is a heap of little bouquets, intended for the buttonholes of the members of the committee. . . . This is silly . . . this is silly !

March 3.—This evening the pleasant little dinner

which the Charpentiers are giving in my honour takes place.

After dinner, on that sofa to the left of the fireplace in the study, which might well be called the corner of Zola, Daudet, and Goncourt, we talk about the eloquence of yesterday—the speeches of Poincaré and Clemenceau.

At eleven o'clock Sarah Bernhardt, leaning against the marble fireplace in the drawing-room, reads carelessly, through a lorgnette, in her golden voice, the *Tribute to Edmond de Goncourt*, by Robert de Montesquiou :—

“White peacocks, wakened by the dreaming Faustin,
Are by our fondling memories less caressed
Than is the grace of every heroine,
O master, Martha, Renée, Manette, and the rest.

“White peacocks, called up by the dreaming Faustin.”

While Sarah is reciting these verses I am given a copy of them to follow, in the beautiful handwriting of Robert de Montesquiou and coloured by Caruchet, on which delicate white peacock's feathers are painted in a discreet manner in water-colours, so that they almost look like the elegant water-marks of the paper.

I go to thank Sarah, who in her idol's dress has the indefinable charm of a witch in the old stories.

After this, Montesquiou presents me to the beautiful ladies from artisocratic districts whom he has with him—the Duchesse de Rohan and the Comtesse Potocka.

The evening comes to an end with *La Soularde*, by Yvette Guilbert—a piece in which the singer shows herself to be a great, a very great, tragic actress, who is able to bring a deep pain to your heart.

March 6.—Georges Lecomte comes to find me for the marriage of Ajalbert to little Dora. While we are in the carriage on our way he tells me that he himself is going to be married. He used to love a girl when he was a young man ; she is now a widow, and his tender feeling has persisted. And he finds himself very happy at marrying a woman who will not force him to put on a black coat every evening to go out and call upon people, but who will allow him to work, which, after all, is what he likes best in this world.

Here we are at the Ménard-Dorians, where a procession is organized, and soon we are at the *Mairie*, where the marriage takes place, celebrated by a man who has lost his voice, and where I find myself in the place which I had at the marriage of Léon Daudet and of Jeanne Hugo.

Almost as soon as we get back there is a dinner

of forty-eight covers, arranged in a charming manner in two rooms, where two large tables decorated with almond blossoms form a T, and where the table where the old folks sit has for its head the table of the young people, in the midst of whom was the bride, looking very pretty with her clear face and her pleasant laugh; and right through the meal we were cheered, animated, and stirred up by Gipsy fiddlers at their maddest, and who in their red clothes led the music up and down behind the backs of the guests. It was a very amusing, very cosmopolitan meal, very attractive to one's inquisitive stomach—a Bulgarian olive soup, the recipe of which Mme Ménard-Dorian brought back with her from her travels; white pike-sausages stuffed with truffles, ducks with *purée de foie gras*, etc.

There were some nice women there in the evening; one of them told me that she had been married like a Renée Mauperin—she was so much the type of the book.

An amusing detail. The hairdresser who attended to the bride's hair asked her whether her husband was short or tall, and when the bride asked what this had to do with it, he said to her that it was so that he could do her hair with an eye to his figure, making the scaffolding of her hair proportionate to the husband's height.

March 7.—Daudet presents M. Finot to me ; the editor of the *Revue des Revues*, a Pole, who talked pleasantly to me of the success of my writings in the Slav countries, in those places where a group of thirty persons is formed to hear the reading of a new book ; and he tells me, to my great astonishment, that *Charles Demailly*, of all my novels, has the greatest success out there.

March 8.—Albert Carré, who asked me for an interview at my banquet, moved thereto by an article by Daudet in the *Revue Encyclopédique*, this morning received my play, *Manette Salomon*, for the Vaudeville or the Gymnase, with the authority to make an immediate announcement in the papers.

March 22.—Dinner at Zola's. To-night the de Béhaines are there. We talked about happiness, which everybody was unanimous in saying did not exist ; and Zola, who is more strongly of that opinion than any of us, falls later on in the evening into a black sadness which makes him dumb.

April 11.—An English governess, a Catholic by religion, has left the Daudet household because she learnt that the author of *Lourdes* was received there.

April 17.—This evening, in a corner of the drawing-room, Yriarte told me this story about Balzac. Old Hertford, the prisoner of the Empire, had read *La Fille aux Yeux d'Or* in the days of Louis-Philippe, and thought he recognized the girl whom Balzac had sketched in his story. Hertford thereupon asked Lacroix to arrange him a dinner with the author at the Maison d'Or, where he invited him. On the day fixed Lacroix came alone, saying that it was not possible to meet Balzac. Hertford's ill-temper forced Lacroix to excuse himself to the effect that it was very difficult to meet Balzac, and said that Hugo and his friends only communicated with him by letters. Hertford nevertheless, with the despotism of his caprices, was determined to meet him at all cost; and at last it was agreed that he should have an interview with the novelist on a first floor in the Porte Saint-Martin. But there, too, Lacroix arrived alone, and said that at that moment Balzac was threatened with Clichy,* and that he only dared to go out in the evenings, and that he spent the evenings with his friends. Then Hertford shouted,—

“Clichy . . . Clichy . . . what does he owe?”

“A huge sum,” replied Lacroix; “perhaps 40,000 francs, perhaps 50,000 francs, perhaps more.”

* Debtors' prison.

“ Well, let him come, and I'll pay his debts.”

In spite of this promise, Hertford could never decide Balzac to meet him.

April 18.—This evening I made the acquaintance, at Daudet's, of Georges Lefèvre, a writer whose life has been full of incidents, who for some time dealt in ostrich feathers in Africa, and then, after a quarrel with the English authorities, went on to the Zulus on the eve of the death of the Prince Imperial, and who, warned by the courier who was carrying dispatches, came on the scene four hours after his death.

The Prince, with eight men of whom he was in command, had spent the night in a place which in the morning the Zulus, slipping through the reeds, surprised just at the moment when he was giving his men orders to take to horse; and, when mounting his horse, an assegai struck him behind the shoulder and pierced it through. When Lefèvre arrived the Prince was on the ground, assegaied and stripped of all his clothes. What had contributed to his death, said Lefèvre, was that in the midst of his men in their dark uniforms, looking a little like firemen, he, in his red uniform and white trousers, looked like an English general.

Georges Lefèvre told us several of the Zulu legends,

and among others that of the elephant, regarded as representing strength, kindness, and intelligence.

According to this legend, the elephant, when he enters a river, puts his feet down lightly, so as not to crush the sand ; he gently touches the branches, so as not to break them ; and saves a gazelle from a serpent, which is making advances towards it, without frightening the serpent.

Now one day the elephant wanted to assure himself of the gratitude of nature and of the animals towards him, and he found that the water made itself fresh, and the sand warm for his feet ; that the branches gently swept themselves out of his way ; and that the animals were respectfully surrounding him, when a crocodile bit one of his feet. He took it with his trunk, and just as he was going to kill it, the gratitude of the water, the sand, and the branches stopped him, and the elephant threw it back into the water.

May 7.—A lay saint has just died. It was Mlle Nicole, who had obtained admission to the Salpêtrière in order that she might look after her mother ; and who, after the death of this mother, looking for something to employ her gentle and loving heart, had undertaken the task of teaching little idiot girls to read by the ingenuity of her

inventions and by the tenderness of her imagination.

May 25.—Exhibition of the Revolution and of the Empire. Here are heroes, with the narrow skulls of cretins; rectilinear pieces of furniture on thin legs; family interiors, with little children disguised as veterans of the Imperial family. But in the middle of all this there are some clothes which are much more exciting than any amount of printed matter. Here are hats which have the red mark of the powder of historic battles—the hat of Austerlitz, the hat of Waterloo; and by the side of these legendary felt articles is that straw hat, that old panama, all warp, with a red braid, which the great Emperor used to wear in Saint-Helena. And quite close to the hat of his exile is that vest of white cotton cloth, with yellow spots, which looked as if they had come out of the liver of the Prometheus of that African island. And there, too, is the bed on which he died—the size of a little boy's bed, an iron bed on castors, with its little canopy shaped like a military tent, its faded green silk, its thin little mattress, its bolster, its large pillow—the bed between the curtains of which there has perhaps been, in sleepless nights, the deepest moral suffering of our century.

After coming out from here I went into the exhibition of flowers.

May 28.—Daudet returned yesterday from England, full of life and energy, and actually fatter. He talks about the snubs he underwent; those conversations which take place between two persons who change every five minutes—conversations which go on for two or three hours.

Then he talks about Stanley, whose photograph is on his writing-desk, and whose jaw is wider than the upper part of his head. He speaks of the traveller with a certain emotional respect, and tells me that he had a conversation with him on religious ideas, and that Stanley told him that only his child's prayer remained with him. And then that man, who speaks French very badly, and breaks into English when he gets animated, became very eloquent indeed, and said that that prayer came to his lips every time that he saw danger on sea, on land, or in the sky.

June 17.—Sarcey writes of me to say that I am a "neurotic whom we must pity!" Really, if he represents health in literature, I must congratulate myself on representing disease.

June 20.—At the cemetery. . . . It is now just

twenty-five years, already a quarter of a century, that we have been separated.

On my way back, I find that the boat is full, and there is no room on the seats for me, when a gentleman makes room by his side. When I thank him, he replies, with a kindly smile: "It is I who have to thank you for having opened my eyes, for having made scales fall from them. . . . I was all for ancient art . . . it was you who made me love the eighteenth century."

He refuses to give his name, and talks as far as Passy in an original manner, as one who knows his business, about architecture, declaring that only ignorant and intolerant epochs produce good things, enthusiastic things, while those epochs which know all about everything are indifferent to everything.

June 27.—Dined with Rodenbach at Voisin's. He told me that he had been educated in a Jesuit school, from which they had expelled him for having written something about love; then, at the age of nineteen, he came to Paris, where, poor little child of letters, and a great admirer of Leconte de Lisle, he had to undergo hardships.

Then he told me that he had been present at an agreement between Verlaine and the publisher

Vanier, when the publisher did not want to give more than twenty-five francs for some pieces of poetry that he had just written, and said that Verlaine insisted on having thirty francs. This ended by Verlaine holding his receipt in one hand and not letting it go until he held in his other hand a napoleon and two five-franc pieces. When Rodenbach complimented him on his victory, "No, no," he cried; "I should never have yielded or I should have had a row!" alluding to the authority of the woman with whom he lived.

July 6.—At Saint-Lazare I meet Léon Daudet and de Régnier, and soon we are on our way to Carrières-sous-Poissy.

Here we are in this house of Mirbeau, covered over with a light green trellis, with its broad terraces and its numerous windows, in this house bathed in daylight and sunshine.

Now we are in the garden, in the little park, among plants from all the horticulturists of England, Holland, and France, wonderful plants, which amuse one by their artistic branching, by their rare shades, and especially Japanese irises, flowers as large as the flowers of the magnolia, with strange and beautiful flame-like colourings. And it is a pleasure to see Mirbeau talking about these plants,

and moving his hands about in the air as if he were holding one.

We have a long walk in his five hectares of plants, then visit his exotic poultry, in their princely installation, in their runs, with fine sand in which a few shrubs are growing, shutting in his Cochin-China hens, these black hens with white top-knots, and the little British bantams, little birds who are embarrassed by their leg-feathers and run about looking as troubled as people whose trousers are coming down.

Pol Neveux, Arthur Meyer, and Rodin come to dinner, and we have an amusing conversation in which many persons are described, judged, and perhaps calumniated.

At eleven o'clock Mme Mirbeau drives me to the station in the little carriage which belongs to the house, while the healthy ones accompany us on foot.

In the train, Rodin, whom I find greatly changed, and very melancholy on account of his worn-out state and of the weariness he feels in working just now, complains, almost painfully, of the vexations which are inflicted upon artists and sculptors by orders which, instead of being of assistance to their work, make them lose a great deal of time over requests and applications—time which would be better employed in making an etching.

July 23.—Dinner given at the Maison d'Or by the *Écho de Paris* for the decorations given to Anatole France and Paul Margueritte.

I am surprised at the pleasant speech of Anatole France, who declares he is proud to be decorated by the Minister who has decorated me.

August 9.—The *Sanctus* of Beethoven, sung to-day after lunch, made me undergo a nervous emotion, and sent tears to my eyes. These religious chants stir up in me all the pains of my past life, and I, the sceptic, the unbeliever, on whom the eloquence of the flesh could have no effect, I feel that I could be converted by plain-song, or by the music which comes of it.

August 15.—Montesquiou, with his witty talk and his store of anecdotes, is really amusing and interesting.

We were talking about his forthcoming book on precious stones, and Daudet superstitiously said that precious stones are dangerous, maleficent. Montesquiou then said that Lord Lytton, who had had an admiration for Comtesse Greffulhe, left her a wonderful engraved stone. But this stone had characters upon it which worried the Comtesse. She took it to a magician, who warned her to get rid of it as quickly as possible, under pain of sudden death,

which is what happened to Lord Lytton. Whereupon the Comtesse got into her carriage, drove to the banks of the Seine, and threw the stone into the water. It is since that time, said Montesquiou, laughingly, that the river has had such a bad effect upon the health of Paris.

August 30.—Lunch at the Brissons, the amiable and charming daughter of Sarcey having expressed a wish to have me there with the Daudets to lunch ; nevertheless I go there with a certain fear of meeting Sarcey, after the unpleasant things we have said about each other.

We lunch in a dining-room in which, after a vegetarian dinner, an enormous Sarcey has been painted, in terrible decorative fashion, representing him in the midst of all the vegetables on earth.

Flammarion, the astronomer, lunches with us, and after lunch he lets himself go on an enthusiastic panegyric of ballooning, which makes me say to him, laughing,—

“ Then did you spend your honeymoon in a balloon ? ”

“ We nearly did . . . but it didn't come off. . . . It was really rather funny. I had a friend, l'Abbé Pioger, who, whenever I wrote a book, rewrote it from the clerical point of view. . . . He rewrote

La Pluralité des Mondes for the use of church schools . . . and without quoting me too much. . . . Well, he was my friend. . . . When I was to be married, he said to me, 'Are you going to be married in church?' 'I don't know . . . perhaps,' I replied. Well, he asked if he could perform the ceremony, although he was not my parish priest. 'Very well,' I said; 'but without a certificate of confession.' 'That's serious,' he said. 'I must refer the matter to the Archbishop.' The Archbishop, however, made no fuss. When the Abbé brought his reply to me he said, 'You see, I've done all you wanted. . . . Well, you ought to go up on your wedding day, and take me with you.' So it was settled that we should meet at one o'clock at the Mairie, then we should have lunch, and meet at three at La Villette.

"He married me, and said, 'I suppose we go up as arranged?'"

"'No, Godard has had an apoplectic stroke, and the ascent is put off.'"

"And, at lunch, Mme Godard told him that there would only be a few days' delay. At the end of a week the trip was decided upon. I went to the Abbé's to warn him that we were going up the next day, but did not find him in, and I was told he was in the country at Saint-Maur-la-

Varenne. I left a message, telling him to be at La Villette the next day at six sharp. He did not come; he had not returned to Paris. A friend who was with us went up in his place. . . . But here is a curious thing that happened. The wind drove us to La Varenne, and there we stopped in a calm. . . . We were eight hundred mètres* up . . . when I heard a voice calling me by name. . . . We were just over the Abbé's garden. . . . We did not see him, but we saw his house very well. . . . We had for a moment the idea of descending and picking him up, in place of my friend, who had had enough of it . . . but the wind came on again. . . . The next day we were at Spa at five o'clock."

"And your wife?"

"She didn't want to come down again!"

The Brissons have a pleasant interior, in which one feels that a true happiness reigns. It is animated and cheered by the play of two plump little girls, of whom the smaller, aged three, is a little intoxicated by the champagne of a *compôte de fruits glacés*, and is jumping about wildly on the huge drawing-room sofa.

September 18.—The Duchesse de Luynes said to

* About half a mile.

somebody who was admiring the wealth and luxury of the flowers at Dampierre: "My gardeners take away 600,000 pots of flowers during the year!"

The old Marquis d'Andlau used to possess, in Le Perche, the old estate of Helvétius, increased and enlarged by two generations of owners, which ran into forty-two farms and ten mills. The mills are not of much account to-day, especially when they are to let. Well, when he had a mill which did not go, and a factory owner presented himself to take the place of the miller, the Marquis always refused to establish a factory, saying that manufacture brought moral corruption into the country.

This little detail tells you what sort of man a noble representative of the propertied classes used to be like—a representative who gave alms generously, and was active in his beneficence.

September 22.—Rattier was talking about a Châlons doctor, named Titon, who used to look after him, and who died ten years ago, leaving behind him a great reputation in the eastern provinces.

He was, perhaps, the only doctor who ever had the idea of asking his patients to keep a record, hour by hour, of their sufferings and pains by day and night. In my opinion such information would

be of the utmost value in prescribing treatments. There are so many diagnoses which go wrong because doctors have such absolute confidence in their power to diagnose that when they pay a visit they do not hear a word of what their patients tell them.

Titon had a strange history. When he was a little peasant boy, an old country doctor took an affection for him, and paid his expenses while he studied medicine in Paris. But as soon as he had finished his courses, and was about to become a celebrity in Paris, the old doctor said to him: "I have made a doctor of you, a doctor who knows more than I do, a very superior doctor. I did it, I acknowledge, so that you should give all your care to my daughter, whose sickly state of health you know, and who can only go on living if she is receiving continual and loving attention." So Titon married the old doctor's daughter, and spent his whole life in being the intelligent physician in attendance on his wife, whom he only survived by six months.

October 30.—I dined in the rue de Berri with a Russian, who talked to me about Tolstoy, with whom his family was related.

He says that he is a madman whose changes

of opinion are extraordinary, and that one day, finding a number of the *Revue des Deux Mondes* at his mother-in-law's, he cried, "It's a rotten thing to read, that review . . . your daughter ought not to read it." A little later on he asked the same lady if her daughter had read *Anna Karenina*, and when she replied that it was not a thing for a young girl to read, he maintained that girls ought to be instructed in everything for the conduct of their lives.

Another day, also, according to this Russian, Tolstoy, after a long denunciation of brandy, having kept the man to whom he had been talking to lunch, had him supplied with brandy. Whereupon he was reminded of the conversation of an hour ago, and Tolstoy replied that "he had no mission to prevent evil." Then why all that preaching? *

December 27.—In this volume, the last I shall print while I live, I cannot bring the *Journal des Goncourt* to an end without a little history of our collaboration, without describing its origins, its expression, and indicating in this common work,

* While we are not concerned with the truth of the above stories, it should be remembered that de Goncourt was strongly prejudiced against all foreign contemporary novelists, and especially against Tolstoy.

year in and year out, the predominance at times of the elder over the younger, at times of the younger over the elder.

Our two temperaments were entirely different. My brother had a gay, vigorous, expansive nature ; I was melancholy, dreamy, concentrated ; and yet it is a curious fact that our two brains received identical impressions from the external world.

Now the day that we had both done with painting, my brother and I passed on to literature. My brother, I admit, was a more elaborate, more precise stylist than I, and at that time I had only the advantage over him of being able to see things more clearly, and of being able to discern, in the mass of things and ideas around us, what might become the literary material for novels and for plays.

And when we made our start my brother was under the influence of Jules Janin, and I was under that of Théophile Gautier, and in our first book, *En 18 . . .*, these two badly-mated inspirations may be recognized ; they gave it the character of a work by two persons, with two pens.

Afterwards came the *Hommes de Lettres* (republished under the title of *Charles Demailly*), a book which belonged to my brother rather than to myself, on account of the wit and those brilliant pieces

of bravura put into the book by him—a thing he repeated in *Manette Salomon*—I having in this book especially worked at the architecture and the main outlines.

These were followed by biographies of artists and historical books, written rather on my insistence, and my natural craving for the truth of the past or present. In these works there was perhaps rather more to my balance than to my brother's.

In this series of works our styles were fused and amalgamated, and resulted in one personal Goncourt style.

In this fraternal effort to write well, it turned out that my brother and I endeavoured to rid ourselves of what we owed to our elders: my brother threw aside the light brilliance of Janin's style, I the materiality of Gautier's style. We both strove to find, while trying to be entirely modern, a virile, concrete, concise style, on a Latin model, resembling the language of Tacitus, whom we then read considerably. And above all, we came to detest heavy colourings, to which I had sacrificed rather too much; and we sought, when we painted material things, to spiritualize them by moral details.

Take, for example, this description of the Forest of Vincennes in *Germinie Lacerteux*:—

“ Narrow paths covered with footprints, hardened, full of marks, crossed one another in every direction. In the spaces between these paths there was grass, but it was crushed, dried-up, and dead grass, scattered about like straw, and whose yellow blades were mixed up on all sides with the sombre green of stinging nettles. . . . Trees stood apart from one another, twisted and ill-grown: little elms with gray trunks, spotted with a yellowish disease; sickly oaks devoured by caterpillars, and with only the lace skeleton of their leaves remaining. . . . The flying dust from the highroads covered the ground with gray. . . . The whole effect was that of poverty and thinness; the choked vegetation had the limpness of the weeds at the city gates. No birds sang in the branches, no insects ran on the beaten soil. . . . It was one of the woods like the old Bois de Boulogne, dusty and hot, and vulgar and disgusting promenade—one of those places where shade is scarce, where the people go for beanfeasts at the gates of their capital; parodies of forests, full of corks, where in the undergrowth melon skins and suicides are to be found! ”

Now it gradually came about that in this manufacture of our books my brother began to specialize in looking after the style, and I in looking after

the creation of the work. He became a little lazy, a little disdainful of seeking and inventing—although he could imagine far finer details than I could when he gave himself the trouble. Perhaps, already suffering with his liver, and drinking Vichy water, this was a beginning of his cerebral exhaustion? In any case, he had always had a repugnance for a too numerous production—for a “mass of books,” as he used to say. And he would repeat, “I was born to write, in the whole of my life, one little volume in duodecimo, after the style of *La Bruyère*, and nothing but that little duodecimo!”

It was, therefore, only out of affection for me that he brought me the assistance of his labour to the end, saying, with a painful sigh, “What, another volume? Haven’t we really done enough in quarto, in octavo, and so on?” And sometimes, when I think of that abominable life of labour I imposed upon him, I feel something like remorse, in the fear that perhaps I hastened his end.

But while throwing upon me the composition of our books, my brother remained an enthusiast for style. I have described in a letter to Zola, written the day after his death, the loving care he put into the elaboration of the form, in the framing of phrases, in the choice of words, taking the things

we had written jointly, and which had at first satisfied us both, and working them over for hours and half-days with an almost angry stubbornness, here changing an epithet, there introducing a rhythm into a period, farther on reshaping a sentence, tiring himself, exercising his brain, in the pursuit of that perfection so difficult, often so impossible, to obtain in the French language, in order to express modern sensations . . . and after this labour resting long moments, tired out, on a sofa, silently smoking an opiated cigar.

He never gave himself so completely over to this effort of style as in the last novel he was to write, in *Madame Gervaisais*, in which, perhaps, the disease that was to kill him gave him at times, I believe, almost the intoxication of religious ecstasy.

[*In July 1896, Edmond de Goncourt died at Champrosay, in the house of his friend Alphonse Daudet.*]

THE END.

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