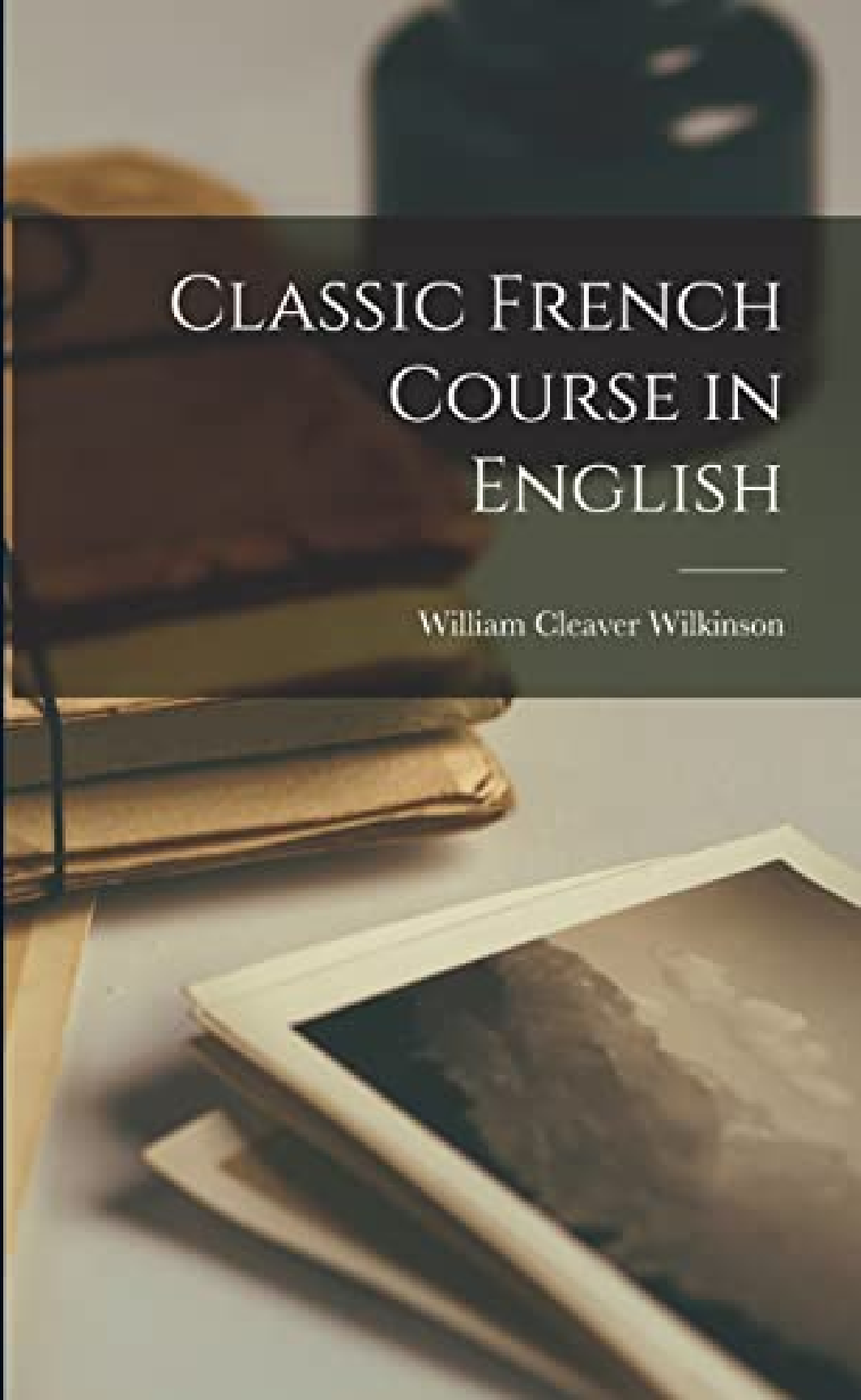


Classic French Course in English

William Cleaver Wilkinson

The Project Gutenberg eBook of French Classics

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: French Classics

Author: William Cleaver Wilkinson

Release date: May 20, 2011 [eBook #36174]

Language: English

Other information and formats: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/36174

Credits: Produced by Marius Masi, Juliet Sutherland and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at http://www.pgdp.net

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK

FRENCH CLASSICS ***

Transcriber's note:
A few typographical errors have been corrected. They appear in the text like this, and the explanation will appear when the mouse pointer is moved over the marked passage.

OTHER BOOKS BY PROFESSOR WILKINSON

THE EPIC OF SAUL

THE EPIC OF PAUL

WEBSTER: AN ODE. WITH NOTES

POEMS

A FREE LANCE IN THE FIELD OF LIFE AND LETTERS

(Volume of Essays)

EDWIN ARNOLD AS POETIZER AND AS PAGANIZER

THE DANCE OF MODERN SOCIETY

FUNK & WAGNALLS COMPANY
NEW YORK AND LONDON

WILKINSON'S FOREIGN CLASSICS IN ENGLISH

FRENCH CLASSICS

BY

WILLIAM CLEAVER
WILKINSON

PROFESSOR OF POETRY AND
CRITICISM
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

*****

FUNK & WAGNALLS
COMPANY

NEW YORK AND LONDON

1909

COPYRIGHT 1900

BY

WILLIAM CLEAVER WILKINSON.

(*Printed in the United States of America*)

PREFACE.

THE preparation of the present volume proposed to the author a task more difficult far than that undertaken in the case of either of the literatures, the Greek or the Latin, treated in the four preceding volumes of the present series. Those volumes dealt with literatures limited and finished; this volume deals with a literature indefinitely vast in extent, and still in vital process of growth. The selection of material to be used was, in the case of the earlier volumes, virtually made for the author beforehand, in a manner greatly to ease his sense of responsibility for the exercise of individual judgment and taste. Long prescription, joined to the winnowing effect of wear and waste through time and chance, had left little doubt what works of what writers, Greek and Roman, best deserved now to be shown to the general reader. Besides this, the prevalent custom of the schools of classical learning could then wisely be taken as a clew of guidance to be implicitly followed, whatever might be the path through which it should lead. There is here no similar avoidance of responsibility possible; for the schools have not established a custom, and French literature is a living body, from which no important members have ever yet been rent by the ravages of time.

The plan of this volume, together with the compass proposed for it, created the necessity of establishing from the outset certain limits to be very

strictly observed. There could be no introductory general matter, beyond a rapid and summary review of that literature, as a whole, which is the subject of the book. The list of authors selected for representation must not include the names of any still living. A third thing resolved upon was to make the number of representative names small rather than large, choice rather than inclusive. The principle at this point adopted was to choose those authors only whose merit, or whose fame, or whose influence, might be supposed unquestionably such that their names and their works would certainly be found surviving, though the language in which they wrote should, like its parent Latin, have perished from the tongues of men. The proportion of space severally allotted to the different authors was to be measured partly according to their relative importance, and partly according to their estimated relative capacity of interesting in translation the average intelligent reader of to-day.

In one word, the single inspiring aim of the author has here been to furnish enlightened readers, versed only in the English language, the means of acquiring, through the medium of their vernacular, some proportioned, trustworthy, and effective knowledge and appreciation, in its chief classics, of the great literature which has been written in French. This object has been sought, not through narrative and description, making books and authors the subject, but through the literature itself, in specimen extracts

illuminated by the necessary explanation and criticism.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

I.
FRENCH LITERATURE 5

II.
FROISSART 22

III.
RABELAIS 29

IV.
MONTAIGNE 40

V.
LA ROCHEFOUCAULD (LA BRUYÈRE; VAUVENARGUES) 55

VI.
LA FONTAINE 66

VII.
MOLIÈRE 76

VIII.

PASCAL 91

IX.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ 105

X.

CORNEILLE 117

XI.

RACINE 127

XII.

BOSSUET, BOURDALOUE, MASSILLON, SAURIN 137

XIII.

FÉNELON 158

XIV.

LE SAGE 174

XV.

MONTESQUIEU, TOCQUEVILLE 184

XVI.

VOLTAIRE 199

XVII.

ROUSSEAU (ST. PIERRE) 212

XVIII.

THE ENCYCLOPÆDISTS 235

XIX.

MADAME DE STAEL 239

XX.

CHATEAUBRIAND 248

XXI.

BÉRANGER 256

XXII.

LAMARTINE 263

XXIII.

THE GROUP OF 1830 274

XXIV.

JOUBERT (SWETCHINE; AMIEL) 307

XXV.

EPILOGUE 318

INDEX 319

FRENCH CLASSICS IN ENGLISH

I.

FRENCH LITERATURE.

OF French literature, taken as a whole, it may boldly be said that it is, not the wisest, not the weightiest, not certainly the purest and loftiest, but by odds the most brilliant and the most interesting, literature in the world. Strong at many points, at some points triumphantly strong, it is conspicuously weak at only one point,—the important point of poetry. In eloquence, in philosophy, even in theology; in history, in fiction, in criticism, in epistolary writing, in what may be called the pamphlet; in another species of composition, characteristically, peculiarly, almost uniquely, French—the Thought and the Maxim; by eminence in comedy, and in all those related modes of written expression for which there is scarcely any name but a French name—the *jeu d'esprit*, the *bon mot*, *persiflage*, the *phrase*; in social and political speculation; last, but not least, in scientific exposition elegant enough in form and in style to rise to the rank of literature proper—the French language has abundant achievement to show, that puts it, upon the whole, hardly second in wealth of letters to any other language whatever, either ancient or modern.

What constitutes the charm—partly a perilous charm—of French literature is before all else its incomparable clearness, its precision, its neatness, its point; then, added to this, its lightness of touch, its

sureness of aim; its vivacity, sparkle, life; its inexhaustible gayety; its impulsion toward wit—impulsion so strong as often to land it in mockery; the sense of release that it breathes and inspires; its freedom from prick to the conscience; its exquisite study and choice of effect; its deference paid to decorum—decorum, we mean, in taste, as distinguished from morals; its infinite patience and labor of art, achieving the perfection of grace and of ease—in one word, its style.

We speak, of course, broadly and in the gross. There are plenty of French authors to whom some of the traits just named could by no means be attributed, and there is certainly not a single French author to whom one could truthfully attribute them all. Voltaire insisted that what was not clear was not French—so much, to the conception of this typical Frenchman, was clearness the genius of the national speech. Still, Montaigne, for example, was sometimes obscure; and even the tragedist Corneille wrote here and there what his commentator, Voltaire, declared to be hardly intelligible. So, too, Rabelais, coarsest of humorists, offending decorum in various ways, offended it most of all exactly in that article of taste, as distinguished from morals, which, with first-rate French authors in general, is so capital a point of regard. On the other hand, Pascal—not to mention the moralists by profession, such as Nicole, and the preachers Bourdaloue and Massillon—Pascal, quivering himself, like a soul unclad, with sense of

responsibility to God, constantly probes you, reading him, to the inmost quick of your conscience. Rousseau, notably in the “Confessions,” and in the “Reveries” supplementary to the “Confessions;” Chateaubriand, echoing Rousseau; and that wayward woman of genius, George Sand, disciple she to both —were so far from being always light-heartedly gay, that not seldom they spread over their page a somber atmosphere almost of gloom—gloom flushed pensively, as with a clouded “setting sun’s pathetic light.” In short, when you speak of particular authors, and naturally still more when you speak of particular works, there are many discriminations to be made. Such exceptions, however, being duly allowed, the literary product of the French mind, considered in the aggregate, will not be misconceived if regarded as possessing the general characteristics in style that we have now sought briefly to indicate.

French literature, we have hinted, is comparatively poor in poetry. This is due in part, no doubt, to the genius of the people; but it is also due in part to the structure of the language. The language, which is derived chiefly from Latin, is thence in such a way derived as to have lost the regularity and stateliness of its ancient original, without having compensated itself with any richness and sweetness of sound peculiarly its own; like, for instance, that canorous vowel quality of its sister derivative, the Italian. The French language, in short, is far from being an ideal

language for the poet.

In spite, however, of this fact, disputed by nobody, it is true of French literature, as it is true of almost any national literature, that it took its rise in verse instead of in prose. Anciently there were two languages subsisting together in France which came to be distinguished from each other in name by the word of affirmation—*oc* or *oïl*, yes—severally peculiar to them, and thus to be known respectively as *langue d'oc* and *langue d'oïl*. The future belonged to the latter of the two forms of speech—the one spoken in the northern part of the country. This, the *langue d'oïl*, became at length the French language. But the *langue d'oc*, a soft and musical tongue, survived long enough to become the vehicle of lyric strains, mostly on subjects of love and gallantry, still familiar in mention, and famous as the songs of the troubadours. The flourishing time of the troubadours was in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Provençal is an alternative name of the language.

Side by side with the southern *troubadours*, or a little later than they, the *trouvères* of the north sang, with more manly ambition, of national themes, and, like Virgil, of arms and of heroes. Some productions of the *trouvères* may fairly be allowed an elevation of aim and of treatment entitling them to be called epic in character. *Chansons de geste* (songs of exploit), or *romans*, is the native name by which those primitive French poems are known. They exist in three principal cycles, or groups, of productions—one

cycle composed of those pertaining to Charlemagne; one, of those pertaining to British Arthur, and a third, of those pertaining to ancient Greece and Rome, notably to Alexander the Great. The cycle revolving around the majestic legend of Charlemagne for its center was Teutonic, rather than Celtic, in spirit as well as in theme. It tended to the religious in tone. The Arthurian cycle was properly Celtic. It dealt more with adventures of love. The Alexandrian cycle, so named from one principal theme celebrated —namely, the deeds of Alexander the Great—mixed fantastically the traditions of ancient Greece and Rome with the then prevailing ideas of chivalry, and with the figments of fairy lore. (The metrical form employed in these poems gave its name to the Alexandrine line later so predominant in French poetry.) The volume of this quasi-epical verse, existing in its three groups, or cycles, is immense. So is that of the satire and the allegory in meter that followed. From this latter store of stock and example, Chaucer drew to supply his muse with material. The *fabliaux*, so called—fables, that is, or stories—were still another form of French literature in verse. It is only now, within the current decade of years, that a really ample collection of *fabliaux*—hitherto, with the exception of a few printed volumes of specimens, extant exclusively in manuscript—has been put into course of publication. Rutebeuf, a *trouvère* of the reign of St. Louis (Louis IX., thirteenth century), is perhaps as conspicuous a personal name as any that thus far emerges out of the sea of practically

anonymous early French authorship. A frankly sordid and mercenary singer, Rutebeuf always tending to mockery, was not seldom licentious—in both these respects anticipating, as probably also to some extent by example conforming, the subsequent literary spirit of his nation. The *fabliaux* generally mingled with their narrative interest that spice of raillery and satire constantly so dear to the French literary appetite. Thibaud was, in a double sense, a royal singer of songs; for he reigned over Navarre, as well as chanted sweetly in verse his love and longing, so the disputed legend asserts, for Queen Blanche of Castile. Thibaud bears the historic title of The Song-maker. He has been styled the Béranger of the thirteenth century. To Thibaud is said to be due the introduction of the feminine rhyme into French poetry—a metrical variation of capital importance. The songs of Abélard, in the century preceding Thibaud, won a wide popularity.

Prose, meantime, had been making noteworthy approaches to form. Villehardouin must be named as first in time among French writers of history. His work is entitled, “Conquest of Constantinople.” It gives an account of the fourth crusade. Joinville, a generation later, continues the succession of chronicles with his admiring story of the life of St. Louis, whose personal friend he was. But Froissart of the fourteenth century, and Comines of the fifteenth, are greater names. Froissart, by his simplicity and his narrative art, was the Herodotus, as Philip de

Comines, for his political sagacity, has been styled the Tacitus, of French historical literature. Up to the time of Froissart, the literature which we have been treating as French was different enough in form from the French of to-day to require what might be called translation in order to become generally intelligible to the living generation of Frenchmen. The text of Froissart is pretty archaic, but it definitely bears the aspect of French.

With the name of Comines, who wrote of Louis XI. (compare Walter Scott's "Quentin Durward"), we reach the fifteenth century, and are close upon the great revival of learning which accompanied the religious reformation under Luther and his peers. Now come Rabelais, boldly declared by Coleridge one of the great creative minds of literature; and Montaigne, with those essays of his, still living, and, indeed, certain always to live. John Calvin, meantime, writes his "Institutes of the Christian Religion" in French as well as in Latin, showing, once and for all, that in the right hands his vernacular tongue was as capable of gravity as many a writer before him had superfluously shown that it was capable of levity. Amyot, the translator of Plutarch, is a French writer of power, without whom the far greater Montaigne could hardly have been. The influence of Amyot on French literary history is wider in reach and longer in duration than we thus indicate; but Montaigne's indebtedness to him is alone enough to prove that a mere translator had in

this man made a very important contribution to the forming prose literature of France.

"The Pleiades," so called, were a group of seven writers, who, about the middle of the sixteenth century, banded themselves together in France, with the express aim of supplying influential example to improve the French language for literary purposes. Their peculiar appellation, "The Pleiades," was copied from that of a somewhat similar group of Greek writers that existed in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus. Of course, the implied allusion in it is to the constellation of the Pleiades. The individual name by which the "Pleiades" of the sixteenth century may best be remembered is that of Ronsard, the poet, associated with the romantic and pathetic memory of Mary Queen of Scots. Never, perhaps, in the history of letters was the fame of a poet in the poet's own life-time more universal and more splendid than was the fame of Ronsard. A high court of literary judicature formally decreed to Ronsard the title of The French Poet by eminence. This occurred in the youth of the poet. The wine of success so brilliant turned the young fellow's head. He soon began to play lord paramount of Parnassus, with every air of one born to the purple. The kings of the earth vied with each other to do him honor. Ronsard affected scholarship, and the foremost scholars of his time were proud to place him with Homer and with Virgil on the roll of the poets. Ronsard's peculiarity in style was the free use of words and constructions

not properly French. Boileau indicated whence he enriched his vocabulary and his syntax, by satirically saying that Ronsard spoke Greek and Latin in French. At his death, Ronsard was almost literally buried under praises. Sainte-Beuve strikingly says that he seemed to go forward into posterity as into a temple.

Sharp posthumous reprisals awaited the extravagant fame of Ronsard. Malherbe, coming in the next generation, legislator of Parnassus, laughed the literary pretensions of Ronsard to scorn. This stern critic of form, such is the story, marked up his copy of Ronsard with notes of censure so many, that a friend of his, seeing the annotated volume, observed, “What here is not marked will be understood to have been approved by you.” Whereupon Malherbe, taking his pen, with one indiscriminate stroke drew it abruptly through the whole volume. “There I Ronsardized,” the contemptuous critic would exclaim, when in reading his own verses to an acquaintance—for Malherbe was a poet himself—he happened to encounter a word that struck him as harsh or improper. Malherbe, in short, sought to chasten and check the luxuriant overgrowth to which the example and method of the Pleiades were tending to push the language of poetry in French. The resultant effect of the two contrary tendencies—that of literary wantonness on the one hand, and that of literary prudery on the other—was at the same time to enrich and to purify French poetical diction. Balzac

(the elder), close to Malherbe in time, performed a service for French prose similar to that which the latter performed for French verse. These two critical and literary powers brought in the reign of what is called classicism in France. French classicism had its long culmination under Louis XIV.

But it was under Louis XIII., or rather under that monarch's great minister, Cardinal Richelieu, that the rich and splendid Augustan age of French literature was truly prepared. Two organized forces, one of them private and social, the other official and public, worked together, though sometimes perhaps not in harmony, to produce the magnificent literary result that illustrated the time of Louis XIV. Of these two organized forces the Hôtel de Rambouillet was one, and the French Academy was the other. The Hôtel de Rambouillet has become the adopted name of a literary society, presided over by the fine inspiring genius of the beautiful and accomplished Italian wife of the Marquis de Rambouillet, a lady who generously conceived the idea of rallying the feminine wit and virtue of the kingdom to exert a potent influence for regenerating the manners and morals, and indeed the literature, of France. At the high court of blended rank and fashion and beauty and polish and virtue and wit, thus established in the exquisitely builded and decorated saloons of the Rambouillet mansion, the selectest literary genius and fame of France were proud and glad to assemble for the discussion and criticism of literature. Here

came Balzac and Voiture; here Corneille read aloud his masterpieces before they were represented on the stage; here Descartes philosophized; here the large and splendid genius of Bossuet first unfolded itself to the world; here Madame de Sévigné brought her bright, incisive wit, trebly commended by stainless reputation, unwithering beauty, and charming address, in the woman who wielded it. The noblest blood of France added the decoration and inspiration of their presence. It is not easy to overrate the diffusive beneficent influence that hence went forth to change the fashion of literature, and to change the fashion of society, for the better. The Hôtel de Rambouillet proper lasted two generations only; but it had a virtual succession, which, though sometimes interrupted, was scarcely extinct until the brilliant and beautiful Madame Récamier ceased, about the middle of the present century, to hold her famous *salons* in Paris. The continuous fame and influence of the French Academy, founded by Richelieu, everybody knows. No other European language has been elaborately and sedulously formed and cultivated like the French.

But great authors are better improvers of a language than any societies, however influential. Corneille, Descartes, Pascal, did more for French style than either the Hôtel de Rambouillet or the Academy—more than both these two great literary societies together. In verse, Racine, following Corneille, advanced in some important respects upon

the example and lead of that great original master; but in prose, when Pascal published his “Provincial Letters,” French style reached at once a point of perfection beyond which it never since has gone. Bossuet, Bourdaloue, Fénelon, Massillon, Molière, La Fontaine, Boileau, La Rochefoucauld, La Bruyère—what a constellation of names are these to glorify the age of Louis XIV.! And Louis XIV. himself, royal embodiment of a literary good sense carried to the pitch of something very like real genius in judgment and taste—what a sun was he (with that talent of his for kingship, probably never surpassed), to balance and to sway, from his unshaken station, the august intellectual system of which he alone constituted the despotic center to attract and repel! Seventy-two years long was this sole individual reign. Louis XIV. still sat on the throne of France when the seventeenth century became the eighteenth.

The eighteenth century was an age of universal reaction in France. Religion, or rather ecclesiasticism—for, in the France of those times, religion was the Church, and the Church was the Roman Catholic hierarchy—had been the dominant fashion under Louis XIV. Infidelity was a broad literary mark, written all over the face of the eighteenth century. It was the hour and power of the Encyclopædists and the Philosophers—of Voltaire, of Diderot, of D’Alembert, of Rousseau. Montesquieu, though contemporary, belongs apart from these writers. More really original, more truly philosophical, he

was far less revolutionary, far less destructive, than they. Still, his influence was, on the whole, exerted in the direction, if not of infidelity, at least of religious indifferentism. The French Revolution was laid in train by the great popular writers whom we have now named, and by their fellows. It needed only the spark, which the proper occasion would be sure soon to strike out, and the awful earthshaking explosion would follow. After the Revolution, during the First Empire, so called—the usurpation, that is, of Napoleon Bonaparte—literature was well-nigh extinguished in France. The names, however, then surpassingly brilliant, of Chateaubriand and Madame de Stael, belong to this period.

Three centuries have now elapsed since the date of "The Pleiades." Throughout this long period, French literature has been chiefly under the sway of that spirit of classicism in style which the reaction against Ronsardism, led first by Malherbe and afterward by Boileau, had established as the national standard in literary taste and aspiration. But Rousseau's genius acted as a powerful solvent of the classic tradition. Chateaubriand's influence was felt on the same side, continuing Rousseau's. George Sand, too, and Lamartine, were forces that strengthened this component. Finally, the great personality of Victor Hugo proved potent enough definitively to break the spell that had been so long and so heavily laid on the literary development of France. The bloodless warfare was fierce between the revolutionary

Romanticists and the conservative Classicists in literary style, but the victory seemed at last to remain with the advocates of the new romantic revival. It looked, on the face of the matter, like a signal triumph of originality over prescription, of genius over criticism, of power over rule. We still live in the midst of the dying echoes of this resonant strife. Perhaps it is too early, as yet, to determine on which side, by the merit of the cause, the advantage truly belongs. But, by the merit of the respective champions, the result was, for a time at least, triumphantly decided in favor of the Romanticists, against the Classicists. The weighty authority, however, of Sainte-Beuve, at first thrown into the scale that was destined to sink, was thence withdrawn, and at last, if not resolutely cast upon the opposite side of the balance, was left wavering in a kind of equipoise between the one and the other.

But our preliminary sketch already reaches the limit within which our choice of authors for representation is necessarily confined.

With first a few remarks, naturally suggested, that may be useful, on the general subject thus rather touched merely than handled, the present writer gives way to let now the representative authors themselves, selected for the purpose, supply to the reader a just and lively idea of French literature.

The first thing, perhaps, to strike the thoughtful mind in a comprehensive view of the subject is not

so much the length—though this is remarkable—as the long *continuity* of French literary history. From its beginning down to the actual moment, French literature has suffered no serious break in the course of its development. There have been periods of greater and periods of less prosperity and fruit; but wastes of marked suspension and barrenness there have been none.

The second thing noticeable is, that French literature has, to a singular degree, lived an independent life of its own. It has found copious springs of health and growth within its own bosom.

But then a third thing to be also observed is that, on the other hand, the touch of foreign influence, felt and acknowledged by this most proudly and self-sufficiently national of literatures, has proved to it, at various epochs, a sovereign force of revival and elastic expansion. Thus, the great renascence in the sixteenth century of ancient Greek and Latin letters was new life to French literature. So, again, Spanish literature, brought into contact with French through Corneille and Molière, with others, gave to the national mind of France a new literary launch. But the most recent and perhaps the most remarkable example of foreign influence quickening French literature to make it freshly fruitful is supplied in the great romanticizing movement under the lead of Victor Hugo. English literature—especially Shakespeare—was largely the pregnant cause of this attempted emancipation of the French literary mind

from the bondage of classicism.

A fourth very salient trait in French literary history consists in the self-conscious, elaborate, persistent efforts put forth from time to time by individuals, and by organizations, both public and private, in France, to improve the language and to elevate the literature of the nation. We know of nothing altogether comparable to this anywhere else in the literature of the world.

A fifth striking thing about French literature is, that it has, to a degree as we believe beyond parallel, exercised a real and vital influence on the character and the fortune of the nation. The social, the political, the moral, the religious, history of France is from age to age a faithful reflex of the changing phases of its literature. Of course, a reciprocal influence has been constantly reflected back and forth from the nation upon its literature, as well as from its literature upon the nation. But where else in the world has it ever been so extraordinarily, we may say so appallingly, true as in France, that the nation was such because such was its literature?

French literature, it will at once be seen, is a study possessing, beyond the literary, a social, a political, and even a religious, interest.

Readers desiring to push their conversance with the literary history of France further into the catalogue of its less important names than the present volume will enable them to do will consult

with profit either the Primer, or the Short History, of French Literature, by Mr. George Saintsbury. Mr. Saintsbury is a well-informed writer, who diffuses himself perhaps too widely to do his best possible work. But he has made French literature a specialty, and he is in general a trustworthy authority on the subject.

Another writer on the subject is Mr. H. Van Laun. Him, although a predecessor of his own in the field, Mr. Saintsbury severely ignores, by claiming that he is himself the first to write in English a history of French literature based on original and independent reading of the authors. We are bound to say that Mr. Van Laun's work is of very poor quality. It offers, indeed, to the reader one advantage not afforded by either of Mr. Saintsbury's works—the advantage, namely, of illustrative extracts from the authors treated extracts, however, not unfrequently marred by wretched translation.

A noteworthy book of the year 1889 is "A History of French Literature" by Charles Woodward Hutson, Professor of Modern Languages in the University of Mississippi. This is an intelligent, well-studied, well-written, carefully conscientious, comprehensive account of French letters from the beginning down to the present day. It has, as a concluding chapter, a notice of the "French Writers of Louisiana." An admirable series of books, translated from the French, on the great French writers, has recently been brought out in Chicago. These two last

mentions, by the way, strikingly suggest how wide, territorially, the bounds of the republic of letters are becoming in our country.

The cyclopædias are, some of them, both in articles on particular authors and in their sketches of French literary history as a whole, good sources of general information on the subject. Readers who command the means of comparing several different cyclopædias, or several successive editions of some one cyclopædia, as, for example, the "Encyclopædia Britannica," will find enlightening and stimulating the not always harmonious views presented on the same topics. Hallam's "History of Literature in Europe" is an additional authority by no means to be overlooked. And, finally, it is to be remembered that any good general history of France will almost certainly contain notices of the more important literary events co-ordinately with those of political, social, economic, or scientific moment.

II.

FROISSART.

1337-1410.

FRENCH literature, for the purposes of the present

volume, may be said to commence with Froissart. Froissart is a kind of mediæval Herodotus. His time is, indeed, almost this side the Middle Ages; but by character and by sympathy he belongs rather to the mediæval than to the modern world. He is delightfully like Herodotus in the style and the spirit of his narrative. Like Herodotus, he became a traveler in order to become an historian. Like Herodotus, he was cosmopolite enough not to be narrowly patriotic. Frenchman though he was, he took as much pleasure in recounting English victories as he did in recounting French. His countrymen have even accused him of unpatriotic partiality for the English. His Chronicles have been, perhaps, more popular in their English form than in their original French. Two prominent English translations have been made, of which the later, that by Thomas Johnes, is now most read. Sir Walter Scott thought the earlier excelled in charm of style.

Jehan or Jean Froissart was a native of Valenciennes. His father meant to make a priest of him, but the boy had tastes of his own. Before he was well out of his teens he began writing history. This was under the patronage of a great noble. Froissart was all his life a natural courtier. He throve on the patronage of the great. It was probably not a fawning spirit in him that made him this kind of man; it was rather an innate love of splendor and high exploit. He admired chivalry, then in its last days, and he painted it with the passion of an idealizer. His father

had been an heraldic painter, so it was perhaps an hereditary strain in the son that naturally attached him to rank and royalty. The people—that is, the promiscuous mass of mankind—hardly exist to Froissart. His pages, spacious as they are, have scarcely room for more than kings and nobles, and knights and squires. He is a picturesque and romantic historian, in whose chronicles the glories of the world of chivalry—a world, as we have said, already dying, and so soon to disappear—are fixed forever on an ample canvas, in moving form and shifting color, to delight the backward-looking imagination of mankind.

Froissart, besides being chronicler, was something of a poet. It would still be possible to confront one who should call this in question with thirty thousand surviving verses from the chronicler's pen. Quantity, indeed, rather than quality, is the strong point of Froissart as poet.

He had no sooner finished the first part of his Chronicles, a compilation from the work of an earlier hand, than he posted to England for the purpose of formally presenting his work to the queen, a princess of Hainault. She rewarded him handsomely. Woman enough, too, she was, woman under the queen, duly to despatch him back again to his native land, where the young fellow's heart, she saw, was lost to a noble lady, whom, from his inferior station, he could woo only as moth might woo the moon. He subsequently returned to Great Britain, and rode about on

horseback gathering materials of history. He visited Italy under excellent auspices, and, together with Chaucer and with Petrarch, witnessed a magnificent marriage ceremonial in Milan. Froissart continued to travel far and wide, always a favorite with princes, but always intent on achieving his projected work. He finally died at Chimay, where he had spent his closing years in rounding out to their completeness his "Chronicles of England, France, and the Adjoining Countries."

Froissart is the most leisurely of historians, or, rather, he is a writer who presupposes the largest allowance of leisure at the command of his readers. He does not seek proportion and perspective. He simply tells us all he has been able to find out respecting each transaction in its turn as it successively comes up in the progress of his narrative. If he goes wrong to-day, he will perhaps correct himself to-morrow, or day after to-morrow—this not by changing the first record where it stands, to make it right, but by inserting a note of his mistake at the point, whatever it may be, which he shall chance to have reached in the work of composition when the new and better light breaks in on his eyes. The student is thus never quite certain but that what he is at one moment reading in his author may be an error of which at some subsequent moment he will be faithfully advised. A little discomposing, this, but such is Froissart; and it is the philosophical way to take your author as he is, and

make the best of him.

Of such an historian, an historian so diffuse, and so little selective, it would obviously be difficult to give any suitably brief specimen that should seem to present a considerable historic action in full. We go to Froissart's account of the celebrated battle of Poitiers (France). This was fought in 1356, between Edward the Black Prince on the English side, and King John on the side of the French. King John, as a result of the battle, fell into the hands of the enemy.

The king of the French was, of course, a great prize to be secured by the victorious English. There was eager individual rivalry as to what particular warrior should be adjudged his true captor. Froissart thus describes the strife and the issue:

> There was much pressing at this time, through eagerness to take the king; and those who were nearest to him, and knew him, cried out, "Surrender yourself, surrender yourself, or you are a dead man!" In that part of the field was a young knight from St. Omer, who was engaged by a salary in the service of the king of England; his name was Denys de Morbeque, who for five years had attached himself to the English, on account of having been banished in his younger days from France, for a murder committed in an affray at St. Omer. It fortunately happened for this knight, that he was at the time near to the king of France, when he was so much pulled about. He, by dint of force, for he was

very strong and robust, pushed through the crowd, and said to the king, in good French, “Sire, sire, surrender yourself!” The king, who found himself very disagreeably situated, turning to him, asked, “To whom shall I surrender myself? to whom? Where is my cousin, the Prince of Wales? If I could see him, I would speak to him.” “Sire,” replied Sir Denys, “he is not here; but surrender yourself to me, and I will lead you to him.” “Who are you?” said the king. “Sire, I am Denys de Morbeque, a knight from Artois; but I serve the king of England because I cannot belong to France, having forfeited all I possessed there.” The king then gave him his right-hand glove, and said, “I surrender myself to you.” There was much crowding and pushing about; for every one was eager to cry out, “I have taken him!” Neither the king nor his youngest son Philip were able to get forward, and free themselves from the throng....

The Prince [of Wales] asked them [his marshals] if they knew any thing of the king of France; they replied, “No, sir, not for a certainty; but we believe he must be either killed or made prisoner, since he has never quitted his batallion.” The prince then, addressing the Earl of Warwick and Lord Cobham, said: “I beg of you to mount your horses, and ride over the field so that on your return you may bring me some certain intelligence of him.” The two barons, immediately mounting their horses, left the prince, and made for a small hillock, that they might look about them. From their stand they perceived a crowd of men-at-arms on foot, who were advancing

very slowly. The king of France was in the midst of them, and in great danger; for the English and Gascons had taken him from Sir Denys de Morbeque, and were disputing who should have him, the stoutest bawling out, “It is I that have got him.” “No, no,” replied the others, “we have him.” The king, to escape from this peril, said: “Gentlemen, gentlemen, I pray you conduct me and my son in a courteous manner to my cousin the prince; and do not make such a riot about my capture, for I am so great a lord that I can make all sufficiently rich.” These words, and others which fell from the king, appeased them a little; but the disputes were always beginning again, and they did not move a step without rioting. When the two barons saw this troop of people, they descended from the hillock, and, sticking spurs into their horses, made up to them. On their arrival, they asked what was the matter. They were answered, that it was the king of France, who had been made prisoner, and that upward of ten knights and squires challenged him at the same time, as belonging to each of them. The two barons then pushed through the crowd by main force, and ordered all to draw aside. They commanded, in the name of the prince, and under pain of instant death, that every one should keep his distance, and not approach unless ordered or desired so to do. They all retreated behind the king; and the two barons, dismounting, advanced to the king with profound reverences, and conducted him in a peaceable manner to the Prince of Wales.

We continue our citation from Froissart with the brief chapter in which the admiring chronicler tells the gallant story of the Black Prince's behavior as host toward his royal captive, King John of France (it was the evening after the battle):

> When evening was come, the Prince of Wales gave a supper in his pavilion to the king of France, and to the greater part of the princes and barons who were prisoners. The prince seated the king of France, and his son the Lord Philip, at an elevated and well-covered table; with them were Sir James de Bourbon, the Lord John d'Artois, the Earls of Tancarville, of Estampes, of Dammartin, of Graville, and the Lord of Partenay. The other knights and squires were placed at different tables. The prince himself served the king's table, as well as the others, with every mark of humility, and would not sit down at it, in spite of all his entreaties for him so to do, saying that "he was not worthy of such an honor, nor did it appertain to him to seat himself at the table of so great a king, or of so valiant a man as he had shown himself by his actions that day." He added, also, with a noble air, "Dear sir, do not make a poor meal because the Almighty God has not gratified your wishes in the event of this day; for be assured that my lord and father will show you every honor and friendship in his power, and will arrange your ransom so reasonably, that you will henceforward always remain friends. In my opinion, you have cause to be glad that the success of this battle did not turn out as you desired; for you have

> this day acquired such high renown for prowess that you have surpassed all the best knights on your side. I do not, dear sir, say this to flatter you: for all those of our side who have seen and observed the actions of each party, have unanimously allowed this to be your due, and decree you the prize and garland for it." At the end of this speech, there were murmurs of praise heard from every one; and the French said the prince had spoken nobly and truly, and that he would be one of the most gallant princes in Christendom if God should grant him life to pursue his career of glory.

A splendid and a gracious figure the Black Prince makes in the pages of Froissart. It was great good fortune for the posthumous fame of chivalry that the institution should have come by an artist so gifted and so loyal as this Frenchman, to deliver its features in portrait to after-times, before the living original vanished forever from the view of history. How much the fiction of Sir Walter Scott owes to Froissart, and to Philip de Comines after Froissart, those only can understand who have read both the old chronicles and the modern romances.

It was one of the congenial labors of Sidney Lanier —pure flame of genius that late burned itself out so swiftly among us!—to edit a reduction or abridgment of Froissart's Chronicles dedicated especially to the use of the young. "The Boy's Froissart," he called it. This book is enriched with a wise and genial appreciation of Froissart's quality by his American

editor.

Whoever reads Froissart needs to remember that the old chronicler is too much enamored of chivalry, and is too easily dazzled by splendor of rank, to be a rigidly just censor of faults committed by knights and nobles and kings. Froissart, in truth, seems to have been nearly destitute of the sentiment of humanity. War to him was chiefly a game and a spectacle.

Our presentation of Froissart must close with a single passage additional, a picturesque one, in which the chronicler describes the style of living witnessed by him at the court—we may so not unfitly apply a royal word—of the Count de Foix. The reader must understand, while he reads what we here show, that Froissart himself, in close connection, relates at full, in the language of an informant of his, how this magnificent Count de Foix had previously killed, with a knife at his throat, his own and his only son. “I was truly sorry,” so, at the conclusion of the story, Froissart, with characteristic direction of his sympathy, says, “for the count his father, whom I found a magnificent, generous, and courteous lord, and also for the country that was discontented for want of an heir.” Here is the promised passage; it occurs in the ninth chapter of the third volume:

> Count Gaston Phœbus de Foix, of whom I am now speaking, was at that time fifty-nine years old; and I must say, that although I have seen very many

knights, kings, princes, and others, I have never seen any so handsome, either in the form of his limbs and shape, or in countenance, which was fair and ruddy, with gray and amorous eyes, that gave delight whenever he chose to express affection. He was so perfectly formed, one could not praise him too much. He loved earnestly the things he ought to love, and hated those which it was becoming him so to hate. He was a prudent knight, full of enterprise and wisdom. He had never any men of abandoned character with him, reigned prudently, and was constant in his devotions. There were regular nocturnals from the Psalter, prayers from the rituals to the Virgin, to the Holy Ghost, and from the burial service. He had every day distributed as alms, at his gate, five florins in small coin, to all comers. He was liberal and courteous in his gifts, and well knew how to take when it was proper, and to give back where he had confidence. He mightily loved dogs above all other animals, and during the summer and winter amused himself much with hunting....

When he quitted his chamber at midnight for supper, twelve servants bore each a lighted torch before him, which were placed near his table, and gave a brilliant light to the apartment. The hall was full of knights and squires, and there were plenty of tables laid out for any person who chose to sup. No one spoke to him at his table, unless he first began a conversation. He commonly ate heartily of poultry, but only the wings and thighs; for in the day-time, he neither ate nor drank much. He had great pleasure in hearing minstrels; as he himself was a

proficient in the science, and made his secretaries sing songs, ballads, and roundelays. He remained at table about two hours, and was pleased when fanciful dishes were served up to him, which having seen, he immediately sent them to the tables of his knights and squires.

In short, every thing considered, though I had before been in several courts of kings, dukes, princes, counts, and noble ladies, I was never at one that pleased me more, nor was I ever more delighted with feats of arms, than at this of the Count de Foix. There were knights and squires to be seen in every chamber, hall, and court, going backward, and forward, and conversing on arms and amours. Every thing honorable was there to be found. All intelligence from distant countries was there to be learnt, for the gallantry of the count had brought visitors from all parts of the world. It was there I was informed of the greater part of those events which had happened in Spain, Portugal, Arragon, Navarre, England, Scotland, and on the borders of Languedoc; for I saw, during my residence, knights and squires arrive from every nation. I therefore made inquiries from them, or from the count himself, who cheerfully conversed with me.

The foregoing is one of the most celebrated passages of description in Froissart. At the same time that it discloses the form and spirit of those vanished days, which will never come again to the world, it discloses likewise the character of the man, who must indeed have loved it all well, to have been able

so well to describe it.

We take now a somewhat long forward step, in going, as we do, at once from Froissart to Rabelais. Comines, an historian intervening, we must reluctantly pass, with thus barely mentioning his name.

III.

RABELAIS.

1495-1553.

RABELAIS is one of the most famous of writers. But he is, at the same time, of famous writers perhaps quite incomparably the coarsest.

The real quality of such a writer it is evidently out of the question to exhibit at all adequately here. But equally out of the question it is to omit Rabelais altogether from an account of French literature.

Of the life of François Rabelais, the man, these few facts will be sufficient to know. In early youth he joined the monastic order of Franciscans. That order hated letters; but Rabelais loved them. He, in fact, conceived a voracious ambition of knowledge. He became immensely learned. This fact, with what it

implies of long labor patiently achieved, is enough to show that Rabelais was not without seriousness of character. But he was much more a merry-andrew than a pattern monk. He made interest enough with influential friends to get himself transferred from the Franciscans to the Benedictines, an order more favorable to studious pursuits. But neither among the Benedictines was this roistering spirit at ease. He left them irregularly, but managed to escape punishment for his irregularity. At last, after various vicissitudes of occupation, he settled down as curate of Meudon, where (the place, however, is doubtful, as also the date) in 1553 he died. He was past fifty years of age before he finished the work which has made him famous.

This work is “The Life of Gargantua and Pantagruel,” a grotesque and nondescript production, founded, probably, on some prior romance or traditionary tale of giants. The narrative of Rabelais is a tissue of adventures shocking every idea of verisimilitude, and serving only as a vehicle for the strange humor of the writer. The work is replete with evidences of Rabelais’s learning. It would be useless to attempt giving any abstract or analysis of a book which is simply a wild chaos of material jumbled together with little regard to logic, order, or method of whatever sort. We shall better represent its character by giving a few specimen extracts.

Rabelais begins his romance characteristically. According as you understand him here, you judge

the spirit of the whole work. Either he now gives you a clew by which, amid the mazes of apparent sheer frivolity on his part, you may follow till you win your way to some veiled serious meaning that he had all the time, but never dared frankly avow; or else he is playfully misleading you on a false scent, which, however long held to, will bring you out nowhere—in short, is quizzing you. Let the reader judge for himself. Here is the opening passage—the "Author's Prologue," it is called in the English translation executed by Sir Thomas Urquhart and Motteaux; a version, by the way, which, with whatever faults of too much freedom, is the work of minds and consciences singularly sympathetic with the genius of the original; the English student is perhaps hardly at all at disadvantage, in comparison with the French, for the full appreciation of Rabelais:

> Most noble and illustrious drinkers, and you thrice precious pockified blades (for to you, and none else, do I dedicate my writings), Alcibiades, in that dialogue of Plato's which is entitled "The Banquet," whilst he was setting forth the praises of his schoolmaster Socrates (without all question the prince of philosophers), amongst other discourses to that purpose said that he resembled the Sileni. Sileni of old were little boxes, like those we now may see in the shops of apothecaries, painted on the outside with wanton toyish figures, as harpies, satyrs, bridled geese, horned hares, saddled ducks, flying goats, thiller harts, and other such counterfeited

pictures, at pleasure, to excite people unto laughter, as Silenus himself, who was the foster-father of good Bacchus, was wont to do; but within those capricious caskets called Sileni, were carefully preserved and kept many rich and fine drugs, such as balm, ambergreese, amomon, musk, civet, with several kinds of precious stones, and other things of great price. Just such another thing was Socrates; for to have eyed his outside, and esteemed of him by his exterior appearance, you would not have given the peel of an onion for him, so deformed he was in body, and ridiculous in his gesture.... Opening this box you would have found within it a heavenly and inestimable drug, a more than human understanding, an admirable virtue, matchless learning, invincible courage, inimitable sobriety, certain contentment of mind, perfect assurance, and an incredible disregard of all that for which men commonly do so much watch, run, sail, fight, travel, toil and turmoil themselves.

Whereunto (in your opinion) doth this little flourish of a preamble tend? For so much as you, my good disciples, and some other jolly fools of ease and leisure, ... are too ready to judge, that there is nothing in them [Rabelais's writings] but jests, mockeries, lascivious discourse, and recreative lies; ... therefore is it, that you must open the book, and seriously consider of the matter treated in it. Then shall you find that it containeth things of far higher value than the box did promise; that is to say, that the subject thereof is not so foolish, as by the title at the first sight it would appear to be.

> ... Did you ever see a dog with a marrow-bone in his mouth? ... Like him, you must, by a sedulous lecture [reading], and frequent meditation, break the bone, and suck out the marrow; that is, my allegorical sense, or the things I to myself propose to be signified by these Pythagorical symbols; ... the most glorious doctrines and dreadful mysteries, as well in what concerneth our religion, as matters of the public state and life economical.

Up to this point the candid reader has probably been conscious of a growing persuasion that this author must be at bottom a serious if also a humorous man—a man, therefore, excusably intent not to be misunderstood as a mere buffoon. But now let the candid reader proceed with the following, and confess, upon his honor, if he is not scandalized and perplexed. What shall be said of a writer who thus plays with his reader?

> Do you believe, upon your conscience, that Homer, whilst he was couching his Iliad and Odyssey, had any thought upon those allegories which Plutarch, Heraclides Ponticus, Eustathius, Phornutus, squeezed out of him, and which Politian filched again from them? If you trust it, with neither hand nor foot do you come near to my opinion, which judgeth them to have been as little dreamed of by Homer, as the gospel sacraments were by Ovid, in his Metamorphoses; though a certain gulligut friar, and true bacon-picker, would have undertaken to prove it if, perhaps, he had met with

as very fools as himself, and, as the proverb says, “a lid worthy of such a kettle.”

If you give any credit thereto, why do not you the same to these jovial new Chronicles of mine? Albeit, when I did dictate them, I thought thereof no more than you, who possibly were drinking the whilst, as I was. For, in the composing of this lordly book, I never lost nor bestowed any more, nor any other time, than what was appointed to serve me for taking of my bodily refection; that is, whilst I was eating and drinking. And, indeed, that is the fittest and most proper hour, wherein to write these high matters and deep sentences; as Homer knew very well, the paragon of all philologues, and Ennius, the father of the Latin poets, as Horace calls him, although a certain sneaking jobbernol alleged that his verses smelled more of the wine than oil.

Does this writer quiz his reader, or, in good faith, give him a needed hint? Who shall decide?

We have let our first extract thus run on to some length, both for the reason that the passage is as representative as any we could properly offer of the quality of Rabelais, and also for the reason that the key of interpretation is here placed in the hand of the reader, for unlocking the enigma of this remarkable book. The extraordinary horse-play of pleasantry, which makes Rabelais unreadable for the general public of to-day, begins so promptly, affecting the very prologue, that we could not present even that piece of writing entire in our

extract. We are informed that the circulation in England of the works of Rabelais, in translation, has been interfered with by the English government, on the ground of their indecency. We are bound to admit that, if any writings whatever were to be suppressed on that ground, the writings of Rabelais are certainly entitled to be of the number. It is safe to say that never, no, not even in the boundless license of the comedy of Aristophanes, was more flagrant indecency, and indecency proportionately more redundant in volume, perpetrated in literature, than was done by Rabelais. Indecency, however, it is, rather than strict lasciviousness. Rabelais sinned against manners more than he sinned against morals. But his obscenity is an ocean, without bottom or shore. Literally, he sticks at nothing that is coarse. Nay, this is absurdly short of expressing the fact. The genius of Rabelais teems with invention of coarseness, beyond what any one could conceive as possible, who had not taken his measure of possibility from Rabelais himself. And his diction was as opulent as his invention.

Such is the character of Rabelais the author. What, then, was it, if not fondness for paradox, that could prompt Coleridge to say, “I could write a treatise in praise of the moral elevation of Rabelais’s works, which would make the church stare and the conventicle groan, and yet would be truth, and nothing but the truth?” If any thing besides fondness for paradox inspired Coleridge in saying this, it must,

one would guess, have been belief on his part in an allegorical sense hidden deep underneath the monstrous mass of the Rabelaisian buffoonery. A more judicious sentence is that of Hallam, the historian of the literature of Europe: “He [Rabelais] is never serious in a single page, and seems to have had little other aim, in his first two volumes, than to pour out the exuberance of his animal gayety.”

The supply of animal gayety in this man was something portentous. One cannot, however, but feel that he forces it sometimes, as sometimes did Dickens those exhaustless animal spirits of his. A very common trick of the Rabelaisian humor is to multiply specifications, or alternative expressions, one after another, almost without end. From the second book of his romance—an afterthought, probably, of continuation to his unexpectedly successful first book—we take the last paragraph of the prologue, which shows this. The veracious historian makes obtestation of the strict truth of his narrative, and imprecates all sorts of evil upon such as do not believe it absolutely. We cleanse our extract a little:

> And, therefore, to make an end of this Prologue, even as I give myself to an hundred thousand panniers-full of fair devils, body and soul, ... in case that I lie so much as one single word in this whole history; after the like manner, St. Anthony’s fire burn you, Mahoom’s disease whirl you, the squinance with a stitch in your side, and the wolf in

> your stomach truss you, the bloody flux seize upon you, the cursed sharp inflammations of wild fire, as slender and thin as cow's hair strengthened with quicksilver, enter into you, ... and, like those of Sodom and Gomorrha, may you fall into sulphur, fire, and bottomless pits, in case you do not firmly believe all that I shall relate unto you in this present Chronicle.

So much for Rabelais's prologues. Our readers must now see something of what, under pains and penalties denounced so dire, they are bound to believe. We condense and defecate for this purpose the thirty-eighth chapter of the first book, which is staggeringly entitled, "How Gargantua did eat up Six Pilgrims in a Sallad:"

> The story requireth that we relate that which happened unto six pilgrims, who came from Sebastian near to Nantes; and who, for shelter that night, being afraid of the enemy, had hid themselves in the garden upon the chickling peas, among the cabbages and lettuces. Gargantua, finding himself somewhat dry, asked whether they could get any lettuce to make him a sallad; and, hearing that there were the greatest and fairest in the country—for they were as great as plum trees, or as walnut trees —he would go thither himself, and brought thence in his hand what he thought good, and withal carried away the six pilgrims, who were in so great fear that they did not dare to speak nor cough. Washing them, therefore, first at the fountain, the

pilgrims said one to another, softly, “What shall we do? We are almost drowned here amongst these lettuce: shall we speak? But if we speak, he will kill us for spies.” And, as they were thus deliberating what to do, Gargantua put them, with the lettuce, into a platter of the house, as large as the huge tun of the White Friars of the Cistercian order; which done, with oil, vinegar, and salt, he ate them up to refresh himself a little before supper, and had already swallowed up five of the pilgrims, the sixth being in the platter, totally hid under a lettuce, except his bourdon, or staff, that appeared, and nothing else. Which Grangousier [Gargantua’s father] seeing, said to Gargantua, “I think that is the horn of a shell snail: do not eat it.” “Why not?” said Gargantua; “they are good all this month:” which he no sooner said, but, drawing up the staff, and therewith taking up the pilgrim, he ate him very well, then drank a terrible draught of excellent white wine. The pilgrims, thus devoured, made shift to save themselves, as well as they could, by drawing their bodies out of the reach of the grinders of his teeth, but could not escape from thinking they had been put in the lowest dungeon of a prison. And, when Gargantua whiffed the great draught, they thought to have drowned in his mouth, and the flood of wine had almost carried them away into the gulf of his stomach. Nevertheless, skipping with their bourdons, as St. Michael’s palmers used to do, they sheltered themselves from the danger of that inundation under the banks of his teeth. But one of them, by chance, groping, or sounding the country with his staff, to try whether they were in safety or

> no, struck hard against the cleft of a hollow tooth, and hit the mandibulary sinew or nerve of the jaw, which put Gargantua to very great pain, so that he began to cry for the rage that he felt. To ease himself, therefore, of his smarting ache, he called for his tooth-picker, and, rubbing towards a young walnut-tree, where they lay skulking, unnestled you, my gentleman pilgrims. For he caught one by the legs, another by the scrip, another by the pocket, another by the scarf, another by the band of the breeches; and the poor fellow that had hurt him with the bourdon, him he hooked to by [another part of his clothes].... The pilgrims, thus dislodged, ran away.

Rabelais closes his story with jocose irreverent application of Scripture—a manner of his which gives some color to the tradition of a biblical pun made by him on his death-bed.

The closest English analogue to Rabelais is undoubtedly Dean Swift. We probably never should have had "Gulliver's Travels" from Swift if we had not first had Gargantua and Pantagruel from Rabelais. Swift, however, contrasts Rabelais as well as resembles him. Whereas Rabelais is simply monstrous in invention, Swift in invention submits himself loyally to law. Give Swift his world of Lilliput and Brobdingnag respectively, and all, after that, is quite natural and probable. The reduction or the exaggeration is made upon a mathematically calculated scale. For such verisimilitude Rabelais

cares not a straw. His various inventions are recklessly independent one of another. A characteristic of Swift thus is scrupulous conformity to whimsical law. Rabelais is remarkable for whimsical disregard of even his own whimseys. Voltaire put the matter with his usual felicity—Swift is Rabelais in his senses.

One of the most celebrated—justly celebrated—of Rabelais's imaginations is that of the Abbey of Thélème [Thelema]. This constitutes a kind of Rabelaisian Utopia. It was proper of the released monk to give his Utopian dream the form of an abbey, but of an abbey in which the opposite should obtain of all that he had so heartily hated in his own monastic experience. A humorously impossible place and state was the Abbey of Thélème—a kind of sportive Brook Farm set far away in a world unrealized. How those Thelemites enjoyed life, to be sure! It was like endless plum pudding—for every body to eat, and nobody to prepare:

> All their life was spent not in laws, statutes, or rules, but according to their own free will and pleasure. They rose out of their beds when they thought good; they did eat, drink, labor, sleep, when they had a mind to it, and were disposed for it. None did awake them, none did offer to constrain them to eat, drink, nor to do any other thing; for so had Gargantua established it. In all their rule, and strictest tie of their order, there was but this one clause to be observed,

DO WHAT THOU WILT.

... By this liberty they entered into a very laudable emulation, to do all of them what they saw did please one. If any of the gallants or ladies should say, Let us drink, they would all drink. If any one of them said, Let us play, they all played. If one said, Let us go a-walking into the fields, they went all.... There was neither he nor she amongst them but could read, write, sing, play upon several musical instruments, speak five or six several languages, and compose in them all very quaintly, both in verse and prose. Never were seen so valiant knights, so noble and worthy, so dextrous and skilful both on foot and a horseback, more brisk and lively, more nimble and quick, or better handling all manner of weapons than were there. Never were seen ladies so proper and handsome, so miniard and dainty, less forward, or more ready with their hand and with their needle, in every honest and free action belonging to that sex, than were there. For this reason, when the time came, that any man of the said abbey, either at the request of his parents, or for some other cause, had a mind to go out of it, he carried along with him one of the ladies, namely her who had before that accepted him as her lover, and they were married together.

The foregoing is one of the most purely sweet imaginative passages in Rabelais's works. The representation, as a whole, sheathes, of course, a keen satire on the religious houses. Real religion Rabelais nowhere attacks.

The same colossal Gargantua who had that eating adventure with the six pilgrims is made, in Rabelais's second book, to write his youthful son Pantagruel—also a giant, but destined to be, when mature, a model of all princely virtues—a letter on education, in which the most pious paternal exhortation occurs. The whole letter reads like some learned Puritan divine's composition. Here are a few specimen sentences:—

> Fail not most carefully to peruse the books of the Greek, Arabian, and Latin physicians, not despising the Talmudists and Cabalists; and by frequent anatomies get thee the perfect knowledge of that other world, called the microcosm, which is man. And at some of the hours of the day apply thy mind to the study of the Holy Scriptures: first, in Greek, the New Testament, with the Epistles of the Apostles; and then the Old Testament in Hebrew. In brief, let me see thee an abyss and bottomless pit of knowledge....
>
> ... It behooveth thee to serve, to love, to fear God, and on him to cast all thy thoughts and all thy hope, and, by faith formed in charity, to cleave unto him, so that thou mayest never be separated from him by thy sins. Suspect the abuses of the world. Set not thy heart upon vanity, for this life is transitory; but the Word of the Lord endureth forever.

"Friar John" is a mighty man of valor, who figures equivocally in the story of Gargantua and

Pantagruel. The Abbey of Thélème is given him in reward of his services. Some have identified this fighting monk with Martin Luther. The representation is, on the whole, so conducted as to leave the reader's sympathies at least half enlisted in favor of the fellow, rough and roistering as he is.

Panurge is the hero of the romance of Pantagruel, —almost more than Pantagruel himself. It would be unpardonable to dismiss Rabelais without first making our readers know Panurge by, at least, a few traits of his character and conduct. Panurge was a shifty but unscrupulous adventurer, whom Pantagruel, pious prince as he was, coming upon him by chance, took and kept under his patronage. Panurge was an arch-imp of mischief—-mischief indulged in the form of obscene and malicious practical jokes. Rabelais describes his accomplishments in a long strain of discourse, from which we purge our selection to follow—thereby transforming Panurge into a comparatively proper and virtuous person:

> He had threescore and three tricks to come by it [money] at his need of which the most honorable and most ordinary was in manner of thieving, secret purloining, and filching, for he was a wicked, lewd rogue, a cozener, drinker, roisterer, rover, and a very dissolute and debauched fellow, if there were any in Paris; otherwise, and in all matters else, the best and most virtuous man in the world; and he

was still contriving some plot, and devising mischief against the sergeants and the watch.

At one time he assembled three or four especial good hacksters and roaring boys; made them in the evening drink like Templars, afterward led them till they came under St. Genevieve, or about the college of Navarre, and, at the hour that the watch was coming up that way—which he knew by putting his sword upon the pavement, and his ear by it, and, when he heard his sword shake, it was an infallible sign that the watch was near at that instant—then he and his companions took a tumbrel or garbage-cart, and gave it the brangle, hurling it with all their force down the hill, and then ran away upon the other side; for in less than two days he knew all the streets, lanes, and turnings in Paris as well as his *Deus det*.

At another time he laid, in some fair place where the said watch was to pass, a train of gunpowder, and, at the very instant that they went along, set fire to it, and then made himself sport to see what good grace they had in running away, thinking that St. Anthony's fire had caught them by the legs.... In one of his pockets he had a great many little horns full of fleas and lice, which he borrowed from the beggars of St. Innocent, and cast them, with small canes or quills to write with, into the necks of the daintiest gentlewomen that he could find, yea, even in the church; for he never seated himself above in the choir, but always in the body of the church amongst the women, both at mass, at vespers, and at sermon.

Coleridge, in his metaphysical way, keen at the moment on the scent of illustrations for the philosophy of Kant, said, “Pantagruel is the Reason; Panurge the Understanding.” Rabelais himself, in the fourth book of his romance, written in the last years of his life, defines the spirit of the work. This fourth book, the English translator says, is “justly thought his masterpiece.” The same authority adds with enthusiasm, “Being wrote with more spirit, salt, and flame than the first part.” Here, then, is Rabelais’s own expression, sincere or jocular, as you choose to take it, for what constitutes the essence of his writing. We quote from the “Prologue:”

> By the means of a little Pantagruelism (which, you know, is *a certain jollity of mind, pickled in the scorn of fortune*), you see me now [“at near seventy years of age,” his translator says], hale and cheery, as sound as a bell, and ready to drink, if you will.

It is impossible to exaggerate the mad, rollicking humor, sticking at nothing, either in thought or in expression, with which especially this last book of Rabelais’s work is written. But we have no more space for quotation.

Coleridge’s theory of interpretation for Rabelais’s writings is hinted in his “Table Talk,” as follows: “After any particularly deep thrust ... Rabelais, as if to break the blow and to appear unconscious of what he has done, writes a chapter or two of pure

buffoonery."

The truth seems to us to be, that Rabelais's supreme taste, like his supreme power, lay in the line of humorous satire. He hated monkery, and he satirized the system as openly as he dared—this, however, not so much in the love of truth and freedom as in pure fondness for exercising his wit. That he was more than willing to make his ribald drollery the fool's mask from behind which he might aim safely his shafts of ridicule at what he despised and hated is, indeed, probable. But in this is supplied to him no sufficient excuse for his obscene and blasphemous pleasantry. Nor yet are the manners of the age an excuse sufficient. Erasmus belonged to the same age, and he disliked the monks not less. But what a contrast, in point of decency, between Rabelais and Erasmus.

IV.

MONTAIGNE.

1533-1592.

MONTAIGNE is signally the author of one book. His "Essays" are the whole of him. He wrote letters, to be sure, and he wrote journals of travel

undertaken in quest of health and pleasure. But these are chiefly void of interest. Montaigne the Essayist alone is emphatically the Montaigne that survives. “Montaigne the Essayist”—that has become, as it were, a personal name in literary history.

The “Essays” are one hundred and seven in number, distributed in three books. They are very unequal in length: and they are on the most various topics—topics often the most whimsical in character. We give a few of his titles, taking them as found in Cotton’s translation:

> That men by various ways arrive at the same end; Whether the governor of a place ought himself to go out to parley; Of liars; Of quick or slow speech; A proceeding of some ambassadors; Various events from the same counsel; Of cannibals; That we laugh and cry from the same thing; Of smell; That the mind hinders itself; Of thumbs; Of virtue; Of coaches; Of managing the will; Of cripples; Of experience.

Montaigne’s titles cannot be trusted to indicate the nature of the essays to which they belong. The author’s pen will not be bound. It runs on at its own pleasure. Things the most unexpected are incessantly turning up in Montaigne—things, probably, that were as unexpected to the writer when he was writing as they will be to the reader when he is reading. The writing, on whatever topic, in whatever

vein, always revolves around the writer for its pivot. Montaigne, from no matter what apparent diversion, may constantly be depended upon to bring up in due time at himself. The tether is long and elastic, but it is tenacious, and it is securely tied to Montaigne. This, as we shall presently let the author himself make plain, is no accident of which Montaigne was unconscious. It is the express idea on which the "Essays" were written. Montaigne, in his "Essays," is a pure and perfect egotist, naked and not ashamed. Egotism is Montaigne's note, his *differentia*, in the world of literature. Other literary men have been egotists—since. But Montaigne may be called the first, and he is the greatest; by no means the most monstrous, but the greatest.

Montaigne was a Gascon, and Gasconisms adulterate the purity of his French. But his style—a little archaic now, and never finished to the nail—had virtues of its own which have exercised a wholesome influence on classic French prose. It is simple, direct, manly, genuine. It is fresh and racy of the writer. It is flexible to every turn, it is sensitive to every rise or fall, of the thought. It is a steadfast rebuke to rant and fustian. It quietly laughs to scorn the folly of that style which writhes in an agony of expression, with neither thought nor feeling present to be expressed. Montaigne's "Essays" have been a great and a beneficent formative force in the development of prose style in French.

For substance, Montaigne is rich in practical

wisdom, his own by original reflection or by discreet purveyal. He had read much, he had observed much, he had experienced much. The result of all, digested in brooding thought, he put into his “Essays.” These grew as he grew. He got himself transferred whole into them. Out of them, in turn, the world has been busy ever since dissolving Montaigne.

Montaigne’s “Essays” are, as we have said, himself. Such is his own way of putting the fact. To one admiring his essays to him, he frankly replied, “You will like me if you like my essays, for they are myself.” The originality, the creative character and force of the “Essays” lies in this autobiographical quality in them. Their fascination, too, consists in the revelation they contain. This was, first, self-revelation on the part of the writer; but no less it becomes, in each case, self-revelation in the experience of the reader. For, as face answereth to face in the glass, so doth the heart of man to man—from race to race and from generation to generation. If Montaigne, in his “Essays,” held the mirror up to himself, he, in the same act, held up the mirror to you and to me. The image that we, reading, call Montaigne, is really ourselves. We never tire of gazing on it. We are all of us Narcissuses. This is why Montaigne is an immortal and a universal writer.

Here is Montaigne’s preface to his “Essays”—“The Author to the Reader,” it is entitled:

> Reader, thou hast here an honest book; it doth at

the outset forewarn thee that, in contriving the same, I have proposed to myself no other than a domestic and private end: I have had no consideration at all either to thy service or to my glory. My powers are not capable of any such design. I have dedicated it to the particular commodity of my kinsfolk and friends, so that, having lost me (which they must do shortly), they may therein recover some traits of my conditions and humours, and by that means preserve more whole, and more life-like, the knowledge they had of me. Had my intention been to seek the world's favor, I should surely have adorned myself with borrowed beauties. I desire therein to be viewed as I appear in mine own genuine, simple, and ordinary manner, without study and artifice; for it is myself I paint. My defects are therein to be read to the life, and my imperfections and my natural form, so far as public reverence hath permitted me. If I had lived among those nations which (they say) yet dwell under the sweet liberty of nature's primitive laws, I assure thee I would most willingly have painted myself quite fully, and quite naked. Thus, reader, myself am the matter of my book. There's no reason thou shouldst employ thy leisure about so frivolous and vain a subject. Therefore, farewell.

From Montaigne, the 12th of June, 1580.

Michel Eyquem de Montaigne, our author, as the foregoing date will have suggested, derived his most familiar name from the place at which he was born and at which he lived. Readers are not to take too

literally Montaigne's notice of his dispensing with "borrowed beauties." He was, in fact, a famous borrower. He himself warns his readers to be careful how they criticise him; they may be flouting unawares Seneca, Plutarch, or some other, equally redoubtable, of the reverend ancients. Montaigne is perhaps as signal an example as any in literature of the man of genius exercising his prescriptive right to help himself to his own wherever he may happen to find it. But Montaigne has in turn been freely borrowed from. Bacon borrowed from him, Shakespeare borrowed from him, Dryden, Pope, Hume, Burke, Byron—these, with many more, in England; and, in France, Pascal, La Rochefoucauld, Voltaire, Rousseau—directly or indirectly, almost every writer since his day. No modern writer, perhaps, has gone in solution into subsequent literature more widely than Montaigne. But no writer remains more solidly and insolubly entire.

We go at once to chapter twenty-five of the first book of the "Essays," entitled, in the English translation, "On the Education of Children." The translation we use henceforth throughout is the classic one of Charles Cotton, in a text of it edited by Mr. William Carew Hazlitt. The "preface," already given, Cotton omitted to translate. We have allowed Mr. Hazlitt to supply the deficiency. Montaigne addresses his educational views to a countess. Several others of his essays are similarly inscribed to women. Mr. Emerson's excuse of Montaigne for his

coarseness—that he wrote for a generation in which women were not expected to be readers—is thus seen to be curiously impertinent to the actual case that existed. Of a far worse fault in Montaigne than his coarseness—we mean his outright immorality—Mr. Emerson makes no mention, and for it, therefore, provides no excuse. We shall ourselves, in due time, deal more openly with our readers on this point.

It was for a "boy of quality" that Montaigne aimed to adapt his suggestions on the subject of education. In this happy country of ours all boys are boys of quality; and we shall go nowhere amiss in selecting from the present essay:

> For a boy of quality, then, I say, I would also have his friends solicitous to find him out a tutor who has rather a well-made than a well-filled head, seeking, indeed, both the one and the other, but rather of the two to prefer manners and judgment to mere learning, and that this man should exercise his charge after a new method.
>
> 'Tis the custom of pedagogues to be eternally thundering in their pupil's ears, as they were pouring into a funnel, whilst the business of the pupil is only to repeat what the others have said: now, I would have a tutor to correct this error, and that, at the very first, he should, according to the capacity he has to deal with, put it to the test, permitting his pupil himself to taste things, and of himself to discern and choose them, sometimes opening the way to him, and sometimes leaving him

to open it for himself; that is, I would not have him alone to invent and speak, but that he should also hear his pupil speak in turn.... Let him make him put what he has learned into a hundred several forms, and accommodate it to so many several subjects, to see if he yet rightly comprehends it, and has made it his own.... 'Tis a sign of crudity and indigestion to disgorge what we eat in the same condition it was swallowed: the stomach has not performed its office, unless it have altered the form and condition of what was committed to it to concoct....

Let him make him examine and thoroughly sift every thing he reads and lodge nothing in his fancy upon simple authority and upon trust, Aristotle's principles will then be no more principles to him than those of Epicurus and the stoics: let this diversity of opinions be propounded to, and laid before, him; he will himself choose, if he be able; if not, he will remain in doubt.

> "Che, non men che saper, dubbiar m'aggrata."
>
> DANTE, *Inferno*, xl, 93.
>
> ["That doubting pleases me, not less than knowing."
>
> LONGFELLOW'S *Translation*.]

For, if he embrace the opinions of Xenophon and Plato, by his own reason they will no more be theirs, but become his own. Who follows another follows nothing, finds nothing, nay, is inquisitive after

nothing. “Non sumus sub rege; sibi quisque se vindicet.” [“We are under no king; let each look to himself.”—SENECA, *Ep.* 33.] Let him, at least, know that he knows. It will be necessary that he imbibe their knowledge, not that he be corrupted with their precepts; and no matter if he forget where he had his learning, provided he know how to apply it to his own use. Truth and reason are common to every one, and are no more his who spake them first, than his who speaks them after; ’tis no more according to Plato, than according to me, since both he and I equally see and understand them. Bees cull their several sweets from this flower and that blossom, here and there where they find them; but themselves afterward make the honey, which is all and purely their own, and no more thyme and marjoram: so the several fragments he borrows from others he will transform and shuffle together, to compile a work that shall be absolutely his own; that is to say, his judgment: his instruction, labor, and study tend to nothing else but to form that.... Conversation with men is of very great use, and travel into foreign countries, ... to be able chiefly to give an account of the humors, manners, customs, and laws of those nations where he has been, and that we may whet and sharpen our wits by rubbing them against those of others....

In this conversing with men, I mean also, and principally, those who live only in the records of history: he shall, by reading those books, converse with the great and heroic souls of the best ages.

It is difficult to find a stopping-place in discourse so wise and so sweet. We come upon sentences like Plato for height and for beauty. An example: “The most manifest sign of wisdom is a continual cheerfulness; her state is like that of things in the regions above the moon, always clear and serene.” But the genius of Montaigne does not often soar, though even one little flight like that shows that it has wings. Montaigne’s garnishes of quotation from foreign tongues are often a cold-blooded device of afterthought with him. His first edition was without them in many places where subsequently they appear. Readers familiar with Emerson will be reminded of him in perusing Montaigne. Emerson himself said, “It seemed to me [in reading the ‘Essays’ of Montaigne], as if I myself had written the book in some former life, so sincerely it spoke to my thoughts and experience.” The rich old English of Cotton’s translation had evidently a strong influence on Emerson, to mold his own style of expression. Emerson’s trick of writing “’tis,” was apparently caught from Cotton. The following sentence, from the present essay of Montaigne, might very well have served Mr. Emerson for his own rule of writing: “Let it go before, or come after, a good sentence, or a thing well said, is always in season; if it neither suit well with what went before, nor has much coherence with what follows after, it is good in itself.” Montaigne, at any rate, wrote his “Essays” on that easy principle. The logic of them is the logic of mere chance association in thought. But, with Montaigne

—whatever is true of Emerson—the association at least is not occult; and it is such as pleases the reader not less than it pleased the writer. So this Gascon gentleman of the olden time never tires us, and never loses us out of his hand. We go with him cheerfully where he so blithely leads.

Montaigne tells us how he was himself trained under his father. The elder Montaigne, too, had his ideas on education—the subject which his son, in this essay, so instructively treats. The essayist leads up to his autobiographical episode by an allusion to the value of the classical languages, and to the question of method in studying them. He says:

> In my infancy, and before I began to speak, he [my father] committed me to the care of a German,... totally ignorant of our language, but very fluent, and a great critic, in Latin. This man, whom he had fetched out of his own country, and whom he entertained with a very great salary, for this only end, had me continually with him: to him there were also joined two others, of inferior learning, to attend me, and to relieve him, who all of them spoke to me in no other language but Latin. As to the rest of his family, it was an inviolable rule, that neither himself nor my mother, man nor maid, should speak any thing in my company but such Latin words as every one had learned only to gabble with me. It is not to be imagined how great an advantage this proved to the whole family: my father and my mother by this means learned Latin

> enough to understand it perfectly well, and to speak it to such a degree as was sufficient for any necessary use, as also those of the servants did who were most frequently with me. In short, we Latined it at such a rate that it overflowed to all the neighboring villages, where there yet remain, that have established themselves by custom, several Latin appellations of artisans and their tools. As for what concerns myself, I was above six years of age before I understood either French or Perigordin ["Perigordin" is Montaigne's name for the dialect of his province, Perigord (Gascony)], any more than Arabic; and, without art, book, grammar, or precept, whipping, or the expense of a tear, I had, by that time, learned to speak as pure Latin as my master himself, for I had no means of mixing it up with any other.

We are now to see how, helped by his wealth, the father was able to gratify a pleasant whimsey of his own in the nurture of his boy. Highly æsthetic was the matin *réveille* that broke the slumbers of this hopeful young heir of Montaigne:

> Some being of opinion that it troubles and disturbs the brains of children suddenly to wake them in the morning, and to snatch them violently and over-hastily from sleep, wherein they are much more profoundly involved than we, he [the father] caused me to be wakened by the sound of some musical instrument, and was never unprovided of a musician for that purpose.... The good man, being

> extremely timorous of any way failing in a thing he had so wholly set his heart upon, suffered himself at last to be overruled by the common opinions:... he sent me, at six years of age, to the College of Guienne, at that time the best and most flourishing in France.

In short, as in the case of Mr. Tulliver, the world was "too many" for Eyquem *père*; and, in the education of his son, the stout Gascon, having started out well as dissenter, fell into dull conformity at last.

We ought to give some idea of the odd instances, classic and other, with which Montaigne plentifully bestrews his pages. He is writing of the "Force of Imagination." He says:

> A woman, fancying she had swallowed a pin in a piece of bread, cried and lamented as though she had an intolerable pain in her throat, where she thought she felt it stick; but an ingenious fellow that was brought to her, seeing no outward tumor nor alteration, supposing it to be only a conceit taken at some crust of bread that had hurt her as it went down, caused her to vomit, and, unseen, threw a crooked pin into the basin, which the woman no sooner saw, but, believing she had cast it up, she presently found herself eased of her pain....
>
> Such as are addicted to the pleasures of the field have, I make no question, heard the story of the falconer, who, having earnestly fixed his eyes upon a kite in the air, laid a wager that he would bring

her down with the sole power of his sight, and did so, as it was said; for *the tales I borrow, I charge upon the consciences of those from whom I have them.*

We italicize the last foregoing words, to make readers see that Montaigne is not to be read for the truth of his instances. He uses what comes to hand. He takes no trouble to verify. "The discourses are my own," he says; but even this, as we have hinted, must not be pressed too hard in interpretation. Whether a given reflection of Montaigne's is strictly his own, in the sense of not having been first another's, who gave it to him, is not to be determined except upon very wide reading, very well remembered, in all the books that Montaigne could have got under his eye. That was full fairly his own, he thought, which he had made his own by intelligent appropriation. And this, perhaps, expresses in general the sound law of property in the realm of mind. At any rate, Montaigne will wear no yoke of fast obligation. He will write as pleases him. Above all things else, he likes his freedom.

Here is one of those sagacious historical scepticisms, in which Montaigne was so fond of poising his mind between opposite views. It occurs in his essay entitled, "Of the Uncertainty of our Judgments:"

Amongst other oversights Pompey is charged withal at the battle of Pharsalia, he is condemned

> for making his army stand still to receive the enemy's charge, "by reason that" (I shall here steal Plutarch's own words, which are better than mine) "he by so doing deprived himself of the violent impression the motion of running adds to the first shock of arms, and hindered that clashing of the combatants against one another, which is wont to give them greater impetuosity and fury, especially when they come to rush in with their utmost vigor, their courages increasing by the shouts and the career; 'tis to render the soldiers' ardor, as a man may say, more reserved and cold." This is what he says. But, if Cæsar had come by the worse, why might it not as well have been urged by another, that, on the contrary, the strongest and most steady posture of fighting is that wherein a man stands planted firm, without motion; and that they who are steady upon the march, closing up, and reserving their force within themselves for the push of the business, have a great advantage against those who are disordered, and who have already spent half their breath in running on precipitately to the charge? Besides that, an army is a body made up of so many individual members, it is impossible for it to move in this fury with so exact a motion as not to break the order of battle, and that the best of them are not engaged before their fellows can come on to help them.

The sententiousness of Montaigne may be illustrated by transferring here a page of brief excerpts from the "Essays," collected by Mr. Bayle St.

John in his biography of the author. The apothegmatic or proverbial quality in Montaigne had a very important sequel of fruitful influence on subsequent French writers, as chapters to follow in this volume will abundantly show. In reading the sentences sub-joined, you will have the sensation of coming suddenly upon a treasure-trove of coined proverbial wisdom:

Our minds are never at home, but ever beyond home.

I will take care, if possible, that my death shall say nothing that my life has not said.

Life in itself is neither good nor bad: it is the place of what is good or bad.

Knowledge should not be stuck on to the mind, but incorporated in it.

Irresolution seems to me the most common and apparent vice of our nature.

Age wrinkles the mind more than the face.

Habit is a second nature.

Hunger cures love.

It is easier to get money than to keep it.

Anger has often been the vehicle of courage.

It is more difficult to command than to obey.

A liar should have a good memory.

Ambition is the daughter of presumption.

To serve a prince, you must be discreet and a liar.

We learn to live when life has passed.

The mind is ill at ease when its companion has the colic.

We are all richer than we think, but we are brought up to go a-begging.

The greatest masterpiece of man is ... to be born at the right time.

We append a saying of Montaigne's not found in Mr. St. John's collection:

There is no so good man, who so squares all his thoughts and actions to the laws, that he is not faulty enough to deserve hanging ten times in his life.

Montaigne was too intensely an egotist, in his character as man no less than in his character as writer, to have many personal relations that exhibit him in aspects engaging to our love. But one friendship of his is memorable—is even historic. The name of La Boëtie is forever associated with the name of Montaigne. La Boëtie is remarkable for being, as we suppose, absolutely the first voice raised in France against the idea of monarchy. His little treatise *Contr' Un* (literally, "Against One"), or

"Voluntary Servitude," is by many esteemed among the most important literary productions of modern times. Others, again, Mr. George Saintsbury, for example, consider it an absurdly overrated book. For our own part, we are inclined to give it conspicuous place in the history of free thought in France. La Boëtie died young; and his *Contr' Un* was published posthumously—first by the Protestants, after the terrible day of St. Bartholomew. Our readers may judge for themselves whether a pamphlet in which such passages as the following could occur must not have had an historic effect upon the inflammable sentiment of the French people. We take Mr. Bayle St. John's translation, bracketing a hint or two of correction suggested by comparison of the original French. The treatise of La Boëtie is sometimes now printed with Montaigne's "Essays," in French editions of our author's works; La Boëtie says:

> You sow your fruits [crops] that he [the king] may ravage them; you furnish and fill your houses that he may have something to steal; you bring up your daughters that he may slake his luxury; you bring up your sons that he may take them to be butchered in his wars, to be the ministers of his avarice, the executors of his vengeance; you disfigure your forms by labor [your own selves you inure to toil] that he may cocker himself in delight, and wallow in nasty and disgusting pleasure.

Montaigne seems really to have loved this friend of

his, whom he reckoned the greatest man in France. His account of La Boëtie's death, Mr. St. John boldly, and not presumptuously, parallels with the "Phædon" of Plato. Noble writing, it certainly is, though its stateliness is a shade too self-conscious, perhaps.

We have thus far presented Montaigne in words of his own such as may fairly be supposed likely to prepossess the reader in his favor. We could multiply our extracts indefinitely in a like unexceptionable vein of writing. But to do so, and to stop with these, would misrepresent Montaigne. Montaigne is very far from being an innocent writer. His moral tone generally is low, and often it is execrable. He is coarse, but coarseness is not the worst of him. Indeed, he is cleanliness itself compared with Rabelais. But Rabelais is morality itself compared with Montaigne. Montaigne is corrupt and corrupting. This feature of his writings we are necessarily forbidden to illustrate. In an essay written in his old age—which we will not even name, its general tenor is so evil—Montaigne holds the following language:

> I gently turn aside, and avert my eyes from the stormy and cloudy sky I have before me, which, thanks be to God, I regard without fear, but not without meditation and study, and amuse myself in the remembrance of my better years:
>
> "Animus quod perdidit, optat,

Atque in præterita se totus imagine versat."—
Petronius, c. 128.

["The mind desires what it has lost, and in fancy flings itself wholly into the past."]

Let childhood look forward, and age backward; is not this the signification of Janus' double face? Let years haul me along if they will, but it shall be backward; as long as my eyes can discern the pleasant season expired, I shall now and then turn them that way; though it escape from my blood and veins, I shall not, however, root the image of it out of my memory:

"Hoc est
Vivere bis, vita posse priore frui."—*Martial*, x. 23, 7.

["'Tis to live twice to be able to enjoy former life again."]

Harmlessly, even engagingly, pensive seems the foregoing strain of sentiment. Who could suppose it a prelude to detailed reminiscence on the author's part of sensual pleasures—the basest—enjoyed in the past? The venerable voluptuary keeps himself in countenance for his lascivious vein by writing as follows:

I have enjoined myself to dare to say all that I dare to do; even thoughts that are not to be published displease me; the worst of my actions and qualities do not appear to me so evil, as I find it evil and base not to dare to own them....

> ... I am greedy of making myself known, and I care not to how many, provided it be truly.... Many things that I would not say to a particular individual, I say to the people; and, as to my most secret thoughts, send my most intimate friends to my book.... For my part, if any one should recommend me as a good pilot, as being very modest, or very chaste, I should owe him no thanks [because the recommendation would be false].

We must leave it—as, however, Montaigne himself is far enough from leaving it—to the imagination of readers to conjecture what "pleasures" they are, of which this worn-out debauchee (nearing death, and thanking God that he nears it "without fear") speaks in the following sentimental strain:

> In farewells, we oftener than not heat our affections toward the things we take leave of: I take my last leave of the pleasures of this world; these are our last embraces.

Mr. Emerson, in his "Representative Men," makes Montaigne stand for The Skeptic. Skeptic, Montaigne was. He questioned, he considered, he doubted. He stood poised in equilibrium, in indifference, between contrary opinions. He saw reasons on this side, but he saw reasons also on that, and he did not clear his mind. "*Que sçai-je?*" was his motto ("What know I?"), a question as of hopeless ignorance—nay, as of

ignorance also void of desire to know. His life was one long interrogation, a balancing of opposites, to the end.

Such, speculatively, was Montaigne. Such, too, speculatively, was Pascal. The difference, however, was greater than the likeness, between these two minds. Pascal, doubting, gave the world of spiritual things the benefit of his doubt. Montaigne, on the other hand, gave the benefit of his doubt to the world of sense. He was a sensualist, he was a glutton, he was a lecher. He, for his portion, chose the good things of this life. His body he used, to get him pleasures of the body. In pleasures of the body he sunk and drowned his conscience, if he ever had a conscience. But his intelligence survived. He became, at last—if he was not such from the first—almost pure sense, without soul.

Yet we have no doubt Montaigne was an agreeable gentleman. We think we should have got on well with him as a neighbor of ours. He was a tolerably decent father, provided the child were grown old enough to be company for him. His own lawful children, while infants, had to go out of the house for their nursing; so it not unnaturally happened that all but one died in their infancy. Five of such is the number that you can count in his own journalistic entries of family births and deaths. But, in his "Essays," speaking as "moral philosopher," he says, carelessly, that he had lost "two or three" "without repining." This, perhaps, is affectation. But what

affectation!

Montaigne was well-to-do; and he ranked as a gentleman, if not as a great nobleman. He lived in a castle, bequeathed to him, and by him bequeathed—a castle still standing, and full of personal association with its most famous owner. He occupied a room in the tower, fitted up as a library. Over the door of this room may still, we believe, be read Montaigne's motto, "*Que sçai-je?*" Votaries of Montaigne perform their pious pilgrimages to this shrine of their idolatry, year after year, century after century.

For, remember, it is now three centuries since Montaigne wrote. He was before Bacon and Shakespeare. He was contemporary with Charles IX., and with Henry of Navarre. But date has little to do with such a writer as Montaigne. His quality is sempiternal. He overlies the ages, as the long hulk of a great steamship overlies the waves of the sea, stretching from summit to summit. Not that, in the form of his literary work, he was altogether independent of time and of circumstance. Not that he was uninfluenced by his historic place, in the essential spirit of his work. But, more than often happens, Montaigne may fairly be judged out of himself alone. His message he might, indeed, have delivered differently; but it would have been substantially the same message, had he been differently placed, in the world, and in history. We need hardly, therefore, add any thing about Montaigne's outward life. His true life is in his book.

Montaigne the Essayist is the consummate, the ideal, expression, practically incapable of improvement, of the spirit and wisdom of the world. This characterization, we think, fairly and sufficiently sums up the good and the bad of Montaigne. We might seem to describe no very mischievous thing. But to have the spirit and wisdom of this world expressed, to have it expressed as in a last authoritative form, a form to commend it, to flatter it, to justify it, to make it seem sufficient, to erect it into a kind of gospel—that means much. It means hardly less than to provide the world with a new Bible—a Bible of the world's own, a Bible that shall approve itself as better than the Bible of the Old and New Testaments. Montaigne's "Essays" constitute, in effect, such a book. The man of the world may—and, to say truth, does—in this volume, find all his needed texts. Here is *viaticum*—daily manna—for him, to last the year round, and to last year after year; an inexhaustible breviary for the church of this world! It is of the gravest historical significance that Rabelais and Montaigne, but especially that Montaigne, should, to such an extent, for now three full centuries, have been furnishing the daily intellectual food of Frenchmen.

Pascal, in an interview with M. de Saci (carefully reported by the latter), in which the conversation was on the subject of Montaigne and Epictetus contrasted—these two authors Pascal acknowledged to be the ones most constantly in his hand—said

gently of Montaigne, “Montaigne is absolutely pernicious to those who have any inclination toward irreligion, or toward vicious indulgences.” We, for our part, are disposed, speaking more broadly than Pascal, to say that, to a somewhat numerous class of naturally dominant minds, Montaigne’s “Essays” in spite of all that there is good in them—nay, greatly because of so much good in them—are, by their subtly insidious persuasion to evil, upon the whole quite the most powerfully pernicious book known to us in literature either ancient or modern.

V.

LA ROCHEFOUCAULD: 1613-1680; **La Bruyère**: 1646(?)-1696; **Vauvenargues**: 1715-1747.

In La Rouchefoucauld we meet another eminent example of the author of one book. “Letters,” “Memoirs,” and “Maxims,” indeed name productions in three kinds, productions all of them notable, and all still extant, from La Rochefoucauld’s pen. But the “Maxims” are so much more famous than either the “Letters” or the “Memoirs” that their author may be said to be known only by those. If it were not for the “Maxims,” the “Letters” and “Memoirs” would probably now be forgotten. We

here may dismiss these from our minds and concentrate our attention exclusively upon the "Maxims." Voltaire said, "The 'Memoirs' of the Duc de La Rochefoucauld are read, but we know his 'Maxims' by heart."

La Rochefoucauld's "Maxims" are detached sentences of reflection and wisdom on human character and conduct. They are about seven hundred in number, but they are all comprised in a very small volume; for they generally are each only two or three lines in length, and almost never does a single maxim occupy more than the half of a moderate-sized page. The "Maxims," detached, as we have described them, have no very marked logical sequence in the order in which they stand. They all, however, have a profound mutual relation. An unvarying monotone of sentiment, in fact, runs through them. They are so many different expressions, answering to so many different observations taken at different angles, of one and the same persisting estimate of human nature. Self-love is the mainspring and motive of every thing we do, or say, or feel, or think—that is the total result of the "Maxims" of La Rochefoucauld.

The writer's qualifications for treating his theme were unsurpassed. He had himself the right character, moral and intellectual; his scheme of conduct in life corresponded; he wrote in the right language—French; and he was rightly situated in time, in place, and in circumstance. He needed but to

look closely within him and without him—which he was gifted with eyes to do—and then report what he saw, in the language to which he was born. This he did, and his “Maxims” are the fruit. His method was largely the skeptical method of Montaigne. His result, too, was much the same result as his master’s. But the pupil surpassed the master in the quality of his work. There is a fineness, an exquisiteness, in the literary form of La Rochefoucauld, which Montaigne might indeed have disdained to seek, but which he could never, even with seeking, have attained. Each maxim of La Rochefoucauld is a “gem of purest ray serene,” wrought to the last degree of perfection in form with infinite artistic pains. Purity, precision, clearness, density, point, are perfectly reconciled in La Rochefoucauld’s style with ease, grace and brilliancy of expression. The influence of such literary finish, well bestowed on thought worthy to receive it, has been incalculably potent in raising the standard of French production in prose. It was Voltaire’s testimony, “One of the works which has most contributed to form the national taste, and give it a spirit of accuracy and precision, was the little collection of ‘Maxims’ by François, Duc de La Rochefoucauld.”

There is a high-bred air about La Rochefoucauld the writer, which well accords with the rank and character of the man La Rochefoucauld. He was of one of the noblest families in France. His instincts were all aristocratic. His manners and his morals

were those of his class. Brave, spirited, a touch of chivalry in him, honorable and amiable as the world reckons of its own, La Rochefoucauld ran a career consistent throughout with his own master-principle —self-love. He had a wife whose conjugal fidelity her husband seems to have thought a sufficient supply in that virtue for both himself and her. He behaved himself accordingly. His illicit relations with other women were notorious. But they unhappily did not make La Rochefoucauld in that respect at all peculiar among the distinguished men of his time. His brilliant female friends collaborated with him in working out his "Maxims." These were the labor of years. They were published in successive editions, during the lifetime of the author; and some final maxims were added from his manuscripts after his death.

Using for the purpose a very recent translation, that of A. S. Bolton (which, in one or two places, we venture to conform more exactly to the sense of the original), we give almost at hazard a few specimens of these celebrated apothegms. We adopt the numbering given in the best Paris edition of the "Maxims":

No. 11. The passions often beget their contraries. Avarice sometimes produces prodigality, and prodigality avarice: we are often firm from weakness, and daring from timidity.

No. 13. Our self-love bears more impatiently the

condemnation of our tastes than of our opinions.

How much just such detraction from all mere natural human greatness is contained in the following penetrative maxim:

No. 18. Moderation is a fear of falling into the envy and contempt which those deserve who are intoxicated with their good fortune; it is a vain parade of the strength of our mind; and, in short, the moderation of men in their highest elevation is a desire to appear greater than their fortune.

What effectively quiet satire in these few words:

No. 19. We have strength enough to bear the ills of others.

This man had seen the end of all perfection in the apparently great of this world. He could not bear that such should flaunt a false plume before their fellows:

No. 20. The steadfastness of sages is only the art of locking up their uneasiness in their hearts.

Of course, had it lain in the author's chosen line to do so, he might, with as much apparent truth, have pointed out, that to lock up uneasiness in the heart requires steadfastness no less—nay, more—than not

to feel uneasiness.

The inflation of “philosophy” vaunting itself is thus softly eased of its painful distention:

> No. 22. Philosophy triumphs easily over troubles passed and troubles to come, but present troubles triumph over it.

When Jesus once rebuked the fellow-disciples of James and John for blaming those brethren as self-seekers, he acted on the same profound principle with that disclosed in the following maxim:

> No. 34. If we had no pride, we should not complain of that of others.

How impossible it is for that Proteus, self-love, to elude the presence of mind, the inexorable eye, the fast hand, of this incredulous Frenchman:

> No. 39. Interest [self-love] speaks all sorts of languages, and plays all sorts of parts, even that of disinterestedness.
>
> No. 49. We are never so happy, or so unhappy, as we imagine.
>
> No. 78. The love of justice is, in most men, only the fear of suffering injustice.

What a subtly unsoldering distrust the following

maxim introduces into the sentiment of mutual friendship:

> No. 83. What men have called friendship is only a partnership, a mutual accommodation of interests, and an exchange of good offices: it is, in short, only a traffic, in which self-love always proposes to gain something.
>
> No. 89. Every one complains of his memory and no one complains of his judgment.

How striking, from its artful suppression of strikingness, is the first following, and what a wide, easy sweep of well-bred satire it contains:

> No. 93. Old men like to give good advice, to console themselves for being no longer able to give bad examples.
>
> No. 119. We are so much accustomed to disguise ourselves to others, that, at last, we disguise ourselves to ourselves.
>
> No. 127. The true way to be deceived is to think one's self sharper than others.

The plain-spoken proverb, "A man that is his own lawyer has a fool for his client," finds a more polished expression in the following:

> No. 132. It is easier to be wise for others, than to

be so for one's self.

How pitilessly this inquisitor pursues his prey, the human soul, into all its useless hiding-places:

> No. 138. We would rather speak ill of ourselves, than not talk of ourselves.

The following maxim, longer and less felicitously phrased than is usual with La Rochefoucauld, recalls that bitter definition of the bore—"One who insists on talking about himself all the time that you are wishing to talk about yourself":

> No. 139. One of the causes why we find so few people who appear reasonable and agreeable in conversation, is that there is scarcely any one who does not think more of what he wishes to say, than of replying exactly to what is said to him. The cleverest and the most compliant think it enough to show an attentive air; while we see in their eyes and in their mind a wandering from what is said to them, and a hurry to return to what they wish to say, instead of considering that it is a bad way to please or to persuade others, to try so hard to please one's self, and that to listen well is one of the greatest accomplishments we can have in conversation.

If we are indignant at the maxims following, it is probably rather because they are partly true than

because they are wholly false:

No. 144. We are not fond of praising, and, without interest, we never praise any one. Praise is a cunning flattery, hidden and delicate, which, in different ways, pleases him who gives and him who receives it. The one takes it as a reward for his merit: the other gives it to show his equity and his discernment.

No. 146. We praise generally only to be praised.

No. 147. Few are wise enough to prefer wholesome blame to treacherous praise.

No. 149. Disclaiming praise is a wish to be praised a second time.

No. 152. If we did not flatter ourselves, the flattery of others could not hurt us.

No. 184. We acknowledge our faults in order to atone, by our sincerity, for the harm they do us in the minds of others.

No. 199. The desire to appear able often prevents our becoming so.

No. 201. Whoever thinks he can do without the world, deceives himself much; but whoever thinks the world cannot do without him, deceives himself much more.

With the following, contrast Ruskin's noble paradox, that the soldier's business, rightly

conceived, is self-sacrifice; his ideal purpose being, not to kill, but to be killed:

> No. 214. Valor, in private soldiers, is a perilous calling, which they have taken to in order to gain their living.

Here is, perhaps, the most current of all La Rochefoucauld's maxims:

> No. 218. Hypocrisy is a homage which vice renders to virtue.

Of the foregoing maxim it may justly be said, that its truth and point depend upon the assumption, implicit, that there is such a thing as virtue—an assumption which the whole tenor of the "Maxims" in general contradicts.

How incisive the following:

> No. 226. Too great eagerness to requite an obligation is a kind of ingratitude.
>
> No. 298. The gratitude of most men is only a secret desire to receive greater favors.
>
> No. 304. We often forgive those who bore us, but we cannot forgive those whom we bore.
>
> No. 313. Why should we have memory enough to retain even the smallest particulars of what has happened to us, and yet not have enough to

remember how often we have told them to the same individual?

The first following maxim satirizes both princes and courtiers. It might be entitled, “How to insult a prince, and not suffer for your temerity”:

No. 320. To praise princes for virtues they have not, is to insult them with impunity.

No. 347. We find few sensible people, except those who are of our way of thinking.

No. 409. We should often be ashamed of our best actions, if the world saw the motives which cause them.

No. 424. We boast of faults the reverse of those we have: when we are weak, we boast of being stubborn.

Here, at length, is a maxim that does not depress—that animates you:

No. 432. To praise noble actions heartily is in some sort to take part in them.

The following is much less exhilarating:

No. 454. There are few instances in which we should make a bad bargain, by giving up the good

that is said of us, on condition that nothing bad be said.

This, also:

> No. 458. Our enemies come nearer to the truth, in the opinions they form of us, than we do ourselves.

Here is a celebrated maxim, vainly "suppressed" by the author, after first publication:

> No. 583. In the adversity of our best friends, we always find something which does not displease us.

Before La Rochefoucauld, Montaigne had said, "Even in the midst of compassion we feel within us an unaccountable bitter-sweet titillation of ill-natured pleasure in seeing another suffer;" and Burke, after both, wrote (in his "Sublime and Beautiful") with a heavier hand, "I am convinced that we have a degree of delight, and that no small one, in the real misfortunes and pains of others."

La Rochefoucauld is not fairly cynical, more than is Montaigne. But as a man he wins upon you less. His maxims are like hard and sharp crystals, precipitated from the worldly wisdom blandly solute and dilute in Montaigne.

The wise of this world reject the dogma of human depravity, as taught in the Bible. They willingly accept it—nay, accept it complacently, hugging themselves for their own penetration—as taught in the "Maxims" of La Rochefoucauld.

JEAN DE LA BRUYÈRE is personally almost as little known as if he were an ancient of the Greek or Roman world surviving, like Juvenal, only in his literary production. Bossuet got him employed to teach history to a great duke, who became his patron, and settled a life-long annuity upon him. He published his one book, the "Characters," in 1687, was made member of the French Academy in 1693, and died in 1696. That, in short, is La Bruyère's biography.

His book is universally considered one of the most finished products of the human mind. It is not a great work—it lacks the unity and the majesty of design necessary for that. It consists simply of detached thoughts and observations on a variety of subjects. It shows the author to have been a man of deep and wise reflection, but especially a consummate master of style. The book is one to read in, rather than to read. It is full of food to thought. The very beginning exhibits a self-consciousness on the writer's part very different from that spontaneous simplicity in which truly great books originate. La Bruyère begins:

> Every thing has been said; and one comes too late, after more than seven thousand years that there have been men, and men who have thought.

La Bruyère has something to say, and that to length unusual for him, of pulpit eloquence. We select a few specimen sentences:

> Christian eloquence has become a spectacle. That gospel sadness, which is its soul, is no longer to be observed in it; its place is supplied by advantages of facial expression, by inflections of the voice, by regularity of gesticulation, by choice of words, and by long categories. The sacred word is no longer listened to seriously; it is a kind of amusement, one among many; it is a game in which there is rivalry, and in which there are those who lay wagers.
>
> Profane eloquence has been transferred, so to speak, from the bar ... where it is no longer employed, to the pulpit where it ought not to be found.
>
> Matches of eloquence are made at the very foot of the altar, and in the presence of the mysteries. He who listens sits in judgment on him who preaches, to condemn or to applaud, and is no more converted by the discourse which he praises than by that which he pronounces against. The orator pleases some, displeases others, and has an understanding with all in one thing—that as he does not seek to render them better, so they do not think of becoming better.

The almost cynical acerbity of the preceding is ostensibly relieved of an obvious application to certain illustrious contemporary examples among preachers by the following open allusion to Bossuet and Bourdaloue:

> The Bishop of Meaux [Bossuet] and Father Bourdaloue make me think of Demosthenes and Cicero. Both of them, masters of pulpit eloquence, have had the fortune of great models; the one has made bad critics, the other bad imitators.

Here is a happy instance of La Bruyère's successful pains in redeeming a commonplace sentiment by means of a striking form of expression; the writer is disapproving the use of oaths in support of one's testimony:

> An honest man who says Yes, or No, deserves to be believed; his character swears for him.

Highly satiric in his quiet way, La Bruyère knew how to be. Witness the following thrust at a contemporary author, not named by the satirist, but, no doubt, recognized by the public of the time:

> He maintains that the ancients, however unequal and negligent they may be, have fine traits; he points these out; and they are so fine that they make his criticism readable.

How painstakingly, how self-consciously, La Bruyère did his literary work is evidenced by the following:

> A good author, and one who writes with care,

> often has the experience of finding that the expression which he was a long time in search of without reaching it, and which at length he has found, is that which was the most simple, the most natural, and that which, as it would seem, should have presented itself at first, and without effort.

We feel that the quality of La Bruyère is such as to fit him for the admiration and enjoyment of but a comparatively small class of readers. He was somewhat over-exquisite. His art at times became artifice—infinite labor of style to make commonplace thought seem valuable by dint of perfect expression. We dismiss La Bruyère with a single additional extract—his celebrated parallel between Corneille and Racine:

> Corneille subjects us to his characters and to his ideas; Racine accommodates himself to ours. The one paints men as they ought to be; the other paints them as they are. There is more in the former of what one admires, and of what one ought even to imitate; there is more in the latter of what one observes in others, or of what one experiences in one's self. The one inspires, astonishes, masters, instructs; the other pleases, moves, touches, penetrates. Whatever there is most beautiful, most noble, most imperial, in the reason is made use of by the former; by the latter whatever is most seductive and most delicate in passion. You find in the former maxims, rules, and precepts; in the latter, taste and sentiment. You are more absorbed in the plays of

> Corneille; you are more shaken and more softened in those of Racine. Corneille is more moral; Racine, more natural. The one appears to make Sophocles his model; the other owes more to Euripides.

Less than half a century after La Rochefoucauld and La Bruyère had shown the way, VAUVENARGUES followed in a similar style of authorship, promising almost to rival the fame of his two predecessors. This writer, during his brief life (he died at thirty-two), produced one not inconsiderable literary work more integral and regular in form, entitled, "Introduction to the Knowledge of the Human Mind;" but it is his disconnected thoughts and observations chiefly that continue to preserve his name.

Luc de Clapiers, Marquis de Vauvenargues, though nobly born, was poor. His health was frail. He did not receive a good education in his youth. Indeed, he was still in his youth when he went to the wars. His culture always remained narrow. He did not know Greek and Latin, when to know Greek and Latin was, as it were, the whole of scholarship. To crown his accidental disqualifications for literary work, he fell a victim to the small-pox, which left him wrecked in body. This occurred almost immediately after he abandoned a military career which had been fruitful to him of hardship, but not of promotion. In spite of all that was thus against him, Vauvenargues, in those years, few and evil, that were his, thought finely and justly enough to earn for himself a lasting place in

the literary history of his nation. He was in the eighteenth century of France without being of it. You have to separate him in thought from the infidels and the “philosophers” of his time. He belongs in spirit to an earlier age. His moral and intellectual kindred was with such as Pascal, far more than with such as Voltaire. Vauvenargues is, however, a writer for the few, instead of for the many. His fame is high but it is not wide. Historically, he forms a stepping-stone of transition to a somewhat similar nineteenth-century name, that of Joubert. A very few sentences of his will suffice to indicate to our readers the quality of Vauvenargues. Self-evidently, the following antithesis drawn by him between Corneille and Racine is subtly and ingeniously thought, as well as very happily expressed—this, whatever may be considered to be its aptness in point of literary appreciation:

> Corneille’s heroes often say great things without inspiring them; Racine’s inspire them without saying them.

Here is a good saying:

> It is a great sign of mediocrity always to be moderate in praising.

There is worldly wisdom also here:

> He who knows how to turn his prodigalities to good account practices a large and noble economy.

Virgil's "They are able, because they seem to themselves to be able," is recalled by this:

> The consciousness of our strength makes our strength greater.

So much for Vauvenargues.

And so much for what—considering that, logically, though not quite chronologically, Vauvenargues belongs with them—we may call the seventeenth-century group of French *pensée*-writers. A nineteenth-century group of the same literary class will form the subject of a chapter in due course to follow.

VI.

LA FONTAINE.

1621-1695.

LA FONTAINE enjoys a unique fame. He has absolutely "no fellow in the firmament" of literature. He is the only fabulist, of any age or any nation, that, on the score simply of his fables, is admitted to be

poet as well as fabulist. There is perhaps no other literary name whatever among the French by long proof more secure than is La Fontaine's, of universal and of immortal renown. Such a fame is, of course, not the most resplendent in the world; but to have been the first, and to remain thus far the only, writer of fables enjoying recognition as true poetry—this, surely, is an achievement entitling La Fontaine to monumental mention in any sketch, however summary, of French literature.

Jean de La Fontaine was humbly born, at Château-Thierry, in Champagne. His early education was sadly neglected. At twenty years of age he was still phenomenally ignorant. About this time, being now better situated, he developed a taste for the classics and for poetry. With La Fontaine the man, it is the sadly familiar French story of debauchee manners in life and in literary production. We cannot acquit him, but we are to condemn him only in common with the most of his age and of his nation. As the world goes, La Fontaine was a "good fellow," never lacking friends. These were held fast in loyalty to the poet, not so much by any sterling worth of character felt in him as by an exhaustless, easy-going good-nature that, despite his social insipidity, made La Fontaine the most acceptable of every-day companions. It would be easy to repeat many stories illustrative of this personal quality in La Fontaine, while to tell a single story illustrative of any lofty trait in his character would be perhaps impossible.

Still, La Fontaine seemed not ungrateful for the benefits he received from others; and gratitude, no commonplace virtue, let us accordingly reckon to the credit of a man in general so slenderly equipped with positive claims to admiring personal regard. The mirror of *bonhomie* (easy-hearted good-fellowship), he always was. Indeed, that significant, almost untranslatable, French word might have been coined to fit La Fontaine's case. On his amiable side—a full hemisphere or more of the man—it sums him up completely. Twenty years long this mirror of *bonhomie* was domiciliated, like a pet animal, under the hospitable roof of the celebrated Madame de la Sablière. There was truth as well as humor implied in what she said one day: "I have sent away all my domestics; I have kept only my dog, my cat, and La Fontaine."

But La Fontaine had that in him which kept the friendship of serious men. Molière, a grave, even melancholy spirit, however gay in his comedies; Boileau and Racine, decorous both of them, at least in manners, constituted, together with La Fontaine, a kind of private "Academy," existing on a diminutive scale, which was not without its important influence on French letters. La Fontaine seems to have been a sort of Goldsmith in this club of wits, the butt of many pleasantries from his colleagues, called out by his habit of absent-mindedness. St. Augustine was one night the subject of an elaborate eulogy, which La Fontaine lost the benefit of, through a reverie of

his own indulged meantime on a quite different character. Catching, however, at the name, La Fontaine, as he came to himself for a moment, betrayed the secret of his absent thought by asking, “Do you think St. Augustine had as much wit as Rabelais?” “Take care, Monsieur La Fontaine: you have put one of your stockings on wrong side out”—he had actually done so—was the only answer vouchsafed to his question. The speaker in this case was a doctor of the Sorbonne (brother to Boileau), present as guest. The story is told of La Fontaine, that egged on to groundless jealousy of his wife—a wife whom he never really loved, and whom he soon would finally abandon,—he challenged a military friend of his to combat with swords. The friend was amazed, and, amazed, reluctantly fought with La Fontaine, whom he easily put at his mercy. “Now, what is this for?” he demanded. “The public says you visit my house for my wife’s sake, not for mine,” said La Fontaine. “Then I never will come again.” “Far from it,” responds La Fontaine, seizing his friend’s hand. “I have satisfied the public. Now you must come to my house every day, or I will fight you again.” The two went back in company, and breakfasted together in mutual good humor.

A trait or two more and there will have been enough of the man La Fontaine. It is said that when, on the death of Madame de la Sablière, La Fontaine was homeless, he was met on the street by a friend, who exclaimed, “I was looking for you; come to my

house, and live with me!" "I was on the way there," La Fontaine characteristically replied. At seventy, La Fontaine went through a process of "conversion," so called, in which he professed repentance of his sins. On the genuineness of this inward experience of La Fontaine, it is not for a fellow-creature of his, especially at this distance of time, to pronounce. When he died, at seventy-three, Fénelon could say of him (in Latin), "La Fontaine is no more! He is no more; and with him have gone the playful jokes, the merry laugh, the artless graces, and the sweet Muses!" La Fontaine's earliest works were "Contes," so styled; that is, tales, or romances. These are in character such that the subsequent happy change in manners, if not in morals, has made them unreadable, for their indecency. We need concern ourselves only with the Fables, for it is on these that La Fontaine's fame securely rests. The basis of story in them was not generally original with La Fontaine. He took whatever fittest came to his hand. With much modesty he attributed all to Æsop and Phædrus. But invention of his own is not altogether wanting to his books of fables. Still, it is chiefly the consummate artful artlessness of the form that constitutes the individual merit of La Fontaine's productions. With something, too, of the air of real poetry, he has undoubtedly invested his verse.

We give, first, the brief fable which is said to have been the prime favorite of the author himself. It is the fable of "The Oak and the Reed." Of this fable

French critics have not scrupled to speak in terms of almost the very highest praise. Chamfort says, “Let one consider, that, within the limit of thirty lines, La Fontaine, doing nothing but yield himself to the current of his story, has taken on every tone, that of poetry the most graceful, that of poetry the most lofty, and one will not hesitate to affirm, that, at the epoch at which this fable appeared, there was nothing comparable to it in the French language.” There are, to speak precisely, thirty-two lines in the fable. In this one case let us try representing La Fontaine’s compression by our English form. For the rest of our specimens, after a single further exception, introduced, we confess, partly because it could be given in a graceful version by Bryant, we shall use Elizur Wright’s translation—a meritorious one, still master of the field which, about fifty years ago, it entered as pioneer. Mr. Wright here expands La Fontaine’s thirty-two verses to it forty-four. The additions are not ill-done, but they encumber somewhat the Attic neatness and simplicity of the original. We ought to say, that La Fontaine boldly broke with the tradition which had been making Alexandrines—lines of six feet—obligatory in French verse. He rhymes irregularly, at choice, and makes his verses long or short, as pleases him. The closing verse of the present piece is, in accordance with the intended majesty of the representation, an Alexandrine:

The Oak one day said to the Reed,
"Justly might you dame Nature blame.
A wren's weight would bow down your frame;
The lightest wind that chance may make
Dimple the surface of the lake
Your head bends low indeed,
The while, like Caucasus, my front
To meet the branding sun is wont,
Nay, more, to take the tempest's brunt.
A blast you feel, I feel a breeze.
Had you been born beneath my roof,
Wide-spread, of leafage weather-proof,
Less had you known your life to tease;
I should have sheltered you from storm.
But oftenest you rear your form
On the moist limits of the realm of wind.
Nature, methinks, against you sore has sinned."

"Your pity," answers him the Reed,
"Bespeaks you kind; but spare your pain;
I more than you may winds disdain.
I bend, and break not. You, indeed,
Against their dreadful strokes till now
Have stood, nor tamed your back to bow:
But wait we for the end."

Scarce had he spoke,
When fiercely from the far horizon broke
The wildest of the children, fullest fraught
With terror, that till then the North had brought.
The tree holds good; the reed it bends.
The wind redoubled might expends,
And so well works that from his bed
Him it uproots who nigh to heaven his head

Held, and whose feet reached to the kingdom of the
dead.

Here is that fable of La Fontaine's graced by the hand of Bryant upon it as translator. It is entitled "Love and Folly:"

Love's worshipers alone can know
The thousand mysteries that are his;
His blazing torch, his twanging bow,
His blooming age are mysteries.
A charming science—but the day
Were all too short to con it o'er;
So take of me this little lay,
A sample of its boundless lore.

As once, beneath the fragrant shade
Of myrtles fresh, in heaven's pure air,
The children, Love and Folly, played—
A quarrel rose betwixt the pair.
Love said the gods should do him right—
But Folly vowed to do it then,
And struck him, o'er the orbs of sight,
So hard he never saw again.

His lovely mother's grief was deep,
She called for vengeance on the deed;
A beauty does not vainly weep,
Nor coldly does a mother plead.
A shade came o'er the eternal bliss
That fills the dwellers of the skies;
Even stony-hearted Nemesis
And Rhadamanthus wiped their eyes.

"Behold," she said, "this lovely boy,"
While streamed afresh her graceful tears,
"Immortal, yet shut out from joy
And sunshine all his future years.
The child can never take, you see
A single step without a staff—
The harshest punishment would be

Too lenient for the crime by half."

All said that Love had suffered wrong,
And well that wrong should be repaid;
When weighed the public interest long,
And long the party's interest weighed,
And thus decreed the court above—
"Since Love is blind from Folly's blow,
Let Folly be the guide of Love,
Where'er the boy may choose to go."

In the fable of the "Rat Retired from the World," La Fontaine rallies the monks. With French *finesse* he hits his mark by expressly avoiding it. "What think you I mean by my disobliging rat? A monk? No, but a Mahometan devotee; I take it for granted that a monk is always ready with his help to the needful!"

The sage Levantines have a tale
About a rat that weary grew
Of all the cares which life assail,
And to a Holland cheese withdrew.
His solitude was there profound,
Extending through his world so round.
Our hermit lived on that within;
And soon his industry had been
With claws and teeth so good,
That in his novel hermitage
He had in store, for wants of age,
Both house and livelihood.
What more could any rat desire?
He grew fat, fair, and round.
God's blessings thus redound
To those who in his vows retire.
One day this personage devout,
Whose kindness none might doubt,
Was asked, by certain delegates
That came from Rat-United-States,
For some small aid, for they
To foreign parts were on their way,
For succor in the great cat-war:
Ratopolis beleaguered sore,
Their whole republic drained and poor,
No morsel in their scrips they bore.
Slight boon they craved, of succor sure
In days at utmost three or four.
"My friends," the hermit said,
"To worldly things I'm dead.
How can a poor recluse
To such a mission be of use?
What can he do but pray
That God will aid it on its way?

And so, my friends, it is my prayer
That God will have you in his care."
His well-fed saintship said no more
But in their faces shut the door.
    What think you, reader, is the service,
For which I use this niggard rat?
    To paint a monk? No, but a dervise.
A monk, I think, however fat,
Must be more bountiful than that.

The fable entitled "Death and the Dying," is much admired for its union of pathos with wit. "The Two Doves," is another of La Fontaine's more tender inspirations. "The Mogul's Dream" is a somewhat ambitious flight of the fabulist's muse. On the whole, however, the masterpiece among the fables of La Fontaine is that of "The Animals Sick of the Plague." Such at least is the opinion of critics in general. The idea of this fable is not original with La Fontaine. The homilists of the middle ages used a similar fiction to enforce on priests the duty of impartiality in administering the sacrament, so called, of confession. We give this famous fable as our closing specimen of La Fontaine:

The sorest ill that Heaven hath
Sent on this lower world in wrath—
The plague (to call it by its name),
One single day of which
Would Pluto's ferryman enrich,
Waged war on beasts, both wild and tame.
They died not all, but all were sick:
No hunting now, by force or trick,
To save what might so soon expire.
No food excited their desire:
Nor wolf nor fox now watched to slay
The innocent and tender prey.
The turtles fled,
So love and therefore joy were dead.
The lion council held, and said,
"My friends, I do believe
This awful scourge, for which we grieve,
Is for our sins a punishment
Most righteously by Heaven sent.
Let us our guiltiest beast resign
A sacrifice to wrath divine.
Perhaps this offering, truly small,
May gain the life and health of all.
By history we find it noted
That lives have been just so devoted.
Then let us all turn eyes within,
And ferret out the hidden sin.
Himself let no one spare nor flatter,
But make clean conscience in the matter.
For me, my appetite has played the glutton
Too much and often upon mutton.
What harm had e'er my victims done?
I answer, truly, None.
Perhaps, sometimes, by hunger pressed,

I've eat the shepherd with the rest.
I yield myself if need there be;
And yet I think, in equity,
Each should confess his sins with me;
For laws of right and justice cry,
The guiltiest alone should die."
"Sire," said the fox, "your majesty
Is humbler than a king should be,
And over-squeamish in the case.
What! eating stupid sheep a crime?
No, never, sire, at any time.
It rather was an act of grace,
A mark of honor to their race.
And as to shepherds, one may swear,
The fate your majesty describes
Is recompense less full than fair
For such usurpers o'er our tribes."

Thus Renard glibly spoke,
And loud applause from listeners broke
Of neither tiger, boar, nor bear,
Did any keen inquiry dare
To ask for crimes of high degree;
The fighters, biters, scratchers, all
From every mortal sin were free;
The very dogs, both great and small,
Were saints, as far as dogs could be.

The ass, confessing in his turn,
Thus spoke in tones of deep concern:
"I happened through a mead to pass;
The monks, its owners, were at mass:
Keen hunger, leisure, tender grass,
And, add to these the devil, too,

All tempted me the deed to do.
I browsed the bigness of my tongue:
Since truth must out, I own it wrong."
On this, a hue and cry arose,
As if the beasts were all his foes.
A wolf, haranguing lawyer-wise,
Denounced the ass for sacrifice—
The bald-pate, scabby, ragged lout,
By whom the plague had come, no doubt.
His fault was judged a hanging crime.
What! eat another's grass? Oh, shame!
The noose of rope, and death sublime,
For that offense were all too tame!
And soon poor Grizzle felt the same.
Thus human courts acquit the strong,
And doom the weak as therefore wrong.

It is suitable to add, in conclusion, that La Fontaine is a crucial author for disclosing the irreconcilable difference that exists, at bottom, between the Englishman's and the Frenchman's idea of poetry. No English-speaker, heir of Shakespeare and Milton, will ever be able to satisfy a Frenchman with admiration such as he can conscientiously profess for the poetry of La Fontaine.

VII.

MOLIÈRE.

1623-1673.

MOLIÈRE is confessedly the greatest writer of comedy in the world. Greek Menander might have disputed the palm; but Menander's works have perished, and his greatness must be guessed. Who knows but we guess him too great? Molière's works survive, and his greatness may be measured.

We have stinted our praise. Molière is not only the foremost name in a certain department of literature; he is one of the foremost names in literature. The names are few on which critics are willing to bestow this distinction. But critics generally agree in bestowing this distinction on Molière.

Molière's comedy is by no means mere farce. Farces he wrote, undoubtedly; and some element of farce, perhaps, entered to qualify nearly every comedy that flowed from his pen. But it is not for his farce that Molière is rated one of the few greatest producers of literature. Molière's comedy constitutes to Molière the patent that it does, of high degree in genius, not because it provokes laughter, but because, amid laughter provoked, it not seldom reveals, as if with flashes of lightning—lightning playful, indeed, but lightning that might have been deadly—the "secrets of the nethermost abyss" of human nature. Not human manners merely, those of a time, or a race, but human attributes, those of all times, and of all races, are the things with which, in his higher comedies, Molière deals. Some transient

whim of fashion may in these supply to him the mould of form that he uses, but it is human nature itself that supplies to Molière the substance of his dramatic creations. Now and again, if you read Molière wisely and deeply, you find your laughter at comedy fairly frozen in your throat, by a gelid horror seizing you, to feel that these follies or these crimes displayed belong to that human nature, one and the same everywhere and always, of which also you yourself partake. Comedy, Dante, too, called his poem, which included the *Inferno*. And a Dantesque quality, not of method, but of power, is to be felt in Molière.

This character in Molière the writer accords with the character of the man Molière. It might not have seemed natural to say of Molière, as was said of Dante, "There goes the man that has been in hell." But Molière was melancholy enough in temper and in mien to have well inspired an exclamation such as, "There goes the man that has seen the human heart."

A poet as well as a dramatist, his own fellow-countrymen, at least, feel Molière to be. In Victor Hugo's list of the eight greatest poets of all time, two are Hebrews (Job and Isaiah), two Greeks (Homer and Æschylus), one is a Roman (Lucretius), one an Italian (Dante), one an Englishman (Shakespeare)—seven. The eighth could hardly fail to be a Frenchman, and that Frenchman is Molière. Mr. Swinburne might perhaps make the list nine, but he

would certainly include Victor Hugo himself.

Curiously enough, Molière is not this great writer's real name. It is a stage name. It was assumed by the bearer when he was about twenty-four years of age, on occasion of his becoming one in a strolling band of players—in 1646 or thereabout. This band, originally composed of amateurs, developed into a professional dramatic company, which passed through various transformations, until, from being at first grandiloquently self-styled, L'Illustre Théâtre, it was, twenty years after, recognized by the national title of Théâtre Français. Molière's real name was Jean Baptiste Poquelin.

Young Poquelin's bent, early encouraged by seeing plays and ballets, was strongly toward the stage. The drama, under the quickening patronage of Louis XIII.'s lordly minister, Cardinal Richelieu, was a great public interest of those times in Paris. Molière's evil star, too, it was perhaps in part that brought him back to Paris, from Orleans. He admired a certain actress in the capital. She became the companion—probably not innocent companion—of his wandering life as actor. A sister of this actress—a sister young enough to be daughter, instead of sister—Molière finally married. She led her jealous husband a wretched conjugal life. A peculiarly dark tradition of shame, connected with Molière's marriage, has lately been to a good degree dispelled. But it is not possible to redeem this great man's fame to chastity and honor. He paid heavily, in like misery of his own, for

whatever pangs of jealousy he inflicted. There was sometimes true tragedy for himself hidden within the comedy that he acted for others. (Molière, to the very end of his life, acted in the comedies that he wrote.) When some play of his represented the torments of jealousy in the heart of a husband, it was probably not so much acting, as it was real life, that the spectators saw proceeding on the stage between Molière and his wife, confronted with each other in performing the piece.

Despite his faults, Molière was cast in a noble, generous mold, of character as well as of genius. Expostulated with for persisting to appear on the stage when his health was such that he put his life at stake in so doing, he replied that the men and women of his company depended for their bread on the play's going through, and appear he would. He actually died an hour or so after playing the part of the Imaginary Invalid in his comedy of that name. That piece was the last work of his pen.

Molière produced in all some thirty dramatic pieces, from among which we select a few of the most celebrated for brief description and illustration.

The "Bourgeois Gentilhomme" ("Shopkeeper turned Gentleman") partakes of the nature of the farce quite as much as it does of the comedy. But it is farce such as only a man of genius could produce. In it Molière ridicules the airs and affectations of a rich man vulgarly ambitious to figure in a social rank too

exalted for his birth, his breeding, or his merit. Jourdain is the name under which Molière satirizes such a character. We give a fragment from one of the scenes. M. Jourdain is in process of fitting himself for that higher position in society to which he aspires. He will equip himself with the necessary knowledge. To this end he employs a professor of philosophy to come and give him lessons at his house:

M. Jourdain. I have the greatest desire in the world to be learned; and it vexes me more than I can tell, that my father and mother did not make me learn thoroughly all the sciences when I was young.

Professor of Philosophy. This is a praiseworthy feeling. *Nam sine doctrina vita est quasi mortis imago.* You understand this, and you have, no doubt, a knowledge of Latin?

M. Jour. Yes; but act as if I had none. Explain to me the meaning of it—

Prof. Phil. The meaning of it is, that, without science, life is an image of death.

M. Jour. That Latin is quite right.

Prof. Phil. Have you any principles, any rudiments, of science?

M. Jour. Oh, yes! I can read and write.

Prof. Phil. With what would you like to begin? Shall I teach you logic?

M. Jour. And what may this logic be?

Prof. Phil. It is that which teaches us the three operations of the mind.

M. Jour. What are they—these three operations of the mind?

Prof. Phil. The first, the second, and the third. The first is to conceive well by means of universals; the second, to judge well by means of categories; and the third, to draw a conclusion aright by means of the figures Barbara, Celarent, Darii, Ferio, Baralipton, etc.

M. Jour. Pooh! what repulsive words! This logic does not by any means suit me. Teach me something more enlivening.

Prof. Phil. Will you learn moral philosophy?

M. Jour. Moral philosophy?

Prof. Phil. Yes.

M. Jour. What does it say, this moral philosophy?

Prof. Phil. It treats of happiness, teaches men to moderate their passions, and—

M. Jour. No, none of that. I am devilishly hot-tempered, and, morality or no morality, I like to give full vent to my anger whenever I have a mind to it.

Prof. Phil. Would you like to learn physics?

M. Jour. And what have physics to say for

themselves?

Prof. Phil. Physics is that science which explains the principles of natural things and the properties of bodies; which discourses of the nature of the elements, of metals, minerals, stones, plants, and animals; which teaches us the cause of all the meteors, the rainbow, the *ignis fatuus*, comets, lightning, thunder, thunderbolts, rain, snow, hail, and whirlwinds.

M. Jour. There is too much hullaballoo in all that, too much riot and rumpus.

Prof. Phil. Very good.

M. Jour. And now I want to intrust you with a great secret. I am in love with a lady of quality; and I should be glad if you would help me to write something to her in a short letter which I mean to drop at her feet.

Prof. Phil. Very well.

M. Jour. That will be gallant, will it not?

Prof. Phil. Undoubtedly. Is it verse you wish to write to her?

M. Jour. Oh, no! not verse.

Prof. Phil. You only wish prose?

M. Jour. No. I wish for neither verse nor prose.

Prof. Phil. It must be one or the other.

M. Jour. Why?

Prof. Phil. Because, sir, there is nothing by which we can express ourselves except prose or verse.

M. Jour. There is nothing but prose or verse?

Prof. Phil. No, sir. Whatever is not prose, is verse; and whatever is not verse, is prose.

M. Jour. And when we speak, what is that, then?

Prof. Phil. Prose.

M. Jour. What! when I say, "Nicole, bring me my slippers, and give me my nightcap," is that prose?

Prof. Phil. Yes, sir.

M. Jour. Upon my word, I have been speaking prose these forty years without being aware of it; and I am under the greatest obligation to you for informing me of it. Well, then, I wish to write to her in a letter, "Fair Marchioness, your beautiful eyes make me die of love"; but I would have this worded in a gallant manner, turned genteelly.

Prof. Phil. Say that the fire of her eyes has reduced your heart to ashes; that you suffer day and night for her the torments of a—

M. Jour. No, no, no, I don't wish any of that. I simply wish what I tell you—"Fair Marchioness, your beautiful eyes make me die of love."

Prof. Phil. Still, you might amplify the thing a little.

M. Jour. No, I tell you, I will have nothing but these very words in the letter; but they must be put

in a fashionable way, and arranged as they should be. Pray show me a little, so that I may see the different ways in which they can be put.

Prof. Phil. They may be put first of all, as you have said, “Fair Marchioness, your beautiful eyes make me die of love;” or else, “Of love die make me, fair Marchioness, your beautiful eyes;” or, “Your beautiful eyes of love make me, fair Marchioness, die;” or, “Die of love your beautiful eyes, fair Marchioness, make me;” or else, “Me make your beautiful eyes die, fair Marchioness, of love.”

M. Jour. But of all these ways, which is the best?

Prof. Phil. The one you said—“Fair Marchioness, your beautiful eyes make me die of love.”

M. Jour. Yet I have never studied, and I did all right off at the first shot.

The “Bourgeois Gentilhomme” is a very amusing comedy throughout.

From “Les Femmes Savantes” (“The Learned Women”)—“The Blue-Stockings,” we might perhaps freely render the title—we present one scene to indicate the nature of the comedy. There had grown to be a fashion in Paris, among certain women high in social rank, of pretending to the distinction of skill in literary criticism, and of proficiency in science. It was the Hôtel de Rambouillet reduced to absurdity. That fashionable affectation Molière made the subject of his comedy, “The Learned Women.”

In the following extracts, Molière satirizes, under the name of Trissotin, a contemporary writer, one Cotin. The poem which Trissotin reads, for the learned women to criticise and admire, is an actual production of this gentleman. Imagine the domestic *coterie* assembled, and Trissotin, the poet, their guest. He is present, prepared to regale them with what he calls his sonnet. We need to explain that the original poem is thus inscribed: "To Mademoiselle de Longueville, now Duchess of Namur, on her Quartan Fever." The conceit of the sonneteer is that the fever is an enemy luxuriously lodged in the lovely person of its victim, and there insidiously plotting against her life:

Trissotin. Sonnet to the Princess Urania on her Fever.

Your prudence sure is fast asleep,
That thus luxuriously you keep
And lodge magnificently so
Your very hardest-hearted foe.

Bélise. Ah! what a pretty beginning!

Armande. What a charming turn it has!

Philaminte. He alone possesses the talent of making easy verses.

Arm. We must yield to *prudence fast asleep*.

Bél. Lodge one's very hardest-hearted foe is full of

charms for me.

Phil. I like *luxuriously* and *magnificently*: these two adverbs joined together sound admirably.

Bél. Let us hear the rest.

Triss.

Your prudence sure is fast asleep,
That thus luxuriously you keep
And lodge magnificently so
Your very hardest-hearted foe.

Arm. Prudence fast asleep.

Bél. To lodge one's foe.

Phil. Luxuriously and *magnificently*.

Triss.

Drive forth that foe, whate'er men say,
From out your chamber, decked so gay,
Where, ingrate vile, with murderous knife,
Bold she assails your lovely life.

Bél. Ah! gently. Allow me to breathe, I beseech you.

Arm. Give us time to admire, I beg.

Phil. One feels, at hearing these verses, an indescribable something which goes through one's

inmost soul, and makes one feel quite faint.

Arm.

Drive forth that foe, whate'er men say,
From out your chamber, decked so gay—

How prettily *chamber, decked so gay*, is said here! And with what wit the metaphor is introduced!

Phil. Drive forth that foe, whate'er men say.

Ah! in what an admirable taste that *whate'er men say* is! To my mind, the passage is invaluable.

Arm. My heart is also in love with *whate'er men say*.

Bél. I am of your opinion: *whate'er men say* is a happy expression.

Arm. I wish I had written it.

Bél. It is worth a whole poem.

Phil. But do you, like me, thoroughly understand the wit of it?

Arm. and Bél. Oh! Oh!

Phil. Drive forth that foe, whate'er men say.

Although another should take the fever's part, pay no attention; laugh at the gossips.

Drive forth that foe, whate'er men say,
Whate'er men say, whate'er men say.

This *whate'er men say*, says a great deal more than it seems. I do not know if every one is like me, but I discover in it a hundred meanings.

Bél. It is true that it says more than its size seems to imply.

Phil. (*to Trissotin.*) But when you wrote this charming *whate'er men say*, did you yourself understand all its energy? Did you realize all it tells us? And did you then think that you were writing something so witty?

Triss. Ah! ah!

Arm. I have likewise the *ingrate* in my head—this ungrateful, unjust, uncivil fever that ill-treats people who entertain her.

Phil. In short, both the stanzas are admirable. Let us come quickly to the triplets, I pray.

Arm. Ah! once more, *what'er men say*, I beg.

Triss. Drive forth that foe, whate'er men say—

Phil., Arm., and Bél. Whate'er men say!

Triss. From out your chamber, decked so gay—

Phil., Arm. and Bél. Chamber decked so gay!

Triss. Where, ingrate vile, with murderous knife—

Phil., Arm., and Bél. That *ingrate* fever!

Triss. Bold she assails your lovely life.

Triss. Your lovely life!

Arm. and Bél. Ah!

Triss.

What! reckless of your ladyhood,
Still fiercely seeks to shed your blood—

Phil., Arm. and Bél. Ah!

Triss.

And day and night to work you harm.
When to the baths sometime you've brought her,
No more ado, with your own arm
Whelm her and drown her in the water.

Phil. Ah! It is quite overpowering.

Bél. I faint.

Arm. I die from pleasure.

Phil. A thousand sweet thrills seize one.

Arm. When to the baths sometime you've brought her.

Bél. No more ado, with your own arm.

Phil. Whelm her and drown her in the water.

With your own arm, drown her there in the baths.

Arm. In your verses we meet at each step with charming beauty.

Bél. One promenades through them with rapture.

Phil. One treads on fine things only.

Arm. They are little lanes all strewn with roses.

Triss. Then, the sonnet seems to you—

Phil. Admirable, new; and never did any one make any thing more beautiful.

Bél. (*to Henriette*). What! my niece, you listen to what has been read without emotion! You play there but a sorry part!

Hen. We each of us play the best part we can, my aunt; and to be a wit does not depend on our will.

Triss. My verses, perhaps, are tedious to you.

Hen. No. I do not listen.

Phil. Ah! Let us hear the epigram.

But our readers, we think, will consent to spare the epigram. They will relish, however, a fragment taken from a subsequent part of the same protracted scene. The conversation has made the transition from literary criticism to philosophy, in Moliére's time a fashionable study, rendered such by the contemporary genius and fame of Descartes. Armande resents the limitations imposed upon her

sex:

Arm. It is insulting our sex too grossly to limit our intelligence to the power of judging of a skirt, of the make of a garment, of the beauties of lace, or of a new brocade.

Bél. We must rise above this shameful condition, and bravely proclaim our emancipation.

Triss. Every one knows my respect for the fairer sex, and that, if I render homage to the brightness of their eyes, I also honor the splendor of their intellect.

Phil. And our sex does you justice in this respect; but we will show to certain minds who treat us with proud contempt, that women also have knowledge; that, like men, they can hold learned meetings—regulated, too, by better rules; that they wish to unite what elsewhere is kept apart, join noble language to deep learning, reveal nature's laws by a thousand experiments; and, on all questions proposed, admit every party, and ally themselves to none.

Triss. For order, I prefer peripateticism.

Phil. For abstractions, I love platonism.

Arm. Epicurus pleases me, for his tenets are solid.

Bél. I agree with the doctrine of atoms; but I find it difficult to understand a vacuum, and I much prefer subtile matter.

Triss. I quite agree with Descartes about magnetism.

Arm. I like his vortices.

Phil. And I, his falling worlds.

Arm. I long to see our assembly opened, and to distinguish ourselves by some great discovery.

Triss. Much is expected from your enlightened knowledge, for nature has hidden few things from you.

Phil. For my part, I have, without boasting, already made one discovery; I have plainly seen men in the moon.

Bél. I have not, I believe as yet, quite distinguished men, but I have seen steeples as plainly as I see you.

Arm. In addition to natural philosophy, we will dive into grammar, history, verse, ethics, and politics.

Phil. I find in ethics charms which delight my heart; it was formerly the admiration of great geniuses; but I give the preference to the Stoics, and I think nothing so grand as their founder.

"Les Précieuses Ridicules" is an earlier and lighter treatment of the same theme. The object of ridicule in both these pieces was a lapsed and degenerate form of what originally was a thing worthy of respect, and even of praise. At the Hôtel de

Rambouillet, conversation was cultivated as a fine art. There was, no doubt, something overstrained in the standards which the ladies of that circle enforced. Their mutual communication was all conducted in a peculiar style of language, the natural deterioration of which was into a kind of euphuism, such as English readers will remember to have seen exemplified in Walter Scott's Sir Piercie Shafton. These ladies called each other, with demonstrative fondness, "Ma précieuse." Hence at last the term *précieuse* as a designation of ridicule. Madame de Sévigné was a *précieuse*. But she, with many of her peers, was too rich in sarcastic common sense to be a *précieuse ridicule*. Molière himself, thrifty master of policy that he was, took pains to explain that he did not satirize the real thing, but only the affectation.

"Tartuffe, or the Impostor," is perhaps the most celebrated of all Molière's plays. Scarcely comedy, scarcely tragedy, it partakes of both characters. Like tragedy, serious in purpose, it has a happy ending like comedy. Pity and terror are absent; or, if not quite absent, these sentiments are present raised only to a pitch distinctly below the tragic. Indignation is the chief passion excited, or detestation, perhaps, rather than indignation. This feeling is provided at last with its full satisfaction in the condign punishment visited on the impostor.

The original "Tartuffe," like the most of Molière's comedies, is written in rhymed verse. We could not, with any effort, make the English-reading student of

Molière sufficiently feel how much is lost when the form is lost which the creations of this great genius took, in their native French, under his own master hand. A satisfactory metrical rendering is out of the question. The sense, at least, if not the incommunicable spirit, of the original, is very well given in Mr. C. H. Wall's version, which we use.

The story of "Tartuffe" is briefly this: Tartuffe, the hero, is a pure villain. He mixes no adulteration of good in his composition. He is hypocrisy itself, the strictly genuine article. Tartuffe has completely imposed upon one Orgon, a man of wealth and standing. Orgon, with his wife, and with his mother, in fact, believes in him absolutely. These people have received the canting rascal into their house, and are about to bestow upon him their daughter in marriage. The following scene from act first shows the skill with which Molière could exhibit, in a few strokes of bold exaggeration, the infatuation of Orgon's regard for Tartuffe. Orgon has been absent from home. He returns, and meets Cléante, his brother, whom, in his eagerness, he begs to excuse his not answering a question just addressed to him:

Orgon (*to Cléante*). Brother, pray excuse me: you will kindly allow me to allay my anxiety by asking news of the family. (*To Dorine, a maid-servant.*) Has every thing gone on well these last two days? What has happened? How is every body?

Dor. The day before yesterday our mistress was

very feverish from morning to night, and suffered from a most extraordinary headache.

Org. And Tartuffe?

Dor. Tartuffe! He is wonderfully well, stout, and fat with blooming cheeks and ruddy lips.

Org. Poor man!

Dor. In the evening she felt very faint, and the pain in her head was so great that she could not touch any thing at supper.

Org. And Tartuffe?

Dor. He ate his supper by himself before her, and very devoutly devoured a brace of partridges and half a leg of mutton hashed.

Org. Poor man!

Dor. She spent the whole of the night without getting one wink of sleep: she was very feverish, and we had to sit up with her until the morning.

Org. And Tartuffe?

Dor. Overcome by a pleasant sleepiness, he passed from the table to his room and got at once into his warmed bed, where he slept comfortably till the next morning.

Org. Poor man!

Dor. At last, yielding to our persuasions, she consented to be bled, and immediately felt relieved.

Org. And Tartuffe?

Dor. He took heart right valiantly, and fortifying his soul against all evils, to make up for the blood which our lady had lost, drank at breakfast four large bumpers of wine.

Org. Poor man!

Dor. Now, at last, they are both well: and I will go and tell our lady how glad you are to hear of her recovery.

Tartuffe repays the trust and love of his benefactor by making improper advances to that benefactor's wife. Orgon's son, who does not share his father's confidence in Tartuffe, happens to be an unseen witness of the man's infamous conduct. He exposes the hypocrite to Orgon, with the result of being himself expelled from the house for his pains; while Tartuffe, in recompense for the injury done to his feelings, is presented with a gift-deed of Orgon's estate. But now Orgon's wife contrives to let her husband see and hear for himself the vileness of Tartuffe. This done, Orgon confronts the villain, and, with just indignation, orders him out of his house. Tartuffe reminds Orgon that the shoe is on the other foot; that he is himself now owner there, and that it is Orgon, instead of Tartuffe, who must go. Orgon has an interview with his mother, who is exasperatingly sure still that Tartuffe is a maligned good man:

Madame Pernelle. I can never believe, my son, that he would commit so base an action.

Org. What?

Per. Good people are always subject to envy.

Org. What do you mean, mother?

Per. That you live after a strange sort here, and that I am but too well aware of the ill-will they all bear him.

Org. What has this ill-will to do with what I have just told you?

Per. I have told it you a hundred times when you were young, that in this world virtue is ever liable to persecution, and that, although the envious die, envy never dies.

Org. But what has this to do with what has happened to-day?

Per. They have concocted a hundred foolish stories against him.

Org. I have already told you that I saw it all myself.

Per. The malice of evil-disposed persons is very great.

Org. You would make me swear, mother! I tell you that I saw his audacious attempt with my own eyes.

Per. Evil tongues have always some venom to pour forth; and here below, there is nothing proof against

them.

Org. You are maintaining a very senseless argument. I saw it, I tell you—saw it with my own eyes! what you can call s-a-w, saw! Must I din it over and over into your ears, and shout as loud as half a dozen people?

Per. Gracious goodness! appearances often deceive us! We must not always judge by what we see.

Org. I shall go mad!

Per. We are by nature prone to judge wrongly, and good is often mistaken for evil.

Org. I ought to look upon his desire of seducing my wife as charitable?

Per. You ought to have good reasons before you accuse another, and you should have waited till you were quite sure of the fact.

Org. Heaven save the mark! how could I be more sure? I suppose, mother, I ought to have waited till —you will make me say something foolish.

Per. In short, his soul is possessed with too pure a zeal; and I cannot possibly conceive that he would think of attempting what you accuse him of.

Org. If you were not my mother, I really don't know what I might now say to you, you make me so savage.

The short remainder of the scene has for its

important idea the suggestion that, under the existing circumstances, some sort of peace ought to be patched up between Orgon and Tartuffe. Meantime one *Loyal* is observed coming, whereupon the fourth scene of act fifth opens:

Loy. (*to Dorine at the farther part of the stage*). Good-day, my dear sister; pray let me speak to your master.

Dor. He is with friends, and I do not think he can see any one just now.

Loy. I would not be intrusive. I feel sure that he will find nothing unpleasant in my visit; in fact, I come for something which will be very gratifying to him.

Dor. What is your name?

Loy. Only tell him that I come from Mr. Tartuffe for his benefit.

Dor. (*to Orgon*). It is a man who comes in a civil way from Mr. Tartuffe, on some business which will make you glad, he says.

Clé. (*to Orgon*). You must see who it is and what the man wants.

Org. (*to Cléante*). He is coming, perhaps, to settle matters between us in a friendly way. How, in this case, ought I to behave to him?

Clé. Don’t show any resentment, and, if he speaks of an agreement, listen to him.

Loy. (*to Orgon*). Your servant, sir. May heaven punish whoever wrongs you; and may it be as favorable to you, sir, as I wish!

Org. (*aside to Cléante*). This pleasant beginning agrees with my conjectures, and argues some sort of reconciliation.

Loy. All your family was always dear to me, and I served your father.

Org. I am sorry and ashamed to say that I do not know who you are, neither do I remember your name.

Loy. My name is Loyal; I was born in Normandy, and am a royal bailiff in spite of envy. For the last forty years I have had the good fortune to fill the office, thanks to heaven, with great credit; and I come, sir, with your leave, to serve you the writ of a certain order.

Org. What! you are here—

Loy. Gently, sir, I beg. It is merely a summons—a notice for you to leave this place, you and yours; to take away all your goods and chattels, and make room for others, without delay or adjournment, as hereby decreed.

Org. I! leave this place?

Loy. Yes, sir, if you please. The house incontestably belongs, as you are well aware, to the good Mr. Tartuffe. He is now lord and master of your estates, according to a deed I have in my

keeping. It is in due form, and cannot be challenged.

Damis (*to Mr. Loyal*). This great impudence is, indeed, worthy of all admiration.

Loy. (*to Damis.*) Sir, I have nothing at all to do with you. (*Pointing to Orgon.*) My business is with this gentleman. He is tractable and gentle, and knows too well the duty of a gentleman to try to oppose authority.

Org. But—

Loy. Yes, sir; I know that you would not, for any thing, show contumacy; and that you will allow me, like a reasonable man, to execute the orders I have received.

The scene gives in conclusion some spirited byplay of asides and interruptions from indignant members of the family. Then follows scene fifth, one exchange of conversation from which will sufficiently indicate the progress of the plot:

Org. Well, mother, you see whether I am right; and you can judge of the rest by the writ. Do you at last acknowledge his rascality?

Per. I am thunderstruck, and can scarcely believe my eyes and ears.

The next scene introduces Valère, the noble lover of that daughter whom the infatuated father was bent on sacrificing to Tartuffe. Valère comes to

announce that Tartuffe, the villain, has accused Orgon to the king. Orgon must fly. Valère offers him his own carriage and money—will, in fact, himself keep him company till he reaches a place of safety. As Orgon, taking hasty leave of his family, turns to go, he is encountered by—the following scene will show whom:

Tar. (*stopping Orgon.*) Gently, sir, gently; not so fast, I beg. You have not far to go to find a lodging, and you are a prisoner in the king's name.

Org. Wretch! you had reserved this shaft for the last; by it you finish me, and crown all your perfidies.

Tar. Your abuse has no power to disturb me, and I know how to suffer every thing for the sake of heaven.

Clé. Your moderation is really great, we must acknowledge.

Da. How impudently the infamous wretch sports with heaven!

Tar. Your anger cannot move me. I have no other wish but to fulfill my duty.

Marianne. You may claim great glory from the performance of this duty: it is a very honorable employment for you.

Tar. The employment cannot be otherwise than glorious, when it comes from the power that sends

me here.

Org. But do you remember that my charitable hand, ungrateful scoundrel, raised you from a state of misery?

Tar. Yes, I know what help I have received from you; but the interest of my king is my first duty. The just obligation of this sacred duty stifles in my heart all other claims; and I would sacrifice to it friend, wife, relations, and myself with them.

Elmire. The impostor!

Dor. With what treacherous cunning he makes a cloak of all that men revere!...

Tar. (*to the Officer*). I beg of you, sir, to deliver me from all this noise, and to act according to the orders you have received.

Officer. I have certainly put off too long the discharge of my duty, and you very rightly remind me of it. To execute my order, follow me immediately to the prison in which a place is assigned to you.

Tar. Who? I, sir?

Officer. Yes, you.

Tar. Why to prison?

Officer. To you I have no account to render. (*To Orgon.*) Pray, sir, recover from your great alarm. We live under a king [Louis XIV.] who is an enemy to fraud—a king who can read the heart, and whom all

the arts of impostors cannot deceive. His great mind, endowed with delicate discernment, at all times sees things in their true light.... He annuls, by his sovereign will, the terms of the contract by which you gave him [Tartuffe] your property. He moreover forgives you this secret offense in which you were involved by the flight of your friend. This to reward the zeal which you once showed for him in maintaining his rights, and to prove that his heart, when it is least expected, knows how to recompense a good action. Merit with him is never lost, and he remembers good better than evil.

Dor. Heaven be thanked!

Per. Ah! I breathe again.

El. What a favorable end to our troubles!

Mar. Who would have foretold it?

Org. (*to Tartuffe as the Officer leads him off*). Ah, wretch! now you are—

Tartuffe thus disposed of, the play promptly ends with a vanishing glimpse afforded us of a happy marriage in prospect for Valère with the daughter.

"The Tartuffian Age" is the title of a late Italian book admirably translated into English by an American, Mr. W. A. Nettleton. That such should be the Italian author's chosen title for his work incidentally shows how cosmopolitan is our French dramatist's fame. The book is a kindly-caustic satire

on the times in which we live, found by the satirist to be abundant in the quality of Tartuffe, that leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy.

Molière is said to have had a personal aim in drawing the character of Tartuffe. This, at least, was like Dante. There is not much sweet laughter in such a comedy. But there is a power that is dreadful.

Each succeeding generation of Frenchmen supplies its bright and ingenious wits who produce comedy. But as there is no second Shakespeare, so there is but one Molière.

VIII.

PASCAL.

1623-1662.

PASCAL'S fame is distinctly the fame of a man of genius. He achieved notable things. But it is what he might have done, still more than what he did, that fixes his estimation in the world of mind. Blaise Pascal is one of the chief intellectual glories of France.

Pascal, the boy, had a strong natural bent toward mathematics. The story is that his father, in order to turn his son's whole force on the study of languages,

put out of the lad's reach all books treating his favorite subject. Thus shut up to his own resources the masterful little fellow, about his eighth year, drawing charcoal diagrams on the floor, made perceptible progress in working out geometry for himself. At sixteen he produced a treatise on conic sections that excited the wonder and incredulity of Descartes. Later he experimented in barometry, and pursued investigations in mechanics. Later still he made what seemed to be approaches toward Newton's binomial theorem.

Vivid religious convictions meantime deeply affected Pascal's mind. His health, never robust, began to give way. His physicians prescribed mental diversion, and forced him into society. That medicine, taken at first with reluctance, proved dangerously delightful to Pascal's vivacious and susceptible spirit. His pious sister Jacqueline warned her brother that he was going too far. But he was still more effectively warned by an accident, in which he almost miraculously escaped from death. Withdrawing from the world, he adopted a course of ascetic practices, in which he continued till he died —in his thirty-ninth year. He wore about his waist an iron girdle armed with sharp points; and this he would press smartly with his elbow when he detected himself at fault in his spirit.

Notwithstanding what Pascal did or attempted worthy of fame, in science, it was his fortune to become chiefly renowned by literary achievement.

His, in fact, would now be a half-forgotten name if he had not written the “Provincial Letters” and the “Thoughts.”

The “Provincial Letters” is an abbreviated title. The title in full originally was, “Letters written by Louis de Montalte to a Provincial, one of his friends, and to the Reverend Fathers, the Jesuits, on the subject of the morality and the policy of those Fathers.”

Of the “Provincial Letters,” several English translations have been made. No one of these that we have been able to find seems entirely satisfactory. There is an elusive quality to Pascal’s style, and in losing this you seem to lose something of Pascal’s thought. For with Pascal the thought and the style penetrate each other inextricably and almost indistinguishably. You cannot print a smile, an inflection of the voice, a glance of the eye, a French shrug of the shoulders. And such modulations of the thought seem everywhere to lurk in the turns and phrases of Pascal’s inimitable French. To translate them is impossible.

Pascal is beyond question the greatest modern master of that indescribably delicate art in expression, which, from its illustrious ancient exemplar, has received the name of the Socratic irony. With this fine weapon, in great part, it was, wielded like a magician’s invisible wand, that Pascal did his memorable execution on the Jesuitical system

of morals and casuistry, in the “Provincial Letters.” In great part, we say; for the flaming moral earnestness of the man could not abide only to play with his adversaries to the end of the famous dispute. His lighter cimeter blade he flung aside before he had done, and, toward the last, brandished a sword that had weight as well as edge and temper. The skill that could halve a feather in the air with the sword of Saladin was proved to be also strength that could cleave a suit of mail with the brand of Richard the Lion-hearted.

It is generally acknowledged that the French language has never in any hands been a more obedient instrument of intellectual power than it was in the hands of Pascal. He is rated the earliest writer to produce what may be called the final French prose. “The creator of French style,” Villemain boldly calls him. Pascal’s style remains to this day almost perfectly free from adhesions of archaism in diction and in construction. Pascal showed, as it were at once, what the French language was capable of doing in response to the demands of a master. It was the joint achievement of genius, of taste, and of skill, working together in an exquisite balance and harmony.

But let us be entirely frank. The “Provincial Letters” of Pascal are now, to the general reader, not so interesting as from their fame one would seem entitled to expect. You cannot read them intelligently without considerable previous study. You need to

have learned, imperfectly, with labor, a thousand things that every contemporary reader of Pascal perfectly knew as if by simply breathing—the necessary knowledge being then, so to speak, abroad in the air. Even thus you cannot possibly derive that vivid delight from perusing in bulk the "Provincial Letters" now, which the successive numbers of the series, appearing at brief irregular intervals, communicated to the eagerly expecting French public, at a time when the topics discussed were topics of a present and pressing practical interest. Still, with whatever disadvantage unavoidably attending, we must give our readers a taste of the quality of Pascal's "Provincial Letters."

We select a passage at the commencement of the "Seventh Letter." We use the translation of Mr. Thomas M'Crie. This succeeds very well in conveying the sense, though it necessarily fails to convey either the vivacity or the eloquence, of the incomparable original. The first occasion of the "Provincial Letters" was a championship proposed to Pascal to be taken up by him on behalf of his beleaguered and endangered friend Arnauld, the Port-Royalist. (Port Royal was a Roman Catholic abbey situated some eight miles to the south-west of Versailles, and therefore not very remote from Paris.) Arnauld was "for substance of doctrine" really a Calvinist, though he quite sincerely disclaimed being such; and it was for his defense of Calvinism (under its ancient form of Augustinianism) that he was threatened, through

Jesuit enmity, with condemnation for heretical opinion. The problem was to enlist the sentiment of general society in his favor. The friends in council at Port Royal said to Pascal, “You must do this.” Pascal said, “I will try.” In a few days the first letter of a series destined to such fame was submitted for judgment to Port Royal, and approved. It was printed —anonymously. The success was instantaneous and brilliant. A second letter followed, and a third. Soon, from strict personal defense of Arnauld, the writer went on to take up a line of offense and aggression. He carried the war into Africa. He attacked the Jesuits as teachers of immoral doctrine.

The plan of these later letters was to have a Paris gentleman write to a friend of his in the country (the “provincial”), detailing interviews held by him with a Jesuit priest of the city. The supposed Parisian gentleman in his interviews with the supposed Jesuit father affects the air of a very simple-hearted seeker after truth. He represents himself as, by his innocent-seeming docility, leading his Jesuit teacher on to make the most astonishingly frank exposures of the secrets of the casuistical system held and taught by his order.

The “Seventh Letter” tells the story of how Jesuit confessors were instructed to manage their penitents in a matter made immortally famous by the wit and genius of Pascal, the matter of “directing the intention.” There is nothing in the “Provincial Letters” better suited than this at the same time to

interest the general reader, and to display the quality of these renowned productions. (We do not scruple to change our chosen translation a little at points where it seems to us susceptible of some easy improvement.) Remember it is an imaginary Parisian gentleman who now writes to a friend of his in the country. Our extract introduces first the Jesuit father speaking:

> "You know," he said, "that the ruling passion of persons in that rank of life [the rank of gentleman] is 'the point of honor,' which is perpetually driving them into acts of violence apparently quite at variance with Christian piety; so that, in fact, they would be almost all of them excluded from our confessionals, had not our fathers relaxed a little from the strictness of religion, to accommodate themselves to the weakness of humanity. Anxious to keep on good terms, both with the gospel, by doing their duty to God, and with the men of the world, by showing charity to their neighbor, they needed all the wisdom they possessed to devise expedients for so nicely adjusting matters as to permit these gentlemen to adopt the methods usually resorted to for vindicating their honor without wounding their consciences, and thus reconcile things apparently so opposite to each other as piety and the point of honor."...
>
> "I should certainly [so replies M. Montalte, with the most exquisite irony crouched under a cover of admiring simplicity]—I should certainly have

considered the thing perfectly impracticable, if I had not known, from what I have seen of your fathers, that they are capable of doing with ease what is impossible to other men. This led me to anticipate that they must have discovered some method for meeting the difficulty—a method which I admire, even before knowing it, and which I pray you to explain to me."

"Since that is your view of the matter," replied the monk, "I cannot refuse you. Know, then, that this marvelous principle is our grand method of *directing the intention*—the importance of which, in our moral system, is such, that I might almost venture to compare it with the doctrine of *probability*. You have had some glimpses of it in passing, from certain maxims which I mentioned to you. For example, when I was showing you how servants might execute certain troublesome jobs with a safe conscience, did you not remark that it was simply by diverting their intention from the evil to which they were accessory, to the profit which they might reap from the transaction? Now, that is what we call *directing the intention*. You saw, too, that, were it not for a similar divergence of *the mind*, those who give money for benefices might be downright simoniacs. But I will now show you this grand method in all its glory, as it applies to the subject of homicide—a crime which it justifies in a thousand instances—in order that, from this startling result, you may form an idea of all that it is calculated to effect.

"I foresee already," said I, "that, according to this mode, every thing will be permitted: it will stick at

nothing."

"You always fly from the one extreme to the other," replied the monk; "prithee, avoid that habit. For just to show you that we are far from permitting every thing, let me tell you that we never suffer such a thing as a formal intention to sin, with the sole design of sinning; and, if any person whatever should persist in having no other end but evil in the evil that he does, we break with him at once; such conduct is diabolical. This holds true, without exception of age, sex, or rank. But when the person is not of such a wretched disposition as this, we try to put in practice our method of *directing the intention*, which consists in his proposing to himself, as the end of his actions, some allowable object. Not that we do not endeavor, as far as we can, to dissuade men from doing things forbidden; but, when we cannot prevent the action, we at least purify the motive, and thus correct the viciousness of the means by the goodness of the end. Such is the way in which our fathers have contrived to permit those acts of violence to which men usually resort in vindication of their honor. They have no more to do than to turn off their intention from the desire of vengeance, which is criminal, and direct it to a desire to defend their honor, which, according to us, is quite warrantable. And in this way our doctors discharge all their duty toward God and toward man. By permitting the action, they gratify the world and by purifying the intention, they give satisfaction to the gospel. This is a secret, sir, which was entirely unknown to the ancients; the world is

indebted for the discovery entirely to our doctors. You understand it now, I hope?"

"Perfectly," was my reply. "To men you grant the outward material effect of the action, and to God you give the inward and spiritual movement of the intention; and, by this equitable partition, you form an alliance between the laws of God and the laws of men. But, my dear sir, to be frank with you, I can hardly trust your premises, and I suspect that your authors will tell another tale."

"You do me injustice," rejoined the monk; "I advance nothing but what I am ready to prove, and that by such a rich array of passages, that altogether their number, their authority, and their reasonings, will fill you with admiration. To show you, for example, the alliance which our fathers have formed between the maxims of the gospel and those of the world, by thus regulating the intention, let me refer you to Reginald. (*In Praxi.*, liv. xxi., num. 62, p. 260.) [These, and all that follow, are verifiable citations from real and undisputed Jesuit authorities, not to this day repudiated by that order.] 'Private persons are forbidden to avenge themselves; for St. Paul says to the Romans (ch. 12th), "Recompense to no man evil for evil;" and Ecclesiasticus says (ch. 28th), "He that taketh vengeance shall draw on himself the vengeance of God, and his sins will not be forgotten." Besides all that is said in the gospel about forgiving offenses, as in the 6th and 18th chapters of St. Matthew.'"

"Well, father, if after that, he [Reginald] says any

thing contrary to the Scripture, it will, at least, not be from lack of scriptural knowledge. Pray, how does he conclude?"

"You shall hear," he said. "From all this it appears that a military man may demand satisfaction on the spot from the person who has injured him—not, indeed, with the intention of rendering evil for evil, but with that of preserving his honor—*non ut malum pro malo reddat, sed ut conservat honorem*. See you how carefully, because the Scripture condemns it, they guard against the intention of rendering evil for evil? This is what they will tolerate on no account. Thus Lessius observes (*De Just.*, liv. ii., c. 9, d. 12, n. 79), that, 'If a man has received a blow on the face, he must on no account have an intention to avenge himself; but he may lawfully have an intention to avert infamy, and may, with that view, repel the insult immediately, even at the point of the sword—*etiam cum gladio*.' So far are we from permitting any one to cherish the design of taking vengeance on his enemies, that our fathers will not allow any even to *wish their death*—by a movement of hatred. 'If your enemy is disposed to injure you,' says Escobar, 'you have no right to wish his death, by a movement of hatred; though you may, with a view to save yourself from harm.' So legitimate, indeed, is this wish, with such an intention, that our great Hurtado de Mendoza says that 'we may *pray God* to visit with speedy death those who are bent on persecuting us, if there is no other way of escaping from it.'" (In his book, *De Spe*, vol. ii., d. 15, sec. 4, 48.)

"May it please your reverence," said I, "the

Church has forgotten to insert a petition to that effect among her prayers."

"They have not put every thing into the prayers that one may lawfully ask of God," answered the monk. "Besides, in the present case, the thing was impossible, for this same opinion is of more recent standing than the Breviary. You are not a good chronologist, friend. But, not to wander from the point, let me request your attention to the following passage, cited by Diana from Gaspar Hurtado (*De Sub. Pecc.*, diff. 9; Diana, p. 5; tr. 14, r. 99), one of Escobar's four-and-twenty fathers: 'An incumbent may, without any mortal sin, desire the decease of a life-renter on his benefice, and a son that of his father, and rejoice when it happens; provided always it is for the sake of the profit that is to accrue from the event, and not from personal aversion.'"

"Good," cried I. "That is certainly a very happy hit, and I can easily see that the doctrine admits of a wide application. But yet there are certain cases, the solution of which, though of great importance for gentlemen, might present still greater difficulties."

"Propose such, if you please, that we may see," said the monk.

"Show me, with all your directing of the intention," returned I, "that it is allowable to fight a duel."

"Our great Hurtado de Mendoza," said the father, "will satisfy you on that point in a twinkling. 'If a gentleman,' says he, in a passage cited by Diana,

‘who is challenged to fight a duel, is well known to have no religion, and if the vices to which he is openly and unscrupulously addicted are such as would lead people to conclude, in the event of his refusing to fight, that he is actuated, not by the fear of God, but by cowardice, and induce them to say of him that he was a *hen*, and not a man—*gallina, et non vir*; in that case he may, to save his honor, appear at the appointed spot—not, indeed, with the express intention of fighting a duel, but merely with that of defending himself, should the person who challenged him come there unjustly to attack him. His action in this case, viewed by itself, will be perfectly indifferent; for what moral evil is there in one’s stepping into a field, taking a stroll in expectation of meeting a person, and defending one’s self in the event of being attacked? And thus the gentleman is guilty of no sin whatever; for, in fact, it cannot be called accepting a challenge at all, his intention being directed to other circumstances, and the acceptance of a challenge consisting in an express intention to fight, which we are supposing the gentleman never had.’”

The humorous irony of Pascal, in the “Provincial Letters,” plays like the diffusive sheen of an aurora borealis over the whole surface of the composition. It does not often deliver itself startlingly in sudden discharges as of lightning. You need to school your sense somewhat, not to miss a fine effect now and then. Consider the broadness and coarseness in

pleasantry, that, before Pascal, had been common, almost universal, in controversy, and you will better understand what a creative touch it was of genius, of feeling, and of taste, that brought into literature the far more than Attic, the ineffable Christian, purity of that wit and humor in the "Provincial Letters" which will make these writings live as long as men anywhere continue to read the productions of past ages. Erasmus, perhaps, came the nearest of all modern predecessors to anticipating the purified pleasantry of Pascal.

It will be interesting and instructive to see Pascal's own statement of his reasons for adopting the bantering style which he did in the "Provincial Letters," as well as of the sense of responsibility to be faithful and fair, under which he wrote. Pascal says:

> I have been asked why I employed a pleasant, jocose, and diverting style. I reply ... I thought it a duty to write so as to be comprehended by women, and men of the world, that they might know the danger of their maxims and propositions which were then universally propagated.... I have been asked, lastly, if I myself read all the books, which I quoted. I answer, No. If I had done so, I must have passed a great part of my life in reading very bad books; but I read Escobar twice through, and I employed some of my friends in reading the others. But I did not make use of a single passage without having myself read it in the book from which it is cited, without having examined the subject of which it treats, and without

> having read what went before and followed, so that I might run no risk of quoting an objection as an answer which would have been blameworthy and unfair.

Of the wit of the "Provincial Letters," their wit and their controversial effectiveness, the specimens given will have afforded readers some approximate idea. We must deny ourselves the gratification of presenting a brief passage, which we had selected and translated for the purpose, to exemplify from the same source Pascal's serious eloquence. It was Voltaire who said of these productions: "Molière's best comedies do not excel them in wit, nor the compositions of Bossuet in sublimity." Something of Bossuet's sublimity, or of a sublimity perhaps finer than Bossuet's, our readers will discover in citations to follow from the "Thoughts."

Pascal's "Thoughts," the printed book, has a remarkable history. It was a posthumous publication. The author died, leaving behind him a considerable number of detached fragments of composition, first jottings of thought on a subject that had long occupied his mind. These precious manuscripts were almost undecipherable. The writer had used for his purpose any chance scrap of paper—old wrapping, for example, or margin of letter—that, at the critical moment of happy conception, was nearest his hand. Sentences, words even, were often left unfinished. There was no coherence, no sequence, no

arrangement. It was, however, among his friends perfectly well understood that Pascal for years had meditated a work on religion designed to demonstrate the truth of Christianity. For this he had been thinking arduously. Fortunately he had even, in a memorable conversation, sketched his project at some length to his Port Royal friends. With so much, scarcely more, in the way of clew, to guide their editorial work, these friends prepared and issued a volume of Pascal's "Thoughts." With the most loyal intentions, the Port-Royalists unwisely edited too much. They pieced out incompletenesses, they provided clauses or sentences of connection, they toned down expressions deemed too bold, they improved Pascal's style! After having suffered such things from his friends, the posthumous Pascal, later, fell into the hands of an enemy. The infidel Condorcet published an edition of the "Thoughts." Whereas the Port-Royalists had suppressed to placate the Jesuits, Condorcet suppressed to please the "philosophers." Between those on the one side and these on the other, Pascal's "Thoughts" had experienced what might well have killed any production of the human mind that could die. It was not till near the middle of the present century that Cousin called the attention of the world to the fact that we had not yet, but that we still might have, a true edition of Pascal's "Thoughts." M. Faugère took the hint, and, consulting the original manuscripts, preserved in the national library at Paris, produced, with infinite editorial labor, almost two hundred

years after the thinker's death, the first satisfactory edition of Pascal's "Thoughts." Since Faugère, M. Havet has also published an edition of Pascal's works entire, by him now first adequately annotated and explained. The arrangement of the "Thoughts" varies in order, according to the varying judgment of editors. We use, for our extracts, a current translation, which we modify at our discretion by comparison of the original text as given in M. Havet's elaborate work.

Our first extract is a passage in which the writer supposes a skeptic of the more shallow, trifling sort, to speak. This skeptic represents his own state of mind in the following strain as of soliloquy:

> "I do not know who put me into the world, nor what the world is, nor what I am myself. I am in a frightful ignorance of all things. I do not know what my body is, what my senses are, what my soul is, and that very part of me which thinks what I am saying, which reflects upon every thing and upon itself, and is no better acquainted with itself than with any thing else. I see these appalling spaces of the universe which inclose me, and I find myself tethered in one corner of this immense expansion without knowing why I am stationed in this place rather than in another, or why this moment of time which is given me to live is assigned me at this point rather than at another of the whole eternity that has preceded me, and of that which is to follow me.
>
> "I see nothing but infinities on every side, which

inclose me like an atom, and like a shadow which endures but for an instant, and returns no more.

“All that I know is, that I am soon to die; but what I am most ignorant of is, that very death which I am unable to avoid.

“As I know not whence I came, so I know not whither I go; and I know only, that in leaving this world I fall forever either into nothingness or into the hands of an angry God, without knowing which of these two conditions is to be eternally my lot. Such is my state—full of misery, of weakness, and of uncertainty.

“And from all this I conclude that I ought to pass all the days of my life without a thought of trying to learn what is to befall me hereafter. Perhaps in my doubts I might find some enlightenment; but I am unwilling to take the trouble, or go a single step in search of it; and, treating with contempt those who perplex themselves with such solicitude, my purpose is to go forward without forethought and without fear to try the great event, and passively to approach death in uncertainty of the eternity of my future condition.”

Who would desire to have for a friend a man who discourses in this manner? Who would select such a one for the confidant of his affairs? Who would have recourse to such a one in his afflictions? And, in fine, for what use of life could such a man be destined?

The central thought on which the projected apologetic of Pascal was to revolve as on a pivot is, the contrasted greatness and wretchedness of man—with Divine Revelation, in its doctrine of a fall on man's part from original nobleness, supplying the needed link, and the only link conceivable, of explanation, to unite the one with the other, the human greatness with the human wretchedness. This contrast of dignity and disgrace should constantly be in the mind of the reader of the "Thoughts" of Pascal. It will often be found to throw a very necessary light upon the meaning of the separate fragments that make up the series.

We now present a brief fragment asserting, with vivid metaphor, at the same time the fragility of man's frame and the majesty of man's nature. This is a very famous "Thought":

> Man is but a reed, the weakest in nature, but he is a thinking reed. It is not necessary that the entire universe arm itself to crush him. An exhalation, a drop of water, suffices to kill him. But were the universe to crush him, man would still be more noble than that which kills him, because he knows that he is dying, and knows the advantage that the universe has over him. The universe knows nothing of it.
>
> Our whole dignity consists, then, in thought.

One is reminded of the memorable saying of a

celebrated philosopher: “In the universe there is nothing great but man; in man there is nothing great but mind.”

What a sudden, almost ludicrous, reduction in scale, the greatness of Cæsar, as conqueror, is made to suffer when looked at in the way in which Pascal asks you to look at it in the following “Thought”! (Remember that Cæsar, when he began fighting for universal empire, was fifty-one years of age:)

> Cæsar was too old, it seems to me, to amuse himself with conquering the world. This amusement was well enough for Augustus or Alexander; they were young people, whom it is difficult to stop; but Cæsar ought to have been more mature.

That is as if you should reverse the tube of your telescope, with the result of seeing the object observed made smaller instead of larger.

The following sentence might be a “Maxim” of La Rochefoucauld. Pascal was, no doubt, a debtor to him as well as to Montaigne:

> I lay it down as a fact, that, if all men knew what others say of them there would not be four friends in the world.

Here is one of the most current of Pascal’s sayings:

> Rivers are highways that move on and bear us whither we wish to go.

The following “Thought” condenses the substance of the book proposed into three short sentences:

> The knowledge of God without that of our misery produces pride. The knowledge of our misery without that of God gives despair. The knowledge of Jesus Christ is intermediate, because therein we find God and our misery.

The prevalent seeming severity and intellectual coldness of Pascal’s “Thoughts” yield to a touch from the heart, and become pathetic, in such utterances as the following, supposed to be addressed by the Saviour to the penitent seeking to be saved:

> Console thyself; thou wouldst not seek me if thou hadst not found me.
>
> I thought on thee in my agony; such drops of blood I shed for thee.

It is austerity again, but not unjust austerity, that speaks as follows:

> Religion is a thing so great that those who would not take the pains to seek it if it is obscure, should be deprived of it. What do they complain of, then, if

it is such that they could find it by seeking it?

But we must take our leave of Pascal. His was a suffering as well as an aspiring spirit. He suffered because he aspired. But, at least, he did not suffer long. He aspired himself quickly away. Toward the last he wrought at a problem in his first favorite study, that of mathematics, and left behind him, as a memorial of his later life, a remarkable result of investigation on the curve called the cycloid. During his final illness he pierced himself through with many sorrows—unnecessary sorrows, sorrows, too, that bore a double edge, hurting not only him, but also his kindred—in practicing, from mistaken religious motives, a hard repression upon his natural instinct to love, and to welcome love. He thought that God should be all, the creature nothing. The thought was half true, but it was half false. God should, indeed, be all. But, in God, the creature also should be something.

In French history—we may say, in the history of the world—if there are few brighter, there also are few purer, fames than the fame of Pascal.

IX.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

1626-1696.

OF Madame de Sévigné, if it were permitted here to make a pun and a paradox, one might justly and descriptively say that she was not a woman of letters, but only a woman of—letters. For Madame de Sévigné's addiction to literature was not at all that of an author by profession. She simply wrote admirable private letters in great profusion, and became famous thereby.

Madame de Sévigné's fame is partly her merit, but it is also partly her good fortune. She was rightly placed to be what she was. This will appear from a sketch of her life, and still more from specimens to be exhibited of her own epistolary writing.

Marie de Rabutin-Chantal was her maiden name. She was born a baroness. She was married, young, a marchioness. First early left an orphan, she was afterward early left a widow—not too early, however, to have become the mother of two children, a son and a daughter. The daughter grew to be the life-long idol of the widowed mother's heart. The letters she wrote to this daughter, married and living remote from her, compose the greater part of that voluminous epistolary production by which Madame de Sévigné became, without her ever aiming at such a result, or probably ever thinking of it, one of the classics of the French language.

Madame de Sévigné was wealthy as orphan heiress, and she should have been wealthy as widow. But her husband was profligate, and he wasted her substance. She turned out to be a thoroughly capable woman of affairs who managed her property well. During her long and stainless widowhood—her husband fell in a shameful duel when she was but twenty-five years old, and she lived to be seventy—she divided her time between her estate, "The Rocks," in Brittany, and her residence in Paris. This period was all embraced within the protracted reign of Louis XIV., perhaps upon the whole the most memorable age in the history of France.

Beautiful, and, if not brilliantly beautiful, at least, brilliantly witty, Madame de Sévigné was virtuous—in that chief sense of feminine virtue—amid an almost universal empire of profligacy around her. Her social advantages were unsurpassed, and her social success was equal to her advantages. She had the woman courtier's supreme triumph in being once led out to dance by the king—her own junior by a dozen years—no vulgar king, remember, but the "great" Louis XIV. Her cynical cousin, himself a writer of power, who had been repulsed in dishonorable proffers of love by the young marchioness during the lifetime of her husband—we mean Count Bussy—says, in a scurrilous work of his, that Madame de Sévigné remarked, on returning to her seat after her dancing-bout with the king, that Louis possessed great qualities, and would certainly

obscure the luster of all his predecessors. “I could not help laughing in her face,” the ungallant cousin declared, “seeing what had produced this panegyric.” Probably, indeed, the young woman was pleased. But, whatever may have been her faults or her follies, nothing can rob Madame de Sévigné of the glory that is hers, in having been strong enough in womanly and motherly honor to preserve, against many dazzling temptations, amid general bad example, and even under malignant aspersions, a chaste and spotless name. When it is added that, besides access to the royal court itself, this gifted woman enjoyed the familiar acquaintance of La Rochefoucauld—with other high-bred wits, less famous, not a few—enough will have been said to show that her position was such as to give her talent its best possible chance. The French history of the times of Louis XIV. is hinted in glimpses the most vivid and the most suggestive, throughout the whole series of the letters.

We owe it to our readers (and to Madame de Sévigné no less) first of all to let them see a specimen of the affectionate adulation that this French woman of rank and of fashion, literally in almost every letter of hers, effuses on her daughter—a daughter who, by the way, seems very languidly to have responded to such demonstrations:

THE ROCKS, Sunday, June 28, 1671.

You have amply made up to me my late losses; I have received two letters from you which have filled me with transports of joy. The pleasure I take in reading them is beyond all imagination. If I have in any way contributed to the improvement of your style, I did it in the thought that I was laboring for the pleasure of others, not for my own. But Providence, who has seen fit to separate us so often, and to place us at such immense distances from each other, has repaid me a little for the privation in the charms of your correspondence, and still more in the satisfaction you express in your situation, and the beauty of your castle; you represent it to me with an air of grandeur and magnificence that enchants me. I once saw a similar account of it by the first Madame de Grignan; but I little thought at that time that all these beauties were to be one day at your command. I am very much obliged to you for having given me so particular an account of it. If I could be tired in reading your letters, it would not only betray a very bad taste in me, but would likewise show that I could have very little love or friendship for you. Divest yourself of the dislike you have taken to circumstantial details. I have often told you, and you ought yourself to feel the truth of this remark, that they are as dear to us from those we love as they are tedious and disagreeable from others. If they are displeasing to us, it is only from the indifference we feel for those who write them. Admitting this observation to be true, I leave you to judge what pleasure yours afford me. It is a fine thing truly to play the great lady, as you do at present.

Conceive the foregoing multiplied by the whole number of the separate letters composing the correspondence, and you will have no exaggerated idea of the display that Madame de Sévigné makes of her regard for her daughter. This regard was a passion, morbid, no doubt, by excess, and, even at that, extravagantly demonstrated; but it was fundamentally sincere. Madame de Sévigné idealized her absent daughter, and literally "loved but only her." We need not wholly admire such maternal affection. But we should not criticise it too severely.

We choose next a marvelously vivid "instantaneous view" in words, of a court afternoon and evening at Versailles. This letter, too is addressed to the daughter—Madame de Grignan, by her married name. It bears date, "Paris, Wednesday, 29th July." The year is 1676, and the writer is just fifty:

> I was at Versailles last Saturday with the Villarses.... At three the king, the queen, Monsieur [eldest brother to the king], Madame [that brother's wife], Mademoiselle [that brother's eldest unmarried daughter], and every thing else which is royal, together with Madame de Montespan [the celebrated mistress of the king] and train, and all the courtiers, and all the ladies—all, in short, which constitutes the court of France, is assembled in the beautiful apartment of the king's, which you remember. All is furnished divinely, all is magnificent. Such a thing as heat is unknown; you

pass from one place to another without the slightest pressure. A game at *reversis* [the description is of a gambling scene, in which Dangeau figures as a cool and skillful gamester] gives the company a form and a settlement. The king and Madame de Montespan keep a bank together; different tables are occupied by Monsieur, the queen, and Madame de Soubise, Dangeau and party, Langlée and party. Everywhere you see heaps of louis d'ors; they have no other counters. I saw Dangeau play, and thought what fools we all were beside him. He dreams of nothing but what concerns the game; he wins where others lose: he neglects nothing, profits by every thing, never has his attention diverted; in short his science bids defiance to chance. Two hundred thousand francs in ten days, a hundred thousand crowns in a month, these are the pretty memorandums he puts down in his pocket-book. He was kind enough to say that I was partners with him, so that I got an excellent seat. I made my obeisance to the king, as you told me; and he returned it as if I had been young and handsome.... The duke said a thousand kind things without minding a word he uttered. Marshal de Lorgnes attacked me in the name of the Chevalier de Grignan; in short, *tutti quanti* [the whole company]. You know what it is to get a word from every body you meet. Madame de Montespan talked to me of Bourbon, and asked me how I liked Vichi, and whether the place did me good. She said that Bourbon, instead of curing a pain in one of her knees, injured both.... Her size is reduced by a good half, and yet her complexion, her eyes, and her lips, are as fine as ever. She was dressed all in French

point, her hair in a thousand ringlets, the two side ones hanging low on her cheeks, black ribbons on her head, pearls (the same that belonged to Madame de l'Hôpital), the loveliest diamond earrings, three or four bodkins—nothing else on the head; in short a triumphant beauty, worthy the admiration of all the foreign embassadors. She was accused of preventing the whole French nation from seeing the king; she has restored him, you see, to their eyes; and you cannot conceive the joy it has given everybody, and the splendor it has thrown upon the court. This charming confusion, without confusion, of all which is the most select, continues from three till six. If couriers arrive, the king retires a moment to read the despatches and returns. There is always some music going on, to which he listens, and which has an excellent effect. He talks with such of the ladies as are accustomed to enjoy that honor.... At six the carriages are at the door. The king is in one of them with Madame de Montespan, Monsieur and Madame de Thianges, and honest d'Hendicourt in a fool's paradise on the stool. You know how these open carriages are made; they do not sit face to face, but all looking the same way. The queen occupies another with the princess; and the rest come flocking after, as it may happen. There are then gondolas on the canal, and music; and at ten they come back, and then there is a play; and twelve strikes, and they go to supper; and thus rolls round the Saturday. If I were to tell you how often you were asked after, how many questions were put to me without waiting for answers, how often I neglected to answer, how little they cared, and how

much less I did, you would see the *iniqua corte* [wicked court] before you in all its perfection. However, it never was so pleasant before, and everybody wishes it may last.

There is your picture. Picture, pure and simple, it is—comment none, least of all, moralizing comment. The wish is sighed by "everybody," that such pleasant things may "last." Well, they did last the writer's time. But meanwhile the French revolution was a-preparing. A hundred years later it will come, with its terrible reprisals.

We have gone away from the usual translations to find the foregoing extract in an article published forty years ago and more, in the "Edinburgh Review." Again we draw from the same source—this time, the description of a visit paid by a company of grand folks, of whom the writer of the letter was one, to an iron-foundery:

FRIDAY, *1st Oct.* (1677).

Yesterday evening at Cone we descended into a veritable hell, the true forges of Vulcan. Eight or ten Cyclops were at work, forging, not arms for Æneas, but anchors for ships. You never saw strokes redoubled so justly nor with so admirable a cadence. We stood in the midst of four furnaces; and the demons came passing about us, all melting in sweat, with pale faces, wild-staring eyes, savage mustaches, and hair long and black—a sight enough to frighten

less well-bred folks than ourselves. As for me, I could not comprehend the possibility of refusing any thing which these gentlemen, in their hell, might have chosen to exact. We got out at last, by the help of a shower of silver, with which we took care to refresh their souls, and facilitate our exit.

Once more:

PARIS, *29th November* (1679).

I have been to the wedding of Madame de Louvois. How shall I describe it? Magnificence, illuminations, all France, dresses all gold and brocade, jewels, braziers full of fire, and stands full of flowers, confusions of carriages, cries out of doors, lighted torches, pushings back, people run over; in short, a whirlwind, a distraction; questions without answers, compliments without knowing what is said, civilities without knowing who is spoken to, feet entangled in trains. From the midst of all this issue inquiries after your health, which not being answered as quick as lightning, the inquirers pass on, contented to remain in the state of ignorance and indifference in which they [the inquiries] were made. O vanity of vanities! Pretty little De Mouchy has had the small-pox. O vanity, *et cætera*!

Yet again. The gay writer has been sobered, perhaps hurt, by a friend's frankly writing to her, "You are old." To her daughter:

So you were struck with the expression of Madame de la Fayette, blended with so much friendship. 'Twas a truth, I own, which I ought to have borne in mind; and yet I must confess it astonished me, for I do not yet perceive in myself any such decay. Nevertheless, I cannot help making many reflections and calculations, and I find the conditions of life hard enough. It seems to me that I have been dragged, against my will, to the fatal period when old age must be endured; I see it; I have come to it; and I would fain, if I could help it, not go any farther; not advance a step more in the road of infirmities, of pains, of losses of memory, of *disfigurements* ready to do me outrage; and I hear a voice which says, "You must go on in spite of yourself; or, if you will not go on, you must die;" and this is another extremity from which nature revolts. Such is the lot, however, of all who advance beyond middle life. What is their resource? To think of the will of God and of universal law, and so restore reason to its place, and be patient. Be you, then, patient accordingly, my dear child, and let not your affection soften into such tears as reason must condemn.

She dates a letter, and recalls that the day was the anniversary of an event in her life:

PARIS, *Friday, Feb.* 5, 1672.

This day thousand years I was married.

Here is a passage with power in it. The great war minister of Louis has died. Madame de Sévigné was now sixty-five years old. The letter is to her cousin Coulanges:

> I am so astonished at the news of the sudden death of M. de Louvois, that I am at a loss how to speak of it. Dead, however, he is, this great minister, this potent being, who occupied so great a place; whose personality [*le moi*], as M. Nicole says, had so wide a sway; who was the center of so many orbs. What affairs had he not to manage! what designs, what projects! what secrets! what interests to unravel, what wars to undertake, what intrigues, what noble games at chess to play and to direct! Ah! my God, grant me a little time; I want to give check to the Duke of Savoy—checkmate to the Prince of Orange. No, no, you shall not have a moment, not a single moment. Are events like these to be talked of? Not they. We must reflect upon them in our closets.

A glimpse of Bourdaloue:

> Ah, that Bourdaloue! his sermon on the Passion was, they say, the most perfect thing of the kind that can be imagined; it was the same he preached last year, but revised and altered with the assistance of some of his friends, that it might be wholly inimitable. How can one love God if one never hears him properly spoken of? You must really possess a greater portion of grace than others.

A distinguished caterer or steward, a gentleman described as possessing talent enough to have governed a province, commits suicide on a professional point of honor:

PARIS, *Sunday, April* 26, 1671.

I have just learned from Moreuil of what passed at Chantilly with regard to poor Vatel. I wrote to you last Friday that he had stabbed himself—these are the particulars of the affair: The king arrived there on Thursday night; the walk, and the collation, which was served in a place set apart for the purpose, and strewed with jonquils, were just as they should be. Supper was served; but there was no roast meat at one or two of the tables, on account of Vatel's having been obliged to provide several dinners more than were expected. This affected his spirits; and he was heard to say several times, "I have lost my honor! I cannot bear this disgrace!" "My head is quite bewildered," said he to Gourville. "I have not had a wink of sleep these twelve nights; I wish you would assist me in giving orders." Gourville did all he could to comfort and assist him, but the failure of the roast meat (which, however, did not happen at the king's table, but at some of the other twenty-five) was always uppermost with him. Gourville mentioned it to the prince [Condé, the great Condé, the king's host], who went directly to Vatel's apartment and said to him, "Every thing is extremely well conducted, Vatel; nothing could be more admirable than his majesty's supper." "Your highness's goodness," replied he, "overwhelms me; I

am sensible that there was a deficiency of roast meat at two tables." "Not at all," said the prince; "do not perplex yourself, and all will go well." Midnight came; the fireworks did not succeed; they were covered with a thick cloud; they cost sixteen thousand francs. At four o'clock in the morning Vatel went round and found every body asleep. He met one of the under-purveyors, who was just come in with only two loads of fish. "What!" said he, "is this all?" "Yes, sir," said the man, not knowing that Vatel had despatched other people to all the seaports around. Vatel waited for some time; the other purveyors did not arrive; his head grew distracted; he thought there was no more fish to be had. He flew to Gourville: "Sir," said he, "I cannot outlive this disgrace." Gourville laughed at him. Vatel, however, went to his apartment, and setting the hilt of his sword against the door, after two ineffectual attempts, succeeded, in the third, in forcing his sword through his heart. At that instant the couriers arrived with the fish; Vatel was inquired after to distribute it. They ran to his apartment, knocked at the door, but received no answer; upon which they broke it open, and found him weltering in his blood. A messenger was immediately dispatched to acquaint the prince with what had happened, who was like a man in despair. The duke wept, *for his Burgundy journey depended upon Vatel.*

The italics here are our own. We felt that we must use them.

Is it not all pathetic? But how exquisitely

characteristic of the nation and of the times! “Poor Vatel,” is the extent to which Madame de Sévigné allows herself to go in sympathy. Her heart never bleeds very freely—for anybody except her daughter. Madame de Sévigné’s heart, indeed, we grieve to fear, was somewhat hard.

In another letter, after a long strain as worldly as any one could wish to see, this lively woman thus touches, with a sincerity as unquestionable as the levity is, on the point of personal religion:

> But, my dear child, the greatest inclination I have at present is to be a little religious. I plague La Mousse about it every day. I belong neither to God nor to the devil. I am quite weary of such a situation; though, between you and me, I look upon it as the most natural one in the world. I am not the devil’s, because I fear God, and have at the bottom a principle of religion; then, on the other hand, I am not properly God’s, because his law appears hard and irksome to me, and I cannot bring myself to acts of self-denial; so that altogether I am one of those called lukewarm Christians, the great number of whom does not in the least surprise me, for I perfectly understand their sentiments, and the reasons that influence them. However, we are told that this is a state highly displeasing to God; if so, we must get out of it. Alas! this is the difficulty. Was ever any thing so mad as I am, to be thus eternally pestering you with my rhapsodies?

Madame de Sévigné involuntarily becomes a maxim-maker:

> The other day I made a maxim off-hand without once thinking of it; and I liked it so well that I fancied I had taken it out of M. de la Rochefoucauld's. Pray tell me whether it is so or not, for in that case my memory is more to be praised than my judgment. I said, with all the ease in the world, that "ingratitude begets reproach, as acknowledgment begets new favors." Pray, where did this come from? Have I read it? Did I dream it? Is it my own idea? Nothing can be truer than the thing itself, nor than that I am totally ignorant how I came by it. I found it properly arranged in my brain, and at the end of my tongue.

The partial mother lets her daughter know whom the maxim was meant for. She says, "It is intended for your brother." This young fellow had, we suspect, been first earning his mother's "reproaches" for spendthrift habits, and then getting more money from her by "acknowledgment."

She hears that son of hers read "some chapters out of Rabelais," "which were enough," she declares, "to make us die with laughing." "I cannot affect," she says, "a prudery which is not natural to me." No, indeed, a prude this woman was not. She had the strong æsthetic stomach of her time. It is queer to have Rabelais rubbing cheek and jowl with Nicole ("We are going to begin a moral treatise of

Nicole's"), a severe Port-Royalist, in one and the same letter. But this is French; above all, it is Madame de Sévigné. By the way, she and her friends, first and last, "die" a thousand jolly deaths "with laughing."

A contemporary allusion to "Tartuffe," with more French manners implied:

> The other day La Biglesse played Tartuffe to the life. Being at table, she happened to tell a fib about some trifle or other, which I noticed, and told her of it; she cast her eyes to the ground, and with a very demure air, "Yes, indeed, madam," said she, "I am the greatest liar in the world; I am very much obliged to you for telling me of it." We all burst out a-laughing, for it was exactly the tone of Tartuffe —"Yes, brother, I am a wretch, a vessel of iniquity."

M. de la Rochefoucauld appears often by name in the letters. Here he appears anonymously by his effect:

> "Warm affections are never tranquil;" *a maxim*.

Not a very sapid bit of gnomic wisdom, certainly. We must immediately make up to our readers, on Madame de Sévigné's behalf, for the insipidity of the foregoing "maxim" of hers, by giving here two or three far more sententious excerpts from the letters, excerpts collected by another:

> There may be so great a weight of obligation that there is no way of being delivered from it but by ingratitude.
>
> Long sicknesses wear out grief, and long hopes wear out joy.
>
> Shadow is never long taken for substance; you must be, if you would appear to be. The world is not unjust long.

Madame de Sévigné makes a confession which will comfort readers who may have experienced the same difficulty as that of which she speaks:

> I send you M. de Rochefoucauld's "Maxims," revised and corrected, with additions; it is a present to you from himself. Some of them I can make shift to guess the meaning of; but there are others, that, to my shame be it spoken, I cannot understand at all. God knows how it will be with you.

What was it changed this woman's mood to serious? She could not have been hearing Massillon's celebrated sermon on the "Fewness of the Elect," for Massillon was yet only a boy of nine years; she may have been reading Pascal's "Thoughts"—Pascal had been dead ten years, and the "Thoughts" had been published; or she may have been listening to one of those sifting, heart-searching discourses of Bourdaloue—the date of her letter is March 16,

1672, and during the Lent of that year Bourdaloue preached at Versailles—when she wrote somberly as follows:

> You ask me if I am as fond of life as ever. I must own to you that I experience mortifications, and severe ones too; but I am still unhappy at the thoughts of death; I consider it so great a misfortune to see the termination of all my pursuits, that I should desire nothing better, if it were practicable, than to begin life again. I find myself engaged in a scene of confusion and trouble; I was embarked in life without my own consent, and know I must leave it again; this distracts me, for how shall I leave it? In what manner? By what door? At what time? In what disposition? Am I to suffer a thousand pains and torments that will make me die in a state of despair? Shall I lose my senses? Am I to die by some sudden accident? How shall I stand with God? What shall I have to offer to him? Will fear and necessity make my peace with him? Shall I have no other sentiment but that of fear? What have I to hope? Am I worthy of heaven? Or have I deserved the torments of hell? Dreadful alternative! Alarming uncertainty! Can there be greater madness than to place our eternal salvation in uncertainty? Yet what is more natural, or can be more easily accounted for, than the foolish manner in which I have spent my life? I am frequently buried in thoughts of this nature, and then death appears so dreadful to me that I hate life more for leading me to it, than I do for all the thorns that are strewed in its way. You will ask me, then, if

> I would wish to live forever? Far from it; but if I had been consulted, I would very gladly have died in my nurse's arms; it would have spared me many vexations, and would have insured heaven to me at a very easy rate; but let us talk of something else.

A memorable sarcasm saved for us by Madame de Sévigné, at the very close of one of her letters:

> Guilleragues said yesterday that Pelisson abused the privilege men have of being ugly.

Readers familiar with Dickens's "Tale of Two Cities" will recognize in the following narrative a state of society not unlike that described by the novelist as immediately preceding the French Revolution:

> The Archbishop of Rheims, as he returned yesterday from St. Germain, met with a curious adventure. He drove at his usual rate, like a whirlwind. If he thinks himself a great man, his servants think him still greater. They passed through Nanterre, when they met a man on horseback, and in an insolent tone bid him clear the way. The poor man used his utmost endeavors to avoid the danger that threatened him, but his horse proved unmanageable. To make short of it, the coach-and-six turned them both topsy-turvy; but at the same time the coach, too, was completely overturned. In an instant the horse and the man, instead of

> amusing themselves with having their limbs broken, rose almost miraculously; the man remounted, and galloped away, and is galloping still, for aught I know; while the servants, the archbishop's coachman, and the archbishop himself at the head of them, cried out, "Stop that villain! stop him! thrash him soundly!" The rage of the archbishop was so great, that afterward, in relating the adventure, he said if he could have caught the rascal he would have broke all his bones, and cut off both his ears.

If such things were done by the aristocracy—and the spiritual aristocracy at that!—in the green tree, what might not be expected from them in the dry? The writer makes no comment—draws no moral. "Adieu, my dear, delightful child. I cannot express my eagerness to see you," are her next words. She rattles along, three short sentences more, and finishes her letter.

We should still not have done with these letters were we to go on a hundred pages, or two hundred, farther. Readers have already seen truly what Madame de Sévigné is. They have only not seen fully all that she is. And that they would not see short of reading her letters entire. Horace Walpole aspired to do in English for his own time something like what Madame de Sévigné had done in French for hers. In a measure he succeeded. The difference is, that he was imitative and affected, where she was original and genuine.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu must, of course, also be named, as, by her sex, her social position, her talent, and the devotion of her talent, an English analogue to Madame de Sévigné. But these comparisons, and all comparison, leave the French woman without a true parallel, alone in her rank, the most famous letter-writer in the world.

X.

CORNEILLE.

1606-1684.

THE two great names in French tragedy are Corneille and Racine. French tragedy is a very different affair from either modern tragedy in English or ancient tragedy in Greek. It comes nearer being Roman epic, such as Lucan wrote Roman epic, dramatized.

Drama is everywhere and always, and this from the nature of things, a highly conventional literary form. But the convention under which French tragedy should be judged, differs, on the one hand, from that which existed for Greek tragedy, and, on the other hand, from that existing for the English. The atmosphere of real life present in English tragedy is absent in French. The quasi-supernatural

religious awe that reigned over Greek tragedy, French tragedy does not affect. You miss also in French tragedy the severe simplicity, the self-restraint, the statuesque repose, belonging to the Greek model. Loftiness, grandeur, a loftiness somewhat strained, a grandeur tending to be tumid, an heroic tone sustained at sacrifice of ease and nature—such is the element in which French tragedy lives and flourishes. You must grant your French tragedists this their conventional privilege, or you will not enjoy them. You must grant them this, or you cannot understand them. Resolve that you will like grandiloquence, requiring only that the grandiloquence be good, and on this condition we can promise that you will be pleased with Corneille and Racine. In fact, our readers, we are sure, will find the grandiloquence of these two tragedy-writers so very good that a little will suffice them.

Voltaire in his time impressed himself strongly enough on his countrymen to get accepted by his own generation as an equal third in tragedy with Corneille and Racine. There was then a French triumvirate of tragedists to be paralleled with the triumvirate of the Greeks. Corneille was Æschylus; Racine was Sophocles; and, of course, Euripides had his counterpart in Voltaire. Voltaire has since descended from the tragic throne, and that neat symmetry of trine comparison is spoiled. There is, however, some trace of justice in making Corneille as related to Racine resemble Æschylus as related to

Sophocles. Corneille was first, more rugged, loftier; Racine was second, more polished, more severe in taste. Racine had, too, in contrast with Corneille, more of the Euripidean sweetness. In fact, La Bruyère's celebrated comparison of the two Frenchmen—made, of course, before Voltaire—yoked them, Corneille with Sophocles, Racine with Euripides. Mr. John Morley, however, in his elaborate monograph on Voltaire, remarks: "He [Voltaire] is usually considered to hold the same place relatively to Corneille and Racine that Euripides held relatively to Æschylus and Sophocles."

It was perhaps not without its influence on the style of Corneille, that a youthful labor of his in authorship was to translate, wholly or partially, the "Pharsalia" of Lucan. His fondness for Lucan, Corneille always retained. This taste on his part, and the rhymed Alexandrines in which he wrote tragedy, may together help account for the hyperheroic style which is Corneille's great fault. A lady criticised his tragedy, "The Death of Pompey," by saying: "Very fine, but too many heroes in it." Corneille's tragedies generally have, if not too many heroes, at least too much hero, in them. Concerning the historian Gibbon's habitual pomp of expression, it was once wittily said that nobody could possibly tell the truth in such a style as that. It would be equally near the mark if we should say of Corneille's chosen mold of verse, that nobody could possibly be simple and

natural in that. Molière's comedy, however, would almost confute us.

Pierre Corneille was born in Rouen. He studied law, and he was admitted to practice as an advocate, like Molière; but, like Molière, he heard and he heeded an inward voice summoning him away from the bar to the stage. Corneille did not, however, like Molière, tread the boards as an actor. He had a lively sense of personal dignity. He was eminently the "lofty, grave tragedian," in his own esteem. "But I am Pierre Corneille notwithstanding," he self-respectingly said once, when friends were regretting to him some deficiency of grace in his personal carriage. One can imagine him taking off his hat to himself with unaffected deference.

But this serious genius began dramatic composition with writing comedy. He made several experiments of this kind with no commanding success; but at thirty he wrote the tragedy of "The Cid," and instantly became famous. His subsequent plays were chiefly on classical subjects. The subject of "The Cid" was drawn from Spanish literature. This was emphatically what has been called an "epoch-making" production. Richelieu's "Academy," at the instigation, indeed almost under the dictation, of Richelieu, who was jealous of Corneille, tried to write it down. They succeeded about as Balaam succeeded in prophesying against Israel. "The Cid" triumphed over them, and over the great minister. It established not only Corneille's fame, but his

authority. The man of genius taken alone proved stronger than the men of taste taken together.

For all this, however, our readers would hardly relish "The Cid." Let us go at once to that tragedy of Corneille's which, by the general consent of French critics, is the best work of its author, the "Polyeuctes." The following is the rhetorical climax of praise in which Gaillard, one of the most enlightened of Corneille's eulogists, arranges the different masterpieces of his author: "'The Cid' raised Corneille above his rivals; the 'Horace' and the 'Cinna' above his models; the 'Polyeuctes' above himself." This tragedy will, we doubt not, prove to our readers the most interesting of all the tragedies of Corneille.

"The great Corneille"—to apply the traditionary designation which, besides attributing to our tragedian his conceded general eminence in character and genius, serves also to distinguish him by merit from his younger brother, who wrote very good tragedy—was an illustrious figure at the Hôtel de Rambouillet, that focus of the best literary criticism in France. Corneille reading a play of his to the *coterie* of wits assembled there under the presidency of ladies whose eyes, as in a kind of tournament of letters, rained influence on authors, and judged the prize of genius, is the subject of a striking picture by a French painter. Corneille read "Polyeuctes" at the Hôtel Rambouillet, and that awful court decided against the play. Corneille, like

Michael Angelo, had to a good degree the courage of his own productions: but, in the face of adverse decision so august on his work, he needed encouragement, which happily he did not fail to receive, before he would allow his “Polyeuctes” to be represented. The theatre crowned it with the laurels of victory. It thus fell to Corneille to triumph successively, single-handed, over two great adversary courts of critical appreciation—the Academy of Richelieu and the not less formidable Hôtel de Rambouillet.

The objection raised by the Hôtel de Rambouillet against the “Polyeuctes” was that it made the stage encroach on the prerogative of the pulpit, and preach instead of simply amusing. And, indeed, never, perhaps, since the Greek tragedy, was the theatre made so much to serve the solemn purposes of religion. (We except the miracle and passion plays and the mysteries of the Middle Ages, as not belonging within the just bounds of a comparison like that now made.) Corneille’s final influence was to elevate and purify the French theatre. In his early works, however, he made surprising concessions to the lewd taste in the drama that he found prevailing when he began to write. With whatever amount of genuine religious scruple affecting his conscience—on that point we need not judge the poet—Corneille used, before putting them on the stage, to take his plays to the “Church”—that is, to the priestly hierarchy who constituted the “Church”—that they

might be authoritatively judged as to their possible influence on the cause of Christian truth.

In the “Polyeuctes” the motive is religion. Polyeuctes is historic or traditional saint of the Roman Catholic church. His conversion from paganism is the theme of the play. Polyeuctes has a friend Nearchus who is already a Christian convert, and who labors earnestly to make Polyeuctes a proselyte to the faith. Polyeuctes has previously married a noble Roman lady, daughter of Felix, governor of Armenia, in which province the action of the story occurs. (The persecuting Emperor Decius is on the throne of the Roman world.) Paulina married Polyeuctes against her own choice, for she loved Roman Severus better. Her father had put his will upon her, and Paulina had filially obeyed in marrying Polyeuctes. Such are the relations of the different persons of the drama. It will be seen that there is ample room for the play of elevated and tragic passions. Paulina, in fact, is the lofty, the impossible, ideal of wifely and daughterly truth and devotion. Pagan though she is, she is pathetically constant, both to the husband that was forced upon her, and to the father that did the forcing; while still she loves, and cannot but love, the man whom, in spite of her love for him, she, with an act like prolonged suicide, stoically separates from her torn and bleeding heart.

But Severus on his part emulates the nobleness of the woman whom he vainly loves. Learning the true

state of the case, he rises to the height of his opportunity for magnanimous behavior, and bids the married pair be happy in a long life together.

A change in the situation occurs, a change due to the changed mood of the father, Felix. Felix learns that Severus is high in imperial favor, and he wishes now that Severus, instead of Polyeuctes, were his son-in-law. A decree of the emperor makes it possible that this preferable alternative may yet be realized. For the emperor has decreed that Christians must be persecuted to the death, and Polyeuctes has been baptized a Christian—though of this Felix will not hear till later.

A solemn sacrifice to the gods is to be celebrated in honor of imperial victories lately won. Felix sends to summon Polyeuctes, his son-in-law. To Felix's horror, Polyeuctes, with his friend Nearchus, coming to the temple, proceeds in a frenzy of enthusiasm to break and dishonor the images of the gods, proclaiming himself a Christian. In obedience to the imperial decree, Nearchus is hurried to execution, in the sight of his friend, while Polyeuctes is thrown into prison to repent and recant.

"Now is my chance," muses Felix. "I dare not disobey the emperor to spare Polyeuctes. Besides, with Polyeuctes once out of the way, Severus and Paulina may be husband and wife."

Polyeuctes in prison hears that his Paulina is coming to see him. With a kind of altruistic

nobleness which seems contagious in this play, Polyeuctes resolves that Severus shall come too, and he will resign his wife, soon to be a widow, to the care of his own rival, her Roman lover. First, Polyeuctes and Paulina are alone together—Polyeuctes having, before she arrived, fortified his soul for the conflict with her tears, by singing in his solitude a song of high resolve and of anticipative triumph over his temptation.

The scene between Paulina, exerting all her power to detach Polyeuctes from what she believes to be his folly, and Polyeuctes, on the other hand, rapt to the pitch of martyrdom, exerting all his power to resist his wife, and even to convert her—this scene, we say, is full of noble height and pathos, as pathos and height were possible in the verse which Corneille had to write. Neither struggler in this tragic strife moves the other. Paulina is withdrawing when Severus enters. She addresses her lover severely, but Polyeuctes intervenes to defend him. In a short scene, Polyeuctes, by a sort of last will and testament, bequeaths his wife to his rival, and retires with his guard. Now, Severus and Paulina are alone together. If there was a trace of the false heroic in Polyeuctes's resignation of his wife to Severus, the effect of that is finely counteracted by the scene which immediately follows between Paulina and Severus. Severus begins doubtfully, staggering, as it were, to firm posture, while he speaks to Paulina. He expresses amazement at the conduct of Polyeuctes.

Christians certainly deport themselves strangely, he says. He at length finds himself using the following lover-like language:

> As for me, had my destiny become a little earlier propitious and honored my devotion by marriage with you, I should have adored only the splendor of your eyes; of them I should have made my kings; of them I should have made my gods; sooner would I have been reduced to dust, sooner would I have been reduced to ashes, than—

But here Paulina interrupts, and Severus is not permitted to finish his protestation. Her reply is esteemed, and justly esteemed, one of the noblest things in French tragedy—a French critic would be likely to say, the very noblest in tragedy. She says:

> Let us break off there; I fear listening too long; I fear lest this warmth which feels your first fires, force on some sequel unworthy of us both. [Voltaire, who edited Corneille with a feeling of freedom toward a national idol comparable to the sturdy independence that animated Johnson in annotating Shakespeare, says of "This warmth which feels your first fires and which forces on a sequel:" "That is badly written, agreed; but the sentiment gets the better of the expression, and what follows is of a beauty of which there had been no example. The Greeks were frigid declaimers in comparison with this passage of Corneille."] Severus, learn to know Paulina all in all.
>
> My Polyeuctes touches on his last hour; he has but

a moment to live; you are the cause of this, though innocently so. I know not if your heart, yielding to your desires, may have dared build any hope on his destruction; but know that there is no death so cruel that to it with firm brow I would not bend my steps, that there are in hell no horrors that I would not endure, rather than soil a glory so pure, rather than espouse, after his sad fate, a man that was in any wise the cause of his death; and if you suppose me of a heart so little sound, the love which I had for you would all turn to hate. You are generous; be so even to the end. My father is in a state to yield every thing to you; he fears you; and I further hazard this saying, that, if he destroys my husband, it is to you that he sacrifices him. Save this unhappy man, use your influence in his favor, exert yourself to become his support. I know that this is much that I ask; but the greater the effort, the greater the glory from it. To preserve a rival of whom you are jealous, that is a trait of virtue which appertains only to you. And if your renown is not motive sufficient, it is much that a woman once so well beloved, and the love of whom perhaps is still capable of touching you, will owe to your great heart the dearest possession that she owns; remember, in short, that you are Severus. Adieu. Decide with yourself alone what you ought to do; if you are not such as I dare to hope that you are, then, in order that I may continue to esteem you, I wish not to know it.

Voltaire, as editor and commentator of Corneille, is freezingly cold. It is difficult not to feel that at

heart he was unfriendly to the great tragedist's fame. His notes often are remorselessly grammatical. "This is not French"; "This is not the right word"; "According to the construction, this should mean so and so—according to the sense it must mean so and so"; "This is hardly intelligible"; "It is a pity that such or such a fault should mar these fine verses"; "An expression for comedy rather than tragedy"—are the kind of remarks with which Voltaire chills the enthusiasm of the reader. It is useless, however, to deny that the criticisms thus made are, many of them, just. Corneille does not belong to the class of the "faultily faultless" writers.

Severus proves equal to Paulina's noble hopes of him. With a great effort of self-sacrifice, he resolves to intercede for Polyeuctes. This is shown in an interview between Severus and his faithful attendant Fabian. Fabian warns him that he appeals for Polyeuctes at his own peril. Severus loftily replies (and here follows one of the most lauded passages in the play:)

> That advice might be good for some common soul. Though he [the Emperor Decius] holds in his hands my life and my fortune, I am yet Severus; and all that mighty power is powerless over my glory, and powerless over my duty. Here honor compels me, and I will satisfy it; whether fate afterward show itself propitious or adverse, perishing glorious I shall perish content.

I will tell thee further, but under confidence, the sect of Christians is not what it is thought to be. They are hated, why I know not; and I see Decius unjust only in this regard. From curiosity I have sought to become acquainted with them. They are regarded as sorcerers taught from hell; and, in this supposition, the punishment of death is visited on secret mysteries which we do not understand. But Eleusinian Ceres and the Good Goddess have their secrets, like those at Rome and in Greece; still we freely tolerate everywhere, their God alone excepted, every kind of god; all the monsters of Egypt have their temples in Rome; our fathers, at their will, made a god of a man; and, their blood in our veins preserving their errors, we fill heaven with all our emperors; but, to speak without disguise of deifications so numerous, the effect is very doubtful of such metamorphoses.

Christians have but one God, absolute master of all, whose mere will does whatever he resolves; but, if I may venture to say what seems to me true, our gods very often agree ill together; and, though their wrath crush me before your eyes, we have a good many of them for them to be true gods. Finally, among the Christians, morals are pure, vices are hated, virtues flourish; they offer prayers on behalf of us who persecute them; and, during all the time since we have tormented them, have they ever been seen mutinous? Have they ever been seen rebellious? Have our princes ever had more faithful soldiers? Fierce in war, they submit themselves to our executioners; and, lions in combat, they die like

> lambs. I pity them too much not to defend them. Come, let us find Felix; let us commune with his son-in-law; and let us thus, with one single action, gratify at once Paulina, and my glory, and my compassion.

Such is the high heroic style in which pagan Severus resolves and speaks. And thus the fourth act ends.

Felix makes a sad contrast with the high-heartedness which the other characters, most of them, display. He is base enough to suspect that Severus is base enough to be false and treacherous in his act of intercession for Polyeuctes. He imagines he detects a plot against himself to undermine him with the emperor. Voltaire criticises Corneille for giving this sordid character to Felix. He thinks the tragedist might better have let Felix be actuated by zeal for the pagan gods. The mean selfishness that animates the governor, Voltaire regards as below the right tragic pitch. It is the poet himself, no doubt, with that high Roman fashion of his, who, unconsciously to the critic, taught him to make the criticism.

Felix summons Polyeuctes to an interview, and adjures to be a prudent man. Felix at length says, “Adore the gods or die.” “I am a Christian,” simply replies the martyr. “Impious! Adore them, I bid you, or renounce life.” (Here again Voltaire offers one of his refrigerant criticisms: “*Renounce life* does not advance upon the meaning of *die*; when one repeats

the thought, the expression should be strengthened.") Paulina meantime has entered to expostulate with Polyeuctes and with her father. Polyeuctes bids her, "Live with Severus." He says he has revolved the subject, and he is convinced that another love is the sole remedy for her woe. He proceeds in the calmest manner to point out the advantages of the course recommended. Voltaire remarks—justly we are bound to say—that these maxims are here somewhat revolting; the martyr should have had other things to say. On Felix's final word, "Soldiers, execute the order that I have given," Paulina exclaims, "Whither are you taking him?" "To death," says Felix. "To glory," says Polyeuctes. "Admirable dialogue, and always applauded," is Voltaire's note on this.

The tragedy does not end with the martyrdom of Polyeuctes. Paulina becomes a Christian, but remains pagan enough to call her father "barbarous," in acrimoniously bidding him finish his work by putting his daughter also to death. Severus reproaches Felix for his cruelty, and threatens him with his own enmity. Felix undergoes instantaneous conversion—a miracle of grace which, under the circumstances provided by Corneille, we may excuse Voltaire for laughing at. Paulina is delighted; and Severus asks, "Who would not be touched by a spectacle so tender?"

The tragedy thus comes near ending happily enough to be called a comedy.

Such as the foregoing exhibits him is the father of French tragedy, Corneille, where at his best; where at his worst, he is something so different that you would hardly admit him to be the same man. For never was genius more unequal in different manifestations of itself, than Corneille in his different works. Molière is reported to have said that Corneille had a familiar, or a fairy, that came to him at times, and enabled him to write sublimely; but that, when the poet was left to himself, he could write as poorly as another man.

Corneille produced some thirty-three dramatic pieces in all, but of these not more than six or seven retain their place on the French stage.

Corneille and Bossuet together constitute a kind of rank by themselves among the *Dii Majores* of the French literary Olympus.

XI.

RACINE.

1639-1699.

JEAN RACINE was Pierre Corneille reduced to rule. The younger was to the elder somewhat as Sophocles or Euripides was to Æschylus, as Virgil

was to Lucretius, as Pope was to Dryden. Nature was more in Corneille, art was more in Racine. Corneille was a pathfinder in literature. He led the way even for Molière still more for Racine. But Racine was as much before Corneille in perfection of art as Corneille was before Racine in audacity of genius. Racine, accordingly, is much more even and uniform than Corneille. Smoothness, polish, ease, grace, sweetness—these, and monotony in these, are the mark of Racine. But if there is, in the latter poet, less to admire, there is also less to forgive. His taste and his judgment were surer than the taste and the judgment of Corneille. He enjoyed, moreover, an inestimable advantage in the life-long friendship of the great critic of his time, Boileau. Boileau was a literary conscience to Racine. He kept Racine constantly spurred to his best endeavors in art. Racine was congratulating himself to his friends on the ease with which he produced his verse. “Let me teach you to produce easy verse with difficulty,” was the critic’s admirable reply. Racine was a docile pupil. He became as painstaking an artist in verse as Boileau would have him.

It will always be a matter of individual taste, and of changing fashion in criticism, to decide which of the two is, on the whole, to be preferred to the other. Racine eclipsed Corneille in vogue during the lifetime of the latter. Corneille’s old age was, perhaps, seriously saddened by the consciousness, which he could not but have, of being retired from

the place of ascendency once accorded to him over all. His case repeated the fortune of Æschylus in relation to Sophocles. The eighteenth century, taught by Voltaire, established the precedence of Racine. But the nineteenth century has restored the crown to the brow of Corneille. To such mutations is subject the fame of an author.

Jean Racine was early left an orphan. His grandparents put him, after preparatory training at another establishment, to school at Port Royal, where during three years he had the best opportunities of education that the kingdom afforded. His friends wanted to make a clergyman of him; but the preferences of the boy prevailed, and he addicted himself to literature. The Greek tragedists became familiar to him in his youth, and their example in literary art exercised a sovereign influence over Racine's development as author. It pained the good Port-Royalists to see their late gifted pupil, now out of their hands, inclined to write plays. Nicole printed a remonstrance against the theater, in which Racine discovered something that he took to slant anonymously at himself. He wrote a spirited reply, of which no notice was taken by the Port-Royalists. Somebody, however, on their behalf, rejoined to Racine, whereupon the young author wrote a second letter to the Port-Royalists, which he showed to his friend Boileau. "This may do credit to your head, but it will do none to your heart," was that faithful mentor's comment, in returning the

document. Racine suppressed his second letter, and did his best to recall the first. But he went on in his course of writing for the stage.

Racine's second tragedy, the "Alexander the Great," the youthful author took to the great Corneille, to get his judgment on it. Corneille was thirty-three years the senior of Racine, and he was at this time the undisputed master of French tragedy. "You have undoubted talent for poetry—for tragedy, not; try your hand in some other poetical line," was Corneille's sentence on the unrecognized young rival, who was so soon to supplant him in popular favor.

It was a pretty, girlish fancy of the brilliant Princess Henriette (that same daughter of English Charles I., Bossuet's funeral oration on whom, presently to be spoken of, is so celebrated) to engage the two great tragedists, Corneille and Racine, both at once, in labor, without their mutual knowledge, upon the same subject—a subject which she herself, drawing it from the history of Tacitus, conceived to be eminently fit for tragical treatment. Corneille produced his "Berenice" and Racine his "Titus and Berenice." The princess died before the two plays which she had inspired were produced; but, when they were produced, Racine's work won the palm. The rivalry created a bitterness between the two authors, of which, naturally, the defeated one tasted the more deeply. An ill-considered pleasantry, too, of Racine's, in making out of one of Corneille's tragic lines in his "Cid," a comic line for "The Suitors," hurt

the old man's pride. That pride suffered a worse hurt still. The chief Parisian theater, completely occupied with the works of his victorious rival, rejected tragedies offered by Corneille.

Still, Racine did not have things all his own way. Some good critics considered the rage for this younger dramatist a mere passing whim of fashion. These—Madame de Sévigné was of them—stood by their "old admiration," and were true to Corneille.

A memorable mortification and chagrin for our poet was now prepared by his enemies—he seems never to have lacked enemies—with lavish and elaborate malice. Racine had produced a play from Euripides, the "Phædra," on which he had unstintingly bestowed his best genius and his best art. It was contrived that another poet, one Pradon, should, at the self-same moment, have a play represented on the self-same subject. At a cost of many thousands of dollars, the best seats at Racine's theater were all bought by his enemies, and left solidly vacant. The best seats at Pradon's theater were all bought by the same interested parties, and duly occupied with industrious and zealous applauders. This occurred at six successive representations. The result was the immediate apparent triumph of Pradon over the humiliated Racine. Boileau in vain bade his friend be of good cheer, and await the assured reversal of the verdict. Racine was deeply wounded.

This discomposing experience of the poet's, joined with conscientious misgivings on his part as to the propriety of his course in writing for the stage, led him now, at the early age of thirty-eight, to renounce tragedy altogether. His son Louis, from whose life of Racine we have chiefly drawn our material for the present sketch, conceives this change in his father as a profound and genuine religious conversion. Writers whose spirit inclines them not to relish a condemnation such as seems thus to be reflected on the theater take a less charitable view of the change. They account for it as a reaction of mortified pride. Some of them go so far as groundlessly to impute sheer hypocrisy to Racine.

A long interval of silence, on Racine's part, had elapsed, when Madame de Maintenon, the wife of Louis XIV., asked the unemployed poet to prepare a sacred play for the use of the high-born girls educated under her care at St. Cyr. Racine consented, and produced his "Esther." This achieved a prodigious success; for the court took it up, and an exercise written for a girls' school became the admiration of a kingdom. A second similar play followed, the "Athaliah"—the last, and, by general agreement, the most perfect work of its author. We thus reach that tragedy of Racine's which both its fame and its character dictate to us as the one by eminence to be used here in exhibition of the quality of this Virgil among tragedists.

Our readers may, if they please, refresh their

recollection of the history on which the drama is founded by perusing Second Kings, chapter eleven, and Second Chronicles, chapters twenty-two and twenty-three. Athaliah, whose name gives its title to the tragedy, was daughter to the wicked king, Ahab. She reigns as queen at Jerusalem over the kingdom of Judah. To secure her usurped position, she had sought to kill all the descendants of King David, even her own grandchildren. She had succeeded, but not quite. Young Joash escaped, to be secretly reared in the temple by the high-priest. The final disclosure of this hidden prince, and his coronation as king in place of usurping Athalia, destined to be fearfully overthrown, and put to death in his name, afford the action of the play. Action, however, there is almost none in classic French tragedy. The tragic drama is, with the French, as it was with the Greeks, after whom it was framed, merely a succession of scenes in which speeches are made by the actors. Lofty declamation is always the character of the play. In the “Athalia,” as in the “Esther,” Racine introduced the feature of the chorus, a restoration which had all the effect of an innovation. The chorus in “Athalia” consisted of Hebrew virgins, who at intervals marking the transitions between the acts, chanted the spirit of the piece in its successive stages of progress toward the final catastrophe. The “Athalia” is almost proof against technical criticism. It is acknowledged to be, after its kind, a nearly ideal product of art.

First, in specimen of the choral feature of the drama, we content ourselves with giving a single chorus from the “Athalia.” This we turn into rhyme, clinging pretty closely all the way to the form of the original. Attentive readers may, in one place of our rendering, observe an instance of identical rhyme. This, in a piece of verse originally written in English, would, of course, be a fault. In translation from French, it may pass for a merit; since, to judge from the practice of the national poets, the French ear seems to be even better pleased with such strict identities of sound, at the close of corresponding lines, than it is with those definite, mere resemblances to which, in English versification, rhymes are rigidly limited.

Suspense between hope and dread, dread preponderating, is the state of feeling represented in the present chorus. Salomith is the leading singer:

SALOMITH.
The Lord hath deigned to speak,
But what he to his prophet now hath shown—
Who unto us will make it clearly known?
Arms he himself to save us, poor and weak?
Arms he himself to have us overthrown?
THE WHOLE CHORUS.
O promises! O threats! O mystery profound!
What woe, what weal, are each in turn foretold?
How can so much of wrath be found
So much of love to enfold?
A VOICE.
Zion shall be no more; a cruel flame
Will all her ornaments devour.
A SECOND VOICE.
God shelters Zion; she has shield and tower
In his eternal name.
FIRST VOICE.
I see her splendor all from vision disappear.
SECOND VOICE.
I see on every side her glory shine more clear.
FIRST VOICE.
Into a deep abyss is Zion sunk from sight.
SECOND VOICE.
Zion lifts up her brow amid celestial light.
FIRST VOICE.
What dire despair!
SECOND VOICE.
What praise from every tongue!
FIRST VOICE.
What cries of grief!
SECOND VOICE.
What songs of triumph sung!
A THIRD VOICE.

Cease we to vex ourselves; our God, one day,
Will this great mystery make clear.
ALL THREE VOICES.
Let us his wrath revere,
While on his love, no less, our hopes we stay.

The catastrophe is reached in the coronation of little Joash as king, and in the destruction of usurping and wicked Athaliah. Little Joash, by the way, with his rather precocious wisdom of reply, derived to himself for the moment a certain factitious interest, from the resemblance, meant by the poet to be divined by spectators, between him and the little Duke of Burgundy, Louis XIV.'s grandson, then of about the same age with the Hebrew boy, and of high reputation for mental vivacity.

The scene in which the high-priest, Jehoiada, for the first time discloses to his foster-son, Joash, the latter's royal descent from David, and his true heirship to the throne of Judah, will serve sufficiently to exhibit what maturity of modest and pious wisdom the dramatist attributes to this Hebrew boy of nine or ten years. Nine or ten years of age Racine makes Joash, instead of seven, as Scripture interpreted without violence would make him. The lad has had his sage curiosity excited by seeing preparations in progress for some important ceremonial. That ceremonial is his own coronation, but he does not guess the secret. Nay, he has just touchingly asked his foster-mother, observed by him

to be in tears:

> What pity touches you? Is it that, in a holocaust to be this day offered, I, like Jephtha's daughter in other times, must pacify by my death the anger of the Lord? Alas, a son has nothing that does not belong to his father!

The discreet foster-mother refers the lad to her husband, Jehoiada, now approaching. Joash rushes into the arms of the high-priest, exclaiming, "My father!" "Well, my son?" the high-priest replies. "What preparations, then, are these?" asks Joash. The high-priest bids him prepare himself to listen and learn, the time being now come for him to pay his debt to God:

> *Joash.* I feel myself ready, if he wishes it, to give to him my life.
>
> *Jehoiada.* You have often heard read the history of our kings. Do you remember, my son, what strict laws a king worthy of the crown ought to impose upon himself?
>
> *Joash.* A wise and good king, so hath God himself declared, puts not his reliance upon riches and gold; he fears the Lord his God, has ever before him his precepts, his laws, his judgments severe, and does not with unjust burdens overwhelm his brethren.

Fénelon had already been two years preceptor to

the Duke of Burgundy when this tragedy was written. It is impossible not to feel that Racine must have had that prince in mind when he put into the mouth of young Joash sentiments so likely to have been instilled into the heart of his royal pupil, the great king's grandson, by such a preceptor as Fénelon. How could the selfish old monarch of France contrive to avoid recognizing his own portrait suggested by contrast in that description of the good king from the lips of little Joash? Racine was here treading on treacherous ground. He will presently find his footing quite give way under him, to let him down into the "horrible pit" of disgrace with his king. This not, however, in the present play.

The tragedist has generously bestowed upon wicked Queen Athaliah a certain loftiness of spirit which, in its display in the final catastrophe, almost redeems her to admiration, if not to sympathy. There is nothing in the play more nearly sublime in declamation than the final speech in which Athaliah greets her own doom, and blasphemously forecasts, for young King Joash, a future of apostasy from God. With this admirable piece of rhetoric, resembling a burst of blasphemy from Satan in "Paradise Lost," so far as French poetry may be allowed to resemble English, we conclude our representation of Racine. Athaliah has now just heard the announcement of things that assure her of the overthrow of her usurpation. She expresses herself in a speech, the first words of which were, no doubt, designed by the

poet to recall the celebrated traditional exclamation of Julian the Apostate, uttered at a moment of irretrievable disaster to his impious hopes—"O Galilean, thou hast conquered!" as follows:

God of the Jews, 'tis thou that dost prevail!
Ay, it is Joash; all without avail
Seek I to cheat myself with other thought:
I know the wound my weapon on him wrought;
I see his father Ahaziah's face;
Naught but brings back to me that hated race.
David doth triumph, Ahab only fall—
Unpitying God, thou only hast done all!
'Tis thou that, flattering me to hope in vain
For easy vengeance, o'er and o'er again
Hast with myself myself embroiled anew,
Now pangs of conscience rousing, not a few,
Now dazzling me with thy rich treasures rare,
Which I to burn or pillage did not dare.
Let him, then, reign, this son, thy care, thy toil,
And, so to signalize his new-got spoil,
Let him into my bosom plunge the knife,
And take with filial hand his mother's life.
Hearken what wish for him she dying breathes—
Wish? nay, what hope, assured hope, bequeaths—
That, disobedient, proud, rebellious, he,
Faithful to Ahab's blood received from me,
To his grandfather, to his father, like,
Abhorrent heir of David, down may strike
Thy worship and thy fane, avenger fell
Of Athaliah, Ahab, Jezebel!

With words thus rendered into such English verse

as we could command for the purpose, Athaliah disappears from the stage. Her execution follows immediately. This is not exhibited, but is announced with brief, solemn comment from Jehoiada. And so the tragedy ends.

The interest of the piece, to the modern reader, is by no means equal to its fame. One reproaches one's self, but one yawns in conscientiously perusing it. Still, one feels the work of the author to be irreproachably, nay, consummately, good. But fashions in taste change; and we cannot hold ourselves responsible for admiring, or, at any rate, for enjoying, according to the judgment of other races and of former generations. It is—so, with grave concurrence, we say—It is a great classic, worthy of the praise that it receives. We are glad that we have read it; and, let us be candid, equally glad that we have not to read it again.

As has already been intimated, Racine, after "Athaliah," wrote tragedy no more. He ceased to interest himself in the fortune of his plays. His son "Louis," in his Life of his father, testifies that he never heard his father speak in the family of the dramas that he had written. His theatrical triumphs seemed to afford him no pleasure. He repented of them rather than gloried in them.

While one need not doubt that this regret of Racine's for the devotion of his powers to the production of tragedy was a sincere regret of his

conscience, one may properly wish that the regret had been more heroic. The fact is, Racine was somewhat feminine in character as well as in genius. He could not beat up with stout heart undismayed against an adverse wind. And the wind blew adverse at length to Racine, from the principal quarter, the court of Versailles. From being a chief favorite with his sovereign, Racine fell into the position of an exile from the royal presence. The immediate occasion was one honorable rather than otherwise to the poet.

In conversation with Madame de Maintenon, Racine had expressed views on the state of France, and on the duties of a king to his subjects, which so impressed her mind that she desired him to reduce his observations to writing and confide them to her, she promising to keep them profoundly secret from Louis. But Louis surprised her with the manuscript in her hand. Taking it from her, he read in it, and demanded to know the author. Madame de Maintenon could not finally refuse to tell. “Does M. Racine, because he is a great poet, think that he knows every thing?” the despot angrily asked. Louis never spoke to Racine again. The distressed and infatuated poet still made some paltry request of the king—to experience the humiliation that he invoked. His request was not granted. Racine wilted, like a tender plant, under the sultry frown of his monarch. He could not rally. He soon after died, literally killed by the mere displeasure of one man. Such was the measureless power wielded by Louis XIV.; such was

the want of virile stuff in Racine. A spirit partly kindred to the tragedist, Archbishop Fénelon, will presently be shown to have had at about the same time a partly similar experience.

XII.

BOSSUET: 1627-1704; **BOURDALOUE**: 1632-1704; **MASSILLON**: 1663-1742; **SAURIN**: 1677-1730.

We group four names in one title, Bossuet, Bourdaloue, Massillon, Saurin, to represent the pulpit orators of France. There are other great names—as Fléchier and Claude—but the names we choose are the greatest.

Bossuet's individual distinction is, that he was a great man as well as a great orator; Bourdaloue's, that he was priest-and-preacher simply; Massillon's, that his sermons, regarded quite independently of their subject, their matter, their occasion, regarded merely as masterpieces of style, became at once, and permanently became, a part of French literature; Saurin's, that he was the pulpit theologian of Protestantism.

The greatness of Bossuet is an article in the French national creed. No Frenchman disputes it; no Frenchman, indeed, but proclaims it. Protestant

agrees with Catholic, infidel with Christian, at least in this. Bossuet, twinned here with Corneille, is to the Frenchman, as Milton is to the Englishman, his synonym for sublimity. Eloquence, somehow, seems a thing too near the common human level to answer fully the need that Frenchmen feel in speaking of Bossuet. Bossuet is not eloquent, he is sublime. That in French it is in equal part oratory, while in English it is poetry almost alone, that supplies in literature its satisfaction to the sentiment of the sublime, very well represents the difference in genius between the two races. The French idea of poetry is eloquence; and it is eloquence carried to its height, whether in verse or in prose, that constitutes for the Frenchman sublimity. The difference is a difference of blood. English blood is Teutonic in base, and the imagination of the Teuton is poetic. French blood, in base, is Celtic; and the imagination of the Celt is oratoric.

Jacques Bénigne Bossuet was of good *bourgeois*, or middle-class, stock. He passed a well-ordered and virtuous youth, as if in prophetic consistency with what was to be his subsequent career. He was brought forward while a young man in the Hôtel de Rambouillet, where, on a certain occasion, he preached a kind of show sermon, under the auspices of his admiring patron. In due time he attracted wide public attention, not merely as an eloquent orator, but as a profound student and as a powerful controversialist. His character and influence became

in their maturity such that La Bruyère aptly called him a “Father of the Church.” “The Corneille of the pulpit,” was Henri Martin’s characterization and praise. A third phrase, “the eagle of Meaux,” has passed into almost an alternative name for Bossuet. He soared like an eagle in his eloquence, and he was bishop of Meaux.

Bossuet and Louis XIV. were exactly suited to each other, in the mutual relation of subject and sovereign. Bossuet preached sincerely—as every body knows Louis sincerely practiced—the doctrine of the divine right of kings to rule absolutely. But the proud prelate compromised neither his own dignity nor the dignity of the Church in the presence of the absolute monarch.

Bossuet threw himself with great zeal, and to prodigious effect, into the controversy against Protestantism. His “History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches,” in two good volumes, was one of the mightiest pamphlets ever written. As tutor to the Dauphin (the king’s eldest son), he produced, with other works, his celebrated “Discourse on Universal History.”

In proceeding now to give, from the four great preachers named in our title, a few specimen passages of the most famous pulpit oratory in the world, we need to prepare our readers against a natural disappointment. That which they are about to see has nothing in it of what will at first strike

them as brilliant. The pulpit eloquence of the Augustan age of France was distinctly “classic,” and not at all “romantic,” in style. Its character is not ornate, but severe. There is little rhetorical figure in it, little of that “illustration” which our own different national taste is accustomed to demand from the pulpit. There is plenty of white light, “dry light” and white, for the reason; but there is almost no bright color for the fancy, and, it must be added, not a great deal of melting warmth for the heart.

The funeral orations of Bossuet are generally esteemed the masterpieces of this orator’s eloquence. He had great occasions, and he was great to match them. Still, readers might easily be disappointed in perusing a funeral oration of Bossuet’s. The discourse will generally be found to deal in commonplaces of description, of reflection, and of sentiment. Those commonplaces, however, are often made very impressive by the lofty, the magisterial, the imperial manner of the preacher in treating them. We exhibit a specimen, a single specimen only, and a brief one, in the majestic exordium to the funeral oration on the Princess Henrietta of England.

This princess was daughter to that unfortunate Stuart, King Charles I. of England. Her mother’s death—her mother was of the French house of Bourbon—had occurred but a short time before, and Bossuet had on that occasion pronounced the eulogy. The daughter, scarcely returned to France from a secret mission of state to England, the success of

which made her an object of distinguished regard at Versailles, suddenly fell ill and died. Bossuet was summoned to preach at her funeral. (We have not been able to find an English translation of Bossuet, and we accordingly make the present transfer from French ourselves. We do the same, for the same reason, in the case of Massillon. In the case of Bourdaloue, we succeeded in obtaining a printed translation which we could modify to suit our purpose.) Bossuet:

> It was then reserved for my lot to pay this funereal tribute to the high and potent princess, Henrietta of England, Duchess of Orleans. She whom I had seen so attentive while I was discharging a like office for the queen, her mother, was so soon after to be the subject of a similar discourse, and my sad voice was predestined to this melancholy service. O vanity! O nothingness! O mortals! ignorant of their destiny! Ten months ago would she have believed it? And you, my hearers, would you have thought, while she was shedding so many tears in this place, that she was so soon to assemble you here to deplore her own loss? O princess! the worthy object of the admiration of two great kingdoms, was it not enough that England should deplore your absence, without being yet further compelled to deplore your death? France, who with so much joy beheld you again, surrounded with a new brilliancy, had she not in reserve other pomps and other triumphs for you, returned from that famous voyage whence you had brought hither so much glory, and hopes so fair?

“Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.” Nothing is left for me to say but that: that is the only sentiment which, in presence of so strange a casualty, grief so well-grounded and so poignant permits me to indulge. Nor have I explored the Holy Scriptures in order to find therein some text which I might apply to this princess; I have taken, without premeditation and without choice, the first expression presented to me by the Preacher with whom vanity, although it has been so often named, is yet, to my mind, not named often enough to suit the purpose that I have in view. I wish, in a single misfortune, to lament all the calamities of the human race, and in a single death to exhibit the death and the nothingness of all human greatness. This text, which suits all the circumstances and all the occurrences of our life, becomes, by a special adaptedness, appropriate to my mournful theme; since never were the vanities of the earth either so clearly disclosed or so openly confounded. No, after what we have just seen, health is but a name, life is but a dream, glory is but a shadow, charms and pleasures are but a dangerous diversion. Every thing is vain within us, except the sincere acknowledgment made before God of our vanity, and the fixed judgment of the mind, leading us to despise all that we are.

But did I speak the truth? Man, whom God made in his own image, is he but a shadow? That which Jesus Christ came from heaven to earth to seek, that which he deemed that he could, without degrading himself, ransom with his own blood, is that a mere nothing? Let us acknowledge our mistake; surely

this sad spectacle of the vanity of things human was leading us astray, and public hope, baffled suddenly by the death of this princess, was urging us too far. It must not be permitted to man to despise himself entirely, lest he, supposing, in common with the wicked, that our life is but a game in which chance reigns, take his way without rule and without self-control, at the pleasure of his own blind wishes. It is for this reason that the Preacher, after having commenced his inspired production by the expression which I have cited, after having filled all its pages with contempt for things human, is pleased at last to show man something more substantial by saying to him, “Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” Thus every thing is vain in man, if we regard what he gives to the world: but, on the contrary, every thing is important, if we consider what he owes to God. Once again: every thing is vain in man, if we regard the course of his mortal life; but every thing is of value, every thing is important, if we contemplate the goal where it ends, and the account of it which he must render. Let us, therefore, meditate to-day, in presence of this altar and of this tomb, the first and the last utterance of the Preacher; of which the one shows the nothingness of man, the other establishes his greatness. Let this tomb convince us of our nothingness, provided that this altar, where is daily offered for us a Victim of price so great, teach us at the same time our dignity. The princess whom we

> weep shall be a faithful witness, both of the one and of the other. Let us survey that which a sudden death has taken away from her; let us survey that which a holy death has bestowed upon her. Thus shall we learn to despise that which she quitted without regret, in order to attach all our regard to that which she embraced with so much ardor—when her soul, purified from all earthly sentiments, full of the heaven on whose border she touched, saw the light completely revealed. Such are the truths which I have to treat, and which I have deemed worthy to be proposed to so great a prince, and to the most illustrious assembly in the world.

It will be felt how removed is the foregoing from any thing like an effort, on the preacher's part, to startle his audience with the far-fetched and unexpected. It must, however, be admitted that Bossuet was not always—as, of our Webster, it has well been said that he always was—superior to the temptation to exaggerate an occasion by pomps of rhetoric. Bossuet was a great man, but he was not quite great enough to be wholly free from pride of self-consciousness in matching himself as an orator against "the most illustrious assembly in the world."

The ordinary sermons of Bossuet are less read, and they perhaps less deserve to be read, than those of Bourdaloue and Massillon.

BOURDALOUE was a voice. He was the voice of one crying, not in the wilderness, but amid the homes

and haunts of men, and, by eminence, in the court of the most powerful and most splendid of earthly monarchs. He was a Jesuit; one of the most devoted and most accomplished of an order filled with devoted and accomplished men. It belonged to his Jesuit character and Jesuit training that Bourdaloue should hold the place that he did, as ever-successful courtier at Versailles, all the while that, as preacher, he was using the "holy freedom of the pulpit" to launch those blank fulminations of his at sin in high places, at sin even in the highest, and all the briefer while that, as confessor to Madame de Maintenon, he was influencing the policy of Louis XIV.

No scandal of any sort attaches to the reputation of Louis Bourdaloue. He was a man of spotless fame—unless it be a spot on his fame that he could please the most selfish of sinful monarchs well enough to be that monarch's chosen preacher during a longer time than any other pulpit orator whatever was tolerated at Versailles. He is described by all who knew him as a man of gracious spirit. If he did not reprobate and denounce the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, that was rather of the age than of Bourdaloue.

Sainte-Beuve, in a remarkably sympathetic appreciation of Bourdaloue—free, contrary to the critic's wont, from hostile insinuation even—regards it as part of the merit of this preacher that there is, and that there can be, no biography of him. His public life is summed up in simply saying that he was a preacher. During thirty-four laborious and

fruitful years he preached the doctrines of the Church; and this is the sole account to be given of him, except, indeed, that in the confessional he was, all that time, learning those secrets of the human heart which he used to such effect in composing his sermons. He had very suave and winning ways as confessor, though he enjoined great strictness as preacher. This led a witty woman of his time to say of him: “Father Bourdaloue charges high in the pulpit, but he sells cheap in the confessional.” How much laxity he allowed as confessor, it is, of course, impossible to say. But his sermons remain to show that, though indeed he was severe and high in requirement as preacher, he did not fail to soften asperity by insisting on the goodness, while he insisted on the awfulness, of God. Still, it cannot be denied that somehow the elaborate compliments which, as an established convention of his pulpit, he not infrequently delivered to Louis XIV., tended powerfully to make it appear that his stern denunciation of sin, which at first blush might seem directly leveled at the king, had in reality no application at all, or but the very gentlest application, to the particular case of his Most Christian Majesty.

We begin our citations from Bourdaloue with an extract from a sermon of his on “A Perverted Conscience.” The whole discourse is one well worth the study of any reader. It is a piece of searching psychological analysis, and pungent application to

conscience. Bourdaloue, in his sermons, has always the air of a man seriously intent on producing practical results. There are no false motions. Every swaying of the preacher's weapon is a blow, and every blow is a hit. There is hardly another example in homiletic literature of such compactness, such solidity, such logical consecutiveness, such cogency, such freedom from surplusage. Tare and tret are excluded. Every thing counts. You meet with two or three adjectives, and you at first naturally assume, that, after the usual manner of homilists, Bourdaloue has thrown these in without rigorously definite purpose, simply to heighten a general effect. Not at all. There follows a development of the preacher's thought, constituting virtually a distinct justification of each adjective employed. You soon learn that there is no random, no waste, in this man's words. But here is the promised extract from the sermon on "A Perverted Conscience." In it Bourdaloue depresses his gun, and discharges it point-blank at the audience before him. You can almost imagine you see the ranks of "the great" laid low. Alas! one fears that, instead of biting the dust, those courtiers, with the king in the midst of them to set the example, only cried bravo in their hearts at the skill of the gunner:

> I have said more particularly that in the world in which you live—-I mean the court—the disease of a perverted conscience is far more common, and far more difficult to be avoided; and I am sure that in this you will agree with me. For it is at the court

that the passions bear sway, that desires are more ardent, that self-interest is keener, and that, by infallible consequence, self-blinding is more easy, and consciences, even the most enlightened and the most upright, become gradually perverted. It is at the court that the goddess of the world, I mean fortune, exercises over the minds of men, and in consequence over their consciences, a more absolute dominion. It is at the court that the aim to maintain one's self, the impatience to raise one's self, the frenzy to push one's self, the fear of displeasing, the desire of making one's self agreeable, produce consciences which anywhere else would pass for monstrous, but which, finding themselves there authorized by custom, seem to have acquired a right of possession and of prescription. People, from living at court, and from no other cause than having lived there, are filled with these errors. Whatever uprightness of conscience they may have brought thither, by breathing its air and by hearing its language they are habituated to iniquity, they come to have less horror of vice, and, after having long blamed it, a thousand times condemned it, they at last behold it with a more favorable eye, tolerate it, excuse it; that is to say, without observing what is happening, they make over their consciences, and, by insensible steps, from Christian, which they were, by little and little become quite worldly, and not far from pagan.

What could surpass the adaptedness of such preaching as that to the need of the moment for

which it was prepared? And how did the libertine French monarch contrive to escape the force of truth like the following, with which the preacher immediately proceeds?

> You would say, and it really seems, that for the court there are other principles of religion than for the rest of the world, and that the courtier has a right to make for himself a conscience different in kind and in quality from that of other men; for such is the prevailing idea of the matter—an idea well sustained, or rather unfortunately justified, by experience.... Nevertheless, my dear hearers, St. Paul assures us, that there is but one God and one faith; and woe to the man who dividing him, this one God, shall represent him as at court less an enemy to human transgressions than he is outside of the court; or, severing this one faith, shall suppose it in the case of one class more indulgent than in the case of another.

Bourdaloue, as Jesuit, could not but feel the power of Pascal, in his "Provincial Letters," constantly undermining the authority of his order. His preaching, as Sainte-Beuve well says, may be considered to have been, in the preacher's intention, one prolonged confutation of Pascal's immortal indictment. We borrow of Sainte-Beuve a short extract from Bourdaloue's sermon on slander, which may serve as an instance to show with what adroitness the Jesuit retorted anonymously upon the

Jansenist:

> Behold one of the abuses of our time. Means have been found to consecrate slander, to change it into a virtue, and even into one of the holiest virtues—-that means is, zeal for the glory of God.... We must humble those people, is the cry; and it is for the good of the Church to tarnish their reputation and to diminish their credit. That idea becomes, as it were, a principle; the conscience is fashioned accordingly, and there is nothing that is not permissible to a motive so noble. You fabricate, you exaggerate, you give things a poisonous taint, you tell but half the truth; you make your prejudices stand for indisputable facts; you spread abroad a hundred falsehoods; you confound what is individual with what is general; what one man has said that is bad, you pretend that all have said; and what many have said that is good, you pretend that nobody has said; and all that once again for the glory of God. For such direction of the intention justifies all that. Such direction of the intention will not suffice to justify a prevarication, but it is more than sufficient to justify calumny, provided only you are convinced that you are serving God thereby.

In conclusion, we give a passage or two of Bourdaloue's sermon on "An Eternity of Woe." Stanch orthodoxy the reader will find here. President Edwards's discourse, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," is not more unflinching. But what a relief of contrasted sweetness does Bourdaloue

interpose in the first part of the ensuing extract, to set off the grim and grisly horror of that which is to follow! We draw, for this case, from a translation, issued in Dublin under Roman Catholic auspices, of select sermons by Bourdaloue. The translator, throughout his volume, has been highly loyal in spirit toward the great French preacher; but this has not prevented much enfeebling by him of the style of his original, to which we here do what we can to restore the tone:

> There are some just, fervent, perfect souls, who, like children in the house of the Heavenly Father, strive to please and possess him, in order only to possess and to love him; and who, incessantly animated by this unselfish motive, inviolably adhere to his divine precepts, and lay it down as a rigorous and unalterable rule, to obey the least intimation of his will. They serve him with an affection entirely filial. But there are also dastards, worldlings, sinners, terrestrial and sensual men, who are scarcely susceptible of any other impressions than those of the judgments and vengeance of God. Talk to them of his greatness, of his perfections, of his benefits, or even of his rewards, and they will hardly listen to you; and, if they are prevailed upon to pay some attention and respect to your words, these will sound in their ears, but not reach their hearts.... Therefore, to move them, to stir them up, to awaken them from the lethargic sleep with which they are overwhelmed, the thunder of divine wrath and the decree that condemns them to eternal flames must

> be dinned into their ears: “Depart from me, ye accursed, into everlasting fire” (Matt. xxv). Make them consider attentively, and represent to them with all the force of grace, the consequences and horror of this word “eternal.”...

It is not imagination, it is pure reason and intelligence, that now in Bourdaloue goes about the business of impressing the thought of the dreadfulness of an eternity of woe. The effect produced is not that of the lightning-flash suddenly revealing the jaws agape of an unfathomable abyss directly before you. It is rather that of steady, intolerable pressure gradually applied to crush, to annihilate, the soul:

> ... Struck with horror at so doleful a destiny, I apply to this eternity all the powers of my mind; I examine and scrutinize it in all its parts; and I survey, as it were, its whole dimensions. Moreover, to express it in more lively colors, and to represent it in my mind more conformably to the senses and the human understanding, I borrow comparisons from the Fathers of the Church, and I make, if I may so speak, the same computations. I figure to myself all the stars of the firmament; to this innumerable multitude I add all the drops of water in the bosom of the ocean; and if this be not enough, I reckon, or at least endeavor to reckon, all the grains of sand on its shore. Then I interrogate myself, I reason with myself, and I put to myself the question: If I had for as many ages, and a thousand times as many,

undergone torments in that glowing fire which is kindled by the breath of the Lord in his anger to take eternal vengeance, would eternity be at an end? No; and why? Because it is eternity, and eternity is endless. To number up the stars that shine in the heavens, to count the drops of water that compose the sea, to tell the grains of sand that lie upon the shore, is not absolutely impossible; but to measure in eternity the number of days, of years, of ages, is what cannot be compassed, because the days, the years, and the ages are without number; or to speak more properly, because in eternity there are neither days, nor years, nor ages, but a single endless, infinite duration.

To this thought I devote my mind. I imagine I see and rove through this same eternity, and discover no end, but find it to be always a boundless tract. I imagine that the wide prospect lies open on all sides, and encompasses me around: that if I rise up or if I sink down, or what way soever I turn my eyes, this eternity meets them; and that after a thousand efforts to get forward I have made no progress, but find it still eternity. I imagine that after long revolutions of time, I behold in the midst of this eternity a damned soul, in the same state, in the same affliction, in the same misery still; and putting myself mentally in the place of this soul, I imagine that in this eternal punishment I feel myself continually devoured by that fire which nothing extinguishes; that I continually shed those floods of tears which nothing can dry up; that I am continually gnawed by the worm of conscience,

> which never dies; that I continually express my despair and anguish by that gnashing of teeth, and those lamentable cries, which never can move the compassion of God. This idea of myself, this representation, amazes and terrifies me. My whole body shudders, I tremble with fear, I am filled with horror, I have the same feelings as the royal prophet when he cried, "Pierce thou my flesh with thy fear, for I am afraid of thy judgments."

That was a touching tribute from the elder to the younger—tribute touching, whether wrung, perforce, from a proudly humble, or freely offered by a simply magnanimous heart—when, like John the Baptist speaking of Jesus, Bourdaloue, growing old, said of Massillon, enjoying his swiftly crescent renown: "He must increase, and I must decrease." It was a true presentiment of the comparative fortune of fame that impended for these two men. It was not, however, in the same path, but in a different, that Massillon outran Bourdaloue. In his own sphere, that of unimpassioned appeal to reason and to conscience, Bourdaloue is still without a rival. No one else, certainly, ever earned, so well as he, the double title which his epigrammatic countrymen were once fond of bestowing upon him—"The king of preachers, and the preacher of kings."

Jean Baptiste MASSILLON became priest by his own internal sense of vocation to the office, against the preference of his family that he should become,

like his father, a notary. He seems to have been by nature sincerely modest in spirit. He had to be forced into the publicity of a preaching career at Paris. His ecclesiastical superior peremptorily required at his hands the sacrifice of his wish to be obscure. He at once filled Paris with his fame. The inevitable consequence followed. He was summoned to preach before the king at Versailles. Here he received, as probably he deserved, that celebrated compliment in epigram from Louis XIV.: “In hearing some preachers, I feel pleased with them; in hearing you, I feel displeased with myself.”

It must not, however, be supposed that Massillon preached like a prophet Nathan saying to King David, “Thou art the man”; or like a John the Baptist saying to King Herod, “It is not lawful for *thee* to have *her*”; or like a John Knox denouncing Queen Mary. Massillon, if he was stern, was suavely stern. He complimented the king. The sword with which he wounded was wreathed with flowers. It is difficult not to feel that some unspoken understanding subsisted between the preacher and the king, which permitted the king to separate the preacher from the man, when Massillon used that great plainness of speech to his sovereign. The king did not, however, often invite this master of eloquence to make the royal conscience displacent with itself. Bourdaloue was ostensibly as outspoken as Massillon; but somehow that Jesuit preacher contented the king to be his hearer during as many as ten annual seasons,

against the one or two only that Massillon preached at court before Louis.

The work of Massillon generally judged, though according to Sainte-Beuve not wisely judged, to be his choicest, is contained in that volume of his which goes by the name of “Le Petit Carême”—literally, “The Little Lent”—a collection of sermons preached during a Lent before the king’s great-grandson and successor, youthful Louis XV. These sermons especially have given to their author a fame that is his by a title perhaps absolutely unique in literature. We know no other instance of a writer, limited in his production strictly to sermons, who holds his place in the first rank of authorship simply by virtue of supreme mastership in literary style.

Still, from the text of his printed discourses—admirable, exquisite, ideal compositions in point of form as these are—it will be found impossible to conceive adequately the living eloquence of Massillon. There are interesting traditions of the effects produced by particular passages of particular sermons of his. When Louis XIV. died, Massillon preached his funeral sermon. He began with that celebrated single sentence of exordium which, it is said, brought his whole audience, by instantaneous, simultaneous impulse, in a body to their feet. The modern reader will experience some difficulty in comprehending at once why that perfectly commonplace-seeming expression of the preacher should have produced an effect so powerful. The

element of the opportune, the apposite, the fit, is always great part of the secret of eloquence. Nothing more absolutely appropriate can be conceived than was the sentiment, the exclamation, with which Massillon opened that funeral sermon. The image and symbol of earthly greatness, in the person of Louis XIV., had been shattered under the touch of iconoclast death. “God only is great!” said the preacher; and all was said. Those four short words had uttered completely, and with a simplicity incapable of being surpassed, the thought that usurped every breast. It is not the surprise of some striking new thought that is the most eloquent thing. The most eloquent thing is the surprise of that one word, suddenly spoken, which completely expresses some thought, present already and uppermost, but silent till now, awaiting expression, in a multitude of minds. This most eloquent thing it was which, from Massillon’s lips that day, moved his susceptible audience to rise, like one man, and bow in mute act of submission to the truth of his words. The inventive and curious reader may exercise his ingenuity at leisure. He will strive in vain to conceive any other exordium than Massillon’s that would have matched the occasion presented.

There is an admirable anecdote of the pulpit, which—though since often otherwise applied—had, perhaps, its first application to Massillon. Some one congratulating the orator, as he came down from his pulpit, on the eloquence of the sermon just preached,

that wise self-knower fenced by replying, “Ah, the devil has already apprised me of that!” The recluse celibate preacher was one day asked whence he derived that marvelous knowledge which he displayed of the passions, the weaknesses, the follies, the sins, of human nature. “From my own heart,” was his reply. Source sufficient, perhaps; but from the confessional, too, one may confidently add.

There is probably no better brief, quotable passage to represent Massillon at his imaginative highest in eloquence, than that most celebrated one of all, occurring toward the close of his memorable sermon on the “Fewness of the Elect.” The effect attending the delivery of this passage, on both of the two recorded occasions on which the sermon was preached, is reported to have been remarkable. The manner of the orator—downcast, as with the inward oppression of the same solemnity that he, in speaking, cast like a spell on the audience—indefinitely heightened the magical power of the awful conception excited. Not Bourdaloue himself, with that preternatural skill of his to probe the conscience of man to its innermost secret, could have exceeded the heart-searching rigor with which, in the earlier part of the discourse, Massillon had put to the rack the quivering consciences of his hearers. The terrors of the Lord, the shadows of the world to come, were thus already on all hearts. So much as this, Bourdaloue, too, with his incomparable dialectic, could have accomplished. But there

immediately follows a culmination in power, such as was distinctly beyond the height of Bourdaloue. Genius must be super-added to talent if you would have the supreme, either in poetry or in eloquence. There was an extreme point in Massillon's discourses at which mere reason, having done, and done terribly, its utmost, was fain to confess that it could not go a single step farther. At that extreme point, suddenly, inexhaustible imagination took up the part of exhausted reason. Reason had made men afraid; imagination now appalled them. Massillon said:

> I confine myself to you, my brethren, who are gathered here. I speak no longer of the rest of mankind. I look at you as if you were the only ones on the earth; and here is the thought that seizes me, and that terrifies me. I make the supposition that this is your last hour, and the end of the world; that the heavens are about to open above your heads, that Jesus Christ is to appear in his glory in the midst of this sanctuary, and that you are gathered here only to wait for him, and as trembling criminals on whom is to be pronounced either a sentence of grace or a decree of eternal death. For, vainly do you flatter yourselves; you will die such in character as you are to-day. All those impulses toward change with which you amuse yourselves, you will amuse yourselves with them down to the bed of death. Such is the experience of all generations. The only thing new you will then find in yourselves will be, perhaps, a reckoning a trifle larger than that which you would to-day have to

render; and according to what you would be if you were this moment to be judged, you may almost determine what will befall you at the termination of your life.

Now I ask you, and I ask it smitten with terror, not separating in this matter my lot from yours, and putting myself into the same frame of mind into which I desire you to come—I ask you, then, If Jesus Christ were to appear in this sanctuary, in the midst of this assembly, the most illustrious in the world, to pass judgment on us, to draw the dread line of distinction between the goats and the sheep, do you believe that the majority of all of us who are here would be set on his right hand? Do you believe that things would even be equal? Nay, do you believe there would be found so many as the ten righteous men whom anciently the Lord could not find in five whole cities? I put the question to you, but you know not; I know not myself. Thou only, O my God, knowest those that belong to thee! But if we know not those who belong to him, at least we know that sinners do not belong to him. Now, of what classes of persons do the professing Christians in this assembly consist? Titles and dignities must be counted for naught; of these you shall be stripped before Jesus Christ. Who make up this assembly? Sinners, in great number, who do not wish to be converted; in still greater number, sinners who would like it, but who put off their conversion; many others who would be converted, only to relapse into sin; finally, a multitude who think they have no need of conversion. You have thus made up

the company of the reprobate. Cut off these four classes of sinners from this sacred assembly, for they will be be cut off from it at the great day! Stand forth now, ye righteous! where are you? Remnant of Israel, pass to the right hand! True wheat of Jesus Christ, disengage yourselves from this chaff, doomed to the fire! O God! where are thine elect? and what remains there for thy portion?

Brethren, our perdition is well nigh assured, and we do not give it a thought. Even if in that dread separation which one day shall be made, there were to be but a single sinner out of this assembly found on the side of the reprobate, and if a voice from heaven should come to give us assurance of the fact in this sanctuary, without pointing out the person intended, who among us would not fear that he might himself be the wretch? Who among us would not at once recoil upon his conscience, to inquire whether his sins had not deserved that penalty? Who among us would not, seized with dismay, ask of Jesus Christ, as did once the apostles, “Lord, is it I?”

What is there wanting in such eloquence as the foregoing? Wherein lies its deficiency of power to penetrate and subdue? Voltaire avowed that he found the sermons of Massillon to be among “the most agreeable books we have in our language. I love,” he went on, “to have them read to me at table.” There are things in Massillon that Voltaire should not have delighted to read, or to hear read—

things that should have made him wince and revolt, if they did not make him yield and be converted. Was there fault in the preacher? Did he preach with professional, rather than with personal, zeal? Did his hearers feel themselves secretly acquitted by the man, at the self-same moment at which they were openly condemned by the preacher? It is impossible to say. But Massillon's virtue was not lofty and regal; however it may have been free from just reproach. He was somewhat too capable of compliance. He was made bishop of Clermont, and his promotion cost him the anguish of having to help consecrate a scandalously unfit candidate as archbishop of Cambray. Massillon's, however, is a fair, if not an absolutely spotless, fame. Hierarch as he was, and orthodox Catholic, this most elegant of eloquent orators had a liberal strain in his blood which allied him politically with the "philosophers" of the time succeeding. He, with Fénelon, and perhaps with Racine, makes seem less abrupt the transition in France from the age of absolutism to the age of revolt and final revolution. There is distinct advance in Massillon, and advance more than is accounted for by his somewhat later time, toward the easier modern spirit in Church and in State, from the high, unbending austerity of that antique pontiff and minister, Bossuet.

In dealing with SAURIN we are irresistibly reminded of the train of historic misfortunes that age after age have visited France. It bears eloquent, if

tragic testimony to the enduring noble qualities of the French people, that they have survived so splendidly so much national suicide. What other great nation is there that has continued great and spilled so often her own best blood? The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, with its sequel of frightful hemorrhage in the loss to France of her Huguenots, the guillotine of the Revolution, the decimations of Napoleon, the madness of the Franco-German war, the Commune!

To such reflections we are forced; for Jacques Saurin preached his great sermons in French as a compulsory exile from France. He had a year or two's experience as French preacher in London; but from his twenty-eighth year till he died at fifty-two he was pastor of the French church at The Hague in Holland.

Saurin's living renown was great; and his renown has never been less, though it has been less resounding, since he died. This is as it could not but be; for the reputation of Saurin as preacher rested from the first on solid foundations that were not to be shaken. If he had been a loyal Roman Catholic, he would have been twinned with Bossuet, whom he somewhat resembles, in the acclamations of general fame. It is far more in name than in merit that Bossuet surpasses him. Bossuet's quasi-pontifical relation to the Gallican Church indeed engaged him in various activities which seemed to display a talent in him correspondingly more various than that of

Saurin, who remained almost exclusively a preacher. But the difference is probably a difference of fortune rather than a difference of original gift. The intellect that expresses itself in Saurin's sermons is certainly a spacious intellect. Saurin is in mere intellect as distinctly "great" as is Bossuet. In imagination, however, that attribute of genius as distinguished from talent, to Bossuet we suppose must be accorded superiority over Saurin.

Clearness, French clearness; order, French order; solidity of matter; sobriety of thought; soundness of doctrine; breadth of comprehension; sagacity and instructedness of interpretation; solemnity of inculcation; progress and cumulation of effect; strength and elevation, rather than grace and winningness, of style; address to the understanding, rather than appeal to the emotions; certitude of logic, rather than play of imagination; a theological, more than a practical, tendency of interest—such are the distinguishing characteristics of Saurin as preacher.

Sermons are literary products in which change from fashion to fashion of thought and of form makes itself felt more than in almost any other kind of literature. The sermons of one age are generally doomed to be obsolete in the age next following. But to this general rule Saurin's sermons come near constituting an exception. They might, many of them, perhaps most of them, still be preached. This, certain pulpit plagiarists of a generation or two ago,

are said to have learned.

The following extract will give our readers an idea how Saurin, toward the close of a discourse—having now done, for the occasion, with dispassionate argument—would follow up and press his hearer with deliberately vehement, unescapable oratoric harangue and appeal. His text is: “Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.” Analyzing this, he states thus his second head of discourse: “Motives to virtue are superior to motives to vice.”

> What [under the first head] I affirmed of all known truth, that its force is irresistible, I affirm, on the same principle, of all motives to virtue: the most hardened sinners cannot resist them if they attend to them; there is no other way of becoming insensible to them than to turn the eyes away from them....
>
> And where is the man so blinded as to digest the falsehoods which the motives to vice imply? Where is the wretch desperate enough to reason in this manner:
>
> “I love to be esteemed; I will, therefore, devote myself exclusively to acquiring the esteem of those men who, like me, will in a few days be devoured by worms, and whose ashes will in a few days, like my own, be mixed with the dust of the earth; but I will not take the least pains to obtain the approbation of those noble intelligences, of those sublime spirits, of those angels, of those seraphims, who are without ceasing around the throne of God; I will not take the

least pains to have a share in those praises with which the great God will one day, in the sight of heaven and of earth, crown those who have been faithful to him.

"I love glory; I will therefore apply myself exclusively to make the world say of me: That man has a taste quite exceptional in dress, his table is delicately served, there has never been either base blood or plebeian marriage in his family, nobody offends him with impunity, he permits none but a respectful approach; but I will never take the least pains to make envy itself say of me: That man fears God, he prefers his duty above all other things, he thinks there is more magnanimity in forgiving an affront than in revenging it, in being holy than in being noble in the world's esteem, and so on.

"I am very fond of pleasure; I will therefore give myself wholly up to gratify my senses, to lead a voluptuous life, to have the spectacle follow the feast, debauchery the spectacle, and so on; but I will never take the least pains to secure that *fullness of joy* which is at *God's right hand*, that *river of pleasure* whereof he gives to drink to those *who put their trust under the shadow of his wings*.

"I hate constraint and trouble; I will apply myself therefore exclusively to escape the idea of emotions of penitence, above all, the idea of prison cells, of exile, of the rack, of the stake; but I will brave the chains of darkness with their weight, the demons with their fury, hell with its torments, eternity with its horrors. I have made my decision; I consent to

> curse eternally the day of my birth, to look eternally upon annihilation as a blessing beyond price, to seek eternally for death without being able to find it, to vomit eternally blasphemies against my Creator, to hear eternally the howlings of the damned, to howl eternally with them, and to be eternally, like them, the object of that sentence, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Once more, Where is the wretch desperate enough to digest these propositions? Yet these are the motives to vice.

To illustrate the point-blank directness, the almost excessive fidelity, amounting to something very like truculence, with which Saurin would train his guns and fire his broadsides into the faces and eyes of his hearers, let the following, our final citation, serve; we quote from the conclusion to a powerful sermon on infidelity:

> Let us here put a period to this discourse. We turn to you, my brethren.... You congratulate yourselves for the most part,... on detesting infidelity, and on respecting religion. But shall we tell you, my brethren, how odious soever the men are whom we have just been describing, we know of others more odious still. There is a restriction in the judgment which the prophet pronounces on the first, when he calls them, in the words of my text, the most foolish and the most brutish among the people; and there are men who surpass them in brutality and in extravagance.

Do not think we exceed the truth of the matter, or that we are endeavoring to obtain your attention by paradoxes. In all good faith, I speak as I think, I find more refinement, and even, if I may venture to say so, a less fund of corruption in men who, having resolved to abandon themselves to the torrent of their passions, strive to persuade themselves, either that there is no God in heaven, or that he pays no attention to what men do on earth; than in those who, believing in a God who sees them and heeds them, live as if they believed nothing of the sort. Infidels were not able to support, in their excesses, the idea of a benefactor outraged, of a Supreme Judge provoked to anger, of an eternal salvation neglected, of a hell braved, *a lake burning with fire and brimstone*, and *smoke ascending up for ever and ever*. It was necessary, in order to give free course to their passions it was necessary for them to put far away from their eyes these terrifying objects, and to efface from their minds these overwhelming truths.

But you, you who believe that there is a God in heaven, you who believe yourselves under his eye, and who insult him without remorse and without repentance, you who believe that this God holds the thunderbolt in his hand to crush sinners, and who live in sin, you who believe that there are devouring flames and chains of darkness, and who brave their horrors, you who believe the soul immortal, and who concern yourselves only with time; what forehead, what forehead of brass, is the one you wear!

One thing in just qualification of the praise due to Saurin for his pulpit eloquence requires to be added. When he attempts the figure of apostrophe, as he frequently does, personifying inanimate objects and addressing them in the way of oratoric appeal, he is very apt to produce a frigid effect, the absolute opposite of genuine eloquence. Nothing but imagination white-hot with passion justifies, in the use of the orator, the expedient of such apostrophe as this which Saurin affects. With Saurin, both the necessary imagination and the necessary passion seem somehow to fail; and he possessed neither the perfect judgment nor the perfect taste, nor yet the fine feeling, that might have chastised the audacities to which his ambition incited him. His rhetorically bold things he did in a certain cold-blooded way; so that, with him, what should have been the climax of oratoric effectiveness, or else not been at all, produces sometimes instead a reaction and recoil of disappointment. We thus indicate a shortcoming in Saurin which deposes this great preacher, one is compelled to admit, despite his remarkable merits, from the first into the second rank of orators.

Both the Roman Catholic and the Protestant lines of French pulpit eloquence are continued down to our own day. Lacordaire, Père Félix, Père Hyacinthe, of the Catholics, Frédéric Monod, Adolph Monod, Coquerel, of the Protestants, are names worthy to be here set down; and it may be added that Eugène Bersier, deceased in 1889, challenges on the whole

not unequal comparison with the men treated in this chapter for pulpit power. He may be described as a kind of nineteenth-century Bossuet, tempered to Massillon, among French Protestant preachers.

But there is no Louis XIV. now to cast over any great preachers, even of the Roman Catholics, the illusive, factitious, reflected glory of the person and court, the sentence and seal, of the “most illustrious sovereign of the world.”

The seventeenth-century sacred eloquence of France, the sacred eloquence, that is to say, of the “great” French age, will always remain a unique tradition in the history of the pulpit.

XIII.

FÉNELON.

1651-1715.

IF Bossuet is to Frenchmen a synonym for sublimity, no less to them is Fénelon a synonym for saintliness. From the French point of view, one might say, “the sublime Bossuet,” “the saintly Fénelon,” somewhat as one says, “the learned Selden,” “the judicious Hooker.” It is as much a French delight to idealize Fénelon an archangel Raphael, affable and

mild, as it is to glorify Bossuet a Michael in majesty and power.

But saintliness of character was in Fénelon commended to the world by equal charm of person and of genius. The words of Milton describing Eve might be applied, with no change but that of gender, to Fénelon, both the exterior and the interior man:

> Grace was in all his steps, heaven in his eye,
> In every gesture dignity and love.

The consent is general among those who saw Fénelon, and have left behind them their testimony, that alike in person, in character, and in genius, he was such as we thus describe him.

Twice, in his youth, he was smitten to the heart with a feeling of vocation to be a missionary. Both times he was thwarted by the intervention of friends. The second time, he wrote disclosing his half-romantic aspiration in a glowing letter of confidence and friendship to Bossuet, his senior by many years, but not yet become famous. Young Fénelon's friend Bossuet was destined later to prove a bitter antagonist, almost a personal foe.

Until he was forty-two years old, François Fénelon lived in comparative retirement, nourishing his genius with study, with contemplation, with choice society. He experimented in writing verse. Not succeeding to his mind, he turned to prose

composition, and, leading the way, in a new species of literature, for Rousseau, for Chateaubriand, for Lamartine, and for many others, to follow, went on writing what, in ceasing to be verse, did not cease to be poetry.

The great world will presently involve Fénelon in the currents of history. Louis XIV., grown old, and become as selfishly greedy now of personal salvation as all his life he had been selfishly greedy of personal glory, seeks that object of his soul by serving the Church in the wholesale conversion of Protestants. He revokes the Edict of Nantes, which had secured religious toleration for the realm, and proceeds to dragoon the Huguenots into conformity with the Roman Catholic Church. The reaction in public sentiment against such rigors grew a cry that had to be silenced. Fénelon was selected to visit the heretic provinces, and win them to willing submission. He stipulated that every form of coercion should cease, and went to conquer all with love. His success was remarkable. But not even Fénelon quite escaped the infection of violent zeal for the Church. It seems not to be given to any man to rise wholly superior to the spirit of the world in which he lives.

The luster of Fénelon's name, luminous from the triumphs of his mission among the Protestants, was sufficient to justify the choice of this man, a man both by nature and by culture so ideally formed for the office as was he, to be tutor to the heir prospective of the French monarchy. The Duke of

Burgundy, grandson to Louis XIV., was accordingly put under the charge of Fénelon to be trained for future kingship. Never, probably, in the history of mankind, has there occurred a case in which the victory of a teacher could be more illustrious than actually was the victory of Fénelon as teacher to this scion of the house of Bourbon. We shall be giving our readers a relishable taste of St. Simon, the celebrated memoir-writer of the age of Louis XIV., if out of the portrait in words, drawn by him from life, of Fénelon's princely pupil, we transfer here a few strong lines to our pages. St. Simon says:

> In the first place, it must be said that Monseigneur the Duke of Burgundy had by nature a most formidable disposition. He was passionate to the extent of wishing to dash to pieces his clocks when they struck the hour which called him to what he did not like, and of flying into the utmost rage against the rain if it interfered with what he wanted to do. Resistance threw him into paroxysms of fury. I speak of what I have often witnessed in his early youth. Moreover, an ungovernable impulse drove him into whatever indulgence, bodily or mental, was forbidden him. His sarcasm was so much the more cruel, as it was witty and piquant, and as it seized with precision upon every point open to ridicule. All this was sharpened by a vivacity of body and of mind that proceeded to the degree of impetuosity, and that during his early days never permitted him to learn any thing except by doing two things at once. Every form of pleasure he loved with a violent

> avidity, and all this with a pride and a haughtiness impossible to describe; dangerously wise, moreover, to judge of men and things, and to detect the weak point in a train of reasoning, and to reason himself more cogently and more profoundly than his teachers. But at the same time, as soon as his passion was spent, reason resumed her sway; he felt his faults, he acknowledged them, and sometimes with such chagrin that his rage was rekindled. A mind lively, alert, penetrating, stiffening itself against obstacles, excelling literally in every thing. The prodigy is, that in a very short time piety and grace made of him a different being, and transformed faults so numerous and so formidable into virtues exactly opposite.

St. Simon attributes to Fénelon “every virtue under heaven”; but his way was to give to God rather than to man the praise of the remarkable change which, during Fénelon’s charge of the Duke of Burgundy, came over the character of the prince.

The grandfather survived the grandson; and it was never put to the stern proof of historical experiment whether Fénelon had indeed turned out one Bourbon entirely different from all the other members, earlier or later, of that royal line.

Before, however, the Duke of Burgundy was thus snatched away from the perilous prospect of a throne, his beloved teacher was parted from him, not indeed by death, but by what, to the archbishop’s

susceptible and suffering spirit, was worse than death, by “disgrace.” The disgrace was such as has ever since engaged for its subject the interest, the sympathy, and the admiration of mankind. Fénelon lost the royal favor. That was all—for the present; but that was much. He was banished from court, and he ceased to be preceptor to the Duke of Burgundy. The king, in signal severity, used his own hand to strike Fénelon’s name from the list of the household of his grandson and heir. The archbishop—for Fénelon had previously been made archbishop of Cambray—returned into his diocese as into an exile. But his cup of humiliation was by no means full. Bossuet will stain his own glory by following his exiled former pupil and friend, with hostile pontifical rage, to crush him in his retreat.

The occasion was a woman, a woman with the charm of genius and of exalted character, a Christian, a saint, but a mystic—it was Madame Guyon. Madame Guyon taught that it was possible to love God for himself alone, purely and disinterestedly. Fénelon received the doctrine, and Madame Guyon was patronized by Madame de Maintenon. Bossuet scented heresy. He was too much a “natural man” to understand Madame Guyon. The king was like the prelate, his minister, in spirit, and in consequent incapacity. It was resolved that Fénelon must condemn Madame Guyon. But Fénelon would not. He was very gentle, very conciliatory, but in fine he would not. Controversy ensued, haughty, magisterial,

domineering, on the part of Bossuet; on the part of Fénelon, meek, docile, suasive. The world wondered, and watched the duel. Fénelon finally did what king James's translators misleadingly make Job wish that his adversary had done—he wrote a book, "The Maxims of the Saints." In this book, he sought to show that the accepted and even canonized teachers of the Church had taught the doctrine for which, in his own case and in the case of Madame Guyon, condemnation was now invoked. Bossuet was pope at Paris: and he, in full presence, denounced to the monarch the heresy of Fénelon. At this moment of crisis for Fénelon, it happened that news was brought him of the burning of his mansion at Cambray with all his books and manuscripts. It will always be remembered that Fénelon only said: "It is better so than if it had been the cottage of a poor laboring-man."

Madame de Maintenon, till now his friend, with perfect frigid facility separated herself from the side of the accused. The controversy was carried to Rome, where at length Fénelon's book was condemned—condemned mildly, but condemned. The pope is said to have made the remark that Fénelon erred by loving God too much, and Fénelon's antagonists by loving their fellow-man too little. Fénelon bowed to the authority of the Church, and meekly in his own cathedral confessed his error. It was a logical thing for him, as loyal Catholic, to do; and he did it with a beautiful grace of humility. The Protestant spirit,

however, rebels on his behalf, and finds it difficult even to admire the manner in which was done by him a thing that seems so unfit to have been done by him at all. Bossuet did not long survive his inglorious triumph over so much sanctity of personal character, over so much difficult and beautiful height of doctrinal and practical instruction to virtue. Fénelon seems to have been reported as preaching a funeral sermon on the dead prelate. “I have wept and prayed,” he wrote to a friend, “for this old instructor of my youth; but it is not true that I celebrated his obsequies in my cathedral, and preached his funeral sermon. Such affectation, you know, is foreign to my nature.” The iron must have gone deep, to wring from that gentle bosom even so much cry as this of wounded feeling.

It is hard to tell what might now have befallen Fénelon, in the way of good fortune—he might even have been recalled to court, and re-installed in his office of tutor to the prince—had not a sinister incident, not to have been looked for, at an inopportune moment occurred. The “Telemachus” appeared in print, and kindled a sudden flame of popular feeling, which instantly spread in universal conflagration over the face of Europe. This composition of Fénelon’s the author had written to convey, under a form of quasi-poetical fiction, lessons of wisdom in government to the mind of his royal pupil. The existence of the manuscript book would seem to have been intended to be a secret

from the king—indeed, from almost every one, except the pupil himself for whose use it was made. But a copyist proved false to his trust, and furnished a copy of "Telemachus" to a printer in Holland, who lost no time in publishing a book so likely to sell. But the sale of the book surpassed all expectation. Holland not only, but Belgium, Germany, France, and England multiplied copies as fast as they could; still Europe could not get copies as fast as she wanted them.

The secret of such popularity did not lie simply in the literary merits of "Telemachus." It lay more in a certain interpretation that the book was supposed to bear. "Telemachus" was understood to be a covert criticism of Louis XIV., and of the principle of absolute monarchy embodied in him. This imputed intention of the book could not fail to become known at Versailles. The result, of course, was fatal, and finally fatal, to the prospects, whatever these may have been, of Fénelon's restoration to favor at court. The archbishop thenceforward was left to do in comparative obscurity the duties of his episcopal office in his diocese of Cambray. He devoted himself, with exemplary and touching fidelity, to the interests of his flock, loving them and loved by them, until he died. It was an entirely worthy and adequate employment of his powers. The only abatement needful from the praise to be bestowed upon his behavior in this pastoral relation is that he suffered himself sometimes to think of his position as one of

"disgrace." His reputation meantime for holy character and conduct was European. His palace at Cambray, hospitably open ever to the resort of suffering need, indeed almost his whole diocese, lying on the frontier of France, was by mutual consent of contending armies, treated in war as a kind of mutual inviolable ground, invested with privilege of sanctuary. It was an instructive example of the serene and beautiful ascendency sometimes divinely accorded to illustrious personal goodness.

There had been a moment, even subsequently to the affair of the "Telemachus" publication, when it looked as if, after long delay, a complete worldly triumph for Fénelon was assured, and was near. The father of the Duke of Burgundy died, and nothing then seemed to stand between Fénelon's late pupil and the throne, nothing but the precarious life of an aged monarch, visibly approaching the end. The Duke of Burgundy, through all changes, had remained unchangingly fast in his affectionate loyalty to Fénelon. Sternly forbidden, by the jealous and watchful king, his grandfather, to communicate with his old teacher, he yet had found means to send to Fénelon, from time to time, reassuring signals of his trust and love. Fénelon was now, in all eyes, the predestined prime minister of a new reign about to commence. Through devoted friends of his own, near to the person of the prince at court, Fénelon sent minutes of advice to his pupil, which outlined a whole beneficent policy of liberal monarchical rule.

A new day seemed dawning for France. The horrible reaction of the Regency and of Louis XV. might, perhaps, have been averted, and, with that spared to France, the revolution itself might have been accomplished without the Revolution. But it was not to be. The Duke of Burgundy first buried his wife, and then, within a few days, followed her himself to the grave. He died sincerely rejoicing that God had taken him away from the dread responsibility of reigning.

"All my ties are broken," mourned Fénelon; "there is no longer any thing to bind me to the earth." In truth, the teacher survived his pupil but two or three years. When he died, his sovereign, gloomy with well-grounded apprehension for the future of his realm, said, with tardy revival of recognition for the virtue that had perished in Fénelon: "Here was a man who could have served us well under the disasters by which my kingdom is about to be assailed."

Fénelon's literary productions are various; but they all have the common character of being works written for the sake of life, rather than for the sake of literature. They were inspired each by a practical purpose, and adapted each to a particular occasion. His treatise on the "Education of Girls" was written for the use of a mother who desired instruction on the topic from Fénelon. His argument on the "Being of a God" was prepared as a duty of his preceptorship to the prince. But the one book of Fénelon, which was an historical event when it

appeared, and which stands an indestructible classic in literature, is the “Telemachus.” It remains for us briefly to give some idea of this book.

The first thing to be said is, that those are mistaken who suppose themselves to have obtained a true idea of “Telemachus” from having partly read it at school, as an exercise in French. The essence of the work lies beyond those few opening pages to which the exploration of school-boys and school-girls is generally limited. This masterpiece of Fénelon is much more than a charming piece of romantic and sentimental poetry in prose. It is a kind of epic, indeed, like the “Odyssey,” only written in rhythmical prose instead of rhythmical verse; but, unlike the “Odyssey,” it is an idyllic epic written with an ulterior purpose of moral and political didactics. It was designed as a manual of instruction —instruction made delightful to a prince—to inculcate the duties incumbent on a sovereign.

Telemachus, our readers will remember, was the son of Ulysses. Fénelon’s story relates the adventures encountered by Telemachus in search for his father, so long delayed on his return from Troy to Ithaca. Telemachus is imagined by Fénelon to be attended by Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, masked from his recognition, as well as from the recognition of others, under the form of an old man. Minerva, of course, constantly imparts the wisest counsel to young Telemachus, who has his weaknesses, as had the young Duke of Burgundy, but who is essentially

well-disposed, as Fénelon hoped his royal pupil would finally turn out to be. Nothing can exceed the urbanity and grace with which the delicate business is conducted by Fénelon, of teaching a bad prince, with a very bad example set him by his grandfather, to be a good king. The style in which the story is told, and in which the advice is insinuated, is exquisite, is beyond praise. The "soft delicious" stream of sound runs on, as from a fountain, and like "linked sweetness long drawn out." Never had prose a flow of melody more luscious. It is perpetual ravishment to the ear. The invention, too, of incident is fruitful, while the landscape and coloring are magical for beauty. We give a few extracts, to be read with that application in mind to Louis XIV., and to the state of France, which, when the book was first printed, gave it such an exciting interest in the eyes of Europe. Telemachus, after the manner of Æneas to Queen Dido, is relating to the goddess Calypso, into whose island he has come, the adventures that have previously befallen him. He says that he, with Mentor (Minerva in disguise), found himself in Crete. Mentor had been there before, and was ready to tell Telemachus all about the country. Telemachus was naturally interested to learn respecting the Cretan monarchy. Mentor, he says, informed him as follows:

> The king's authority over the subject is absolute, but the authority of the law is absolute over him. His power to do good is unlimited, but he is

restrained from doing evil. The laws have put the people into his hands, as the most valuable deposit, upon condition that he shall treat them as his children. It is the intent of the law that the wisdom and equity of one man shall be the happiness of many, and not that the wretchedness and slavery of many should gratify the pride and luxury of one. The king ought to possess nothing more than the subject, except what is necessary to alleviate the fatigue of his station, and impress upon the minds of the people a reverence of that authority by which the laws are executed. Moreover, the king should indulge himself less, as well in ease as in pleasure, and should be less disposed to the pomp and the pride of life than any other man. He ought not to be distinguished from the rest of mankind by the greatness of his wealth, or the vanity of his enjoyments, but by superior wisdom, more heroic virtue, and more splendid glory. Abroad he ought to be the defender of his country, by commanding her armies; and at home the judge of his people, distributing justice among them, improving their morals, and increasing their felicity. It is not for himself that the gods have intrusted him with royalty. He is exalted above individuals only that he may be the servant of the people. To the public he owes all his time, all his attention, and all his love; he deserves dignity only in proportion as he gives up private enjoyments for the public good.

Pretty sound doctrine, the foregoing, on the subject of the duties devolving on a king. The

"paternal" idea, to be sure, of government is in it; but there is the idea, too, of limited or constitutional monarchy. The spirit of just and liberal political thought had, it seems, not been wholly extinguished, even at the court, by that oppression of mind—an oppression seldom, if ever, in human history exceeded—which was enforced under the unmitigated absolutism of Louis XIV. The literature that, with Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, the Encyclopædists, prepared the Revolution, had already begun virtually to be written when Fénelon wrote his "Telemachus." It is easy to see why the fame of Fénelon should by exception have been dear even to the hottest infidel haters of that ecclesiastical hierarchy to which the archbishop of Cambray himself belonged. This lover of liberty, this gentle rebuker of kings, was of the freethinkers, at least in the sympathy of political thought. Nay, the Revolution itself is foreshown in a remarkable glimpse of conjectural prophecy which occurs in the "Telemachus." Idomeneus is a headstrong king, whom Mentor is made by the author to reprove and instruct for the Duke of Burgundy's benefit. To Idomeneus—a character taken, and not unplausibly taken, to have been suggested to Fénelon by the example of Louis XIV.—to this imaginary counterpart of the reigning monarch of France, Mentor holds the following language. How could the sequel of Bourbon despotism in France—a sequel suspended now for a time, but two or three generations later to be dreadfully visited on the heirs of Louis XIV.—have

been more fully foreshadowed? The “Telemachus”:

> Remember that the sovereign who is most absolute is always least powerful; he seizes upon all, and his grasp is ruin. He is, indeed, the sole proprietor of whatever his state contains; but, for that reason, his state contains nothing of value; the fields are uncultivated, and almost a desert; the towns lose some of their few inhabitants every day; and trade every day declines. The king, who must cease to be a king when he ceases to have subjects, and who is great only in virtue of his people, is himself insensibly losing his character and his power, as the number of his people, from whom alone both are derived, insensibly diminishes. His dominions are at length exhausted of money and of men: the loss of men is the greatest and the most irreparable he can sustain. Absolute power degrades every subject to a slave. The tyrant is flattered even to an appearance of adoration, and every one trembles at the glance of his eye; but, at the least revolt, this enormous power perishes by its own excess. It derived no strength from the love of the people; it wearied and provoked all that it could reach, and rendered every individual of the state impatient of its continuance. At the first stroke of opposition, the idol is overturned, broken to pieces, and trodden under foot. Contempt, hatred, fear, resentment, distrust, and every other passion of the soul unite against so hateful a despotism. The king who, in his vain prosperity, found no man bold enough to tell him the truth, in his adversity finds

> no man kind enough to excuse his faults, or to defend him against his enemies.

So much is perhaps enough to indicate the political drift of the "Telemachus." That drift is, indeed, observable everywhere throughout the book.

We conclude our exhibition of this fine classic, by letting Fénelon appear more purely now in his character as dreamer and poet. Young Prince Telemachus has, Ulysses-like, and Æneas-like, his descent into Hades. This incident affords Fénelon opportunity to exercise his best powers of awful and of lovely imagining and describing. Christian ideas are, in this episode of the "Telemachus," superinduced upon pagan, after a manner hard, perhaps, to reconcile with the verisimilitude required by art, but at least productive of very noble and very beautiful results. First, one glimpse of Tartarus as conceived by Fénelon. It is the spectacle of kings who on earth abused their power that Telemachus is beholding:

> Telemachus observed the countenance of these criminals to be pale and ghastly, strongly expressive of the torment they suffered at the heart. They looked inward with a self-abhorrence now inseparable from their existence. Their crimes themselves had become their punishment, and it was not necessary that greater should be inflicted. They haunted them like hideous specters, and continually started up before them in all their enormity. They

> wished for a second death, that might separate them from these ministers of vengeance, as the first had separated their spirits from the body—a death that might at once extinguish all consciousness and sensibility. They called upon the depths of hell to hide them from the persecuting beams of truth, in impenetrable darkness; but they are reserved for the cup of vengeance, which, though they drink of it forever, shall be ever full. The truth, from which they fled, has overtaken them, an invincible and unrelenting enemy. The ray which once might have illuminated them, like the mild radiance of the day, now pierces them like lightning—a fierce and fatal fire, that, without injury to the external parts, infixes a burning torment at the heart. By truth, now an avenging flame, the very soul is melted like metal in a furnace; it dissolves all, but destroys nothing; it disunites the first elements of life, yet the sufferer can never die. He is, as it were, divided against himself, without rest and without comfort; animated by no vital principle, but the rage that kindles at his own misconduct, and the dreadful madness that results from despair.

If the “perpetual feast of nectar’d sweets” that the “Telemachus” affords is felt at times to be almost cloying, it is not, as our readers have now seen, for want of occasional contrasts of a bitterness sufficiently mordant and drastic. But the didactic purpose is never lost sight of by the author. Here is an aspect of the Elysium found by Telemachus. How could any thing be more delectably conceived and

described? The translator, Dr. Hawkesworth, is animated to an English style that befits the sweetness of his original. The “Telemachus:”

> In this place resided all the good kings who had wisely governed mankind from the beginning of time. They were separated from the rest of the just; for, as wicked princes suffer more dreadful punishment than other offenders in Tartarus, so good kings enjoy infinitely greater felicity than other lovers of virtue, in the fields of Elysium.
>
> Telemachus advanced toward these kings, whom he found in groves of delightful fragrance, reclining upon the downy turf, where the flowers and herbage were perpetually renewed. A thousand rills wandered through these scenes of delight, and refreshed the soil with a gentle and unpolluted wave; the song of innumerable birds echoed in the groves. Spring strewed the ground with her flowers, while at the same time autumn loaded the trees with her fruit. In this place the burning heat of the dog-star was never felt, and the stormy north was forbidden to scatter over it the frosts of winter. Neither War that thirsts for blood, nor Envy that bites with an envenomed tooth, like the vipers that are wreathed around her arms and fostered in her bosom, nor Jealousy, nor Distrust, nor Fears, nor vain Desires, invade these sacred domains of peace. The day is here without end, and the shades of night are unknown. Here the bodies of the blessed are clothed with a pure and lambent light, as with a garment. The light does not resemble that

vouchsafed to mortals upon earth, which is rather darkness visible; it is rather a celestial glory than a light—an emanation that penetrates the grossest body with more subtilty than the rays of the sun penetrate the purest crystal, which rather strengthens than dazzles the sight, and diffuses through the soul a serenity which no language can express. By this ethereal essence the blessed are sustained in everlasting life; it pervades them; it is incorporated with them, as food with the mortal body; they see it, they feel it, they breathe it, and it produces in them an inexhaustible source of serenity and joy. It is a fountain of delight, in which they are absorbed as fishes are absorbed in the sea; they wish for nothing, and, having nothing, they possess all things. This celestial light satiates the hunger of the soul; every desire is precluded; and they have a fulness of joy which sets them above all that mortals seek with such restless ardor, to fill the vacuity that aches forever in their breast. All the delightful objects that surround them are disregarded; for their felicity springs up within, and, being perfect, can derive nothing from without. So the gods, satiated with nectar and ambrosia, disdain, as gross and impure, all the dainties of the most luxurious table upon earth. From these seats of tranquillity all evils fly far away; death, disease, poverty, pain, regret, remorse, fear, even hope—which is sometimes not less painful than fear itself—animosity, disgust, and resentment can never enter there.

The leaden good sense of Louis XIV. pronounced

Fénelon the "most chimerical" man in France. The founder of the kingdom of heaven would have been a dreamer, to this most worldly-minded of "Most Christian" monarchs. Bossuet, who, about to die, read something of Fénelon's "Telemachus," said it was a book hardly serious enough for a clergyman to write. A *more* serious book, whether its purpose be regarded, or its undoubted actual influence in molding the character of a prospective ruler of France, was not written by any clergyman of Fénelon's or Bossuet's time.

Fénelon was an eloquent preacher as well as an elegant writer. His influence exerted in both the two functions, that of the writer and that of the preacher, was powerfully felt in favor of the freedom of nature in style as against the conventionality of culture and art. He insensibly helped on that reform from a too rigid classicism, which in our day we have seen pushed to its extreme in the exaggerations of romanticism. Few wiser words have ever been spoken on the subject of oratory than are to be found in his "Dialogues on Eloquence."

Disappearing space warns us that we must perforce let pass from presence the gracious spirit of Fénelon. But we should wrong this most engaging of prelates, and we should wrong our readers, not still to represent a side of his character and of his literary work, a very important side, that thus far has been only hinted at in incidental allusion. We mean that distinctively religious side which belongs alike to the

man and to the writer.

Fénelon, as priest, was something more than professional preacher, pastor, theologian. He was a devout soul, the subject of a transcendent Christian experience, even verging on mysticism. In his capacity of spiritual director, he wrote what are called “spiritual letters,” many of which survive, included in his published works. These have a very peculiarly ripe, sweet, chaste, St. John-like quality of tone, and they are written in a pure, simple, transparent style, that reads as if the thought found its own form of expression without the smallest trouble on the part of the writer. The style, in fact, is absolute perfection; you cannot tell the mere literal truth about it and not thus seem to be exaggerating its merit. Even in translation some charm of such ultimate felicity in it cannot fail to be felt.

Almost any “spiritual” letter that we happen first to strike will be as good as any other, to illustrate the rare culture of heart, the deep spiritual wisdom, the perfect urbanity in manner, reconciled with the perfect frankness in fact, and the circumfluent grace of literary style, with which this heavenly-minded man conducted, through correspondence, his cure of individual souls. We pluck out a few specimen sentences from two different letters, and present them detached, without setting of context:

Consent to be humiliated; silence and peace in

humiliation are the true good of the soul. One might be tempted to speak humbly, and one might find a thousand fine pretexts for doing so; but it is still better to be silent humbly. The humility which still speaks is still to be suspected; in speaking, self-love consoles itself a little.

What now follows, ending our extracts from Fénelon's writings, we give, not only for its own value, but for the light it throws on the charming humility of the author:

It has seemed to me that you needed to enlarge your heart in the matter of the defects of others....

Perfection bears with ease the imperfection of others; it becomes all things to all men. One must grow accustomed to the idea of the grossest defects in good souls....

I beg of you more than ever not to spare me in respect of my defects. Should you believe that you see one that I perhaps have not, that will be no great misfortune. If your hints wound me, that sensitiveness will show me that you have touched the quick; thus you will always have conferred on me a great benefit in disciplining me to be little, and in accustoming me to take reproof. I ought to be more abased that another in proportion as I am more exalted by my position, and as God requires of me more complete death to all. I need such simplicity, and I hope that, far from weakening, it will strengthen our union of heart.

It is impossible not to associate with Fénelon, in the thought of this spiritual life of his, explored and purified so deep, that remarkable woman, Madame Guyon, to whom in certain religious relations the great and gentle archbishop ostensibly, and perhaps really, submitted himself, as one who learns to one who teaches. Her exaltation—how far real, and how far illusory only, let us leave it for the All-knower to judge—made Madame Guyon easily equal to the seemingly audacious part of spiritual guide to a man who was at once one of the most illustrious writers, one of the most highly placed Church dignitaries, and one of the saintliest Christians in Europe. It is undoubtedly true that the sage can learn more from the fool than the fool can from the sage; and therefore if it could be proved to have been indeed the fact that, of the two, Fénelon was the greater gainer from the relation existing between himself and Madame Guyon, that might well be only because he was already a wiser person than she.

We have no room here to show Madame Guyon by any of her extant letters addressed to Fénelon; but we may take the present occasion to introduce at least a few stanzas from one of those sweet little Christian poems of hers which a spirit not far alien from Fénelon's own, we mean William Cowper, has put for us into fairly happy English expression. Madame Guyon spent ten years in prison—for teaching that souls should love God unselfishly, for his own sake only!—and it is in prison that this

meekly triumphing song of hers must be imagined as sung by the author. It bears the title, “The Soul that Loves God Finds Him Everywhere.”

*****

To me remains nor place nor time;
My country is in every clime;
I can be calm and free from care
On any shore, since God is there.

While place we seek, or place we shun,
The soul finds happiness in none;
But, with a God to guide our way,
’Tis equal joy to go or stay.

Could I be cast where thou art not,
That were indeed a dreadful lot;
But regions none remote I call,
Secure of finding God in all.

*****

Ah, then! to his embrace repair;
My soul, thou art no stranger there;
There love divine shall be thy guard,
And peace and safety thy reward.

French literature, unfortunately, is on the whole such in character as to need all that it can show to be cast into the scale of moral elevation and purity. Fénelon alone—he was not alone, as the instance of

Madame Guyon has just freshly been reminding us—but Fénelon alone were enough, in quality supported by quantity, not indeed to overcome, but to go far toward overcoming, the perverse inclination of the balance.

XIV.

LE SAGE.

1668-1747.

LE SAGE was a fruitful father of literary product, but it is as the author of “Gil Blas” that he is entitled to his place in these pages. “The Adventures of Gil Blas” justly enjoys the distinction of being among the few works of fiction that are read everywhere, and everywhere acknowledged to be masterpieces in literature. Lapse of time and change of fashion seem not to tend at all toward making “Gil Blas” obsolete. With every generation of men it takes as it were a fresh lease of inexhaustible immortality.

Of course, there must be something elemental in the quality and merit of a book, especially a book of fiction, concerning which this can truly be said. A novel “Gil Blas” is generally called. The name is hardly descriptive. Le Sage’s masterpiece is rather a

book of human nature and of human life. It constitutes already, embraced within the compass of a single work, that which it was the ambition of the novelist Balzac to achieve in an Alexandrian library of fiction; "Gil Blas" is the whole "comedy" of man. The breadth of it is enormous. There is hardly any thing lacking to it that is human—unless it be some truly noble human character, some truly noble human action.

We spoke of it not amiss, when we used Balzac's half-cynical word and called it the *comedy* of man. Le Sage involuntarily reveals his own limitation in the fact that he has converted into comedy the whole mingled drama of man's earthly condition. Within his proper individual bounds, this man's dimensions are so large that he has been not unfitly styled Shakespearean. But Shakespeare exceeds Le Sage in measure by a whole hemisphere. Shakespeare knows how to be serious, to be tragic; as Le Sage does not. Matter of tragedy indeed abounds in "Gil Blas," but it is all treated lightly, in the manner of comedy. You are allured, in reading, to laugh, when, if you return at all upon yourself, you are conscious you ought rather to weep. Le Sage is the antithesis of Rousseau, of Chateaubriand, of Lamartine, of George Sand—writers who know as little of laughter as Le Sage does of tears.

But it should at once, and strongly, be said that Le Sage is no cynic. It is not a sneering, but a smiling, mask that he wears. The smile is of a worldly-

wisdom not ill-pleased with itself, and therefore not ill-pleased with the world which it rallies. It is a genial smile. But for all that, if you are yourself at bottom a serious man, you are disturbed at last. You are vexed to find yourself incessantly brought to smile at what you know ought to move your shame, your indignation, or your grief. The moral temper which Le Sage exhibits and which he engenders is not the "enthusiasm of humanity." It is less the temper to help your fellow-men than the temper to profit the most that you can by their weaknesses, by their follies, and even by their crimes. Le Sage's hero, "Gil Blas," goes through a series of "adventures," in which nearly every human sin is committed by him and by his fellows, either unblushingly, or, if with any show of compunction at all, then with such show of compunction as is almost worse than perfect indifference would be. The book is not in intention immoral, but only unmoral. It may well be questioned whether in effect it be not the more immoral for this very character in it. The abounding gay animal spirits of the narrative go frisking along as if let loose in a lucky world where moral distinctions were things that did not exist; the real world indeed, only with the deepest reality of all left out!

Verisimilitude seems hardly sought. The situations often waver on the edge of the ludicrously farcical. The tenor of the production stops barely short of sheer extravaganza. There is no unity,

progressiveness, culmination of plot. The whole book is a mere concatenation, scarcely concatenation, succession, say rather, of “adventures,” any one of which is nearly as good a starting-point for the reader as any other would be.

The scene of the story and the local color are all Spanish. Le Sage’s previous experience of travel in Spain, as well as his long occupation in translating from the Spanish into French, probably influenced him to this choice of medium for his masterpiece; which, by the way, it cost the author intervals of time covering twenty-two years to bring to its completion. The fact of its Spanish character gave color to the charge, deemed now to have been exploded, that “Gil Blas” was plagiarized by Le Sage from a Spanish original. It may be added that laying the scene and action of his story in Spain left Le Sage the more free to satirize, as he undoubtedly does, certain persons and certain manners belonging to his own country, France.

Of Alain René Le Sage, the man, there need little be said. He was a successful writer of comedies for the stage. Of these the most were ephemeral productions. Two, however, and one especially, the “Turcaret,” have the honor of ranking, in French literature, next to the very highest in their kind, the comedies of Molière. Never rich, Le Sage was always independent in spirit. The story is told of him that, arriving once unavoidably late at a noble mansion where he had made an appointment to read one of

his own productions, he was reproached by the distinguished hostess for making the company lose an hour in waiting; whereupon he replied: “I give the company a chance to recover their lost hour,” and refusing to be placated bowed himself out.

Smollet, the celebrated English novelist—and historian so-called—has translated “Gil Blas.” We make use of his translation in presenting our extracts from this novel to our readers. There are two passages, both deservedly famous, which will admirably exemplify Le Sage at his best; one of these is the immortal episode concerning the illustrious physician, Doctor Sangrado, and the other is the instructive relation of Gil Blas’s experience in discharging the office of what one might call literary valet and critic to an archbishop.

First we introduce Doctor Sangrado.

Gil Blas is at this time in the Spanish town of Valladolid serving an ecclesiastic in the capacity of lackey. His master, falling sick, sends for a physician. Gil Blas—the novel is autobiographic in form—shall tell his own story:

> I therefore went in search of Dr. Sangrado, and brought him to the house.... The licentiate having promised to obey him in all things, Sangrado sent me for a surgeon, whom he named, and ordered him to take from my master six good porringers of blood, as the first effort, in order to supply the want of perspiration. Then he said to the surgeon: “Master

> Martin Omnez, return in three hours and take as much more; and repeat the same evacuation to-morrow. It is a gross error to think that blood is necessary for the preservation of life; a patient cannot be blooded too much; for as he is obliged to perform no considerable motion or exercise, but just only to breathe, he has no more occasion for blood than a man who is asleep—life, in both, consisting in the pulse and respiration only." The doctor having ordered frequent and copious evacuations of this kind, he told us that we must make the canon drink warm water incessantly; assuring us that water, drank in abundance, was the true specific in all distempers whatever.... We set about warming water with all despatch; and as the physician had recommended to us, above all things, not to be too sparing of it, we made my master drink for the first dose two or three pints, at as many draughts. An hour after we repeated it, and returning to the charge, from time to time, overwhelmed his stomach with a deluge of water, the surgeon seconding us, on the other hand, by the quantity of blood which he drew from him. In less than two days the old canon was reduced to extremity.

Blood-letting, as an expedient of the healing art, has happily gone out of fashion; but Dr. Sangrado's other master secret, the therapeutic drinking of hot water, has been rehabilitated in our days. We sincerely hope that none of our hot-water-drinking readers will let Le Sage laugh them out of countenance in holding to their habit—if it really

does them good!

Gil Blas is promoted to be servant, and then professional assistant, to the famous Dr. Sangrado. Gil Blas and the doctor's maid were warned by their master against eating much, but, now, however, Gil Blas shall himself again resume the part of narrator:

> He allowed us, by way of recompense, to drink as much water as we could swallow: far from restricting us in this particular, he would sometimes say, "Drink, my children; health consists in the suppleness and humectation of the parts: drink water in great abundance: it is an universal menstruum that dissolves all kinds of salt. When the course of the blood is too languid, this accelerates its motion; and when too rapid, checks its impetuosity".... "If thou feelest in thyself," said he to me, "any reluctance to simple element, there are innocent aids in plenty that will support thy stomach against the insipid taste of water; sage, for example, and balm will give it an admirable flavor; and an infusion of corn-poppy, gillyflower, and rosemary, will render it still more delicious."
>
> Notwithstanding all he could say in praise of water, and the excellent beverages he taught me to compose, I drank of it with such moderation, that perceiving my temperance, he said: "Why, truly, Gil Blas, I am not at all surprised that thou dost not enjoy good health. Thou dost not drink enough, my friend. Water taken in small quantities serves only to disentangle the particles of the bile, and give them

> more activity; whereas they should be drowned in a copious dilution: don't be afraid, my child, that abundance of water will weaken and relax thy stomach: lay aside that panic fear which perhaps thou entertainest of plentiful drinking."

Gil Blas, discouraged, was about to leave Dr. Sangrado's service, when that distinguished physician said to him—we take up the text of the story once more:

> "I have a regard for thee, and without further delay will make thy fortune.... I spare thee the trouble of studying pharmacy, anatomy, botany, and physic: know, my friend, all that is required is to bleed the patients and make them drink warm water. This is the secret of curing all the distempers incident to man".... I assured him that I would follow his maxims as long as I lived, even if they should be contrary to those of Hippocrates. But this assurance was not altogether sincere; for I disapproved of his opinion with regard to water, and resolved to drink wine every day, when I went out to visit my patients.

This resolution Gil Blas carried out, and, returning home drunk in consequence, gave Dr. Sangrado an artfully heightened account of a scuffle he had had with a rival physician of his master named Cuchillo. Let Gil Blas pursue the narrative:

"Thou hast done well, Gil Blas," said Dr. Sangrado, "in defending the honor of our remedies against that little abortion of the faculty. He affirms, then, that aqueous draughts are improper for the dropsy! Ignorant wretch! I maintain, I do, that a dropsical patient cannot drink too much."... He perceived that I drank more water that evening than usual, the wine having made me very thirsty, ... and said, with a smile, "I see, Gil Blas, thou hast no longer an aversion to water. Heaven be praised! thou drinkest it now like nectar."... "Sir," I replied, "there is a time for all things: I would not at present give a pint of water for an hogshead of wine." The doctor, charmed with this answer, did not neglect such a fair opportunity of extolling the excellence of water.... "There are still a few," he exclaimed, "who, like thou and I, drink nothing but water; and, who, as a preservative from, or cure of all distempers, trust to hot water unboiled: for I have observed that boiled water is more heavy and less agreeable to the stomach."

... I entered into the doctor's sentiments, inveighed against the use of wine, and lamented that mankind had contracted a taste for such a pernicious liquor. Then (as my thirst was not sufficiently quenched) I filled a large goblet with water, and having swallowed long draughts of it: "Come, sir," said I to my master, "let us regale ourselves with this benevolent liquor." ... He applauded my zeal, and during a whole quarter of an hour exhorted me to drink nothing but water. In order to familiarize myself to this prescription, I promised to swallow a

> great quantity every evening; and that I might the more easily perform my promise, went to bed with a resolution of going to the tavern every day.

In passing from the humor of Le Sage's Dr. Sangrado, we cannot refrain from exhorting the reader not to miss that refinement about water made hot without actually boiling. The present writer seems to himself to have encountered the same delicacy of hot-water-drinking in his own personal observation of those who now practice this method of health or of cure.

A later fortune of Gil Blas, in his long career of extremely various "adventures," shaken from change to change as in a kaleidoscope, was to fall into the service of an archbishop, by whom he was soon advanced to a post of confidential favor. Gil Blas became in fact the archbishop's "guide, philosopher, and friend," in the very important matter of that high dignitary's literary and historical reputation. This happened through Gil Blas's felicity in copying out with judicious calligraphy—a calligraphy such as seemed to their author to commend those productions in some fit proportion to their worth—the venerable archbishop's homilies. Gil Blas thus relates the immediate, and then the more remote, result of his submitting to the archbishop his maiden essay in copy-hand reproduction of that prelate's pulpit rhetoric:

"Good heaven!" cried he in a transport, when he had surveyed all the sheets of my copy, "was ever anything seen so correct? You transcribe so well that you must certainly understand grammar. Tell me ingenuously, my friend, have you found nothing that shocked you in writing it over? Some neglect, perhaps, in the style, or improper term?" "O, sir," answered I, with an air of modesty, "I am not learned enough to make critical observations; and if I was, I am persuaded that the works of your grace would escape my censure." The prelate smiled at my reply; and, though he said nothing, discovered through all his piety, that he was a downright author.

By this kind of flattery, I entirely gained his good graces, became more and more dear to him every day.... One evening he repeated in his closet, when I was present, with great enthusiasm, an homily which he intended to pronounce the next day in the cathedral; and, not satisfied with asking my opinion of it in general, obliged me to single out the particular passages which I most admired. I had the good luck to mention those that he himself looked upon to be the best, his own favorite morceaus: by which means I passed, in his judgment, for a man who had a delicate knowledge of the true beauties of a work. "This is," cried he, "what is called having taste and sentiment: well, friend, I assure thee thou hast not got Bœotian ears." In a word, he was so well satisfied with me, that he pronounced with some vivacity, "Gil Blas, henceforth give thyself no uneasiness about thy fortune: I undertake to make it

extremely agreeable; I love thee; and, as a proof of my affection, make thee my confidant."

I no sooner heard these words than I fell at his grace's feet, quite penetrated with gratitude; I heartily embraced his bandy legs, and looked upon myself as a man on the high way to wealth and opulence. "Yes, my child," resumed the archbishop, whose discourse had been interrupted by my prostration, "thou shalt be the repository of my most secret thoughts. Listen with attention to what I am going to say: my chief pleasure consists in preaching; the Lord gives a blessing to my homilies; they touch the hearts of sinners, make them seriously reflect on their conduct, and have recourse to repentance.... I will confess my weakness; I propose to myself another reward, a reward which the delicacy of my virtue reproaches me with in vain! I mean the esteem that the world shows for fine polished writing. The honor of being reckoned a perfect orator has charmed my imagination; my performances are thought equally strong and delicate; but I would, of all things, avoid the fault of good authors who write too long, and retire without forfeiting the least tittle of my reputation. Wherefore, my dear Gil Blas," continued the prelate, "one thing that I exact of thy zeal is, whenever thou shalt perceive my pen smack of old age, and my genius flag, don't fail to advertise me of it: for I don't trust to my own judgment, which may be seduced by self-love." ... "Thank heaven, sir," said I, "that period is far off: besides, a genius like that of your grace will preserve its vigor much better than

any other; or, to speak more justly, will be always the same. I look upon you as another Cardinal Ximenes, whose superior genius, instead of being weakened by age, seemed to receive new strength from it." "No flattery, friend," said he, interrupting me. "I know I am liable to sink all at once: people at my age begin to feel infirmities, and the infirmities of the body often affect the understanding. I repeat it to thee again, Gil Blas, as soon as thou shalt judge mine in the least impaired, be sure to give me notice; and be not afraid of speaking freely and sincerely, for I shall receive thy advice as a mark of thy affection. Besides, thy interest is concerned; if, unhappily for thee, it should come to my ears that the public says my discourses have no longer their wonted force, and that it is high time for me to repose myself, I frankly declare that thou shalt lose my friendship, as well as the fortune I have promised. Such will be the fruit of thy foolish reserve!"

Gil Blas was destined soon to be put to the extreme proof of his fidelity. Himself must tell how:

In the very zenith of my favor we had a hot alarm in the episcopal palace: the archbishop was seized with a fit of the apoplexy; he was, however, succored immediately, and such salutary medicines administered that in a few days his health was re-established; but his understanding had received a rude shock, which I plainly perceived in the very next discourse which he composed. I did not, however, find the difference between this and the rest so sensible as to make me conclude that the orator began to flag, and waited for another homily to fix my resolution. This, indeed, was quite decisive; sometimes the good old prelate repeated the same thing over and over, sometimes rose too high or sunk too low; it was a vague discourse, the rhetoric of an old professor, a mere capucinade. [The word, “capucinade,” satirizes the Capuchin monks.]

I was not the only person who took notice of this. The greatest part of the audience when he pronounced it, as if they had been also hired to examine it, said softly to one another, “This sermon smells strong of the apoplexy.” Come, master homily-critic, said I then to myself, prepare to do your office; you see that his grace begins to fail; it is your duty to give him notice of it, not only as the depository of his thoughts, but, likewise, lest some one of his friends should be free enough with him to prevent you; in that case you know what would happen: your name would be erased from his last

will....

After these reflections I made others of a quite contrary nature. To give the notice in question, seemed a delicate point. I imagined that it might be ill-received by an author like him, conceited of his own works; but, rejecting this suggestion, I represented to myself that he could not possibly take it amiss after having exacted it of me in so pressing a manner. Add to this that I depended upon my being able to mention it with address, and make him swallow the pill without reluctance. In a word, finding that I ran a greater risk in keeping silence than in breaking it, I determined to speak.

The only thing that embarrassed me now was how to break the ice. Luckily the orator himself extricated me from that difficulty by asking what people said of him, and if they were satisfied with his last discourse. I answered that his homilies were always admired, but in my opinion the last had not succeeded so well as the rest in affecting the audience. “How, friend!” replied he with astonishment, “has it met with any Aristarchus?” “No, sir,” said I, “by no means; such works as yours are not to be criticised; everybody is charmed with them. Nevertheless, since you have laid your injunctions upon me to be free and sincere, I will take the liberty to tell you that your last discourse, in my judgment, has not altogether the energy of your other performances. Are you not of the same opinion?”

My master grew pale at these words, and said

with a forced smile, “So, then, Mr. Gil Blas, this piece is not to your taste?” “I don’t say so, sir,” cried I, quite disconcerted, “I think it excellent, although a little inferior to your other works.” “I understand you,” he replied, “you think I flag, don’t you? Come, be plain; you believe it is time for me to think of retiring.” “I should not have been so bold,” said I, “as to speak so freely if your grace had not commanded me; I do no more, therefore, than obey you, and I most humbly beg that you will not be offended at my freedom.” “God forbid,” cried he, with precipitation, “God forbid that I should find fault with it. In so doing I should be very unjust. I don’t at all take it ill that you speak your sentiment; it is your sentiment only that I find bad. I have been most egregiously deceived in your narrow understanding.”

Though I was disconcerted, I endeavored to find some mitigation in order to set things to rights again; but how is it possible to appease an incensed author, one especially who has been accustomed to hear himself praised? “Say no more, my child,” said he, “you are yet too raw to make proper distinctions. Know that I never composed a better homily than that which you disapprove, for my genius, thank heaven, hath as yet lost nothing of its vigor. Henceforth I will make a better choice of a confidant and keep one of greater ability than you. Go,” added he, pushing me by the shoulders out of his closet, “go tell my treasurer to give you a hundred ducats, and may heaven conduct you with that sum. Adieu, Mr. Gil Blas, I wish you all manner of prosperity,

with a little more taste."

It would be hard, we think, to overmatch anywhere in literature the shrewd but genial satire, the quiet, effective comedy, of the foregoing. How deep it gently goes, probing and searching into the secret springs of our common human nature! The cool, the frontless calculation of self-interest on Gil Blas's part throughout the whole course of his conduct of the relation between himself and the archbishop is perfectly characteristic of the impudent easy-heartedness everywhere displayed of this conscienceless adventurer. It illustrates the consummate art of the author that the whole is so managed that, while you do not sympathize with his hero, you still are by no means forced to feel unplesantly offended at him. This is a great feat of lullaby to the conscience of the reader; for the character of the work is such that if, in perusing it, you should throughout keep vigilantly obeying the wholesome safeguard injunction of the apostle, "Abhor that which is evil," you would be so busy doing the duty of abhorring as seriously to interfere with your enjoyment of the comedy. To get the pleasure or the profit, and at the same time leave the taint, that is the problem often in studying the masterpieces of literature. As generally, so in the case of "Gil Blas," it is a problem perhaps best to be solved by being still more intent on leaving the taint than on getting the pleasure or the profit.

On the whole, the reading of “Gil Blas” entire is a task or a diversion that may safely in most cases be postponed to the leisure of late life. The whole is such, or is not so good, as the part that has here been shown. It is an instance in which the building is very fairly represented by a single specimen brick. Multiply what you have seen by the necessary factor, and you have the total product with little or no loss.

It ought to be added that “Gil Blas,” as in local color and in what might be styled medium not French at all, is also in general character the least French of French productions. It seems almost as if expressly written to be part of what Goethe taught his disciples to look for, namely, a “world-literature.” “Gil Blas,” though French in form, is in essence French only because it is human. And for the same reason it is of every other nation as well. It possesses, therefore, as French literature a unique and, so to speak, paradoxical importance in not being French literature; it is, in fact, perhaps quite the only French book that is less national than universal.

XV.

MONTESQUIEU: 1689-1755; **DE TOCQUEVILLE**: 1805-1859.

TO Montesquieu belongs the glory of being the founder, or inventor, of the philosophy of history. Bossuet might dispute this palm with him; but Bossuet, in his "Discourse on Universal History," only exemplified the principle which it was left to Montesquieu afterward more consciously to develop.

Three books, still living, are associated with the name of Montesquieu—"The Persian Letters," "The Greatness and the Decline of the Romans," and "The Spirit of Laws." "The Persian Letters" are a series of epistles purporting to be written by a Persian sojourning in Paris and observing the manners and morals of the people around him. The idea is ingenious; though the ingenuity, we suppose, was not original with Montesquieu. Such letters afford the writer of them an admirable advantage for telling satire on contemporary follies. This production of Montesquieu became the suggestive example to Goldsmith for his "Citizen of the World; or, Letters of a Chinese Philosopher." We shall have here no room for illustrative citations from Montesquieu's "Persian Letters."

The second work, that on the "Greatness and the Decline of the Romans," is less a history than a series of essays on the history of Rome. It is brilliant, striking, suggestive. It aims to be philosophical rather than historical. It deals in bold generalizations. The spirit of it is, perhaps, too constantly and too profoundly hostile to the Romans. Something of the ancient Gallic enmity—as if a

derivation from that last and noblest of the Gauls, Vercingetorix—seems to animate the Frenchman in discussing the character and the career of the great conquering nation of antiquity. The critical element is the element chiefly wanting to make Montesquieu's work equal to the demands of modern historical scholarship. Montesquieu was, however, a full worthy forerunner of the philosophical historians of to-day. We give a single extract in illustration—an extract condensed from the chapter in which the author analyzes and expounds the foreign policy of the Romans. The generalizations are bold and brilliant,—too bold, probably, for strict critical truth. (We use, for our extract, the recent translation by Mr. Jehu Baker, who enriches his volume with original notes of no little interest and value.) Montesquieu:

> This body [the Roman Senate] erected itself into a tribunal for the judgment of all peoples, and at the end of every war it decided upon the punishment and the recompenses which it conceived each to be entitled to. It took away parts of the lands of the conquered states, in order to bestow them upon the allies of Rome, thus accomplishing two objects at once—attaching to Rome those kings of whom she had little to fear and much to hope, and weakening those of whom she had little to hope and all to fear.
>
> Allies were employed to make war upon an enemy, but the destroyers were at once destroyed in their turn. Philip was beaten with the half of the

Ætolians, who were immediately afterward annihilated for having joined themselves to Antiochus. Antiochus was beaten with the help of the Rhodians, who, after having received signal rewards, were humiliated forever, under the pretext that they had requested that peace might be made with Perseus.

When they had many enemies on hand at the same time, they accorded a truce to the weakest, which considered itself happy in obtaining such a respite, counting it for much to be able to secure a postponement of its ruin.

When they were engaged in a great war, the Senate affected to ignore all sorts of injuries, and silently awaited the arrival of the proper time for punishment; when, if it saw that only some individuals were culpable, it refused to punish them, choosing rather to hold the entire nation as criminal, and thus reserve to itself a useful vengeance.

As they inflicted inconceivable evils upon their enemies, there were not many leagues formed against them; for those who were most distant from danger were not willing to draw nearer to it. The consequence of this was, that they were rarely attacked; whilst, on the other hand, they constantly made war at such time, in such manner, and against such peoples, as suited their convenience; and, among the many nations which they assailed, there were very few that would not have submitted to every species of injury at their hands if they had

been willing to leave them in peace.

It being their custom to speak always as masters, the ambassadors whom they sent to nations which had not yet felt their power were certain to be insulted; and this was an infallible pretext for a new war.

As they never made peace in good faith, and as, with the design of universal conquest, their treaties were, properly speaking, only suspensions of war, they always put conditions in them which began the ruin of the states which accepted them. They either provided that the garrisons of strong places should be withdrawn, or that the number of troops should be limited, or that the horses or the elephants of the vanquished party should be delivered over to themselves; and if the defeated people was powerful on sea, they compelled it to burn its vessels, and sometimes to remove, and occupy a place of habitation farther inland.

After having destroyed the armies of a prince, they ruined his finances by excessive taxes, or by the imposition of a tribute under the pretext of requiring him to pay the expenses of the war—a new species of tyranny, which forced the vanquished sovereign to oppress his own subjects, and thus to alienate their affection.

When they granted peace to a king, they took some of his brothers or children as hostages. This gave them the means of troubling his kingdom at their pleasure. If they held the nearest heir, they

intimidated the possessor; if only a prince of a remote degree, they used him to stir up revolts against the legitimate ruler.

Whenever any people or prince withdrew their obedience from their sovereign, they immediately accorded to them the title of allies of the Roman people, and thus rendered them sacred and inviolable; so that there was no king, however great he might be, who would for a moment be sure of his subjects, or even of his family.

Although the title of Roman ally was a species of servitude, it was, nevertheless, very much sought after; for the possession of this title made it certain that the recipients of it would receive injuries from the Romans only, and there was ground for the hope that this class of injuries would be rendered less grievous than they would otherwise be.

Thus, there was no service which nations and kings were not ready to perform, nor any humiliation which they did not submit to, in order to obtain this distinction....

These customs were not merely some particular facts which happened at hazard. They were permanently established principles, as may be readily seen; for the maxims which the Romans acted upon against the greatest powers were precisely those which they had employed in the beginning of their career against the small cities which surrounded them....

> But nothing served Rome more effectually than the respect which she inspired among all nations. She immediately reduced kings to silence, and rendered them as dumb. With the latter, it was not a mere question of the degree of their power; their very persons were attacked. To risk a war with Rome was to expose themselves to captivity, to death, and to the infamy of a triumph. Thus it was that kings, who lived in pomp and luxury, did not dare to look with steady eyes upon the Roman people, and, losing courage, they hoped, by their patience and their obsequiousness, to obtain some postponement of the calamities with which they were menaced.

The “Spirit of Laws” is probably to be considered the masterpiece of Montesquieu. It is our duty, however, to say that this work is quite differently estimated by different authorities. By some, it is praised in terms of the highest admiration, as a great achievement in wide and wise political or juridical philosophy. By others, it is dismissed very lightly, as the ambitious, or, rather, pretentious, effort of a superficial man, a showy mere sciolist.

The philosophical aim and ambition of the author at once appear in the inquiry which he institutes for the three several animating *principles* of the several forms of government respectively distinguished by him; namely, democracy (or republicanism), monarchy, and despotism. What these three principles are will be seen from the following

statement: “As *virtue* is necessary in a republic, and in a monarchy *honor*, so *fear* is necessary in a despotic government.” The meaning is that in republics virtue possessed by the citizens is the spring of national prosperity; that under a monarchy the desire of preferment at the hands of the sovereign is what quickens men to perform services to the State; that despotism thrives by fear inspired in the breasts of those subject to its sway.

To illustrate the freely discursive character of the work, we give the whole of chapter sixteen—there are chapters still shorter—in Book VII.:

AN EXCELLENT CUSTOM OF THE SAMNITES.

The Samnites had a custom which in so small a republic, and especially in their situation, must have been productive of admirable effects. The young people were all convened in one place and their conduct was examined. He that was declared the best of the whole assembly had leave given him to take which girl he pleased for his wife; the second best chose after him, and so on. Admirable institution! The only recommendation that young men could have on this occasion was their virtue and the service done their country. He who had the greatest share of these endowments chose which girl he liked out of the whole nation. Love, beauty, chastity, virtue, birth, and even wealth itself, were all, in some measure, the dowry of virtue. A nobler and grander recompense, less chargeable to a petty state and more capable of influencing both sexes,

could scarce be imagined.

> The Samnites were descended from the Lacedemonians; and Plato, whose institutes are only an improvement of those of Lycurgus, enacted nearly the same law.

The relation of the foregoing chapter to the subject indicated in the title of the book is sufficiently obscure and remote for a work like this, purporting to be philosophical. What relation exists seems to be found in the fact that the custom described tends to produce that popular virtue by which republics flourish. But the information, at all events, is curious and interesting.

The following paragraphs, taken from the second chapter of Book XIV., contain in germ a large part of the philosophy underlying M. Taine's essays on the history of literature:

OF THE DIFFERENCE OF MEN IN DIFFERENT CLIMATES.

> A cold air constringes the extremities of the external fibers of the body; this increases their elasticity, and favors the return of the blood from the extreme parts to the heart. It contracts those very fibers; consequently it increases also their force. On the contrary, a warm air relaxes and lengthens the extremes of the fibers; of course it diminishes their force and elasticity.

> People are therefore more vigorous in cold climates. Here the action of the heart and the reaction of the extremities of the fibers are better performed, the temperature of the humors is greater, the blood moves freer toward the heart, and reciprocally the heart has more power. This superiority of strength must produce various effects; for instance, a greater boldness—that is, more courage; a greater sense of superiority—that is, less desire of revenge; a greater opinion of security—that is, more frankness, less suspicion, policy, and cunning. In short, this must be productive of very different tempers. Put a man into a close, warm place, and for the reasons above given he will feel a great faintness. If under this circumstance you propose a bold enterprise to him, I believe you will find him very little disposed towards it; his present weakness will throw him into a despondency; he will be afraid of every thing, being in a state of total incapacity. The inhabitants of warm countries are, like old men, timorous; the people in cold countries are, like young men, brave.

In the following extract, from chapter five, Book XXIV., the climatic theory is again applied, this time to the matter of religion, in a style that makes one think of Buckle's "History of Civilization":

> When the Christian religion, two centuries ago, became unhappily divided into Catholic and Protestant, the people of the north embraced the Protestant, and those south adhered still to the

Catholic.

> The reason is plain: the people of the north have, and will forever have, a spirit of liberty and independence, which the people of the south have not; and therefore a religion which has no visible head is more agreeable to the independency of the climate than that which has one.

Climate is a "great matter" with Montesquieu. In treating of the subject of a State changing its religion, he says:

> The ancient religion is connected with the constitution of the kingdom, and the new one is not; the former *agrees with the climate*, and very often the new one is opposite to it.

For the Christian religion, Montesquieu professes profound respect—rather as a pagan political philosopher might do, than as one intimately acquainted with it by a personal experience of his own. His spirit, however, is humane and liberal. It is the spirit of Montaigne, it is the spirit of Voltaire, speaking in the idiom of this different man, and of this different man as influenced by his different circumstances. Montesquieu had had practical proof of the importance to himself of not offending the dominant hierarchy.

On the whole, concerning Montesquieu it may justly be said, that of all political philosophers, he, if

not the profoundest, is at least one of the most interesting; if not the most accurate and critical, at least one of the most brilliant and suggestive.

As to Montesquieu the man, it is perhaps sufficient to say that he seems to have been a very good type of the French gentleman of quality. An interesting story told by Sainte-Beuve reveals, if true, a side at once attractive and repellent of his personal character. Montesquieu at Marseilles employed a young boatman, whose manner and speech indicated more cultivation than was to have been looked for in one plying his vocation. The philosopher learned his history. The youth's father was at the time a captive in one of the Barbary States, and this son of his was now working to earn money for his ransom. The stranger listened apparently unmoved, and went his way. Some months later, home came the father, released he knew not how, to his surprised and overjoyed family. The son guessed the secret, and, meeting Montesquieu a year or so after in Marseilles, threw himself in grateful tears at his feet, begged the generous benefactor to reveal his name and to come and see the family he had blessed. Montesquieu, calmly expressing himself ignorant of the whole business, actually shook the young fellow off, and turned away without betraying the least emotion. It was not till after the cold-blooded philanthropist's death that the fact came out.

A tranquil, happy temperament was Montesquieu's. He would seem to have come as near

as any one ever did to being the natural master of his part in life. But the world was too much for him; as it is for all—at last. Witness the contrast of these two different sets of expressions from his pen. In earlier manhood he says:

> Study has been for me the sovereign remedy for all the dissatisfactions of life, having never had a sense of chagrin that an hour's reading would not dissipate. I wake in the morning with a secret joy to behold the light. I behold the light with a kind of ravishment, and all the rest of the day I am happy.

In late life, the brave, cheerful tone had declined to this:

> I am broken down with fatigue; I must repose for the rest of my life

Then it took a further fall to this:

> I have expected to kill myself for the last three months, finishing an addition to my work on the origin and changes of the French civil law. It will take only three hours to read it; but, I assure you, it has been such a labor to me, that my hair has turned white under it all.

Finally it touches nadir:

> It [his work] has almost cost me my life; I must rest; I can work no more.
>
> My candles are all burned out; I have set off all my cartridges.

When Montesquieu died, only Diderot, among Parisian men of letters, followed him to his tomb.

Belonging to an entirely different world, literary, social, political, from that in which Montesquieu flourished—more than one full century, and that a French century, had intervened—was a man kindred in genius with him, to whom, for the double reason that his intellectual rank deserves it, and that the subject of his principal work is one to command especially the interest of Americans, we feel compelled to devote serious, though it must be hastening, attention. We refer to Alexis de TOCQUEVILLE, the author of that famous book, "Democracy in America." We can most conveniently discharge our duty by letting their likeness in intellectual character and achievement bridge for us the chasm of time between the two men, and thus considering the later in conjunction here with the earlier author.

"Democracy in America" is a most remarkable book to have been, as in fact it was, the production of a young man of thirty. It was the fruit of a tour in the United States undertaken by the writer ostensibly to visit in an official capacity the prisons of the new

nation that France had helped create, in a kind of counterpoise to England, on this side of the Atlantic. The inquisitive young French inspector inspected much more than the prison system of the lusty infant republic. He observed and studied American institutions and manners at large, in order to lay a base line for the boldest speculative triangulation into the probable political future of the world.

Tocqueville held the belief that democracy, as a system of government, was destined to prevail universally. He wrote his observations and reflections, and he made his guesses, primarily for the instruction of France. So confident was his conviction on the subject of democratic destiny for his own country at least, that, while as yet the apparently profound peace was undisturbed of the monarchical reaction under Louis Philippe, he predicted an impending revolution; predicted in fact the revolution which actually occurred in 1848. France, after that date, both during the prophet's life, and subsequently to his death, experienced her vibrations from, one form of government to another; but no one can now deny that thus far the resultant tendency is in favor of Tocqueville's bold speculative forecast of the political future of his nation. The same thing is true, we think, more broadly, of the world in general; and of this Brazil apparently furnishes a striking late instance in confirmation.

"Democracy in America" is a classic in literature. Its credit is highest with those best qualified to form

a judgment. But its fame is universal. It associates its author in rank of genius with the foremost political philosophers of the world—with Machiavelli, with Montesquieu, with Burke. Every American aiming at a political career, every American journalist having to discuss political subjects should be familiar with this book. Mr. Bryce's more recent work on the United States, which has sprung so suddenly into such commanding fame, by no means supersedes, though it does most usefully supplement, the monumental treatise of Tocqueville—a name generally miscalled "De Tocqueville."

Of Alexis de Tocqueville's life it need only be said that, sprung of a noble French family, he ran a respectable, though neither a brilliant, nor a very influential, career in the politics of his country; until, discontented with the second empire, that of the usurper, Louis Napoleon, he retired, about 1851, from public service and devoted himself to labor with the pen. His second chief work was "The Ancient Régime," published in 1856, three years before his death.

We cannot probably make a better brief selection, at once more characteristic and more interesting, from Tocqueville's "Democracy in America" than by presenting in large part the chapter entitled: "Causes which render democratic armies weaker than other armies at the outset of a campaign, and more formidable in a protracted warfare."

A striking illustrative light was destined to be thrown by momentous subsequent history in our own land on the sagacity and justness of the speculations hazarded here by the author on his particular topic.

It would not be far wrong to consider that Americans, by the great civil war, furnished, in a single historical case, the double example required for complete illustration of Tocqueville's point: an example of the democratic, together with an example of the aristocratic, community engaging in war after a long peace. Readers may make each his own comparison of the Frenchman's philosophical speculations with the actual facts that emerged in the course of our national strife:

> Any army is in danger of being conquered at the outset of a campaign, after a long peace; any army which has long been engaged in warfare has strong chances of victory: this truth is peculiarly applicable to democratic armies. In aristocracies the military profession, being a privileged career, is held in honor even in time of peace. Men of great talents, great attainments, and great ambition embrace it; the army is in all respects on a level with the nation, and frequently above it.
>
> We have seen, on the contrary, that among a democratic people the choicer minds of the nation are gradually drawn away from the military profession to seek, by other paths, distinction, power, and especially wealth. After a long peace—and in democratic ages the periods of peace are long

—the army is always inferior to the country itself. In this state it is called into active service: and until war has altered it, there is danger for the country as well as for the army.

I have shown that in democratic armies, and in time of peace, the rule of seniority is the supreme and inflexible law of advancement. This is not only a consequence, as I have before observed, of the constitution of these armies, but of the constitution of the people, *and it will always occur*.

The words italicized by us above illustrate the intrepid firmness of our author in staking the fortune of an opinion of his upon the risk of confutation by future fact. He affirms, it will be seen, absolutely, and does not seek to save himself by a clause.

Again, as among these nations the officer derives his position in the country solely from his position in the army, and as he draws all the distinction and the competency he enjoys from the same source, he does not retire from his profession or is not superannuated till toward the extreme close of life. The consequence of these two causes is that when a democratic people goes to war after a long interval of peace all the leading officers of the army are old men. I speak not only of the generals, but of the non-commissioned officers, who have most of them been stationary, or have only advanced step by step. It may be remarked with surprise that in a democratic army after a long peace all the soldiers

are mere boys, and all the superior officers in declining years; so that the former are wanting in experience, the latter in vigor. This is a strong element of defeat, *for the first condition of successful generalship is youth*. I should not have ventured to say so if the greatest captain of modern times had not made the observation. [The unequaled success of the aged Von Moltke in the conduct of the Prussian war against France in 1870 is here a curious comment on the text.]

****

I am therefore of opinion that when a democratic people engages in a war after a long peace, it incurs much more risk of defeat than any other nation; but it ought not easily to be cast down by its reverses, for the chances of success for such an army are increased by the duration of the war. When a war has at length by its long continuance roused the whole community from their peaceful occupations and ruined their minor undertakings the same passions which made them attach so much importance to the maintenance of peace will be turned to arms. War, after it has destroyed all modes of speculation, becomes itself the great and sole speculation, to which all the ardent and ambitious desires which equality engenders are exclusively directed. Hence it is that the self-same democratic nations which are so reluctant to engage in hostilities sometimes perform prodigious achievements when once they have taken the field.

As the war attracts more and more of public

attention, and is seen to create high reputations and great fortunes in a short space of time, the choicest spirits of the nation enter the military profession. All the enterprising, proud, and martial minds, no longer of the aristocracy solely, but of the whole country, are drawn in this direction. As the number of competitors for military honors is immense, and war drives every man to his proper level, great generals are always sure to spring up. A long war produces upon a democratic army the same effects that a revolution produces upon a people; it breaks through regulations, and allows extraordinary men to rise above the common level. Those officers whose bodies and minds have grown old in peace are removed, or superannuated, or they die. In their stead a host of young men are pressing on whose frames are already hardened, whose desires are extended and inflamed by active service. They are bent on advancement at all hazards, and perpetual advancement. They are followed by others with the same passions and desires, and after these are others yet, unlimited by aught but the size of the army. The principle of equality opens the door of ambition to all, and death provides chances for ambition. Death is constantly thinning the ranks, making vacancies, closing and opening the career of arms.

There is, moreover, a secret connection between the military character and the character of democracies which war brings to light. The men of democracies are naturally passionately eager to acquire what they covet, and to enjoy it on easy conditions. They, for the most part, worship chance,

and are much less afraid of death than of difficulty. This is the spirit which they bring to commerce and manufactures; and this same spirit, carried with them to the field of battle, induces them willingly to expose their lives in order to secure in a moment the rewards of victory. No kind of greatness is more pleasing to the imagination of a democratic people than military greatness—a greatness of vivid and sudden luster, obtained without toil, by nothing but the risk of life.

Thus, while the interest and the tastes of the members of a democratic community divert them from war, their habits of mind fit them for carrying on war well; they soon make good soldiers when they are roused from their business and their enjoyments.

If peace is peculiarly hurtful to democratic armies, war secures to them advantages which no other armies ever possess; and these advantages, however little felt at first, cannot fail in the end to give them the victory. An aristocratic nation which, in a contest with a democratic people, does not succeed in ruining the latter at the outset of the war always runs a great risk of being conquered by it.

"Democracy in America" must be credited with a very important teaching influence on the political thought of mankind. This influence is more than the impulse of stimulating speculation. It is a practical force fruitful of solid political result. The present

writer remembers hearing Tocqueville taught to eager audiences of French students in the Collège de France, at Paris, by M. Laboulaye, a popular professor in that national institution. This was while in France the second empire remained as yet apparently firm on its base, and while in this country the great duel between section and section remained as yet apparently doubtful. The applause with which the lecturer's praise of free institutions was greeted signified much. It signified that the leaven of Tocqueville's ideas was working in those youthful hearts. (M. Laboulaye's lectures, which possessed original merit of their own, were finally published in a volume.) Present republican France owes, in no despicable degree, its existence to the fact that Tocqueville had visited, and reported, and interpreted the United States to his countrymen. Perhaps, also, it is true that the American Union is standing to-day partly because the popular sentiment created by Tocqueville in France favorable to American democracy was too strong, too vivid, and too universal, for the emperor safely to disregard it, in imperial acts, long threatened, hostile to the integrity of the republic. If Tocqueville's guess is right, if democratic institutions are indeed ultimately to prevail throughout the world, certainly it cannot be denied that the prophet himself will have done his part toward fulfilling his prophecy.

We feel that we shall have done scant justice to the high and serious spirit who forms the subject of these

concluding pages of the present chapter, if we do not go from the one work itself, by example out of which we have shown him, to expressions of his in his correspondence that may let us a little deeper into the personal secret of the man himself. Tocqueville, although, as we have intimated, a believer in the democratic destiny of the world, was not such in virtue of being a democrat by preference himself. On the contrary, his own aristocratic blood favoring it perhaps, his individual choice would apparently have gone, not for, but against, democracy. This seems to be indicated in what follows, written to a friend concerning the purpose of his work, "Democracy in America":

> I wished to show what in our days a democratic people really was, and, by a rigorously accurate picture, to produce a double effect on the men of my day. To those who have fancied an ideal democracy, as a brilliant and easily realized dream, I undertook to show that they had clothed the picture in false colors; that the democratic government which they desired, though it may procure real benefits to the people who can bear it, has none of the elevated features with which their imaginations would endow it; and moreover, that such a government can only maintain itself under certain conditions of faith, enlightenment, and private morality, which we have not yet reached, and which we must labor to attain before grasping their political results.
>
> To men for whom the word "democracy" is the

synonym of overthrow, spoliation, anarchy, and murder, I have endeavored to prove that it was possible for democracy to govern society, and yet to respect property, to recognize rights, to spare liberty, to honor religion; that if democratic government is less fitted than other forms to develop some of the finest faculties of the human soul, it has yet its noble and its lovely features; and that perhaps, after all, it may be the will of God to distribute a moderate degree of happiness to the mass of men, and not to concentrate great felicity and great perfection on a few. I have tried, moreover, to demonstrate that, whatever might be their opinion upon these points, the time for discussing them was past; that the world marched onward day by day towards a condition of social equality, and dragged them and every one along with it; that their only choice now lay between evils henceforth inevitable; that the practical question of this day was not whether you would have an aristocracy or a democracy, but whether you would have a democratic society, without poetry and without grandeur, but with morality and order; or a democratic society disorganized and depraved, delivered over to a furious frenzy, or else bent beneath a yoke heavier than any that have weighed upon mankind since the fall of the Roman Empire.

The “Commune” in France, “Nihilism” in Russia, “Socialism” in Germany, “Nationalism” in the United States, are all of them, each in its own different way, remarkable historical commentaries on the prophetic

political forecast contained in the foregoing letter.

Here is ripe practical wisdom occurring in a letter written by Tocqueville about two years before his death:

> You know that my most settled principle is, that there is no period of a man's life at which he is entitled to *rest*; and that effort out of one's self, and still more above one's self, is as necessary in age as in youth—nay, even more necessary. Man in this world is like a traveler who is always walking towards a colder region, and who is therefore obliged to be more active as he goes farther north. The great malady of the soul is *cold*. And in order to counteract and combat this formidable illness, he must keep up the activity of his mind not only by work, but by contact with his fellow-men and with the world. Retirement from the great conflicts of the world is desirable no doubt for those whose strength is on the decline; but absolute retirement, away from the stir of life, is not desirable for any man, nor at any age.

His experience as practical politician made him write thus:

> It is a sad side of humanity that politics uncovers. We may say, without making any exception, that nothing there is either thoroughly pure or thoroughly disinterested; nothing really generous,

> nothing hearty or spontaneous. There is no *youth*, even among the youngest; and something cold, selfish, and premeditated may be detected even in the most apparently passionate proceedings.

There was so much wholesome reaction in Tocqueville's moral nature that, notwithstanding the disparaging views, on his part, thus revealed of human worth, he never became cynical. He could even write as follows to a friend of his who, he thought, went too far in decrying mankind:

> You make humanity out worse than it is. I have seen many countries, studied many men, mingled in many public transactions, and the result of my observation is not what you suppose. Men in general are neither very good nor very bad; they are simply *mediocre*. I have never closely examined even the best without discovering faults and frailties invisible at first. I have always in the end found among the worst certain elements and *holding-points* of honesty. There are two men in every man: it is childish to see only one; it is sad and unjust to look only at the other.... Man, with all his vices, his weaknesses, and his virtues, this strange mixture of good and bad, of low and lofty, of sincere and depraved, is, after all, the object most deserving of study, interest, pity, affection, and admiration to be found upon this earth; and since we have no angels, we cannot attach ourselves to anything greater or worthier than our fellow-creatures.

On the whole, Alexis de Tocqueville's own practice in life showed that he wrote not only with sincerity, but with earnestness, when he wrote those words. It was not of such Frenchmen as was Tocqueville that the author of that heavy sentence on France could have been thinking—that the French character was made up without conscience. We, for our part, cannot but maintain that Tocqueville is as much more solid as he may be less brilliant than his predecessor and fellow, Montesquieu. They were both too theoretical; that is, too exclusively French as distinguished, for instance, from English, in political philosophy. They began to be deductive, when to be inductive yet longer would have been their wiser part. In a word—like Guizot, too, the author of the "History of Civilization," and the minister of Citizen-King Louis Philippe—both Montesquieu and Tocqueville failed of escaping what the French would call the defect of their quality.

XV.

VOLTAIRE.

1694-1778.

BY the volume and the variety, joined to the unfailing brilliancy, of his production; by his

prodigious effectiveness; and by his universal fame, Voltaire is undoubtedly entitled to rank first, with no fellow, among the eighteenth-century literary men, not merely of France, but of the world. He was not a great man, he produced no great single work, but he must nevertheless be pronounced a great writer. There is hardly any species of composition to which, in the long course of his activity, he did not turn his talent. It cannot be said that he succeeded splendidly in all; but in some he succeeded splendidly, and he failed abjectly in none. There is not a great thought, and there is not a flat expression, in the whole bulk of his multitudinous and multifarious works. Read him wherever you will, in the ninety-seven volumes (equivalent, probably in the aggregate, to two hundred volumes like the present) which, in one leading edition, collect his productions, you may often find him superficial, you may often find him untrustworthy, you will certainly often find him flippant, but not less certainly you will never find him obscure, and you will never find him dull. The clearness, the vivacity of this man's mind were something almost preternatural. So, too, were his readiness, his versatility, his audacity. He had no distrust of himself, no awe of his fellow-men, no reverence for God, to deter him from any attempt with his pen, however presuming. If a state ode were required, it should be ready to order at twelve to-morrow; if an epic poem—to be classed with the "Iliad" and the "Æneid "—the "Henriade" was promptly forthcoming, to answer the demand. He did

not shrink from flouting a national idol, by freely finding fault with Corneille; and he lightly undertook the task of extinguishing a venerable form of Christianity, simply with pricks, innumerably repeated, of his tormenting pen.

A very large part of the volume of Voltaire's production consists of letters, written by him to correspondents perhaps more numerous, and more various in rank, from kings on the throne down to scribblers in the garret, than ever, in any other case, exchanged such communications with a literary man. Another considerable proportion of his work in literature took the form of pamphlets, either anonymously or pseudonymously published, in which this master-spirit of intellectual disturbance and ferment found it convenient, or advantageous, or safe, to promulge and propagate his ideas. A shower of such publications was incessantly escaping from Voltaire's pen. More formal and regular, more confessedly ambitious, literary essays of his, were poems in every kind—heroic, mock-heroic, lyric, elegiac, comic, tragic, satiric—historical and biographical monographs, and tales or novels of a peculiar class.

Voltaire's poetry does not count for very much now. Still, its first success was so great that it will always remain an important topic in literary history. Besides this, it really is, in some of its kinds, remarkable work. Voltaire's epic verse is almost an exception, needful to be made, from our assertion

that this author is nowhere dull. “The Henriade” comes dangerously near that mark. It is a tasteless reproduction of Lucan’s faults, with little reproduction of Lucan’s virtues. Voltaire’s comedies are bright and witty, but they are not laughter-provoking; and they do not possess the elemental and creative character of Shakespeare’s or Molière’s work. His tragedies are better; but they do not avoid that cast of mechanical which seems necessarily to belong to poetry produced by talent, however consummate, unaccompanied with genius. Voltaire’s histories are luminous and readable narratives, but they cannot claim the merit either of critical accuracy or of philosophic breadth and insight. His letters would have to be read in considerable volume in order to furnish a full satisfactory idea of the author. His tales, finally, afford the most available, and, on the whole, likewise the best means of arriving shortly and easily at a knowledge of Voltaire.

But, before coming to these, we owe it to our readers, and perhaps to ourselves, to justify with example what, a little way back, we said of Voltaire as epic poet.

Voltaire was profoundly influenced by his personal observations of what England was, alike in her literary, her political, and her theological aspects. Voltairism may, in fact, be pronounced a transplantation from English soil. It was English deism “mixed with cunning sparks of”—French wit.

A very short passage from the “Henriade” will suffice the double purpose of showing what in quality of style that poem of Voltaire’s is, and of suggesting its author’s sense of debt to the England which, for its freedom and its free-thinking, he so much admired. The reader will not fail to note the skill with which Voltaire manages in praising another country to give a very broad hint to his own. The old-fashioned formal heroic couplet, with rhyme, in which the following passage appears translated, is not inapposite to the artificial cast and style of the original. Various passions, such as “Fear,” are not only personified in the “Henriade,” but made to play the part of veritable characters in the action of the poem. Supernatural interferences occur. History is boldly fabricated or falsified at the pleasure of the poet. Of this audacious freedom the passage from which we take our extract presents an instance. Voltaire sends his hero on a mythical mission to England to solicit help from Queen Elizabeth. He here meets every reader’s familiar old friend, “a venerable hermit,” who instructs him in English history and manners. Voltaire wrote prefaces and notes to vindicate his epic practices. He went to Virgil for precedents. Lucan he censured for not making free enough with his history. “Eliza” is, of course, Queen Elizabeth, and “Bourbon,” is the hero of the epic, Henry IV. of France, from whose name, it need not be said, comes the title, “Henriade.” We quote from the first canto of the poem:

A virgin queen the regal scepter sway'd,
And fate itself her sovereign power obeyed.
The wise Eliza, whose directing hand
Had the great scale of Europe at command;
And ruled a people that alike disdain
Or freedom's ease, or slavery's iron chain.
Of every loss her reign oblivion bred;
There, flocks unnumbered graze each flowery mead.
Britannia's vessels rule the azure seas,
Corn fills her plains, and fruitage loads her trees.
From pole to pole her gallant navies sweep
The waters of the tributary deep.
On Thames's banks each flower of genius thrives,
There sports the Muse, and Mars his thunder gives.
Three different powers at Westminster appear,
And all admire the ties which join them there.
Whom interest parts the laws together bring,
The people's deputies, the peers and king.
One whole they form, whose terror wide extends
To neighboring nations, and their rights defends.
Thrice happy times, when grateful subjects show
That loyal, warm affection which is due!
But happier still, when freedom's blessings spring
From the wise conduct of a prudent king!
O when, cried Bourbon, ravished at the sight,
In France shall peace and glory thus unite?

A poem flaunting on its front invidious praise like the foregoing of a foreign government so different from the government of France, could not be very acceptable to the ruling classes of his time in the author's own country. But in England, during the poet's two years' stay in that island, a revised edition

of the “Henriade” was issued under auspices the most august and imposing. Queen Caroline headed the list of subscribers, and such was the brilliancy of the patronage extended to the poem that Voltaire, as is with probability said, netted forty thousand dollars from his English edition—a sum of money equivalent to, say, one hundred thousand dollars, present value. This early success laid the foundation of a fortune for Voltaire, which the skill, the prudence, the servility, the greed, and the unscrupulousness of the owner subsequently built into proportions that were nothing less than princely. Voltaire’s annual income at his death was about a hundred thousand dollars. It seems incredible that a man so rich, and, in some ways, it must be acknowledged, so generous, should have been at the same time so mean, so sordid, so literally perjured in sordidness, as Voltaire is demonstrated, and admitted even by his farthest-going admirers, for instance, Mr. John Morley, to have been.

Among Voltaire’s tales doubtless the one most eligible for use, to serve our present purpose, is his “Candide.” This is a nondescript piece of fiction, the design of which is, by means of a narrative of travel and adventure, constructed without much regard to the probability of particular incidents, to set forth, in the characteristic mocking vein of Voltaire, the vanity and misery of mankind. The author’s invention is often whimsical enough; but it is constantly so ready, so reckless, and so abundant,

that the reader never tires as he is hurried ceaselessly forward from change to change of scene and circumstance. The play of wit is incessant. The style is limpidity itself. Your sympathies are never painfully engaged, even in recitals of experience that ought to be the most heart-rending. There is never a touch of noble moral sentiment to relieve the monotony of mockery that lightly laughs at you and tantalizes you, page after page, from the beginning to the end of the book. The banter is not good-natured; though, on the other hand, it cannot justly be pronounced ill-natured; and it is, in final effect upon the reader's mind, bewildering and depressing in the extreme. Vanity of vanities, all is vanity; such is the comfortless doctrine of the book. The apples are the apples of Sodom, everywhere in the world. There is no virtue anywhere, no good, no happiness. Life is a cheat, the love of life is a cruelty, and beyond life there is nothing. At least, there is no glimpse given of any compensating future reserved for men, a future to redress the balance of good and ill experienced here and now. Faith and hope, those two eyes of the soul, are smilingly quenched in their sockets, and you are left blind, in a whirling world of darkness, with a whirling world of darkness before you.

Such is "Candide." We select a single passage for specimen. The passage we select is more nearly free than almost any other passage as long, in this extraordinary romance, would probably be found,

from impure implications. It is, besides, more nearly serious in apparent motive than is the general tenor of the production. Here, however, as elsewhere, the writer keeps carefully down his mocking mask. At least, you are left tantalizingly uncertain all the time how much the grin you face is the grin of the man, and how much the grin of a visor that he wears.

Candide, the hero, is a young fellow of ingenuous character brought successively under the lead of several different persons wise in the ways of the world, who act toward him, each in his turn, the part of "guide, philosopher, and friend." Candide, with such a mentor bearing the name Martin, has now arrived at Venice. Candide speaks:

> "I have heard a great talk of the Senator Pococuranté, who lives in that fine house at the Brenta, where they say he entertains foreigners in the most polite manner. They pretend this man is a perfect stranger to uneasiness." "I should be glad to see so extraordinary a being," said Martin. Candide thereupon sent a messenger to Signor Pococuranté desiring permission to wait on him the next day.
>
> Candide and his friend Martin went into a gondola on the Brenta, and arrived at the palace of the noble Pococuranté: the gardens were laid out in elegant taste and adorned with fine marble statues; his palace was built after the most approved rules of architecture. The master of the house, who was a man of sixty, and very rich, received our two

travelers with great politeness, but without much ceremony, which somewhat disconcerted Candide, but was not at all displeasing to Martin.

As soon as they were seated two very pretty girls, neatly dressed, brought in chocolate, which was extremely well frothed. Candide could not help making encomiums upon their beauty and graceful carriage. “The creatures are well enough,” said the senator. “I make them my companions, for I am heartily tired of the ladies of the town, their coquetry, their jealousy, their quarrels, their humors, their meannesses, their pride, and their folly. I am weary of making sonnets, or of paying for sonnets to be made, on them; but, after all, these two girls begin to grow very indifferent to me.”

After having refreshed himself, Candide walked into a large gallery, where he was struck with the sight of a fine collection of paintings.

“Pray,” said Candide, “by what master are the two first of these?” “They are Raphael’s,” answered the senator. “I gave a great deal of money for them seven years ago, purely out of curiosity, as they were said to be the finest pieces in Italy: but I cannot say they please me; the coloring is dark and heavy; the figures do not swell nor come out enough, and the drapery is very bad. In short, notwithstanding the encomiums lavished upon them, they are not, in my opinion, a true representation of nature. I approve of no paintings but where I think I behold Nature herself; and there are very few, if any, of that kind to be met with. I

have what is called a fine collection, but I take no manner of delight in them."

While dinner was getting ready Pococurante ordered a concert. Candide praised the music to the skies. "This noise," said the noble Venetian, "may amuse one for a little time; but if it was to last above half an hour it would grow tiresome to everybody, though perhaps no one would care to own it. Music is become the art of executing what is difficult; now, whatever is difficult cannot be long pleasing.

"I believe I might take more pleasure in an opera, if they had not made such a monster of that species of dramatic entertainment as perfectly shocks me; and I am amazed how people can bear to see wretched tragedies set to music, where the scenes are contrived for no other purpose than to lug in, as it were by the ears, three or four ridiculous songs, to give a favorite actress an opportunity of exhibiting her pipe. Let who will or can die away in raptures at the trills of a eunuch quavering the majestic part of Cæsar or Cato, and strutting in a foolish manner upon the stage. For my part, I have long ago renounced these paltry entertainments, which constitute the glory of modern Italy, and are so dearly purchased by crowned heads." Candide opposed these sentiments, but he did it in a discreet manner. As for Martin, he was entirely of the old senator's opinion.

Dinner being served up, they sat down to table, and after a very hearty repast, returned to the library. Candide, observing Homer richly bound,

commended the noble Venetian's taste. "This," said he, "is a book that was once the delight of the great Pangloss, the best philosopher in Germany." "Homer is no favorite of mine," answered Pococuranté very coolly. "I was made to believe once that I took a pleasure in reading him; but his continual repetitions of battles must have all such a resemblance with each other; his gods that are forever in a hurry and bustle, without ever doing any thing; his Helen, that is the cause of the war, and yet hardly acts in the whole performance; his Troy, that holds out so long without being taken; in short, all these things together make the poem very insipid to me. I have asked some learned men whether they are not in reality as much tired as myself with reading this poet. Those who spoke ingenuously assured me that he had made them fall asleep, and yet that they could not well avoid giving him a place in their libraries; but that it was merely as they would do an antique, or those rusty medals which are kept only for curiosity, and are of no manner of use in commerce."

"But your excellency does not surely form the same opinion of Virgil?" said Candide. "Why, I grant," replied Pococuranté, "that the second, third, fourth, and sixth books of his 'Æneid' are excellent; but as for his pious Æneas, his strong Cloanthus, his friendly Achates, his boy Ascanius, his silly King Latinus, his ill-bred Amata, his insipid Lavinia, and some other characters much in the same strain, I think there cannot in nature be anything more flat and disagreeable. I must confess I prefer Tasso far

beyond him; nay, even that sleepy tale-teller Ariosto."

"May I take the liberty to ask if you do not receive great pleasure from reading Horace?" said Candide. "There are maxims in this writer," replied Pococuranté, "from whence a man of the world may reap some benefit; and the short measure of the verse makes them more easily to be retained in the memory. But I see nothing extraordinary in his journey to Brundusium, and his account of his bad dinner; nor in his dirty, low quarrel between one Rupilius, whose words, as he expresses it, were full of poisonous filth; and another, whose language was dipped in vinegar. His indelicate verses against old women and witches have frequently given me great offense; nor can I discover the great merit of his telling his friend Mæcenas, that, if he will but rank him in the class of lyric poets, his lofty head shall touch the stars. Ignorant readers are apt to advance everything by the lump in a writer of reputation. For my part, I read only to please myself. I like nothing but what makes for my purpose." Candide, who had been brought up with a notion of never making use of his own judgment, was astonished at what he heard; but Martin found there was a good deal of reason in the senator's remarks.

"Oh, here is a Tully!" said Candide; "this great man, I fancy, you are never tired of reading." "Indeed, I never read him at all," replied Pococuranté. "What the deuce is it to me whether he pleads for Rabirius or Cluentius? I try causes enough myself. I had once some liking to his philosophical

works; but when I found he doubted of everything, I thought I knew as much as himself, and had no need of a guide to learn ignorance."

"Ha!" cried Martin, "here are fourscore volumes of the 'Memoirs of the Academy of Sciences,' perhaps there may be something curious and valuable in this collection." "Yes," answered Pococuranté; "so there might, if any one of these compilers of this rubbish had only invented the art of pin-making. But all these volumes are filled with mere chimerical systems, without one single article conducive to real utility."

"I see a prodigious number of plays," said Candide, "in Italian, Spanish, and French." "Yes," replied the Venetian; "there are, I think, three thousand, and not three dozen of them good for anything. As to those huge volumes of divinity, and those enormous collections of sermons, they are not all together worth one single page of Seneca; and I fancy you will readily believe that neither myself nor any one else ever looks into them."

Martin, perceiving some shelves filled with English books, said to the senator: "I fancy that a republican must be highly delighted with those books, which are most of them written with a noble spirit of freedom." "It is noble to write as we think," said Pococuranté; "it is the privilege of humanity. Throughout Italy we write only what we do not think; and the present inhabitants of the country of the Cæsars and Antoninuses dare not acquire a single idea without the permission of a father

Dominican. I should be enamored of the spirit of the English nation did it not utterly frustrate the good effects it would produce by passion and the spirit of party."

Candide, seeing a Milton, asked the senator if he did not think that author a great man. "Who?" said Pococuranté sharply. "That barbarian, who writes a tedious commentary, in ten books of rambling verse, on the first chapter of Genesis! That slovenly imitator of the Greeks, who disfigures the creation by making the Messiah take a pair of compasses from heaven's armory to plan the world; whereas Moses represented the Deity as producing the whole universe by his fiat! Can I think you have any esteem for a writer who has spoiled Tasso's hell and the devil; who transforms Lucifer, sometimes into a toad, and at others into a pigmy; who makes him say the same thing over again a hundred times; who metamorphoses him into a school-divine; and who, by an absurdly serious imitation of Ariosto's comic invention of fire-arms, represents the devils and angels cannonading each other in heaven! Neither I, nor any other Italian, can possibly take pleasure in such melancholy reveries. But the marriage of Sin and Death, and snakes issuing from the womb of the former, are enough to make any person sick that is not lost to all sense of delicacy. This obscene, whimsical, and disagreeable poem met with the neglect that it deserved at its first publication; and I only treat the author now as he was treated in his own country by his contemporaries."

Candide was sensibly grieved at this speech, as he

had a great respect for Homer, and was very fond of Milton. “Alas!” said he softly to Martin, “I am afraid this man holds our German poets in great contempt.” “There would be no such great harm in that,” said Martin. “Oh, what a surprising man!” said Candide to himself. “What a prodigious genius is this Pococuranté! Nothing can please him!”

After finishing their survey of the library they went down into the garden, when Candide commended the several beauties that offered themselves to his view. “I know nothing upon earth laid out in such bad taste,” said Pococuranté; “everything about it is childish and trifling; but I shall have another laid out to-morrow upon a nobler plan.”

As soon as our two travelers had taken leave of his excellency, “Well,” said Candide to Martin, “I hope you will own that this man is the happiest of all mortals, for he is above everything he possesses.” “But do you not see,” answered Martin, “that he likewise dislikes everything he possesses? It was an observation of Plato long since, that those are not the best stomachs that reject, without distinction, all sorts of aliments.” “True,” said Candide; “but still, there must certainly be a pleasure in criticising everything, and in perceiving faults where others think they see beauties.” “That is,” replied Martin, “there is a pleasure in having no pleasure.” “Well, well,” said Candide. “I find that I shall be the only happy man at last, when I am blessed with the sight of my dear Cunegund.” “It is good to hope,” said Martin.

The single citation preceding sufficiently exemplifies, at their best, though at their worst not, the style and the spirit of Voltaire's "Candide;" as his "Candide" sufficiently exemplifies the style and the spirit of the most characteristic of Voltaire's writings in general. "Pococurantism" is a word, now not uncommon in English, contributed by Voltaire to the vocabulary of literature. To readers of the foregoing extract, the sense of the term will not need to be explained. We respectfully suggest to our dictionary-makers, that the fact stated of its origin in the "Candide" of Voltaire would be interesting and instructive to many. Voltaire coined the name, to suit the character of his Venetian gentleman, from two Italian words which mean together "little-caring." Signor Pococuranté is the immortal type of men that have worn out their capacity of fresh sensation and enjoyment.

Mr. John Morley's elaborate monograph on Voltaire claims the attention of readers desirous of exhaustive acquaintance with its subject. This author writes in sympathy with Voltaire, so far as Voltaire was an enemy of the Christian religion; but in antipathy to him, so far as Voltaire fell short of being an atheist. A similar sympathy, limited by a similar antipathy, is observable in the same author's still more extended monograph on Rousseau. The sympathy works without the antipathy to limit it, in Mr. Morley's two volumes on "Diderot and the Encyclopædists"—for Diderot and his closest fellows

were good thorough-going atheists.

Even in Voltaire and Rousseau, but particularly in Voltaire, Mr. Morley, though his sympathy with these writers is, as we have said, not complete, finds far more to praise than to blame. To this eager apostle of atheism, Voltaire was at least on the right road, although he did, unfortunately, stop short of the goal. His influence was potent against Christianity, and potent it certainly was not against atheism. Voltaire might freely be lauded as on the whole a mighty and a beneficent liberalizer of thought.

And we, we who are neither atheists nor deists—let us not deny to Voltaire his just meed of praise. There were streaks of gold in the base alloy of that character of his. He burned with magnanimous heat against the hideous doctrine and practice of ecclesiastical persecution. Carlyle says of Voltaire, that he “spent his best efforts, and as many still think, successfully, in assaulting the Christian religion.” This, true though it be, is liable to be falsely understood. It was not against the Christian religion, as the Christian religion really is, but rather against the Christian religion as the Roman hierarchy misrepresented it, that Voltaire ostensibly directed his efforts. “You are right,” wrote he to his henchman D’Alembert, in 1762, “in assuming that I speak of superstition only; for as to the Christian religion, I respect it and love it, as you do.” This distinction of Voltaire’s, with whatever degree of

simple sincerity on his part made, ought to be remembered in his favor, when his memorable motto, "*Écrasez l'Infâme*," is interpreted and applied. He did not mean Jesus Christ by *l'Infâme*; he did not mean the Christian religion by it; he did not even mean the Christian Church by it; he meant the oppressive despotism and the crass obscurantism of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. At least, this is what he would have said that he meant, what in fact he substantially did say that he meant, when incessantly reiterating, in its various forms, his watchword, "*Écrasez l'Infâme*," "*Écrasons l'Infâme*"—"Crush the wretch!" "Let us crush the wretch!" His blows were aimed, perhaps, at "superstition;" but they really fell, in the full half of their effect, on Christianity itself. Whether Voltaire regretted this, whether he would in his heart have had it otherwise, may well, in spite of any protestation from him of love for Christianity, be doubted. Still, it is never, in judgment of Voltaire, to be forgotten that the organized Christianity which he confronted was in large part a system justly hateful to the true and wise lover, whether of God or of man. That system he did well in fighting. Carnal indeed were the weapons with which he fought it; and his victory over it was a carnal victory, bringing, on the whole, but slender net advantage, if any such advantage at all, to the cause of final truth and light. The French Revolution, with its excesses and its horrors, was perhaps the proper, the legitimate, the necessary, fruit of resistance such as was Voltaire's, in fundamental spirit, to the evils in Church and in

State against which he conducted so gallantly his life-long campaign.

But though we thus bring in doubt the work of Voltaire, both as to the purity of its motive and as to the value of its fruit, we should wrong our sense of justice to ourselves if we permitted our readers to suppose us blind to the generous things that this arch-infidel did on behalf of the suffering and the oppressed. Voltaire more than once wielded that pen of his, the most dreaded weapon in Europe, like a knight sworn to take on himself the championship of the forlornest of causes. There is the historic case of Jean Calas at Toulouse, Protestant, an old man of near seventy, broken on the wheel, as suspected, without evidence, and against accumulated impossibilities, of murdering his own son, a young man of about thirty, by hanging him. Voltaire took up the case and pleaded it to the common sense, and to the human feeling, of France, with immense effectiveness. It is, in truth, Voltaire's advocacy of righteousness, in this instance of incredible wrong, that has made the instance itself immortal. His part in the case of Calas, though the most signal, is not the only example of Voltaire's literary knighthood. He hated oppression, and he loved liberty, for himself and for all men, with a passion as deep and as constant as any passion of which nature had made Voltaire capable. If the liberty that he loved was fundamentally liberty as against God no less than as against men, and if the oppression that he hated was

fundamentally the oppression of being put under obligation to obey Christ as lord of life and of thought, this was something of which, probably, Voltaire never had a clear consciousness.

We have now indicated what was most admirable in Voltaire's personal character. On the whole, he was far from being an admirable man. He was vain, he was shallow, he was frivolous, he was deceitful, he was voluptuous, he fawned on the great, he abased himself before them, he licked the dust on which they stood. "*Trajan, est-il content?*" ("Is Trajan satisfied?")—this, asked, in nauseous adulation, and nauseous self-abasement, by Voltaire of Louis XV., so little like Trajan in character—is monumental. The occasion was the production of a piece of Voltaire's written at the instance of Louis XV.'s mistress, the infamous Madame de Pompadour. The king, for answer, simply gorgonized the poet with a stony Bourbon stare.

But, taken altogether, Voltaire's life was a great success. He got on in the world, was rich, was fortunate, was famous, was gay, if he was not happy. He had his friendship with the great Frederick of Prussia, who filled for his false French flatterer a return cup of sweetness, cunningly mixed with exceeding bitterness. His death was an appropriate *coup de théâtre*, a felicity of finish to such a life quite beyond the reach of art. He came back to Paris, whence he had been an exile, welcomed with a triumph transcending the triumph of a conqueror.

They made a great feast for him, a feast of flattery, in the theater. The old man was drunk with delight. The delight was too much for him. It literally killed him. It was as if a favorite actress should be quite smothered to death on the stage under flowers thrown in excessive profusion at her feet.

Let Carlyle's sentence be our epigraph on Voltaire:

"No great Man.... Found always at the top, less by power in swimming than by lightness in floating."

XVII

ROUSSEAU: 1712-1778; **St. Pierre**: 1737-1814.

THERE are two Rousseaus in French literature. At least there was a first, until the second effaced him, and became the only.

We speak, of course, in comparison, and hyperbolically. J. B. Rousseau is still named as a lyric poet of the time of Louis XIV. But when Rousseau, without initials, is spoken of, it is always Jean Jacques Rousseau that is meant.

Jean Jacques Rousseau is perhaps the most squalid, as it certainly is one of the most splendid, among French literary names. The squalor belongs

chiefly to the man, but the splendor is wholly the writer's. There is hardly another example in the world's literature of a union so striking of these opposites.

Rousseau's life he has himself told, in the best, the worst, and the most imperishable of his books, the "Confessions." This book is one to which the adjective charming attaches, in a peculiarly literal sense of the word. The spell, however, is repellent as well as attractive. But the attraction of the style asserts and pronounces itself only the more, in triumph over the much there is in the matter to disgust and revolt. It is quite the most offensive, and it is well-nigh the most fascinating, book that we know.

The "Confessions" begin as follows:

> I purpose an undertaking that never had an example, and whose execution never will have an imitator. I would exhibit to my fellows a man, in all the truth of nature, and that man—myself.
>
> Myself alone. I know my own heart, and I am acquainted with men. I am made unlike any one I have ever seen—I dare believe unlike any living being. If no better than, I am at least different from, others. Whether nature did well or ill in breaking the mold wherein I was cast, can be determined only after having read me.
>
> Let the last trumpet sound when it will, I will

> come, with this book in my hand, and present myself before the Sovereign Judge. I will boldly proclaim: Thus have I acted, thus have I thought, such was I. With equal frankness have I disclosed the good and the evil. I have omitted nothing bad, added nothing good; and if I have happened to make use of some unimportant ornament, it has, in every case, been simply for the purpose of filling up a void occasioned by my lack of memory. I may have taken for granted as true what I knew to be possible, never what I knew to be false. Such as I was, I have exhibited myself—despicable and vile, when so; virtuous, generous, sublime, when so. I have unveiled my interior being, such as Thou, Eternal Existence, hast beheld it. Assemble around me the numberless throng of my fellow-mortals; let them listen to my confessions, let them blush at my depravities, let them shrink appalled at my miseries. Let each of them, in his turn, with equal sincerity, lay bare his heart at the foot of thy throne, and then let a single one tell thee, if he dare, *I was better than that man*.

Notwithstanding our autobiographer's disavowal of debt to example for the idea of his "Confessions," it seems clear that Montaigne here was at least inspiration, if not pattern, to Rousseau. But Rousseau resolved to do what Montaigne had done, more ingenuously and more courageously than Montaigne had done it. This writer will make himself his subject, and then treat his subject with greater

frankness than any man before him ever used about himself, or than any man after him would ever use. He undoubtedly succeeded in his attempt. His frankness, in fact, is so forward and eager that it is probably even inventive of things disgraceful to himself. Montaigne makes great pretense of telling his own faults, but you observe that he generally chooses rather amiable faults of his own to tell. Rousseau's morbid vulgarity leads him to disclose traits in himself of character or of behavior, that, despite whatever contrary wishes on your part, compel your contempt of the man. And it is for the man who confesses, almost more than for the man who is guilty, that you feel the contempt.

The "Confessions" proceed:

> I was born at Geneva, in 1712, of Isaac Rousseau and Susannah Bernard, citizens.... I came into the world weak and sickly. I cost my mother her life, and my birth was the first of my misfortunes.
>
> I never learned how my father supported his loss, but I know that he remained ever after inconsolable.... When he used to say to me, "Jean Jacques, let us speak of your mother," my usual reply was, "Well, father, we'll cry then," a reply which would instantly bring the tears to his eyes. "Ah!" he would exclaim with agitation, "give me her back, console me for her loss, fill up the void she has left in my soul. Could I love thee thus wert thou but *my* son?" Forty years after having lost her he expired

> in the arms of a second wife, but with the name of the first on his lips, and her image engraven on his heart.
>
> Such were the authors of my being. Of all the gifts Heaven had allotted them, a feeling heart was the only one I had inherited. While, however, this had been the source of their happiness, it became the spring of all my misfortunes.

"A feeling heart!" That expression tells the literary secret of Rousseau. It is hardly too much to say that Rousseau was the first French writer to write with his heart; but heart's blood was the ink in which almost every word of Rousseau's was written. This was the spring of his marvelous power. Rousseau:

> My mother had left a number of romances. These father and I betook us to reading during the evenings. At first the sole object was, by means of entertaining books, to improve me in reading; but, ere long, the charm became so potent, that we read turn about without intermission, and passed whole nights in this employment. Never could we break up till the end of the volume. At times my father, hearing the swallows of a morning, would exclaim, quite ashamed of himself, "Come, let's to bed; I'm more of a child than you are!"

The elder Rousseau was right respecting himself. And such a father would almost necessarily have such a child. Jean Jacques Rousseau is to be judged

tenderly for his faults. What birth and what breeding were his! The “Confessions” go on:

> I soon acquired, by this dangerous course, not only an extreme facility in reading and understanding, but, for my age, a quite unprecedented acquaintance with the passions. I had not the slightest conception of things themselves at a time when the whole round of sentiments was already perfectly familiar to me. I had apprehended nothing—I had felt all.

Some hint now of other books read by the boy:

> .... Plutarch especially became my favorite reading. The pleasure which I found in incessantly reperusing him cured me in some measure of the romance madness: and I soon came to prefer Agesilaus, Brutus, and Aristides to Orondates, Artemenes, and Juba. From these interesting studies, joined to the conversations to which they gave rise with my father, resulted that free, republican spirit, that haughty and untamable character, fretful of restraint or subjection, which has tormented me my life long, and that in situations the least suitable for giving it play. Incessantly occupied with Rome and Athens, living, so to speak, with their great men, born myself the citizen of a republic [Geneva], the son of a father with whom patriotism was the ruling passion, I caught the flame from him—I imagined myself a Greek or a Roman, and became the personage whose life I was reading.

On such food of reading and of reverie, young Rousseau's imagination and sentiment battened, while his reason and his practical sense starved and died within him. Unconsciously thus in part were formed the dreamer of the "Émile" and of "The Social Contract." Another glimpse of the home life—if home life such experience can be called—of this half-orphan, homeless Genevan boy:

> I had a brother, my elder by seven years.... He fell into the ways of debauchery, even before he was old enough to be really a libertine. ... I remember once when my father was chastising him severely and in anger, that I impetuously threw myself between them, clasping him tightly. I thus covered him with my body, receiving the blows that were aimed at him; and I held out so persistently in this position, that whether softened by my cries and tears, or fearing that I should get the worst of it, my father was forced to forgive him. In the end my brother turned out so bad that he ran away and disappeared altogether.

It is pathetic—Rousseau's attempted contrast following, between the paternal neglect of his older brother and the paternal indulgence of himself:

> If this poor lad was carelessly brought up, it was quite otherwise with his brother.... My desires were so little excited, and so little crossed, that it never came into my head to have any. I can solemnly aver,

> that till the time when I was bound to a master I never knew what it was to have a whim.

Poor lad! "Never knew what it was to have a whim!" It well might be, however—his boy's life all one whim uncrossed, unchecked; no contrast of saving restraint, to make him know that he was living by whim alone!

Young Jean Jacques was at length apprenticed to an engraver. He describes the contrast of his new situation and the effect of the contrast upon his own character and career:

> I learned to covet in silence, to dissemble, to dissimulate, to lie, and at last to steal, a propensity for which I had never hitherto had the slightest inclination, and of which I have never since been able quite to cure myself....
>
> My first theft was the result of complaisance, but it opened the door to others which had not so laudable a motive.
>
> My master had a journeyman named M. Verrat.... [He] took it into his head to rob his mother of some of her early asparagus and sell it, converting the proceeds into some extra good breakfasts. As he did not wish to expose himself, and not being very nimble, he selected me for this expedition. Long did I stickle, but he persisted. I never could resist kindness, so I consented. I went every morning to the garden, gathered the best of the asparagus, and

took it to “the Molard,” where some good creature, perceiving that I had just been stealing it, would insinuate that little fact, so as to get it the cheaper. In my terror I took whatever she chose to give me and carried it to M. Verrat.

This little domestic arrangement continued for several days before it came into my head to rob the robber, and tithe M. Verrat for the proceeds of the asparagus.... I thus learned that to steal was, after all, not so very terrible a thing as I had conceived, and ere long I turned this discovery to so good an account, that nothing I had an inclination for could safely be left within my reach....

And now, before giving myself over to the fatality of my destiny, let me, for a moment, contemplate what would naturally have been my lot had I fallen into the hands of a better master. Nothing was more agreeable to my tastes, nor better calculated to render me happy, than the calm and obscure condition of a good artisan, more especially in certain lines, such as that of an engraver at Geneva.... In my native country, in the bosom of my religion, of my family, and my friends, I should have led a life gentle and uncheckered as became my character, in the uniformity of a pleasing occupation and among connections dear to my heart. I should have been a good Christian, a good citizen, a good father, a good friend, a good artisan, and a good man in every respect. I should have loved my station; it may be I should have been an honor to it; and after having passed an obscure and simple, though even and happy, life, I should peacefully

> have departed in the bosom of my kindred. Soon, it may be, forgotten, I should at least have been regretted as long as the remembrance of me survived.
>
> Instead of this ... what a picture am I about to draw!

Thus ends the first book of the "Confessions."

The picture Rousseau is "about to draw" has in it a certain Madame de Warens for a principal figure. This lady, a Roman Catholic convert from Protestantism, had forsaken a husband, not loved, and was living on a bounty from King Victor Amadeus of Sardinia. For Annecy, the home of Madame de Warens, our young Jean Jacques, sent thither by a Roman Catholic curate, sets out on foot. The distance was but one day's walk; which one day's walk, however, the humor of the wanderer stretched into a saunter of three days. The man of fifty-four, become the biographer of his own youth, finds no lothness of self-respect to prevent his detailing the absurd adventures with which he diverted himself on the way. For example:

> Not a country-seat could I see, either to the right or left, without going after the adventure which I was certain awaited me. I could not muster courage to enter the mansion, nor even to knock, for I was excessively timid; but I sang beneath the most inviting window, very much astonished to find, after

> wasting my breath, that neither lady nor miss made her appearance, attracted by the beauty of my voice, or the spice of my songs—seeing that I knew some capital ones that my comrades had taught me, and which I sang in the most admirable manner.

Rousseau describes the emotions he experienced in his first meeting with Madame de Warens:

> I had pictured to myself a grim old devotee—M. de Pontverre's "worthy lady" could, in my opinion, be none other. But lo, a countenance beaming with charms, beautiful, mild blue eyes, a complexion of dazzling fairness, the outline of an enchanting neck! Nothing escaped the rapid glance of the young proselyte; for that instant I was hers, sure that a religion preached by such missionaries could not fail to lead to paradise!

This abnormally susceptible youth had remarkable experiences, all within his own soul, during his sojourn, of a few days only, on the present occasion, under Madame de Warens's hospitable roof. These experiences, the autobiographer, old enough to call himself "old dotard," has, nevertheless, not grown wise enough to be ashamed to be very detailed and psychological in recounting. It was a case of precocious love at first sight. One could afford to laugh at it as ridiculous, but that it had a sequel full of sin and of sorrow. Jean Jacques was now forwarded to Turin, to become inmate of a sort of

charity school for the instruction of catechumens. The very day after he started on foot, his father, with a friend of his, reached Annecy on horseback, in pursuit of the truant boy. They might easily have overtaken him, but they let him go his way. Rousseau explains the case on behalf of his father as follows:

> My father was not only an honorable man, but a person of the most reliable probity, and endowed with one of those powerful minds that perform deeds of loftiest heroism. I may add, he was a good father, especially to me. Tenderly did he love me, but he loved his pleasures also, and, since our living apart, other ties had, in a measure, weakened his paternal affection. He had married again, at Nyon; and though his wife was no longer of an age to present me with brothers, yet she had connections; another family circle was thus formed, other objects engrossed his attention, and the new domestic relations no longer so frequently brought back the remembrance of me. My father was growing old, and had nothing on which to rely for the support of his declining years. My brother and I had something coming to us from my mother's fortune; the interest of this my father was to receive during our absence. This consideration did not present itself to him directly, nor did it stand in the way of his doing his duty; it had, however, a silent, and to himself imperceptible, influence, and at times slackened his zeal, which, unacted upon by this, would have been carried much farther. This, I think, was the reason,

> that, having traced me as far as Annecy, he did not follow me to Chamberi, where he was morally certain of overtaking me. This will also explain why, in visiting him many times after my flight, I received from him on every occasion a father's kindness, though unaccompanied by any very pressing efforts to retain me.

Rousseau's filial regard for his father was peculiar. It did not lead him to hide, it only led him to account for, his father's sordidness. The son generalized and inferred a moral maxim for the conduct of life from this behavior of the father's—a maxim, which, as he thought, had done him great good. He says:

> This conduct on the part of a father of whose affection and virtue I have had so many proofs, has given rise within me to reflections on my own character which have not a little contributed to maintain my heart uncorrupted. I have derived therefrom this great maxim of morality, perhaps the only one of any use in practice; namely, to avoid such situations as put our duty in antagonism with our interest, or disclose our own advantage in the misfortunes of another, certain that in such circumstances, however sincere the love of virtue we bring with us, it will sooner or later, and whether we perceive it or not, become weakened, and we shall come to be unjust and culpable in our acts without having ceased to be upright and blameless in our intentions.

The fruitful maxim thus deduced by Rousseau, he thinks he tried faithfully to put in practice. With apparent perfect assurance concerning himself, he says:

> I have sincerely desired to do what was right. I have, with all the energy of my character, shunned situations which set my interest in opposition to the interest of another, thus inspiring me with a secret though involuntary desire prejudicial to that man.

Jean Jacques at Turin made speed to convert himself, by the abjurations required, into a pretty good Catholic. He was hereon free to seek his fortune in the Sardinian capital. This he did by getting successively various situations in service. In one of these he stole, so he tells us, a piece of ribbon, which was soon found in his possession. He said a maid-servant, naming her, gave it to him. The two were confronted with each other. In spite of the poor girl's solemn appeal, Jean Jacques persisted in his lie against her. Both servants were discharged. The autobiographer protests that he has suffered much remorse for this lie of his to the harm of the innocent maid. He expresses confident hope that his suffering sorrow, already experienced on his behalf, will stand him in stead of punishment that might be his due in a future state. Remorse is a note in Rousseau that distinguishes him from Montaigne. Montaigne reviews his own life to live over his sins, not to

repent of them.

The end of several vicissitudes is, that young Rousseau gets back to Madame de Warens. She welcomes him kindly. He says:

> From the first day, the most affectionate familiarity sprang up between us, and that to the same degree in which it continued during all the rest of her life. *Petit*—Child—was my name, *Maman*—Mamma—hers; and *Petit* and *Maman* we remained, even when the course of time had all but effaced the difference of our ages. These two names seem to me marvelously well to express our tone toward each other, the simplicity of our manners, and, more than all, the relation of our hearts. She was to me the tenderest of mothers, never seeking her own pleasure, but ever my welfare; and if the senses had anything to do with my attachment for her, it was not to change its nature, but only to render it more exquisite, and intoxicate me with the charm of having a young and pretty mamma whom it was delightful for me to caress. I say quite literally, to caress; for it never entered into her head to deny me the tenderest maternal kisses and endearments, nor into my heart to abuse them. Some may say that, in the end, quite other relations subsisted between us. I grant it; but have patience—I cannot tell everything at once.

With Madame de Warens, Rousseau's relations, as is intimated above, became licentious. This

continued until, after an interval of years (nine years, with breaks), in a fit of jealousy he forsook her. Rousseau's whole life was a series of self-indulgences, groveling, sometimes, beyond what is conceivable to any one not learning of it all in detail from the man's own pen. The reader is fain at last to seek the only relief possible from the sickening story, by flying to the conclusion that Jean Jacques Rousseau, with all his genius, was wanting in that mental sanity which is a condition of complete moral responsibility.

We shall, of course, not follow the "Confessions" through their disgusting recitals of sin and shame. We should do wrong, however, to the literary, and even to the moral, character of the work, were we not to point out that there are frequent oases of sweetness and beauty set in the wastes of incredible foulness which overspread so widely the pages of Rousseau's "Confessions." Here, for example, is an idyll of vagabondage that might almost make one willing to play tramp one's self, if one by so doing might have such an experience:

> I remember, particularly, having passed a delicious night without the city on a road that skirted the Rhone or the Saône, for I cannot remember which. On the other side were terraced gardens. It had been a very warm day; the evening was charming; the dew moistened the faded grass; a calm night, without a breeze; the air was cool without being cold; the sun in setting had left

> crimson vapors in the sky, which tinged the water with its roseate hue, while the trees along the terrace were filled with nightingales gushing out melodious answers to each other's song. I walked along in a species of ecstasy, giving up heart and senses to the enjoyment of the scene, only slightly sighing with regret at enjoying it alone. Absorbed in my sweet reverie, I prolonged my walk far into the night, without perceiving that I was wearied out. At length I discovered it. I lay voluptuously down on the tablet of a sort of niche or false door sunk in the terrace wall. The canopy of my couch was formed by the over-arching boughs of the trees; a nightingale sat exactly above me; its song lulled me to sleep; my slumber was sweet, and my awaking still more so. It was broad day; my eyes, on opening, fell on the water, the verdure, and the admirable landscape spread out before me. I arose and shook off dull sleep; and, growing hungry, I gayly directed my steps toward the city, bent on transforming two *pieces de six blancs*, that I had left, into a good breakfast. I was so cheerful that I went singing along the whole way.

This happy-go-lucky, vagabond, grown-up child, this sentimentalist of genius, had now and then different experiences—experiences to which the reflection of the man grown old attributes important influence on the formation of his most controlling beliefs:

One day, among others, having purposely turned aside to get a closer view of a spot that appeared worthy of all admiration, I grew so delighted with it, and wandered round it so often, that I at length lost myself completely. After several hours of useless walking, weary and faint with hunger and thirst, I entered a peasant's hut which did not present a very promising appearance, but it was the only one I saw around. I conceived it to be here as at Geneva and throughout Switzerland, where all the inhabitants in easy circumstances are in the situation to exercise hospitality. I entreated the man to get me some dinner, offering to pay for it. He presented me with some skimmed milk and coarse barley bread, observing that that was all he had. I drank the milk with delight, and ate the bread, chaff and all; but this was not very restorative to a man exhausted with fatigue. The peasant, who was watching me narrowly, judged of the truth of my story by the sincerity of my appetite. All of a sudden, after having said that he saw perfectly well that I was a good and true young fellow that did not come to betray him, he opened a little trap-door by the side of his kitchen, went down and returned a moment afterward with a good brown loaf of pure wheat, the remains of a toothsome ham, and a bottle of wine, the sight of which rejoiced my heart more than all the rest. To these he added a good thick omelette, and I made such a dinner as none but a walker ever enjoyed. When it came to pay, lo! his disquietude and fears again seized him; he would none of my money, and rejected it with extraordinary manifestations of disquiet. The funniest part of the

> matter was, that I could not conceive what he was afraid of. At length, with fear and trembling, he pronounced those terrible words, *Commissioners* and *Cellar-rats*. He gave me to understand that he concealed his wine because of the excise, and his bread on account of the tax, and that he was a lost man if they got the slightest inkling that he was not dying of hunger. Everything he said to me touching this matter, whereof, indeed, I had not the slightest idea, produced an impression on me that can never be effaced. It became the germ of that inextinguishable hatred that afterward sprang up in my heart against the vexations to which these poor people are subject, and against their oppressors. This man, though in easy circumstances, dared not eat the bread he had gained by the sweat of his brow, and could escape ruin only by presenting the appearance of the same misery that reigned around him.

A hideously false world, that world of French society was, in Rousseau's time. The falseness was full ripe to be laid bare by some one; and Rousseau's experience of life, as well as his temperament and his genius, fitted him to do the work of exposure that he did. What one emphatically calls character was sadly wanting in Rousseau—how sadly, witness such an acted piece of mad folly as the following:

> I, without knowing aught of the matter, ... gave myself out for a [musical] composer. Nor was this

all: having been presented to M. de Freytorens, law professor, who loved music, and gave concerts at his house, nothing would do but I must give him a sample of my talent; so I set about composing a piece for his concert quite as boldly as though I had really been an adept in the science. I had the constancy to work for fifteen days on this fine affair, to copy it fair, write out the different parts, and distribute them with as much assurance as though it had been a masterpiece of harmony. Then, what will scarcely be believed, but which yet is gospel truth, worthily to crown this sublime production I tacked to the end thereof a pretty minuet which was then having a run on the streets.... I gave it as my own just as resolutely as though I had been speaking to inhabitants of the moon.

They assembled to perform my piece. I explain to each the nature of the movement, the style of execution, and the relations of the parts—I was very full of business. For five or six minutes they were tuning; to me each minute seemed an age. At length, all being ready, I rap with a handsome paper *bâton* on the leader's desk the five or six beats of the "*Make ready*." Silence is made—I gravely set to beating time—they commence! No, never since French operas began, was there such a *charivari* heard. Whatever they might have thought of my pretended talent, the effect was worse than they could possibly have imagined. The musicians choked with laughter; the auditors opened their eyes and would fain have closed their ears. But that was an impossibility. My tormenting set of symphonists,

who seemed rather to enjoy the fun, scraped away with a din sufficient to crack the tympanum of one born deaf. I had the firmness to go right ahead, however, sweating, it is true, at every pore, but held back by shame; not daring to retreat, and glued to the spot. For my consolation I heard the company whispering to each other, quite loud enough for it to reach my ear: “It is not bearable!” said one. “What music gone mad!” cried another. “What a devilish din!” added a third. Poor Jean Jacques, little dreamedst thou, in that cruel moment, that one day before the king of France and all the court, thy sounds would excite murmurs of surprise and applause, and that in all the boxes around thee the loveliest ladies would burst forth with, “What charming sounds! what enchanting music! every strain reaches the heart!”

But what restored every one to good humor was the minuet. Scarcely had they played a few measures than I heard bursts of laughter break out on all hands. Every one congratulated me on my fine musical taste; they assured me that this minuet would make me spoken about, and that I merited the louded praises. I need not attempt depicting my agony, nor own that I well deserved it.

Readers have now had an opportunity to judge for themselves, by specimen, of the style, both of the writer and of the man Jean Jacques Rousseau. The writer’s style they must have felt even through the medium of imperfect anonymous translation, to be a charming one. If they have felt the style of the man

to be contrasted, as squalor is contrasted with splendor, that they must not suppose to be a contrast of which Jean Jacques himself, the confessor, was in the least displacently conscious. Far from it. In the latter part of his "Confessions," a part that deals with the author as one already now acknowledged a power in the world of letters, though with all his chief works still to write, Rousseau speaks thus of himself (he was considering at the time the ways and means available to him of obtaining a livelihood):

> I felt that writing for bread would soon have extinguished my genius, and destroyed my talents, which were less in my pen than in my heart, and solely proceeded from an elevated and noble manner of thinking.... It is too difficult to think nobly when we think for a livelihood.

Is not that finely said? And one need not doubt that it was said with perfect sincerity. For our own part, paradoxical though it be to declare it, we are wholly willing to insist that Rousseau did think on a lofty plane. The trouble with him was, not that he thus thought with his heart, rather than with his head—which, however, he did—but that he thought with his heart alone, and not at all with his conscience and his will. In a word, his thought was sentiment rather than thought. He was a sentimentalist instead of a thinker. One illustration of the divorce that he decreed for himself, or rather —for we have used too positive a form of expression

—that he allowed to subsist, between sentiment and conduct, will suffice. It was presently to be his fortune, as author of a tract on education (the "Emile"), to change the habit of a nation in the matter of the nurture for babes. French mothers of the higher social class in Rousseau's time almost universally gave up their infants to be nursed at alien bosoms. Rousseau so eloquently denounced the unnaturalness of this, that from his time it became the fashion for French mothers to suckle their children themselves. Meantime, the preacher himself of this beautiful humanity, living in unwedded union with a woman (not Madame de Warens, but a woman of the laboring class, found after Madame de Warens was abandoned), sent his illegitimate children, against the mother's remonstrance, one after another, to the number of five, to be brought up unknown at the hospital for foundlings! He tells the story himself in his "Confessions." This course on his own part he subsequently laments with many tears and many self-upbraidings. But these, alas, he intermingles with self-justifications, nearly as many —so that at last it is hard to say whether the balance of his judgment inclines for or against himself in the matter. A paradox of inconsistencies and self-contradictions, this man—a problem in human character, of which the supposition of partial insanity in him, long working subtly in the blood, seems the only solution. The occupation finally adopted by Rousseau for obtaining subsistence was the copying of music. It extorts from one a measure

of involuntary respect for Rousseau, to see patiently toiling at this slavish work, to earn its owner bread, the same pen which had lately set all Europe in ferment with the “Emile” and “The Social Contract.”

From Rousseau’s “Confessions,” we have not room to purvey further. It is a melancholy book—written under monomaniac suspicion on the part of the author that he was the object of a wide-spread conspiracy against his reputation, his peace of mind, and even his life. The poor, shattered, self-consumed sensualist and sentimentalist paid dear in the agonies of his closing years for the indulgences of an unregulated life. The tender-hearted, really affectionate, and loyal friend came at length to live in a world of his own imagination, full of treachery to himself. David Hume, the Scotchman, tried to befriend him; but the monomaniac was incapable of being befriended. Nothing could be more pitiful than were the decline and the extinction that occurred of so much brilliant genius, and so much lovable character. It is even doubtful whether Rousseau did not at last take his own life. The voice of accusation is silenced in the presence of an earthly retribution so dreadful. One may not indeed approve, but one may at least be free to pity, more than he blames, in judging Rousseau.

Accompanying, and in some sort complementing the “Confessions,” are often published several detached pieces called “Reveries,” or “Walks.” These are very peculiar compositions, and very

characteristic of the author. They are dreamy meditations or reveries, sad, even somber, in spirit, but “beautiful exceedingly,” in form of expression. Such works as the “René” of Chateaubriand, works but too abundant since in French literature, must all trace their pedigree to Rousseau’s “Walks.”

This author’s books in general are now little read. They worked their work and ceased. But there are in some of them passages that continue to live. Of these, perhaps quite the most famous is the “Savoyard Curate’s Confession of Faith,” a document of some length, incorporated into the “Émile.” This, taken as a whole, is the most seductively eloquent argument against Christianity that perhaps ever was written. It contains, however, concessions to the sublime elevation of Scripture and to the unique virtue and majesty of Jesus, which are often quoted, and which will bear quoting here. The Savoyard Curate is represented speaking to a young friend as follows:—

> I will confess to you further, that the majesty of the Scriptures strikes me with admiration, as the purity of the gospel hath its influence on my heart. Peruse the works of our philosophers with all their pomp of diction; how mean, how contemptible, are they, compared with the Scripture! Is it possible that a book at once so simple and sublime should be merely the work of man? Is it possible that the Sacred Personage, whose history it contains, should be himself a mere man? Do we find that he assumed

the tone of an enthusiast or ambitious sectary? What sweetness, what purity, in his manners! What an affecting gracefulness in his delivery! What sublimity in his maxims! What profound wisdom in his discourses! What presence of mind, what subtilty, what truth, in his replies! How great the command over his passions! Where is the man, where the philosopher, who could so live and die, without weakness and without ostentation? When Plato described his imaginary good man loaded with all the shame of guilt, yet meriting the highest reward of virtue, he described exactly the character of Jesus Christ: the resemblance was so striking that all the Fathers perceived it.

What prepossession, what blindness, must it be to compare the son of Sophroniscus to the Son of Mary! What an infinite disproportion there is between them! Socrates, dying without pain or ignominy, easily supported his character to the last; and if his death, however easy, had not crowned his life, it might have been doubted whether Socrates, with all his wisdom, was anything more than a vain sophist. He invented, it is said, the theory of morals. Others, however, had before put them in practice; he had only to say what they had done, and reduce their examples to precepts. Aristides had been *just* before Socrates defined justice; Leonidas gave up his life for his country before Socrates declared patriotism to be a duty; the Spartans were a sober people before Socrates recommended sobriety; before he had even defined virtue Greece abounded in virtuous men. But where could Jesus learn, among his compatriots,

that pure and sublime morality of which he only has given us both precept and example? The greatest wisdom was made known amidst the most bigoted fanaticism, and the simplicity of the most heroic virtues did honor to the vilest people on the earth. The death of Socrates, peaceably philosophizing with his friends, appears the most agreeable that could be wished for; that of Jesus, expiring in the midst of agonizing pains, abused, insulted, cursed by a whole nation, is the most horrible that could be feared. Socrates, in receiving the cup of poison, blessed indeed the weeping executioner who administered it; but Jesus, in the midst of excruciating tortures, prayed for his merciless tormentors. Yes, if the life and death of Socrates are those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God. Shall we suppose the evangelic history a mere fiction? Indeed, my friend, it bears not the marks of fiction; on the contrary, the history of Socrates, which nobody presumes to doubt, is not so well attested as that of Jesus Christ. Such a supposition, in fact, only shifts the difficulty without removing it; it is more inconceivable that a number of persons should agree to write such a history, than that one only should furnish the subject of it. The Jewish authors were incapable of the diction, and strangers to the morality contained in the Gospel, the marks of whose truth are so striking and inimitable that the inventor would be a more astonishing character than the hero.

So far in eloquent ascription of incomparable

excellence to the Bible and to the Founder of Christianity. But then immediately Rousseau's Curate proceeds:—

> And yet, with all this, the same Gospel abounds with incredible relations, with circumstances repugnant to reason, and which it is impossible for a man of sense either to conceive or admit.

The compliment to Christianity almost convinces you—until suddenly you are apprised that the author of the compliment was not convinced himself!

Jean Jacques Rousseau, in the preface to his "Confessions," appealed from the judgment of men to the judgment of God. This judgment it was his habit, to the end of his days, thanks to the effect of his early Genevan education, always to think of as certainly impending. Let us adjourn our final sentence upon him until we hear that Omniscient award.

In pendant to what we have said and have shown of Rousseau, some notice may here properly be given of another celebrated writer, or writer perhaps we should say of a celebrated book, who stands to Rousseau in the relation of sequel and echo. We mean ST. PIERRE, the author of "Paul and Virginia."

This is a very famous little classic. It is a kind of prose idyll, a pastoral of lowly and simple life, a life

lived by the subjects of it in the spirit of return to the conditions of nature, such as Jean Jacques Rousseau idealized the conditions of nature to be. The author's own personal experience furnished him the hint, the ground, and the material, of his bucolic romance. It had happened to St. Pierre, in the course of a somewhat fruitless and vagabond life, to be sent in an official capacity to Mauritius, or the Isle of France. In this remote island, as in a kind of Utopia, the scene of the story of "Paul and Virginia" is laid.

St. Pierre was already thirty-one years old when he took his distant voyage; he stayed three years in Mauritius, and then he waited sixteen years, becoming therefore, fifty years old, before he made use of what he had experienced in publishing his romance of "Paul and Virginia." He had meantime seen a great deal of Rousseau during the latter's declining years, and from him had learned that art of writing by virtue of which he was destined to constitute the second of succession in a literary line to be continued after him in Chateaubriand and Lamartine, in Madame de Stael and George Sand.

It is the historical importance thus attaching to St. Pierre's name, even more perhaps than it is the merit and the fame of his books, or of his book—for of his books other than "Paul and Virginia," we need not trouble our readers with even the titles—that warrants us in listing him, as we do, among the select "immortals" of French literature. St. Pierre's distinguishing note was the supposed return to

nature and to natural unsophisticated sentiment accomplished in his writings.

But the return, with him, was by no means completely satisfactory. There was always something unreal in St. Pierre's passion for nature; and the feeling with which he wrote seems, to us of to-day, to have been neither very deep nor very sincere. Still, all was accepted and was highly effective in its time; Europe was flooded with tears in reading "Paul and Virginia," much as afterward it was flooded with tears in reading an equally notable, but far less wholesome book, that prose masterpiece of the youthful Goethe, "The Sorrows of Werther." The "Corinne" of Madame de Stael afterward, later the "Jocelyn" of Lamartine, later again the passionate earlier novels of George Sand, served to their respective fresh generations of readers a somewhat similar office, that of stimulating and of expressing the vague longing and aspiration of youth.

The plot of "Paul and Virginia" is simplicity itself. Two young French widows—widows we may euphemistically call the women both, though the mother of Paul had never been married—meet, strangers to each other, in Mauritius, and their children, Paul and Virginia respectively, grow up from babyhood together, as if brother and sister, in a state of nature such as never was anywhere in the world outside of a romance, until at last, Virginia undertaking a vain voyage to France to bring round a rich alienated aunt of her mother's, perishes by

shipwreck on her return; in prompt sequel of which calamity, all the remaining personages of the tale, down to the very dog, naturally and sentimentally, one after another, die. The story is represented as told to a traveler in the Isle of France by a sympathetic old man who had been an eye-witness of all.

Two extracts, one from the beginning, and one from the end, of the romance, will sufficiently indicate its quality.

Paul and Virginia being now about twelve years of age, Virginia goes, accompanied by Paul, to restore to the master a runaway female slave to whom he had been cruel, and to intercede with him on the sufferer's behalf. She has accomplished her purpose, and the two have set out to return. They lose their way. This is the state of the case at the point at which our first extract begins, as follows:

> "God will have pity on us," replied Virginia; "he listens to the voice of the little birds which ask him for food." She had scarcely uttered these words when they heard the noise of water falling from a neighboring rock. They hastened to it, and, after having quenched their thirst at this spring clearer than crystal, they gathered and ate a few cresses which grew on its banks. As they were looking around them to find some more substantial nourishment, Virginia descried a young palm-tree among the trees of the wood. The cabbage which is

found at the top of this tree, inclosed within its leaves, is an excellent food; but although its stalk is not thicker than a man's leg it was more than sixty feet high. The wood of this tree is indeed composed only of a collection of filaments; but its internal bark is so hard that it blunts the sharpest hatchets, and Paul had not even a knife. He thought of setting fire to this palm-tree at its foot. Another difficulty—he had no steel to strike fire with, and besides, in this island so covered with rocks, I do not believe it would be possible to find a single flint. Necessity inspires industry, and often the most useful inventions have come from men reduced to extremity. Paul resolved to light a fire after the manner of the negroes. With the sharp end of a stone he made a small hole in the branch of a tree that was very dry, which he placed under his feet; he then with the edge of the stone made a point to another branch equally dry, but of a different kind of wood. He next placed the piece of pointed wood in the small hole of the branch which was under his feet, and turning it rapidly round in his hands, as one turns a mill to froth chocolate, he in a few moments perceived smoke and sparks arise from the point of contact. He collected together dry herbs and other branches of trees, and set fire to the foot of the palm-tree, which soon afterward fell with a violent noise. The fire served him also in stripping the cabbage of the long woody and prickly leaves which enclosed it. Virginia and he ate a part of this cabbage raw, and the rest cooked in the ashes, and they found them equally agreeable to the taste.... After their meal ... an hour of walking brought them

to the banks of a large river, which barred their way.... The noise of its waters terrified Virginia; she dared not try to ford it. Paul accordingly took Virginia on his back, and passed thus laden over the slippery rocks of the river, regardless of the turbulence of the waters. “Fear not,” said he to her; “I feel myself very strong with you.” ... When Paul had passed over, and was on the bank, he wished to continue his journey laden with his sister, flattering himself that he could ascend in that manner the mountain of the Three Peaks, which he saw before him at the distance of half a league; but his strength soon began to fail, and he was obliged to set her on the ground and to throw himself down beside her.... Virginia plucked from an old tree, which hung over the banks of the river, some long leaves of hart’s tongue which hung down from its trunk. She made of these a kind of buskins with which she bound her feet, which the stones of the way had caused to bleed, for in her hurry to do good she had forgotten to put on her shoes. Feeling herself relieved by the freshness of the leaves she broke off a branch of bamboo and began to walk, leaning with one hand on the cane and with the other on her brother.

In this manner they walked on slowly through the woods; but the height of the trees and the thickness of their foliage made them soon lose sight of the mountain of the Three Peaks, by which they had directed themselves, and even of the sun, which was already setting. After some time they quitted, without perceiving it, the beaten path which they had till then followed, and found themselves in a

labyrinth of trees, shrubs, and rocks, which had no farther outlet. Paul made Virginia sit down, and ran almost distracted in search of a path out of this thick wood; but he wearied himself in vain. He climbed to the top of a lofty tree, to discover at least the mountain of the Three Peaks, but he could perceive nothing around him but tops of trees, some of which were illuminated by the last rays of the setting sun. Already the shadow of the mountains covered the forests in the valleys; the wind was going down, as is usual at sunset; a profound silence reigned in these solitudes, and no noise was heard but the cry of the stags who came to seek repose in these unfrequented recesses. Paul, in the hope that some hunter might hear him, cried out as loud as he could: “Come! Come! and help Virginia!” But only the echoes of the forest answered to his voice and repeated several times successively: “Virginia! Virginia!”

Paul now descended from the tree, overcome with fatigue and disappointment; ... he began to weep. Virginia said to him: “Do not weep, my dear, unless you wish to overwhelm me with grief.... O! I have been very imprudent.” And she began to shed tears. Nevertheless, she said to Paul, “Let us pray to God, my brother, and he will have pity on us.” Scarcely had they finished their prayer when they heard the barking of a dog.... “I believe,” said Virginia, “it is Fidèle, our house-dog.”

Of course all turned out happily. A rescue party had come in search of the estray, and they were soon

brought with rejoicing home.

Such as the foregoing passage will have served to show is the charm of unfallen simplicity and innocence represented by St. Pierre to have been cast, forming as if an Eden in the wilderness, about these happy children of nature on whom society had had no chance to exercise its baneful power. True, they suffered, though in Eden. True, others sinned, as well as suffered, about them, for there was slavery and there was cruelty; but that was in the wilderness outside; in Eden they did not sin. It was all Rousseauism in experiment and reduced to absurdity. By Rousseauism we indicate the doctrinal dream of that dreamer; by no means the actual waking practice of the man that dreamed.

It may seem a strange marring of the idea of a sufficiency in nature, let nature but be unhindered by society, to renew the world in the purity of paradise, that the end of the idyll of Paul and Virginia should have come about through an effort on the part of Virginia's mother, made quite in the spirit of the present artificial order of things, to secure a bequest from an aunt of hers in France, whom the niece had offended by marrying as she did; but so it was. Virginia undertakes the necessary voyage, and, as we have already said, perishes by shipwreck on the coast of Mauritius in returning. The heart-rending agony of the final catastrophe we have no space to exhibit. The author seems to hint that Virginia might have been saved, could she have brought herself to assent

to the desire of an entreating honest stalwart seaman that she should disembarrass her person of her clothes. It is almost the step taken from the sublime to the ridiculous for the author to make his heroine perish thus as a martyr to her own invincible modesty.

The bereaved mother has visions of her departed daughter's accomplished felicity in the world unseen. These she describes to the neighbor, who, a venerable old man, tells the traveler the tale. Now for the final extract from the text of the book:

> "O my worthy neighbor!" said she [Paul's mother] to me [the old man who tells the whole story]: "I thought last night I beheld Virginia clothed in white, in the midst of groves and delicious gardens. She said to me: 'I enjoy the most desirable happiness.' Then she approached Paul with a smiling air and bore him away with her. As I endeavored to retain my son I felt that I myself was quitting the earth, and that I was following him with inexpressible pleasure. I then wished to bid my friend farewell, when I perceived her following us with Mary and Domingo. [These are negro slaves of the two mothers.] But what seems still more strange is, that Madame de la Tour [Virginia's mother] had the same night a dream attended with similar circumstances."
>
> I replied to her, "My friend, I believe that nothing happens in the world without the permission of God. Dreams do sometimes foretell the truth."

Madame de la Tour related to me that the same night she had also had a dream entirely similar. I had never observed in these two ladies the least propensity to superstition; I was therefore struck with the resemblance of their dreams, and I had no doubt but that they would be soon realized. This opinion, that truth sometimes presents itself to us during our sleep, is generally spread among all the nations of the earth. The most illustrious men of antiquity have entertained it, amongst others, Alexander, Cæsar, the Scipios, the two Catos, and Brutus, who were by no means inclined to superstition. The Old and the New Testament supply us with a variety of examples of dreams that have been realized....

But whether this opinion concerning dreams be true or not, those of my unfortunate friends were speedily realized. Paul died two months after the death of his dear Virginia, whose name he incessantly pronounced. Margaret [Paul's mother] beheld her end approach a week after that of her son with a joy which virtue only can feel. She bade Madame de la Tour the most tender farewell, "in the hope," she said, "of a sweet and eternal reunion. Death is the greatest of all blessings," added she; "we ought to desire it. If life be a punishment we ought to wish for its end; if it be a trial, we should wish it short."

The governor took care of Domingo and Mary, who were no longer able to labor, and who did not long survive their mistresses. As for poor Fidèle, he

pined away about the same time as he lost his master.

I conducted Madame de la Tour to my house. She bore up under these heavy afflictions with an incredible fortitude of mind. She had comforted Paul and Margaret up to their last moments, as if she had only their misfortune to support. When she no longer beheld them, she spoke of them every day as of beloved friends who were in the neighborhood. She survived them, however, but a month....

The body of Paul was placed by the side of Virginia, at the foot of the same bamboos; and near the same spot the remains of their tender mothers and their faithful servants were laid. No marble was raised over their humble turf, no inscription engraved to celebrate their virtues; but their memory remains indelible in the hearts of those whom they have assisted.

If we have treated somewhat lightly this romance of sentimentalism and of naturalism it is because of the taint of ungenuineness—that is, of unreality more or less conscious on the author's part—that we seem to ourselves to discover in its pages. But the masterpiece of Bernardin de St. Pierre is after all a serious literary fact. For instance, if "Paul and Virginia" had never been written it is doubtful if we should ever have had that series of romantico-realistic little pieces of fiction from the pen of George Sand, out of one of which we shall presently exemplify this woman of genius to our readers. A

production in literature is to be judged not only by its own inherent quality, but also, perhaps not less by its entail of influence.

"Paul and Virginia," in becoming a school-book for the learning of French, may be said to have bought increase of celebrity at the price of some diminution in fame. In our own opinion, however, which, after all that we have said, hardly needs to be thus expressly stated, the book still remains quite as famous as its intrinsic merits entitle it to be. Its chief security of renown in the future lies, and will continue more and more to lie, in the striking fact of its renown in the past.

We formally part with Rousseau and with his first literary foster-child. But we shall trace their features still, again and again, persisting in authors to follow who could not escape a tell-tale impress, open to all to see, stamped from that singularly fecund, and singularly potent, literary paternity.

XVIII.

THE ENCYCLOPÆDISTS.

A CENOTAPH is a monument erected to the memory of one dead, but not marking the spot in which his remains rest. The present chapter is a

cenotaph to the French Encyclopædists. It is in the nature of a memorial of their literary work, but it will be found to contain no specimen extracts from their writings.

Everybody has heard of the Encyclopædists of France. Who are they? They are a group of men who, during the eighteenth century, associated themselves together for the production of a great work to be the repository of all human knowledge,—in one word, of an encyclopædia. The project was a laudable one; and the motive to it was laudable—in part. For there was mixture of motive in the case. In part, the motive was simple desire to advance the cause of human enlightenment; in part, however, the motive was desire to undermine Christianity. This latter end the encyclopædist collaborators may have thought to be an indispensable means subsidiary to the former end. They probably did think so—with such imperfect sincerity as is possible to those who set themselves, consciously or unconsciously, against God. The fact is, that the Encyclopædists came at length to be nearly as much occupied in extinguishing Christianity as in promoting public enlightenment. They went about this their task of destroying in a way as effective as has ever been devised for accomplishing a similar work. They gave a vicious turn of insinuation against Christianity to as many articles as possible. In the most unexpected places, throughout the entire work, pitfalls were laid of anti-Christian implication, awaiting the unwary

feet of the explorer of its pages. You were nowhere sure of your ground. The world has never before seen, it has never seen since, an example of propagandism altogether so adroit and so alert. It is not too much to say further that history can supply few instances of propagandism so successful. The Encyclopædists might almost be said to have given the human mind a fresh start and a new orbit. The fresh start is, perhaps, spent; the new orbit has at length, to a great extent, returned upon the old; but it holds true, nevertheless, that the Encyclopædists of France were for a time, and that not a short time, a prodigious force of impulsion and direction to the Occidental mind. It ought to be added that the aim of the Encyclopædists was political also, not less than religious. In truth, religion and politics, Church and State, in their day, and in France, were much the same thing. The "Encyclopædia" was as revolutionary in politics as it was atheistic in religion.

The leader in this movement of insurrectionary thought was Denis DIDEROT. Diderot (1713-1784) was born to be an encyclopædist, and a captain of encyclopædists. Force inexhaustible, and inexhaustible willingness to give out force; unappeasable curiosity to know; irresistible impulse to impart knowledge; versatile capacity to do every thing, carried to the verge, if not carried beyond the verge, of incapacity to do anything thoroughly well; quenchless zeal and quenchless hope; levity enough

of temper to keep its subject free from those depressions of spirit and those cares of conscience which weigh and wear on the overearnest man; abundant physical health—gifts such as these made up the manifold equipment of Diderot for rowing and steering the gigantic enterprise of the "Encyclopædia" triumphantly to the port of final completion, through many and many a zone of stormy adverse wind and sea, traversed on the way. Diderot produced no signal independent and original work of his own; probably he could not have produced such a work. On the other hand, it is simply just to say that hardly anybody but Diderot could have achieved the "Encyclopædia." That, indeed, may be considered an achievement not more to the glory than to the shame of its author; but whatever its true moral character, in whatever proportion shameful or glorious, it is inalienably and peculiarly Diderot's achievement—at least in this sense, that without Diderot the "Encyclopædia" would never have been achieved.

We have already, in discussing Voltaire, adverted sufficiently to Mr. John Morley's volumes in honor of Diderot and his compeers. Diderot is therein ably presented in the best possible light to the reader; and we are bound to say that, despite Mr. Morley's friendly endeavors, Diderot therein appears very ill. He married a young woman whose simple and touching self-sacrifice on her husband's behalf he presently requited by giving himself away, body and

soul, to a rival. In his writings he is so easily insincere that not unfrequently it is a problem, even for his biographer, to decide when he is expressing his sentiments truly and when not, insomuch that, once and again, Mr. Morley himself is obliged to say, "This is probably hypocritical on Diderot's part," or something to that effect. As for filthy communication out of his mouth and from his pen—not, of course, habitual, but occasional—the subject will not bear more than this mention. These be thy gods, O Atheism! one, in reading Mr. Morley on Diderot, is tempted again and again to exclaim. To offset such lowness of character in the man it must in justice be added that Diderot was, notwithstanding, of a generous, uncalculating turn of mind, not grudging, especially in intellectual relations, to give of his best to others, expecting nothing again. Diderot, too, as well as Voltaire, had his royal or imperial friends, in the notorious Empress Catherine of Russia, and in King Stanislaus of Poland. He visited Catherine once in her capital, and was there munificently entertained by her. She was regally pleased to humor this gentleman of France, permitting him to bring down his fist in gesture violently on the redoubtable royal knee, according to a pleasant way Diderot had of emphasizing a point in familiar conversation. His truest claim to praise for intellectual superiority is, perhaps, that he was a prolific begetter of wit in other men.

D'ALEMBERT (Jean le Rond, 1717-1783) was an

eminent mathematician. He wrote especially, though not at first exclusively, on mathematical subjects for the "Encyclopædia." He was, indeed, at the outset, published as mathematical editor of the work. His European reputation in science made his name a tower of strength to the "Encyclopædia,"—even after he ceased to be an editorial coadjutor in the enterprise. For there came a time when D'Alembert abdicated responsibility as editor and left the undertaking to fall heavily on the single shoulder, Atlantean shoulder it proved to be, of Diderot. The celebrated "Preliminary Discourse," prefixed to the "Encyclopædia," proceeded from the hand of D'Alembert. This has always been esteemed a masterpiece of comprehensive grasp and lucid exposition. A less creditable contribution of D'Alembert's to the "Encyclopædia" was his article on "Geneva," in the course of which, at the instance of Voltaire, who wanted a chance to have his plays represented in that city, he went out of his way to recommend to the Genevans that they establish for themselves a theater. This brought out Rousseau in an eloquent harangue against the theater as exerting influence to debauch public morals. D'Alembert, in the contest, did not carry off the honors of the day. D'Alembert's "Éloges," so called, a series of characterizations and appreciations written by the author in his old age, of members of the French Academy, enjoy deserved reputation for sagacious intellectual estimate, and for clear, though not supremely elegant, style of composition.

Diderot and D'Alembert are the only men whose names appear on the title-page of the "Encyclopædia;" but Voltaire, Rousseau, Turgot, Helvétius, Duclos, Condillac, Buffon, Grimm, Holbach, with many besides whom we must not stay even to mention, contributed to the work.

The influence of the "Encyclopædia," great during its day, is by no means yet exhausted. But it is an influence indirectly exerted, for the "Encyclopædia" itself has long been an obsolete work.

There is a legal maxim that the laws are silent when a state of war exists. Certainly, amid the madness of a revolution such as, during the closing years of the eighteenth century, the influence of Voltaire, Rousseau, and the Encyclopædists, with Beaumarchais, reacting against the accumulated political and ecclesiastical oppressions of ages, precipitated upon France, it might safely be assumed that letters would be silent. But the nation meantime was portentously preparing material for a literature which many wondering centuries to follow would occupy themselves with writing.

XIX.

MADAME DE STAEL.

1766-1817.

IN Madame de Stael we encounter a truly redoubtable figure in literature.

But Madame de Stael in her day seemed more than a writer, more even than a writer of what the Germans would call world-importance; she was, or she seemed, a prodigious living personal force. For her tongue was not less formidable than her pen. In truth, the fame of Madame de Stael is due to the twofold power which, during her life-time, she exercised, and exercised in very uncertain proportions, first perhaps as a talker and second as a writer. She is generally allowed, and that upon the most incontestable authority, to have been one of the most brilliant and most effective talkers in the history of the human race.

This power in Madame de Stael of personal impression you are not free to ascribe to any charm that she owned of physical beauty; for Madame de Stael was not a beautiful woman. By her friend, Madame Récamier, that charm was exercised to the full, and that charm Madame de Stael, did not despise. So far from it, she is said once (thus at least the present writer seems to remember, but he has been unable to verify his impression) passionately to have exclaimed that she would give all her genius for one evening of Madame Récamier's beauty. This was not the vanity on her part of wish to be admired. It was the pathos of longing to be loved. "Never,

never," she cried out in anguish, "I shall never be loved as I love." She was true woman after all; and it would be inexpiable wrong against her not to say this also, and say it with emphasis, however sharply we may be just in pronouncing the masculine strength of her character. The contrast was so obvious between Madame de Stael and Madame Récamier in point of mere personal charm that, in a moment evil for him, a gentleman once seated between them permitted himself the awkwardness of saying, in ill-advised intention of compliment to both, but with most unhappy chief effect to the contrary, alike on this side and on that, "How fortunate! I sit between Wit and Beauty." "Yes, and without possessing either the one or the other," retorted Wit, amply avenging herself for being reminded that she was not also Beauty. Madame de Stael had certainly justified one half of the gentleman's compliment; and Madame Récamier, with her serene ineffable charm, did not need to speak in order to justify the other.

It was, then, by the pure dry light of her intellect and her wit that Madame de Stael dazzled so in conversation—dazzled so, and so attracted. Wherever she was, there was the center. She made a *salon* anywhere, by simply being there. And Madame de Stael's *salon* was felt by the ruler of Europe to be a formidable political power implacably hostile to himself. "Somehow," said Napoleon, "I observe that, whatever is talked about at Madame de Stael's, those

who go there come away thinking less favorably of me." It seems to have been in part because she said nothing, and would say nothing, of Napoleon in her "Germany," that he finally suppressed that book. "You will speak ill of me when you get back to your academy," said to Plato the tyrant of Syracuse. "In the academy we shall not have time to speak of you at all," was the philosopher's reply.

Madame de Stael was singularly fortunate in heredity on both sides of her parentage. Her father was an eminent banker and minister of finance, who enjoyed the noblest and clearest renown as a man both of talent and of character. Her mother was that beautiful and gifted daughter of a Swiss pastor whom the historian Gibbon once thought he loved, but whom he dutifully gave up at the will of his father. "I sighed as a lover and obeyed as a son," Gibbon says in his "Autobiography." This was after years had passed with him—"years that bring the philosophic mind!" The obese but famous English historian, still a bachelor, was a frequent guest at the house of M. Necker, where he had the opportunity gallantly to admire the brilliant daughter of the woman who might have been his wife.

We have said enough to show that, with the exception of personal beauty, Madame de Stael enjoyed every external advantage that could help to give her a shining career. Her wealth was something more than a mere accessory advantage; she needed it to sustain her in the waste of money made necessary

by her wanderings through Europe to escape the tyrannous hand of Napoleon. Her exile was agony to her, for she loved France, and she loved Paris with inextinguishable affection. It is impossible to deny to the obstinacy that refused to burn even a pinch of incense to the god of her nation's idolatry, for the sake of permission to return to every thing that she loved—it is impossible, we say, to deny to this obstinacy in Madame de Stael the title of a true and heroic virtue.

How costly-brave was the attitude that Madame de Stael steadfastly kept toward Napoleon, during the fifteen years of his unparalleled sway, may be guessed from the account that she gives of the unnerving, the prostrating effect upon her of the presence, the character, and the genius of that extraordinary man. In her "Reflections on the French Revolution" she has the following passage, almost equally striking whether taken as a description or as a confession:

Far from gaining re-assurance in meeting Buonaparte oftener, he intimidated me daily more and more. I confusedly felt that no emotion of the heart could possibly take effect upon him. He looks upon a human being as a fact or as a thing, but not as a fellow-creature. He does not hate any more than he loves; there is nothing for him but himself; all other beings are so many ciphers. The force of his will lies in the imperturbable calculation of his selfishness.... His successes are as much to be credited to the qualities which he lacks as to the talents which he possesses. Neither pity, nor attraction, nor religion, nor attachment to any idea whatsoever, could make him swerve from the main path he had chosen. Every time I heard him talk I was struck with his superiority; this, however, had no resemblance to the superiority of men trained and cultivated by study or by society, a class of which England and France can offer examples. But his courses of remark indicated a tact for seizing upon circumstances like that which the hunter has for seizing upon his prey. Sometimes he recounted the political and military incidents of his life in a manner to interest greatly; he had even, in narrations that admitted gayety, a trace of Italian imagination. Still, nothing could get the better of my revulsion for what I perceived in him. I felt, in his soul, a sword, cold and cutting, that froze while it wounded; I felt, in his mind, a fundamental irony from which nothing great, nothing beautiful, not his own glory even, could escape; for he despised the

> nation whose suffrages he sought; and no single spark of enthusiasm mixed with his wish to astonish mankind.
>
> It was during the interval between the return of Buonaparte (from Italy), and his setting out for Egypt toward the end of 1787, that I several times saw him in Paris; and never could I overcome the difficulty which I experienced in breathing in his presence. I was one day seated at table between him and the Abbé Sieyès; singular situation, could I have foreseen the future! [Sieyès, two years later, became one in a triumvirate of "consuls," of whom Napoleon was another.] I scrutinized carefully the face of Napoleon; but every time he detected my observing glances he had the art to rob his eyes of all expression, as if they were changed to marble. His countenance was then immobile, save a vague smile that he brought upon his lips at a venture, in order to throw out any one who might wish to mark the external signs of his thought.

It was not a light thing, and Madame de Stael did not feel it a light thing, to hold out as she did, never once dipping her colors, against the will and the power of the man whom she thus describes.

This passionate woman of genius, twice linked by marriage in a union marked by violent and opposite disparities of age—for the second husband was as much younger as the first was older than she—sought satisfaction for her hungry desire of love in "relations," if not ambiguous, at least apparently

ambiguous, with men other than her husbands. One of these men was Benjamin Constant, whose conversational powers, exercised in partnership, never in rivalship, with Madame de Stael, helped make the society in which they shone as twin stars together, the admiration, the envy, the despair, of cultivated Europe. Benjamin Constant, as Madame de Stael's companion of travel in Germany, was no doubt part, though August Wilhelm Schlegel was part still greater, of the vitalizing intellectual influence that helped her produce her work on that country. Schlegel, by the way, had previously accompanied Madame de Stael in that Italian tour and sojourn of hers, the fruit of which was the novel, or the book of travels, or both in one, entitled "Corinne." This book was the first of her books to give its author a European fame. Besides being studied as a text-book in the schools, "Corinne" is still read as a production important in literary history.

The "De l'Allemagne" (literally "Concerning Germany") is generally esteemed the masterpiece of its author. From this we draw our illustrations by specimen of the literary quality of Madame de Stael. The "Germany" may be said to have first introduced that country to France, almost to Europe in general. Its scope is comprehensive. It describes Germany in a great variety of aspects; but it is on the literature of Germany that it expends its strength.

Madame de Stael's "Preface" to her "Germany,"

written in England, where, after its arbitrary suppression in France, the volume was finally published, is an interesting bit of reading. Witness one or two extracts:

> My bookseller took upon himself the responsibility of the publication of my book, after submitting it to the censors....
>
> At the moment when the work was about to appear, and when the 10,000 copies of the first edition had been actually printed off, the minister of the police, known under the name of General Savary, sent his officers to the bookseller's, with orders to tear the whole edition in pieces, and to place sentinels at the different entrances to the warehouse, for fear a single copy of this dangerous writing should escape.

What a glimpse is there incidentally afforded of the intolerable despotism of Napoleon!

Madame de Stael thinks silently of her lovely and beloved friend Madame Récamier, who had suffered from Napoleon by her relation with the exiled woman of letters, when still in her preface she writes:

> Some of my friends were banished, because they had had the generosity to come and see me; this was too much: to carry with us the contagion of misfortune, not to dare to associate with those we

> love, to be afraid to write to them, or pronounce their names, to be the object by turns, either of affectionate attentions which make us tremble for those who show them, or of those refinements of baseness which terror inspires, is a situation from which every one, who still values life, would withdraw!

We advance into the body of the work.

The German Lessing had himself found in his literary countrymen the same fault that Madame de Stael, near the beginning of her book, points out as follows:

> In literature, as in politics, the Germans have too much respect for foreigners, and not enough of national prejudices. In individuals it is a virtue, this denial of self, and this esteem of others; but the patriotism of nations ought to be selfish.

Bismarck and Moltke in politics and in war, Herman Grimm, for example, in literature, with his appalling claim for Goethe's "Faust," as the "greatest work of the greatest poet of all nations and times," have lately "changed all that." The fault of Germany now is not over-modesty.

The boundless freedom, nay, audacity, of speculative thought indulged by the Germans is stimulantly contrasted with their strangely contented subserviency (which then was) in more material

matters. The sentence we italicize below was canceled by Napoleon's censors, before their master took the shorter method of canceling the book:

> The enlightened men of Germany dispute vehemently among themselves the dominion of speculations, and will suffer no shackles in this department; but they give up, without difficulty, all that is real in life to the powerful of the earth. *This real in life, so disdained by them, finds, however, those who make themselves possessors of it, and these, in the end, carry trouble and constraint even into the empire of the imagination.*

The following passage concerning Voltaire and a particular production of his pen is one of the most trenchantly critical expressions that the reader would find in the whole course of the "Germany." The German name of Leibnitz occurring in it will suggest the association of contrast by which such a criticism of a Frenchman found its way into a book treating of things German. Leibnitz had propounded a metaphysical theory of universal optimism, which—like all philosophic hypotheses, even those apparently least practical, let them once become widely entertained—was having its influence on national thought and national character. With Voltaire's "Candide" the readers of this volume will already have acquired sufficient acquaintance to make Madame de Stael's remarks upon it here

presented additionally interesting:

> Voltaire so well perceived the influence that metaphysics exercise over the general bias of men's minds that to combat Leibnitz he wrote *Candide*. He took up a curious whim against final causes, optimism, free will, in short, against all the philosophical opinions that exalt the dignity of man; and he composed *Candide*, that work of a diabolical gayety, for it appears to be written by a being of a different nature from ourselves, insensible to our condition, well pleased with our sufferings, and laughing like a demon or an ape at the miseries of that human species with which he has nothing in common....
>
> *Candide* brings into action that scoffing philosophy, so indulgent in appearance, in reality so ferocious; it presents human nature under the most lamentable point of view, and offers us, in the room of every consolation, the sardonic grin which frees us from all compassion for others by making us renounce it for ourselves.

When Madame de Stael comes in due course to speak of the masterpiece of Goethe, his "Faust," she prepares her French readers to be shocked with a first disappointment. She says:

> Certainly we must not expect to find in it either taste, or measure, or the art that selects and terminates, but if the imagination could figure to

itself an intellectual chaos, such as the material chaos has often been described, the *Faust* of Goethe should in propriety have been composed at that epoch.... The drama of *Faust* certainly is not a good model. Whether it be considered as an offspring of the delirium of the mind, or of the satiety of reason, it is to be wished that such productions may not be multiplied; but when such a genius as that of Goethe sets itself free from all restrictions the crowd of thoughts is so great that on every side they break through and trample down the barriers of art.

We close our series of extracts by giving what this most brilliant among the French women that have been at the same time great talkers and great writers found to say of that high art of conversation in which her countrymen surpass the world and in which she surpassed her countrymen:

The *bon-mots* of the French have been quoted from one end of Europe to the other. Always they have displayed the brilliancy of their merit and solaced their griefs in a lively and agreeable manner; always they have stood in need of one another, as listeners taking turns in mutual encouragement; always they have excelled in the art of knowing under what circumstances to speak, and even under what circumstances to keep still, when any commanding interest triumphs over their natural liveliness; always they have possessed the talent of living a quick life, of cutting short long discourses, of giving way to their successors who are desirous of speaking

in their turn; always, in short, they have known how to take from thought and feeling no more than is necessary to animate conversation without overstaking the feeble interest which men generally feel for one another.

The French are in the habit of treating their own misfortunes lightly from the fear of fatiguing their friends; they guess the weariness which they would occasion by that which they would experience.... The desire of appearing amiable induces men to assume an expression of gayety, whatever may be the inward disposition of the soul; the physiognomy by degrees influences the feelings, and that which we do for the purpose of pleasing others soon takes off the edge of our own individual sufferings.

A sensible woman has said that Paris is, of all the world, the place where men can most easily dispense with being happy. [The foregoing italicized passage was, Madame de Stael says, "suppressed by the literary censorship under the pretext that there was so much happiness in Paris now that there was no need of doing without it."] ... But nothing can metamorphose a city of Germany into Paris.

... To succeed in conversation one must be able clearly to observe the impression produced at each moment on people, that which they wish to conceal, that which they seek to exaggerate, the inward satisfaction of some, the forced smile of others; one may see passing over the countenances of those who listen half formed censures which may be evaded by hastening to dissipate them before self-love is

engaged on their side. One may also behold there the first birth of approbation, which may be strengthened without, however, exacting from it more than it is willing to bestow. There is no arena in which vanity displays itself in such a variety of forms as in conversation.

I once knew a man who was agitated by praise to such a degree that whenever it was bestowed upon him he exaggerated what he had just said and took such pains to add to his success that he always ended in losing it. I never dared to applaud him from the fear of leading him to affectation and of his making himself ridiculous by the heartiness of his self-love. Another was so afraid of the appearance of wishing to display himself that he let fall words negligently and contemptuously; his assumed indolence only betrayed one more affectation, that of pretending to have none. When vanity displays herself, she is good-natured; when she hides herself, the fear of being discovered renders her sour, and she affects indifference, satiety, in short, whatever may persuade other men that she has no need of them. These different combinations are amusing for the observers, and one is always astonished that self-love does not take the course, which is so simple, of naturally avowing its desire to please, and making the utmost possible use of grace and truth to attain the object.

There is something in the foregoing strain of ascription from Madame de Stael to the social virtues of the French which recalls that remarkable

character given by Pericles, in his noble funeral oration reported by Thucydides, to the national spirit and habit of the Athenians in contrast with those of their Spartan neighbors and enemies.

If of Madame de Stael the woman we shall in any respect have failed to give a just idea, it will be by not having adequately represented the generosity of her character. Her desire and her ability to shine should not be permitted, in any one's conception of her, to obscure her fondness and her fitness for loving and for being loved. Those who knew her intimately bear touching testimony to this quality of womanliness in the personal character of Madame de Stael. She was fundamentally an amiable, as she was conspicuously a strenuous, spirit, and no mutations in fashion or in taste will ever reduce her to less than a great tradition in literature.

XX.

CHATEAUBRIAND.

1768-1848.

CHATEAUBRIAND—his is a faded fame. He was a false brilliant from the first, but he glittered during his time like a veritable Mountain of Light. Men

hardly found out till he died that instead of being precious stone he was nothing but paste.

Our figure misrepresents the fact. Chateaubriand was *not* thus spurious through and through. He had streaks of genuine in him. His true symbol perhaps would be a common rubble-stone flawed splendidly with diamond.

The reaction of disparagement, which is now the critical vogue as to Chateaubriand's personal and literary value, meets occasional stout challenge from redoubtable voices. Mr. Matthew Arnold, for instance, protests against it, triumphantly citing out of the author for whom he stands up what certainly would read like the utterance of a mind both large and noble, could one rid one's self of the feeling that Chateaubriand in writing it had his own case chiefly in view, as follows:

> It is a dangerous mistake, sanctioned, like so many other dangerous mistakes, by Voltaire, to suppose that the best works of imagination are those which draw the most tears.... The true tears are those which are called forth by the beauty of poetry; there must be as much admiration in them as sorrow.

The author of the foregoing, assuredly, excites with his pathos quite as much admiration as sorrow.

Chateaubriand forms an essential link in the chain

of literary history for France. He constitutes almost the sole representative of French literature for the period of the First Empire, so-called—that is, the time of the supreme ascendency of Napoleon Bonaparte. Madame de Stael alone needs to be named as his rival and peer. Chateaubriand, in his day—and his day was a long one, for he outlived the empire, the restoration, and the reign of Louis Philippe—was well-nigh an equal power with Napoleon himself. In his own opinion, he was fully such; for his self-complacency was unbounded.

Never in the history of letters did it twice happen to an author to be better served by opportunity than in two cases was Chateaubriand. The Encyclopædists, with Voltaire and Rousseau, had had their hour, and a reaction had set in, when Chateaubriand's "Genius of Christianity" appeared. It was the exact moment for such a book. It seemed to create the reactionary movement with which it coincided, and it rendered its author not merely famous, but powerful. Napoleon saw his account in making use of a writer who had the secret of such popularity. Besides, the Napoleonic sagacity was equal to perceiving that return to religious belief was needful for France. Napoleon made overtures to Chateaubriand, which Chateaubriand accepted. The author took office at the gift of the dictator.

But Chateaubriand was himself too supremely an egotist to be securely attached to another egotist's interest by any flattery that could be bestowed upon

him. When, at the word of Napoleon, the Duke d'Enghien was murdered, Chateaubriand—let him have the credit of his high spirit—resigned his office and separated himself from the tyrant who had conferred it. Chateaubriand's first happy synchronism with the course of events was his publishing the "Genius of Christianity" when he did. His second was his publishing the pamphlet "Bonaparte and the Bourbons" at the very moment when that restoration impended which raised Louis XVIII. to the throne of France. The new monarch acknowledged that Chateaubriand's book had been worth an army to his cause.

Chateaubriand prolonged his literary career to a great age, enjoying almost to the end an undisputed supremacy among the authors of France. There has seldom been a more uncloudedly, more dazzlingly, brilliant contemporary success achieved by any writer of any age or any nation. The renown continues, but the splendor of the renown has passed away. Why? Our answer is, Chateaubriand's writing is vitiated by a vein of unreality, of falseness, running through it. This character in his writing but reflected, we fear, a character in the writer. There is ground for suspecting that Chateaubriand was at heart lacking in genuineness. It was inseparable defect in the man that gave that hollow ring to the words. It is but a just reprisal upon Chateaubriand that his literary fame should suffer by the fault detected in his personal character. A man's words are

seldom in the long run more weighty than the man.

Chateaubriand was a kind of continuer and modifier of a celebrated French writer that preceded him. He was a better-bred, a much purified, an aristocratic Rousseau. He may be pronounced second greatest in the succession of the literary sentimentalists of France.

René François Augustus, Viscount de Chateaubriand, to give him now his full name and title, lived a life replete with adventure and vicissitude. At twenty-three years of age he fled from the horrors of the French Revolution to travel in America and to find a north-west passage to the Polar Sea. He called, with a letter of introduction, on President Washington, to whose prudent dissuasion of the young man from his project of arctic exploration, founded on the difficulty of the task, Chateaubriand had the French readiness, together with the necessary egotism, to make the complimentary reply: “But, sir, my task is not so difficult as yours was, that of creating a state.” In his posthumous biography, the “*Memoirs d’Outre Tombe*” [Memoirs from Beyond the Tomb], Chateaubriand, alluding to this interview of his with Washington, said, sententiously and loftily, “There is a virtue in the look of a great man.”

Our adventurer never found that north-west passage which he came to seek, but he took impressions of a strange new world, impressions that

he afterward turned to various literary account. His “René” was one fruit of these experiences of his. The “René” is a romantic and sentimental tale, the main interest of which, where it possessed interest, lay in the seductive style of the composition, the idealizing descriptions occurring in it of American landscape, and the tone of melancholy reflection that pervaded it. The “noble red man” is made in it to talk like a Socrates come again, or like a French Christian philosopher born “the heir of all the ages.” Such absurd inconsistency with the truth of things well illustrates that taint of lurking falseness which to such a degree vitiates all Chateaubriand’s work.

The French Revolution had made great strides while Chateaubriand was discovering the north-west passage by musing and dreaming in the woods and by the streams of the New World. Learning that many members of his social class, the aristocracy of France, had fled from their homes and were rallying in other lands to make a stand against their enemies, Chateaubriand resolved to join them. He was nigh to shipwreck on his way. In a siege, after his arrival, he was saved from death by the chance of his having the manuscript of his “Atala” in the right spot on his person to intercept a ball from the enemy. But he was severely wounded nevertheless, and, worse still, was attacked with the small-pox. Thus disabled, he started on foot to make a journey of hundreds of miles. He, of course, suffered many hardships, and one night gave up to die in a ditch in which he lay

down to rest. He was picked up and carried to Namur. Here, as he crawled on hands and knees through the streets, he was befriended by some women who saw his condition. After many adventures, he found himself in London, where he lived squalidly on what he could earn by hack-work with his pen.

His family meantime were suffering in France. Some of them had actually been guillotined, and some were imprisoned, among them his wife, his sister, and his mother. The mother died praying for her son's conversion from infidel error. The sister wrote to her brother the pathetic story, but she too had died before her letter reached that brother's hand. "These two voices," Chateaubriand says, "coming up from the grave, ... struck me with peculiar force.... I wept and believed." The "Genius of Christianity" was written in the spirit of this sentimental conversion of the author.

We pass over, with mere mention of some principal titles, his other books, not previously named, as his "Itinerary," a volume of travels; his "Moses," his "Martyrs," his "Essay on English Literature," his "Translation of the Paradise Lost," to make the brief extracts for which we have room from the "Genius of Christianity."

This work is designed as a manual of Christian evidence, an argument for the truth of the Christian religion. It is written, of course, from a Roman

Catholic point of view, but it may be described as liberal and literary, rather than strict and ecclesiastical. It is far from being closely reasoned. There is, in fact, a great deal of digression and discussion in it. The aim of the author was evidently more to make a readable book suited to the times than to produce an apologetic work that would stand four-square against all hostile attack. The author's question with himself as he wrote seemed to have been, not, Is this valid, and necessary to the demonstration? but, Will this be interesting? The consequence is that the "Genius of Christianity" is now worthy of note rather as a book that has had a history than as a book that possesses permanent value. It contains, however, writing that will satisfactorily exhibit the style of Chateaubriand—a clear, pure, brilliant, harmonious poetic prose.

Chateaubriand raises and answers the question why the ancients failed in feeling for the beauties and sublimities of nature, thus:

> It can scarcely be supposed that men endued with such sensibility as the ancients could have wanted eyes to perceive the charms of nature and talents for depicting them, had they not been blinded by some powerful cause. Now, this cause was their established mythology, which, peopling the universe with elegant phantoms, banished from the creation its solemnity, its grandeur, and its solitude. It was necessary that Christianity should expel the whole hosts of fauns, of satyrs, and of nymphs, to restore to

> the grottoes their silence, and to the woods their scope for uninterrupted contemplation. Under our religion the deserts have assumed a character more pensive, more vague, and more sublime; the forests have attained a loftier pitch; the rivers have broken their petty urns, that in future they may only pour the waters of the abyss from the summit of the mountains; and the true God, in returning to his work, has imparted his immensity to nature.

The foregoing, paradoxical perhaps, is certainly a sharp turning of the tables upon modern paganizers who mourn the dead Greek and Roman divinities of grove and stream.

Here is a passage in description of nature that every reader must acknowledge to be charming. It is throughout thoroughly characteristic of the author. The closing sentence is certainly French rather than Hebrew in spirit—Chateaubriand rather than David:

> Penetrate into those forests of America coeval with the world. What profound silence pervades these retreats when the winds are hushed! What unknown voices when they begin to rise! Stand still, and everything is mute; take but a step, and all nature sighs. Night approaches; the shades thicken; you hear herds of wild beasts passing in the dark; the ground murmurs under your feet; the pealing thunder roars in the deserts; the forest bows; the trees fall; an unknown river rolls before you. The moon at length bursts forth in the east; as you

proceed at the foot of the trees she seems to move before you at their tops and solemnly to accompany your steps. The wanderer seats himself on the trunk of an oak to await the return of day; he looks alternately at the nocturnal luminary, the darkness, and the river: he feels restless, agitated, and in expectation of something extraordinary. A pleasure never felt before, an unusual fear, cause his heart to throb as if he were about to be admitted to some secret of the Divinity; he is alone in the depths of the forest, but the mind of man is equal to the expanse of nature, and all the solitudes of the earth are less vast than one single thought of his heart. Even did he reject the idea of a deity, the intellectual being, alone and unbeheld, would be more august in the midst of a solitary world than if surrounded by the ridiculous divinities of fabulous times. The barren desert itself would have some congeniality with his discursive thoughts, his melancholy feelings, and even his disgust for a life equally devoid of illusion and of hope.

There is in man an instinctive melancholy which makes him harmonize with the scenery of nature. Who has not spent whole hours seated on the bank of a river contemplating its passing waves? Who has not found pleasure on the sea-shore in viewing the distant rock whitened by the billows? How much are the ancients to be pitied, who discovered in the ocean naught but the palace of Neptune and the cavern of Proteus! It was hard that they should perceive only the adventures of the Tritons and the Nereids in the immensity of the seas, which seems to

give an indistinct measure of the greatness of our souls, and which excites a vague desire to quit this life, that we may embrace all nature and taste the fullness of joy in the presence of its author.

How Roman Catholic, rather than catholic, in tone, is the "Genius of Christianity," the following deliciously written sentiment about the Virgin Mary will sufficiently show:

They who see nothing in the chaste queen of angels but an obscure mystery are much to be pitied. What touching thoughts are suggested by that mortal woman, become the immortal mother of a Saviour-God! What might not be said of Mary, who is at once a virgin and a mother, the two most glorious characters of woman!—of that youthful daughter of ancient Israel, who presents herself for the relief of human suffering, and sacrifices a son for the salvation of her paternal race! This tender mediatrix between us and the Eternal, with a heart full of compassion for our miseries, forces us to confide in her maternal aid, and disarms the vengeance of Heaven. What an enchanting dogma, that allays the terror of a God by causing beauty to intervene between our nothingness and his Infinite Majesty.

The anthems of the Church represent the Blessed Mary seated upon a pure-white throne more dazzling than the snow. We there behold her arrayed in splendor, as a mystical rose, or as the

morning star, harbinger of the Sun of grace; the brightest angels wait upon her, while celestial harps and voices form a ravishing concert around her. In that daughter of humanity we behold the refuge of sinners, the comforter of the afflicted, who, all good, all compassionate, all indulgent, averts from us the anger of the Lord.

Mary is the refuge of innocence, of weakness, and of misfortune. The faithful clients that crowd our churches to lay their homage at her feet are poor mariners who have escaped shipwreck under her protection, aged soldiers whom she has saved from death in the fierce hour of battle, young women whose bitter griefs she has assuaged. The mother carries her babe before her image, and this little one, though it knows not as yet the God of heaven, already knows that divine mother who holds an infant in her arms.

Finally, to illustrate the amusing real lack of logic, masking in logical form, of which Chateaubriand was capable, we give the syllogistic-looking conclusion that sums up the book:

Christianity is perfect; men are imperfect.

Now, a perfect consequence cannot spring from an imperfect principle.

Christianity, therefore, is not the work of men.

If Christianity is not the work of men, it can have come from none but God.

If it came from God, men cannot have acquired a knowledge of it but by revelation.

Therefore, Christianity is a revealed religion.

Chateaubriand was long a venerated figure, central in the pure and brilliant *salon* of Madame Récamier, that later Marchioness Rambouillet at Paris. His easy airs of patriarchal condescension toward the younger generation of authors who drew around him there naturally engaged them to prolong the long days of his triumphs. But his triumphs may be said to have come to an end when Sainte-Beuve was ready to pronounce, as he did, that this defender of Christianity was a skeptic at heart, this preacher and praiser of purity was a libertine in life. We will not say that we accept this destructive view of Chateaubriand's character. But we are bound to confess that we wish there were more internal evidence contained in his writings to throw doubt on the justice of a sentence so severe.

DE MAISTRE (Joseph Marie, 1753-1821), is another author who, like Chateaubriand, a little earlier than he, took up a polemic for Christianity as represented in Roman Catholicism. A truly high and nobly earnest spirit was De Maistre, as such contrasting with Chateaubriand, a far deeper and far more philosophical thinker than his brilliant compeer, but wanting in that grace and seductiveness of style which gave to Chateaubriand

his life-long wide supremacy in the empire of French letters. It would be not incongruous, if there were room for it in our volume, to prolong this chapter with some brief notice and exemplification of De Maistre's literary work. We must content ourselves with this respectful bare mention of his name.

The proportionately small space in these pages that, in here ending our notice of him, we allot to Chateaubriand, fails indeed to represent by symbol to the eye the proportionate space that he occupies in the literature of his country. But it has afforded us fairly adequate opportunity to exhibit in description and specimen the characteristic quality of his literary production.

XXI.

BÉRANGER.

1780-1857.

BÉRANGER was a song-writer, the whole of him. He was a song-writer and nothing else. It is his own word, "My songs, they are myself."

Béranger was not the rose-crowned lyrist of love and wine; he was not Anacreon. Béranger was not the hymner of heroes and kings, a maker of odes; he

was not Pindar. Béranger was not the poet of the world, the gay world and the wise; he was not Horace. Béranger was not by chance the lowly melodist, who might by chance as well have been a lofty bard; he was not Robert Burns. Béranger was the song-singer of the people; he himself elected to be such, and he was by the people elected to be such; he said himself, "My muse is the people." In one word, Béranger was—Béranger. There was none like him before, there has been none like him since; Béranger is alone. We do not thus praise him, we simply describe him.

But it is possible to describe him better. We do so by borrowing from Victor Hugo through Sainte-Beuve.

Sainte-Beuve, not in his essay on Béranger (which, in appreciating, somewhat depreciates the poet), but among the interesting things that, under the title "Chateaubriana," he prints at the close of his monograph in two volumes on Chateaubriand, has the following personal recollection of his own, which, given here, will serve a threefold purpose; that of hinting incidentally the relation of four celebrated French authors to one another, that of illustrating the ready fecundity and plasticity of Victor Hugo's genius, and that of setting forth in concrete example Béranger's master method in his songs, which master method is essentially Béranger, the song-writer, himself. Sainte-Beuve says—of course we translate:

Victor Hugo, returning one morning from the garden of the Luxembourg (1828 or 1829) said to me: “If I should see Béranger, I would give him the subject of a pretty song. I just now met M. de Chateaubriand in the Luxembourg; he did not see me; he was wrapt in thought, intently observing some children who, seated on the ground, were playing and tracing figures in the sand. If I were Béranger I would make a song on the subject: ‘I have been minister, I have been ambassador, etc., I wear the decoration of the Order of the Holy Ghost, that of the Order of the Golden Fleece, that of the order of St. Andrew, etc.; and one sole thing at last amuses me: it is to watch children playing in the sand. I wrote “René,” I wrote the “Genius of Christianity,” I stood up against Napoleon, I opened the poetic era of the century, etc.; and I know only one thing that amuses me: to watch children at play upon the sand. I have seen America, I have seen Greece and Rome, I have seen Jerusalem, etc.’ And after each enumeration of various experiences, forms of greatness or of honor, all kept returning still to this: to watch children playing and tracing circles in the sand.” The plan sketched by Victor Hugo was perfect, far better than I have given it here; but the motive is plain, the idea of the refrain. Never have I had better defined to me the difference that separates the song, even the most elevated in character, from the ode properly so-called.

There is Béranger, his whole secret, summed up in small by a masterhand. What Béranger, then, did was

to choose wisely, with long heed, some single, simple, obvious sentiment, appealing to every body's experience, shut that sentiment up into a short, neat, striking, rememberable form of words suited to be sung, make of that form of words a refrain to recur at intervals, and finally on that refrain build up, one after another to the end, the stanzas of his song. He worked slowly and painfully. His genius was never very prolific. The time of his chief fruitfulness was short, covering only fifteen years, the fifteen years between Waterloo (1815) and the elevation of Louis Philippe to the throne of France (1830). During this time his largest product hardly exceeded a dozen songs a year.

Béranger's first discipline to his art may be considered to have been a certain favorite diversion of his childhood, the carving of cherry-stones. This exercise of skill he practiced sedulously with delight when a boy, and in it learned the long, minute patience of art. The man's songs were cut gems laboriously finished, like the boy's carvings in cherry-stones.

Béranger became immensely popular. He remained so to the end. When he died, and it was after prolonged silence on his part—if one can call silence a period marked, indeed, by non-production, but filled with the singing, from land's end to land's end, of his songs in every mouth—when he died the empire buried him and the nation attended his funeral. He had been born poor, and he was reared

in poverty. Rich he would not be, when a man. He took infinite pains to be of the people, and he succeeded. The people were loving and honoring themselves in loving and honoring Béranger. Sainte-Beuve, with that critical incredulity of his, thought that Béranger carried his demonstrative cultivation of the "people" to the point of something like affectation. Perhaps; but the affectation, if it was such, had a sound basis in it of real instinctive popular sympathy. Still, Béranger's emphasized identification of himself with the people was not all a matter of instinct with him. It was in part a matter of deliberately adopted policy. He said:

> The people wanted a man to speak to them the language they love and understand, and to create imitators to vary and multiply versions of the same text. *I have been that man.*

Béranger was quite willing to make any moral descent that might seem to him necessary in order to reach his audience. He may have been instinctively, but he was also deliberately, low and lewd in some of his songs.

> Without their help [said he, that is without the help of such immoral songs] I am disposed to think that the others would not have been able to go so far, or so low, or even so high; no offense in this last word to the virtues of good society.

Even the best of Béranger's songs lack any thing like lift and aspiration. They are conceived in a comparatively low tone. The noblest leaven in them is love of France and of liberty. Béranger hated the Bourbons; they persecuted him, but that only helped him sing them off the throne of France. Béranger's songs did more than any other one individual influence, perhaps they did more than all other individual influences combined, first to overturn the restored Bourbon dynasty after Waterloo, and, second, to bring about the elevation of Louis Napoleon to power.

For Béranger was a passionate admirer of the great Napoleon. True, he deprecated the exhaustions visited on France by the wars of glory which Napoleon waged. But that famous piece of his, "The King of Yvetot," in which this deprecation found voice, was a protest so lightly conceived and at bottom so genial, that the jealousy of Napoleon himself could afford to laugh at it. The pieces in which, on the contrary, he celebrated the praises of the emperor were written with an emotion contagiously vivid. Let us now have before us "The King of Yvetot," with an appropriate contrast to it afterward supplied in one of these encomiastic pieces.

"Yvetot" is the name of an ancient French town, situated in a seignory the lord of which once enjoyed the nominal rank of king. The effect of Béranger's title to his song is of course humorous. The song-

writer's purpose was to draw, in the king whom he describes, a whimsical contrast to the restless Napoleon. Thackeray furnishes us with a happily sympathetic rendering of Béranger's "King of Yvetot," as follows; for brevity's sake we omit one stanza:

There was a king of Yvetot,
Of whom renown hath little said,
Who let all thoughts of glory go,
And dawdled half his days a-bed;
And every night, as night came round,
By Jenny with a night-cap crowned,
Slept very sound.
Sing, ho, ho, ho! and he, he, he!
That's the kind of king for me.

And every day it came to pass
That four lusty meals made he,
And step by step, upon an ass,
Rode abroad his realms to see;
And wherever he did stir,
What think you was his escort, sir?
Why, an old cur.
Sing, ho, ho, ho! and he, he, he!
That's the kind of king for me.

If e'er he went into excess,
'Twas from a somewhat lively thirst,
But he who would his subjects bless,
Odd's fish!—must wet his whistle first,
And so from every cask they got,
Our king did to himself allot
At least a pot.
Sing, ho, ho, ho! and he, he, he!
That's the kind of king for me.

To all the ladies of the land
A courteous king, and kind, was he;
The reason why you'll understand,
They named him *Pater Patriæ*.

Each year he called his fighting-men,
And marched a league from home, and then,
Marched back again.
Sing, ho, ho, ho! and he, he, he!
That's the kind of king for me.

*****

The portrait of this best of kings
Is extant still, upon a sign
That on a village tavern swings,
Famed in the country for good wine.
The people in their Sunday trim,
Filling their glasses to the brim,
Look up to him.
Singing, ha, ha, ha! and he, he, he!
That's the sort of king for me.

In his autobiography, an interesting book, Béranger says that hardly any other writer equally with himself could have dispensed with the help of the printer. His songs traveled of themselves from mouth to mouth without the intervention of printed copies. In fact, Béranger was already famous before his works went into print. It was this oral currency of his songs that made them such engines of power. That brilliant Bohemian wit among Frenchmen, Chamfort, defined, it is said, before Béranger's time, the government of France to be absolute monarchy tempered by songs. This celebrated saying does not overstate the degree, though it may misstate the kind, of influence that Béranger exercised with his

lyre. He was, by conviction and in sympathy, a determined and ardent republican, and yet, in fact, he founded, or played the chief part in founding, the imperial usurpation of Louis Napoleon. This he did by getting the glories of the great emperor sung by Frenchmen throughout France, until the very name of Napoleon became an irresistible spell to conjure by. We now give the most celebrated of these Bonaparte songs. Mr. William Young, an American, has a volume of translations from Béranger. Of this particular song, Mr. Young's version is so felicitous that we unhesitatingly choose it for our readers. The title of the song is, "The Recollections of the People." It was, we believe, founded on an incident of Béranger's own observation; we shorten again by a stanza:

Aye, many a day the straw-thatched cot
  Shall echo with his glory!
The humblest shed, these fifty years,
  Shall know no other story.
There shall the idle villagers
  To some old dame resort,
And beg her with those good old tales
  To make their evenings short.
“What though they say he did us harm
  Our love this cannot dim;
Come, Granny, talk of him to us;
  Come, Granny, talk of him.”

“Well, children—with a train of kings
  Once he passed by this spot;
’Twas long ago; I had but just
  Begun to boil the pot.
On foot he climbed the hill, whereon
  I watched him on his way;
He wore a small three-cornered hat;
  His overcoat was gray.
I was half frightened till he spoke;
  ‘My dear,’ says he, ‘how do?’”
“O, Granny, Granny, did he speak?
  What, Granny! speak to you?”

*****

“But when at length our poor Champagne
  By foes was overrun,
He seemed alone to hold his ground;
  Nor dangers would he shun.
One night—as might be now—I heard
  A knock—the door unbarred—

And saw—good God! 'twas he, himself,
With but a scanty guard.
'O what a war is this!' he cried,
Taking this very chair."
"What! Granny, Granny, there he sat?
What! Granny, he sat there?"

"'I'm hungry,' said he: quick I served
Thin wine and hard brown bread;
He dried his clothes, and by the fire
In sleep drooped down his head.
Waking, he saw my tears—'Cheer up,
Good dame!' says he, 'I go
'Neath Paris' walls to strike for France
One last avenging blow.'
He went; but on the cup he used
Such value did I set—
It has been treasured." "What! till now?
You have it, Granny, yet?"

"Here 'tis; but 'twas the hero's fate
To ruin to be led;
He, whom a pope had crowned, alas!
In a lone isle lies dead.
'Twas long denied: 'No, no,' said they,
'Soon shall he re-appear;
O'er ocean comes he, and the foe
Shall find his master here.'
Ah, what a bitter pang I felt,
When forced to own 'twas true!"
"Poor Granny! Heaven for this will look,
Will kindly look on you."

There was not in Béranger's genius much innate

and irrepressible buoyancy toward poetry, as we English-speakers conceive poetry. But he practiced a severely self-tasking art of verse, which at last yielded a product sufficiently consummate in form to command the admiration of qualified critics. He became unquestionably first among the song-writers of France; he even elevated song-writing, popular song-writing, to the rank of acknowledged literature. His fashion, and, with his fashion, his currency, are rapidly becoming things of the past; but the real merit of his achievement, and, more than that, the fact of his extraordinary influence make his name securely immortal in the literary history, and in the literature, of France.

XXII.

LAMARTINE.

1791-1869.

LAMARTINE, the man, was an image incongruously molded of gold and of clay. Take him at his best, and what is there better? Take him at his worst, and you would not wish worse.

The same contrast holds, but not in the same degree, in Lamartine the author. He is at once one of the most admirable, and one of the least admirable,

of writers.

There are few figures in history worthier to command the homage of generous hearts than the figure of Lamartine in 1848, calming and quelling the mob of Paris by the simple ascendant of genius and of bravery. There are few figures in history more abject than the figure of Lamartine, toward the close of his life, in the garb of a beggar holding out his hat to mankind for the pence and half-pence of wonder, of sympathy, and of sympathetic shame.

Perhaps we instinctively fall into some contagious conformity to Lamartine's own exaggerating rhetoric in expressing ourselves as we do.

The chief facts of the life of Alphonse Marie Louis de Prat de Lamartine are briefly these. Well-born, having for mother a woman of more than Cornelian, of Christian, virtue, who herself mainly educated her son, he traveled, loved, lost, wept "melodious tears"—mixed much in Parisian society, until, at thirty, he published under the title "Meditations," a volume of verse which made him instantly, brilliantly, triumphantly, famous. Every thing desirable was easy to him now. He married an Englishwoman of wealth, he wrote and published more poetry, amusing himself meantime with various diplomatic service, was made member of the French Academy, and in 1832 went traveling in the East, like an Eastern prince for lavish splendor of equipage and outlay. His book, "Memories of the Orient,"

published three years after, was the fruit of what he saw and felt and dreamed during this luxurious experience of travel. Dreamed, we say, for Lamartine drew freely on his imagination to expand and embellish his memories of the East. Other volumes of verse, his “Jocelyn,” his “Fall of an Angel,” and his “Recollections” followed speedily.

The Revolution of 1830 had seated Louis Philippe on the throne. Lamartine under him had been elected to the legislature of France and had been making reputation as an orator. The poet and orator would now be historian. Lamartine wrote his celebrated “History of the Girondists,” which, after first appearing in numbers, was issued in volume in 1847. This book had in it the fermenting principle of a fresh revolution. In 1848 that revolution came, and Louis Philippe fled from Paris and from France, in precipitate abdication of his throne.

Now was the moment of glory and of opportunity for Lamartine. During the three months following, he may be said to have ruled France. Eloquence and bravery together never won triumphs more resplendent than were Lamartine’s during this swift interval of his dizzy elevation to power. He was in title simply minister for foreign affairs, in a provisional government which he had had himself the decision and the intrepidity among the first to propose. But his personal popularity, his serene courage, his magical eloquence, gave him much the authority of dictator. It cannot be asserted that

Lamartine, in this crisis, proved himself a statesman able to cope with the stern exactions of the hour. The candidate for such distinction success only can crown, and Lamartine did not succeed. He fell, as suddenly and as swiftly as he had risen. Yesterday omnipotent, he was absolutely impotent to-day.

But nothing can deprive Lamartine of the pacific glory his due from several extraordinary feats of eloquence achieved by him, at imminent risk to himself, on behalf of mankind. A mob of forty thousand Parisian fanatics roared into the street before the Hôtel de Ville to compel the Provisional Government sitting there to adopt the red flag as the ensign of the republic. This meant nothing less than a new reign of terror for France. Lamartine, single-handed, met the wild beast to its teeth, and with one stroke of the sword that went forth from his mouth laid it tamed at his feet. “The red flag you bring us,” cried the orator to the mob, he shining the while resplendent in a personal beauty touched with the gleam of genius and glorified with the consecration of courage—like a descended Apollo, the rattling quiver borne on his shoulder—“The red flag you bring us,” said he, “has only gone round the Champ de Mars, trailed in the blood of the people—in 1791 and in 1793; while the tricolor has gone round the world, with the name, the glory, and the liberty of our country.” This eloquent condensation of history, untremblingly shot, at close quarters, full in the face of those wild-eyed insurgents, felled them, as if it

had been a ball from a cannon. But ranks from behind still pressed forward with menacing cries. “Down with Lamartine!” “Down with the time-server!” “Off with his head! His head! His head! Lamartine’s head!”

The brandished weapons were in Lamartine’s very face. But that gentle blood never blenched. “My head, citizens? You want my head? Indeed, but I wish you had it, every one of you. If Lamartine’s head were now on each pair of shoulders among you, you would be wiser than you are, and the revolution would go on more prosperously.” The mob was in Lamartine’s hand again, taken captive with a jest.

It is generally granted that Lamartine saved the nation from a new reign of terror. But eloquence is not statesmanship; and Lamartine, weighed in the balance, was found wanting. He served at last only to hand over the state to Louis Napoleon, first president, and then emperor.

Under Napoleon, Lamartine, now and henceforward simply a private citizen, found his affairs embarrassed. He had been a prodigal spender of money. He toiled at letters to mend his broken fortunes. But his sun was past its meridian, and it settled hopelessly in cloud toward its west. He wrote a pseudo-biography of himself and published it as a serial in one of the Paris daily newspapers. He almost literally with his own hands performed the profaneness execrated by the poet, and “tare his

heart before the crowd"—or would have done so, if his production, the "Confidences," so called, had really been what it purported to be, the actual story of his life. It was in fact as much imagination as revelation. But the once overwhelmingly popular author now cheapened himself before the public in almost every practicable way. He brought his own personal dignity to market in his works—and did this over and over again. The public bought their former idol at his own cheapened price, and he still remained poor. In 1850 a public subscription was opened for his relief. As a last humiliation, the proud patrician submitted to accept a pension from the empire of Louis Napoleon. This he enjoyed but two years, for in two years after he died. A further space of two years, and the empire itself that granted Lamartine his pension had met its Sedan and ceased to be.

Fresh from admiring the radiant pages of Lamartine's rhetoric in prose, from admiring the iridescent play in color, the deliquescent melody in sound, of his verse, we feel it painful to admit to ourselves that so much indisputably fine effect goes for little or nothing, now that the fashion of that world of taste and feeling for which this writer wrote has passed returnlessly away. But so it is. Lamartine, like Chateaubriand, and for substantially the same reason, namely, lack of fundamental genuineness, has already reached that last pathetic phase, well-nigh worse than total eclipse, of literary fame, the

condition of an author important in the history of literature, rather than in literature.

Poet, orator, historian, statesman, this munificently gifted nature was most profoundly, most controllingly, poet. But he was French poet, which is to say that his poetry is removed, if not quite from access to the English mind, at least from access to the English mind through translation. He, however, enjoyed at first high English reputation as poet, and the publication of “Jocelyn,” his masterpiece in verse, may be said to have been even a European event in literary history.

The story of “Jocelyn” is avouched by the author to be almost a series of actual occurrences. This assertion, to those familiar with Lamartine’s style in asserting, will not be quite so conclusive as on its face it appears. At any rate, if “Jocelyn” be truth, Lamartine has made truth read like fiction, and fiction of a highly improbable sort. The story, true or fictitious—and which it is, as nobody now knows, so nobody now cares—we need not detain our readers to report.

The poet staggered his public by printing on the title-page to his “Jocelyn” the words, “An Episode,” as much as to say that a certain “Epic of Humanity,” which he might finally (but which, as a matter of fact, he never did) produce, would be large enough to make shrink into the dimensions of a mere episode this poem of ten thousand lines more or less!

Now for an extract or two. In the “Edinburgh Review,” of a date not far from fifty years past now, we find our translation. A day of festival, followed by a long evening of out-door dancing to music, has just closed. The breaking-up is described, with the sequel of young Jocelyn’s pensive and yearning emotions:

Then later, when the fife and hautboy's voice
Began to languish like a failing voice,
And moistened ringlets, by the dance unstrung,
Close to the cheek in drooping tresses clung,
And wearied groups along the darkening green
Gliding, in converse soft and low, were seen,
What sounds enchanting to the ear are muttered!
Adieus, regrets, the kiss, the word half uttered—
My soul was stirred; my ear with sweet sounds rife
Drank languidly the luscious draught of life;
I followed with my step, my heart, my eye,
Each maiden that with wearied eyes went by,
Thrilled at the rustle of each silken dress,
And felt that each that passed still left a joy the less.
At last the dance is hushed, the din at rest,
The moon is risen above the mountain's crest;
Only some lover, heedless of the hour,
Wends homeward, dreaming, to his distant bower;
Or, where the village paths divide, there stand
Some loitering couples, lingering hand in hand,
Who start to hear the clock's unwelcome knell,
Then dive and vanish in the forest dell.

And now I am at home alone. 'Tis night.
All still within the house, no fire, no light.
Let me, too, sleep. Alas! no sleep is there!
Pray then. My spirit will not hear my prayer.
My ear is still with dancing measures ringing,
Echoes which memory back to sense is bringing;
I close my eyes: before my inward glance
Still swims the *fête*, still whirls the giddy dance;
The graceful phantoms of the vanished ball
Come flitting by in beauty each and all;
A glance still haunts my couch; a soft hand seems

To press my hand, that trembles in my dreams,
Fair tresses in the dance's flight brought nigh,
Just touch my cheek, and like the wind flow by,
I see from maiden brows the roses falling,
I hear beloved lips my name recalling—
Anne, Lucy, Blanche!—Where am I—What is this?
What must love be, when even love's dream is bliss!

There is an indefinable French difference, but, that apart, the foregoing is somewhat like Goldsmith in his "Deserted Village." Or is it the resemblance of meter that produces the impression?

"Jocelyn," though certainly intended by the author to be pure, wavers at points on the edge of the exceptionably ambiguous. The following spring song, however, put by the poet into the mouth of his Laurence, is an inspiration as innocent as it is sweet:

See, in her nest, the nightingale's mute mate,
  Hatching her young, her patient vigil hold.
See how with love her fostering wings dilate,
  As if to screen her nurslings from the cold.

Her neck alone, in restlessness upraised,
  O'ertops the nest in which her brood reposes,
And her bright eye, with weary watching glazed,
  Closing to sleep, with every sound uncloses.

Care for her callow young consumes her rest,
  My very voice her downy bosom shakes,
And her heart pants beneath its plumy vest,
  And the nest trembles with each breath she takes.

What spell enchains her to this gentle care?
  Her mate's sweet melody the groves among,
Who, from some branching oak, high poised in air
  Sends down the flowing river of his song.

Hark! dost thou hear him, drop by drop distilling
  The sighs that sweetest after transport be,
Then suddenly the vault above us filling
  With foaming cataracts of harmony?

What spell enchains him in his turn—what makes
  His very being thus in languor melt—
But that his voice a living echo wakes,
  His lay within one loving heart is felt!

And, ravished by the note, his mate still holds
  Her watch attentive through the weary time;
The season comes, the bursting shell unfolds,

And life is music all, and love, and prime.

Passing now from Lamartine's poetry, expressly such, we go to his prose, which, however, is scarcely, if at all, less poetical. Poetry, or at least, the presence in power, and in great proportionate excess of power, of imagination, lording it over every thing else, over memory, judgment, taste, good sense, veracity—characterizes all that proceeded from Lamartine's pen. His history is valueless, almost valueless, as history. His travels are utterly untrustworthy as records of fact. Lamartine cannot tell the simple truth. Persons, things, events, suffer a sea-change, always to something rich and strange seen by him looming in the luminous haze of atmosphere with which his imagination perpetually invests them. His men are ennobled, like Ulysses transfigured by Pallas-Athene. His women are beautiful as houris fresh from paradise. The aspects of ocean and shore and wood and stream and mountain and sky, are all, to Lamartine, washed with a light that never was on sea or land or in heaven overhead, the consecration and the poet's dream. This quality in Lamartine's style does not prevent his being very fine. He is very fine; but you feel, Oh, if this all were also true!

On the whole, large, splendid, scenic, admirable in instinct for choosing his point of view, as Lamartine is in his histories, brilliant even, and fecund in suggestion, we turn from the ostensibly historical in our author to the ostensibly autobiographical, in

order to find our prose specimens of his quality in the “Confidences.” Lamartine never perhaps did any thing finer, any thing more characteristic, than in telling his story of “Graziella” in that work. This story is an “episode” where it appears; or rather—for it is hardly so much as let into the continuous warp and woof of the “Confidences”—it is a separable device of ornament embroidered upon the surface of the fabric. It is probably, indeed, to some extent autobiographic; but the imagination had as much part in it as the memory. For instance, the actual girl that is transfigured into the “Graziella” of the story was not a coral-grinder, as she is represented by Lamartine, but an operative in a tobacco factory. The real beauty of the tale is, by a kind of just retribution on the author, inseparably bound up with unconscious revelation on his part of heartless vanity and egotism in his own character. You admire, but while you admire you wonder, you reprobate, you contemn. A man such as this, you instinctively feel, was not worthy to live immortally as an author. You are reconciled to let Lamartine pass.

“Graziella” is a story of love and death, on one side, of desertion and expiation—expiation through sentimental tears—on the other. One would gladly trust, if one could, that the reality veiled under the fiction was as free in fact from outward guilt as it is idealized to have been by the writer’s fancy. But neither this supposition, nor any other charitable supposition whatever, can redeem “Graziella” from

the condemnation of being steeped in egregious vanity, egotism, and false sentiment, from the heart of the author.

We strike into the midst of the narrative, toward the end. There has been described the growth of relation between the author and the heroine of the idyll, a fisherman's daughter. And now this heroine, Graziella, is desired in marriage by a worthy young countryman of hers. Such a suitor—for she loves, though secretly, the author (this by the way is a thing almost of course with Lamartine)—the girl cannot bring herself to accept. In despair she flees to make herself a nun. She is found by the autobiographer alone in a deserted house. He ministers to her in her exhausted state—and this to the following result:

> "I feel well," said she to me, speaking in a tone of voice that was low, soft, even, and monotonous, as if her breast had completely lost its vibration and its accent at the same time, and as if her voice had only retained one single note. "I have in vain sought to hide it from myself—I have in vain sought to hide it forever from thee. I may die, but thou art the only one that I can ever love. They wished to betroth me to another; thou art the one to whom my soul is betrothed. I will never give myself to another on earth, for I have already secretly given myself to thee. To thee on earth, or to God in heaven! that is the vow I made the first day I discovered that my heart was sick for thee! I well know that I am only a

> poor girl, unworthy to touch thy feet even in thought; therefore, have I never asked thee to love me. I never will ask thee if thou dost love me. But I —I love thee, I love thee, I love thee!" And she seemed to concentrate her whole soul in those three words. "Now despise me, mock me, spurn me with thy feet! Laugh at me if thou wilt, as a mad thing who fancies she is a queen in the midst of her tatters. Hold me up to the scorn of the whole world! Yes, I will tell them with my own lips—'Yes, I love him. And had you been in my place you would have done as I have—you would have loved him or have died.'"

The man thus wooed by the maid assures her of his reciprocal affection. But the author explains to his readers:

> Alas! it was not real love, it was but its shadow in my heart. But I was too young and too ingenuous not to be deceived by it myself. I thought that I adored her as so much innocence, beauty, and love deserved to be adored by a lover. I told her so, with that accent of sincerity which emotion imparts; with that impassioned restraint which is imparted by solitude, darkness, despair, and tears. She believed it because she required that belief to live, and because she had enough passion in her own heart to make up for its insufficiency in a thousand other hearts.

The autobiographer is summoned away by his mother, and he goes, lacerating Graziella's heart, but

swearing a thousand oaths of fealty to his beloved. Alas! the "treacherous air of absence" undid all—with him, though not with her. He blames himself in retrospect—gently—and pities himself lamentably, as follows:

> I was at that ungrateful period of life when frivolity and imitation make a young man feel a false shame in the best feelings of his nature ... I would not have dared to confess ... the name and station of the object of my regret and sadness.... How I blush now for having blushed then! and how much more precious was one of the joy-beams or one of the tear-drops of her chaste eyes than all the glances, all the allurements, all the smiles for which I was about to sacrifice her image! Ah! man, when he is too young, cannot love! He knows not the value of any thing! He only knows what real happiness is after he has lost it.... True love is the ripe fruit of life. At twenty, it is not known, it is imagined.

A farewell letter from Graziella dying:

> "The doctor says that I shall die in less than three days. I wish to say farewell to thee ere I lose all my strength. Oh! if I had thee near me, I would live! But it is God's will. I will soon speak to thee, and forever, from on high. Love my soul! It shall be with thee as long as thou livest. I leave thee my tresses, which were cut off for thy sake one night.

> Consecrate them to God in some chapel in thy own land, that something belonging to me may be near thee!"

The autobiographer "complied with the order contained in her dying behest." He says: "From that day forward, a shadow of her death spread itself over my features and over my youth." He apostrophizes the remembered Graziella as follows:

> "Poor Graziella! Many days have flown by since those days. I have loved, I have been loved. Other rays of beauty and affection have illumined my gloomy path. Other souls have opened themselves for me, to reveal to me in the hearts of women the most mysterious treasures of beauty, sanctity, and purity that God ever animated on earth, to make us understand, foretaste, and desire heaven; but nothing has dimmed thy first apparition in my heart.... Thy real sepulcher is in my soul. There every part of thee is gathered and entombed. Thy name never strikes my ear in vain. I love the language in which it is uttered. At the bottom of my heart there is always a warm tear which filters, drop by drop, and secretly falls upon my memory, to refresh it and embalm it within me."

The pensive poet even makes poetry on the subject, twenty years afterward, poetry which, in his customary triplets of expression, he calls "the balm of a wound, the dew of a heart, the perfume of a

sepulchral flower." He wrote it, he says, "with streaming eyes." He prints his stanzas—for Lamartine is eminently of those who, as it has been said, weep in print and wipe their eyes with the public—and with a sigh, says:

> Thus did I expiate by these written tears the cruelty and ingratitude of my heart of nineteen. I have never been able to reperuse these verses without adoring that youthful image which the transparent and plaintive waves of the Gulf of Naples will roll eternally before my eyes ... and without detesting myself! But souls forgive on high. Hers has forgiven me. Forgive me also, you!—I have wept.

We ought not to disturb, with any further words of our own, the impression of himself which Lamartine has now made on the reader. He has given us here his own true image. He is the weeping poet. It is fit—let him dissolve, let him exhale, from view in tears.

Lachrymose Lamartine, farewell!

XXIII.

THE GROUP OF 1830.

VICTOR HUGO: 1802-1885; **SAINTE-BEUVE**: 1804-1869; **BALZAC**: 1799-1850; **GEORGE SAND**: 1804-1876; **DE MUSSET**: 1810-1857.

AS a convenient method of inclusion and condensation for a number of authors who must by no means be omitted, but for whom there is left little room in these pages, we adopt the plan of making a cluster of important names to be treated in a single chapter. The political and the literary history of France join a sort of synchronism with one another at a certain point of time, which makes this arrangement not only feasible but natural.

The accession of Louis Philippe to the throne of France and the first representation of Victor Hugo's "Hernani" in Paris both occurred in the year 1830. The Bourbon or absolutist tradition in French politics and the classic tradition in French letters were thus at one and the same moment decisively interrupted. For, as in the commencing reign of Louis Philippe, the "Citizen King" of France, the French people became for the first time, under monarchical rule, a recognized estate in the realm, so, with the triumph of Victor Hugo's "Hernani" on the stage, the hour may be said to have struck of culmination in splendor and in influence for the romantic movement in French literature. The dominance of the ideas indicated in the expression "the Romantic Movement" was then suddenly for the moment so overwhelming and so wide that it amounted almost to a usurpation of letters in France. We might indeed

have written “The French Romanticists” as a fairly good alternative title to the present chapter.

1. Victor Hugo.

The men of 1830—we thus use a designation which has come to be established in French literary history—began each man his career in letters as a fighting romanticist. Victor Hugo was the acknowledged Achilles of the fight. Whoever wavered backward, Victor Hugo clamped his feet for his lifetime on the bridge of war, where his plume nodded defiance, seeming still to say for its wearer standing with a cliff of adamant at his back,

> Come one, come all, this rock shall fly
> From its firm base as soon as I.

Around Victor Hugo, as the towering central figure among them all, were mustered, though some of them not to remain in this comradeship with him, Sainte-Beuve, Balzac, George Sand, De Musset. There were others than these, but these shall for us here constitute the group of 1830.

We shall be in yet better accord with Victor Hugo’s estimate of himself, if we take for his symbol a being mightier even than a demigod like Achilles. Let us do so and call him a Titan. But the past tense half seems an anachronism in speaking of Victor Hugo. The

earth still trembles to his retiring footsteps and to the portentous reaction of his wrestle in war with the gods. This is his glory—he fought against Olympus, and, if he did not overthrow, at least he was not overthrown. Olympus in our parable was classicism in power; Victor Hugo was the genius of insurgent romanticism.

We thus repeat yet again terms which it would be difficult precisely to define. Classicism and romanticism are two forces in literature, seemingly opposed to each other, which, however, need to be compounded and reconciled in a single resultant, in order to the true highest effect from either. For neither classicism nor romanticism alone concludes the ultimate theory of literature.

Classicism criticises; romanticism creates. Classicism enjoins self-control; romanticism encourages self-indulgence. Classicism is mold; romanticism is matter. Classicism is art; romanticism is nature. Classicism is law; romanticism is life. Romanticism is undoubtedly first and indispensable; but so, not less, classicism is indispensable, though second. Neither, in short, can get along without the other. But Victor Hugo represents romanticism.

Victor Hugo’s personality seems to have been a literary force almost as much as was his genius. As his quantity was immense, so his quality was vivific. Such a man was certain to be not only the master of a school but the center of a worship. Mr. Swinburne’s

late volume on Victor Hugo may be cited in extreme example of the deific ascription rendered by many at the shrine of this idolatry. Mr. Matthew Arnold, on the other hand, lost no opportunity to flout with indignity the claims of Victor Hugo to his supreme literary godship.

This great French writer has so recently died that, for the purposes of this book, he might almost be considered still living. At any rate, he has of late been so much talked about in current periodicals; he is, in some of his books, so freshly familiar to all, and, if we must say it, he offers a subject so perplexing to treat at this moment judicially, that we shall in some measure avoid responsibility by presenting him here with the utmost brevity—brevity, however, to be taken rather as a homage, than as a slight, to the unmanageable greatness by imminency of his merit and his fame.

Victor-Marie Hugo wrote verse very early, beginning as a classicist. In later youth he was royalist and religious in spirit. At twenty he acquired the title of “the sublime boy.” How he acquired this title seems a matter of doubt. It is generally supposed to have been given by Chateaubriand, in his quality of patriarch of French letters. But this origin of the sobriquet the present writer has seen seriously suggested to be, along with the sobriquet itself, the pure invention of Victor Hugo’s own imaginative egotism; which fruitful source of autobiography is said also to have yielded the poet’s noble pedigree—

the process of production employed on his part being, in the latter case, the extremely simple one of adopting for ancestry the ancient line of a family, bearing the same name indeed with himself, but otherwise utterly unrelated to his own humble house. The really extraordinary independence of fact with which Victor Hugo undoubtedly made his assertions respecting himself renders any testimony that he bears on this point interesting as imagination rather than instructive as history. For three or four years now he was an irrepressible producer and publisher of verse. At twenty-five he put out his “Cromwell,” a drama, with a belligerent preface in favor of romanticism. After this each play of his was a battle for that literary cause. His “Hernani” (1830) was at last more than a battle—it was a victory.

The royalist in due time became republican. When Louis Napoleon was president, Victor Hugo opposed him. When Louis Napoleon made himself emperor, Victor Hugo denounced him. Banished for this from France, the poet betook himself to Belgium. Repelled from Belgium, he found refuge in England. Here, or, more exactly, in the island of Jersey first, and longer, afterward, in the island of Guernsey, he remained till the second empire fell. He then returned to Paris, and shared the melancholy fortunes of that beleaguered capital during the Prussian siege and during the anarchy of the Commune. Here, finally, he died, and, by his own will and testament, in a quite other than the original meaning of that

pregnant Scripture phrase, “was buried”—for his funeral was to be attended with peculiar obsequies. He signified his wish to be treated in burial exactly as one of those paupers of whose cause he had been in his works the life-long champion.

During his long exile, which, notwithstanding his passionate love of Paris, he refused to shorten by any understanding arrived at with the emperor, he kept persecuting that usurper with printed diatribes, both in prose and in verse, which for mordant bitterness have probably never been surpassed in the literature of invective. One of these diatribes was a book entitled “The History of a Crime.” To this he prefixed a kind of *imprimatur* of his own, which may be quoted here as well exemplifying the high oracular style of expression characterized by short sentences and short paragraphs—these often of a single sentence only—that he habitually affected:

> This work is more than opportune. It is imperative. I publish it.
>
> V. H.

Victor Hugo’s egotism was so vast that it was insane if it was not sublime. To exemplify adequately this statement by extracts would ask pages of room. The four lines about to follow, from one of his longer poems, present a modest and moderate example. The poet has been supposing the impossible case that the Supreme Being should take different views, in a

certain matter, from his, the poet's, own—that he should outrage his, the poet's, sense of moral propriety. Here is how, in that case, Victor Hugo would, he declares, deal with offending Deity (we translate literally the original Alexandrines, line for line, without attempting to reproduce either meter or rhyme):

I would go, I would see him, and I would seize him,
Amid the heavens, as one takes a wolf amid the woods,
And, terrible, indignant, calm, extraordinary,
I would denounce him with his own thunder.

To Victor Hugo himself, the foregoing was not blasphemy; it was simply sublimity of a sort suitable to the character of the poet. There was, it is said, fully developed mental unsoundness in his father's family and in his own. Victor Hugo's own genius had, we suspect, some trace of a real, though noble, insanity in it.

In 1862, appeared "Les Miserables," which must be accounted, if not the greatest, at least the most popular work of its author. This book was issued simultaneously in eight different cities and in nine different languages—a circumstance probably not paralleled in the history of literature. The fame of "Les Miserables" does not fade, and it hardly will fade. It is a book of truly prodigious elemental power. That, however, Victor Hugo's genius in

producing it worked with some disturbing consciousness of a theory of literary art to be exemplified and defended, the following curious note, inserted in the midst of the text, at a point of interest in the story, may serve to show:

> Then the poor old man began sobbing and soliloquizing; *for it is a mistake to suppose that there is no soliloquy in nature. Powerful agitations often talk aloud.*

"Les Miserables" is justly open to many strictures, both on literary grounds and on ethical; but it must be pronounced, notwithstanding, a great, and, on the whole, a noble work.

Victor Hugo made this approach to the illimitable in power, that he was well-nigh equally able to do great things and to do small. To exhibit by specimen his achievement in verse we shall offer here a few of his small things, in the impossibility of representing his great. The small things that we offer may acquire a value extrinsic to themselves if thought of as the gentle play of a giant who could with the same ease have astonished you by exhibitions of strength.

Victor Hugo went a second time, having once failed, to intercede with King Louis Philippe on behalf of a political offender condemned to death. It was late at night, and the monarch could not be seen. The intercessor would not be baffled, and, bethinking himself to appeal by the tenderness of

birth and of death to the king, wrote four lines of verse which he left on the table. The allusions in them are to a lovely daughter of the royal house just lost and to a little son just born. We give the French text, and follow it with a close English translation:

Par votre ange envolée ainsi qu'une colombe,
Par ce royal enfant doux et frèle roseau,
Grace encore une fois! grace au nom de la tombe!
Grace au nom du berceau!

By your lost angel, dove-like from you flown,
By this sweet royal babe, fair, fragile reed,
Mercy once more! Be mercy, mercy shown,
In the tomb's name, and cradle's, both, I plead.

The poet's plea availed.

Another little gem of Victor Hugo's is the following quatrain, which, though it may have had at first some particular occasion, is capable of the most general application. Again we give the French, for the French here almost translates itself:

Soyons comme l'oiseau posé pour un instant
Sur des rameaux trop frêles;
Qui sent trembler la branche, mais qui chant pourtant,
Sachant qu'il a des ailes.

This may be thus rendered, almost word for word:

Like the bird let us be, for one moment alight
  Upon branches too frail to uphold,
Who feels tremble the bough, but who sings in despite,
  Knowing well she has wings to unfold.

One more little gem from Victor Hugo's treasury of such we are happily able to present in a version whose authorship will commend it; Mr. Andrew Lang translates "The Grave and the Rose." The poet here affirms, as he is very fond of doing, that capital article in his creed, the immortality of the soul:

The Grave said to the Rose,
  "What of the dews of morn,
Love's flower, what end is theirs?"
  "And what of souls outworn,
Of them whereon doth close
  The tomb's mouth unawares?"
The Rose said to the Grave.

The Rose said, "In the shade
  From the dawn's tears is made
A perfume faint and strange,
  Amber and honey sweet."
  "And all the spirits fleet
Do suffer a sky-change
  More strangely than the dew—
  To God's own angels new,"
The Grave said to the Rose.

The majesty with which this great Frenchman would sometimes, in prose, condescend to be an acrobat walking the tight-rope of grandiloquence stretched over a bottomless abyss of the ridiculous, is well shown in his monograph on Shakespeare. This is accessible in a scholarlike English translation (A. C. McClurg & Co., Chicago, publishers) by Melville B. Anderson. The following sentences will indicate what it is. No one familiar with Victor Hugo can doubt that the great presence of HIMSELF, the writer, was really the chief thing in his musing eye, when, in the latter part of this extract, he was ostensibly describing and vindicating romanticist Shakespeare:

> Shakespeare, shuddering, has within himself winds, spirits, magic potions, vibrations; he sways in the passing breeze, obscure effluences pervade him, he is filled with the unknown sap of life. Thence his agitation, at the core of which is peace. It is this agitation which is lacking in Goethe, wrongly praised for his impassiveness, which is inferiority. All minds of the first order have this agitation. It is in Job, in Æschylus, in Alighieri. This agitation is humanity.... It seems at times as if Shakespeare terrified Shakespeare. He shudders at his own depth. This is the sign of supreme intelligence. It is his own vastness which shakes him and imparts to him strange and mighty oscillations. There is no genius without billows. An intoxicated savage, it may be. He has the savagery of the virgin forest; he has the intoxication of the high sea.

"He shudders at his own depth"—hardly could we resist the temptation to bracket in "[Victor Hugo]" after the pronoun "he." Every reader should do this mentally for himself; he otherwise will miss that important part of the true sense, which here is written between the lines. There never was genius with more inseparable, unescapable, tyrannizing consciousness of itself. You feel the personality even more than you feel the genius in reading Victor Hugo.

A considerable part of Victor Hugo's prose production, mostly fiction, has been translated into English. Messrs. T. Y. Crowell & Co. publish six portly volumes in a uniform edition. From "Les Miserables" in this series we make extracts which will briefly represent Victor Hugo's prose at its very best, alike in style, in thought, and in spirit. In the first, the writer gives utterance to reflections inspired by the final event of the battle of Waterloo:

> This vertigo, this terror, this downfall into ruin of the loftiest bravery which ever astounded history—is that causeless? No. The shadow of an enormous right is projected athwart Waterloo. It is the day of destiny. The force which is mightier than man produced that day. Hence the terrified wrinkle of those brows; hence all those great souls surrendering their swords. Those who have conquered Europe have fallen prone on the earth, with nothing left to say or to do, feeling the present shadow of a terrible presence. *Hoc erat in fatis.* That day the perspective

of the human race underwent a change. Waterloo is the hinge of the nineteenth century. The disappearance of the great man was necessary to the advent of the great century. Some one, a person to whom one replies not, took the responsibility on himself. The panic of heroes can be explained. In the battle of Waterloo there is something more than a cloud, there is something of the meteor. God has passed by.

In the second, Victor Hugo contrasts the two leaders, the conqueror and the conquered, of that momentous day:

Waterloo is the strangest encounter in history. Napoleon and Wellington. They are not enemies; they are opposites. Never did God, who is fond of antitheses, make a more striking contrast, a more extraordinary comparison. On one side, precision, foresight, geometry, prudence, an assured retreat, reserves spared, with an obstinate coolness, an imperturbable method, strategy, which takes advantage of the ground, tactics, which preserve the equilibrium of batallions, carnage, executed according to rule, war regulated, watch in hand, nothing voluntarily left to chance, the ancient classic courage, absolute regularity; on the other intuition, divination, military oddity, superhuman instinct, a flaming glance, an indescribable something which gazes like an eagle, and which strikes like the lightning, a prodigious art in disdainful impetuosity, all the mysteries of a profound soul, association with

> destiny; the stream, the plain, the forest, the hill, summoned, and in a manner, forced to obey, the despot going even so far as to tyrannize over the field of battle; faith in a star mingled with strategic science, elevating but perturbing it. Wellington was the Barême of war; Napoleon was its Michael Angelo; and on this occasion genius was vanquished by calculation. On both sides some one was awaited. It was the exact calculator who succeeded. Napoleon was waiting for Grouchy; he did not come. Wellington expected Blücher; he came.

It remains only to exemplify, as best in small space we can, Victor Hugo's portentous, his terrific, power in working up a tragic situation, and displaying it as in a calcium-light of intense imaginative description or narration. We shall then feel that this Titanic figure in French literature is at least by suggestive partial glimpses fairly before our readers. From "Les Miserables," we take the following passage, introduced by the original author as a first step only in the climax by which he represents the supreme agony of his hero in a great crisis of his life:

> It sometimes happens that on certain shores of Bretagne or Scotland a man, traveler or fisherman, while walking at low tide on the beach, far from shore, suddenly notices that for several minutes past he has been walking with some difficulty. The beach under foot is like pitch; his soles stick fast to it; it is no longer sand, it is bird-lime....

The man pursues his way, he walks on, turns toward the land, endeavors to approach the shore. He is not uneasy. Uneasy about what? Only he is conscious that the heaviness of his feet seems to be increasing at every step that he takes. All at once he sinks in. He sinks in two or three inches. Decidedly, he is not on the right road: he halts to get his bearings. Suddenly he glances at his feet; his feet have disappeared. The sand has covered them. He draws his feet out of the sand, he tries to retrace his steps, he turns back, he sinks in more deeply than before. The sand is up to his ankles, he tears himself free from it and flings himself to the left, the sand reaches to mid-leg, he flings himself to the right, the sand comes up to his knees. Then, with indescribable terror, he recognizes the fact that he is caught in a quicksand....

He shouts, he waves his hat, or his handkerchief, the sand continually gains on him.... He is condemned to that terrible interment, long, infallible, implacable, which it is impossible to either retard or hasten, which lasts for hours, which will not come to an end, which seizes you erect, free, in the flush of health, which drags you down by the feet, which, at every effort that you attempt, at every shout that you utter, draws you a little lower, which has the air of punishing you for your resistance by a redoubled grasp, which forces a man to return slowly to earth, while leaving him time to survey the horizon, the trees, the verdant country, the smoke of the villages on the plain, the sails of the ships on the sea, the birds which fly and sing,

> the sun and the sky.... The wretched man ... shrieks, implores, cries to the clouds, wrings his hands, grows desperate. Behold him in sand up to his belly, the sand reaches to his breast, he is only a bust now. He uplifts his hands, utters furious groans, clenches his nails on the beach, tries to cling fast to that ashes, supports himself on his elbows in order to raise himself from that soft sheath, and sobs frantically; the sand mounts higher. The sand has reached his shoulders, the sand reaches to his throat; only his face is visible now. His mouth cries aloud, the sand fills it; silence. His eyes still gaze forth, the sand closes them; night. Then his brow decreases, a little hair quivers above the sand; a hand projects, pierces the surface of the beach, waves, and disappears. Sinister obliteration of a man!

Victor Hugo's hero was involved thus in a quicksand—but the quicksand in his case was underground, and dark as Erebus; it was a quicksand composed of the unspeakable foulness and fetor of a cess-pool—he was wading up to his very chin in the noisome Styx of the great Paris sewer. All this to rescue, upborne in his arms above his head, a man unconscious, perhaps already dead from wounds received, and a man whom he, the rescuer, hated. There is Victor Hugo for you, Victor Hugo in his glory. For the glory of Victor Hugo as novelist is in climaxes of agony, lashed together and reared like an endless ladder reaching to heaven. This his strength is his weakness. All is said that need be said in hostile criticism of Victor Hugo's writings, when it is

said that he is always to the last degree egotistic and to the last degree theatric. Effect is every thing, truth nothing, with him.

That Victor Hugo willed to be buried exactly like a pauper did not prevent the occurrence of certain very important contrasts between his obsequies and the rites of an ordinary pauper funeral; perhaps, indeed, such a will on his part contributed to create the difference which at all events existed. The funeral attendance was said to be the most numerous ever seen in France. A million spectators were present. Three large wagons headed the procession filled with floral gifts. A beautiful diadem of Irish lilies was contributed by Tennyson, inscribed “To the World’s Greatest Poet.”

The French apotheosis of a national idol would not be complete without tribute from the theater. Accordingly, the Theâtre Français produced a drama by M. Rénan entitled “*Mort*,” in which the shades of Corneille, Racine, Boileau, Voltaire, and Diderot hold a dialogue about human progress in the century to follow them, and, Corneille asking, “What poet will sing in that era, as sweet and tender as Racine, as logical as Boileau, as clear in style as Voltaire,” the genius of the age lyrically answers, “Hugo,” at the same time placing a crown on Hugo’s bust.

Victor Hugo the man, especially as he mellowed with old age, was a sunny, sweet, benignant nature. He was a hearty, one might almost say a partisan,

believer in God—atheism was so offensive to him. Unfortunately, however, Victor Hugo's theism was not such as to enforce departure, in his own personal practice, from that deplorable tradition of his country which has rendered so many distinguished French authors, from the earliest to the latest, offenders against the laws of marriage and of chastity.

2. Sainte-Beuve.

Sainte-Beuve is an instance of the half-malicious sportiveness of nature or of fortune. What he chiefly desired was the fame of a poet. What he chiefly got was the fame of a critic. But Sainte-Beuve's fame as a critic was far more in fact, if far less to his mind, than any fame that he could have achieved as a poet. In poetry, he never could have risen higher than to be a poet of the second or of the third rank. He is admitted to be a critic of the first rank. Nay, in the opinion of many, Sainte-Beuve constitutes a rank by himself, having no peers.

Sainte-Beuve's range of subjects was very wide. He exercised himself to be equally open and fair toward all schools of taste and of opinion alike. At the outset, he was of the coterie of the romanticists. But he soon broke with these, either personally repelled by antipathies, or else unconsciously attracted by a secret sympathy of his own, too strong for his contrary will to resist, toward the classical standards

respesented in the seventeenth-century writers. He never seems to feel himself more entirely in his element than when he is appreciating the literature of the French golden age.

As to religion, Sainte-Beuve, having had his phase of pietism even, ended by becoming a blank unbeliever. But his own antipathetic personal attitude of intellect and of heart toward Christianity he would not in the least allow to disturb the urbanity and serenity of his tolerance for the most orthodox Christian writers. Such, at any rate, was his standard and ideal.

But at this point, as at all points, the complaisance of Sainte-Beuve's writing is a manner with him, rather than a spirit. It does not penetrate deeply. He loves his "insinuations." That is his own word. He is willing to write a whole essay in criticism for the sake of the "insinuations" which his deceitful blandness will sheathe. Or, rather, he would sooner give up the whole essay than forego a phrase, or perhaps a single word, containing his insinuation. It was partly his critical conscience, no doubt, instinctively nice about shades of opinion and of expression; but then a something very like malice was mingled with his critical conscience. With all that must be conceded to the value of Sainte-Beuve's critical work, readers are conscious, in concluding the perusal of almost any one of his essays, that the result to them is a sapor remaining on their literary palate, rather than substance of nutriment entered

into their mental digestion. Their food has been refined into a flavor.

For our illustration of Sainte-Beuve, we go to a paper of his on Bossuet. But we need to prepare our readers. Sainte-Beuve is a writer for the few, instead of for the many. To profit from him requires some effort of attention. One must study a little, as well as simply read. Sainte-Beuve does not deal in heavy strokes. His lines are most of them fine, many of them hair-lines vanishing almost into invisibility. He escapes you like Proteus. Very different is he, by this elusive quality of his, from his countryman, M. Taine, whose bold crayon sketches are at once appreciable to all.

In the choice indicated of specimen, we draw from a series of short criticisms which the author called *Causeries du Lundi*; "Monday-Chats," Mr. William Matthews, who has a volume of select translations from them, not unhappily renders the title. These were originally published as Monday articles in the columns of two Paris journals, the *Constitutionel* and the *Moniteur*. Mr. Matthews's volume is introduced by a most readable biographical sketch and literary appreciation of Sainte-Beuve himself from the pen of the translator. M. Sainte-Beuve, we ought to say, in addition to his very considerable body of criticism, ranging, as we have intimated, over a wide field of literature, wrote an extended historical monograph on Port Royal, which is constantly referred to by

writers as an authority on its subject.

The critic characterizes his subject broadly by his most commanding traits:

> The simple idea of order, of authority, of unity, of the continual government of Providence, Bossuet, among the moderns, has grasped more completely than any other man, and he applies it on all occasions without effort, and, as it were, by an irrefutable deduction. Bossuet is the Hebrew genius, expanded, fecundated by Christianity, and open to all the gains of the human intelligence, but acknowledging something of sovereign interdiction, and closing its vast horizon precisely at the point where its light ceases. In mien and in tone he resembles a Moses; there are mingled in his speech traits characteristic of the Prophet-King, touches of a pathos ardent and sublime; there sounds the voice eloquent by eminence, the simplest, the strongest, the most abrupt, the most familiar, the most suddenly outbursting in thunder. Even where he holds his course unbending, in an imperious flood, he bears along with him treasures of eternal human morality. And it is by all these qualities that he is for us a unique man, and that, whatever may be the employment he makes of his speech, he remains the model of eloquence the most exalted, and of language the most beautiful.

Sainte-Beuve is so much a critic that he cannot help criticising by the way, or even sometimes

perhaps a little out of the way. But it will be quite to our purpose if we admit here what Sainte-Beuve incidentally says of Lamartine:

> [Bossuet] was early distinguished for surprising gifts of memory and of understanding. He knew Virgil by heart, as, a little later, he knew Homer. "Less easy to understand is it," says M. de Lamartine, "*how he was infatuated all his life* with the Latin poet, Horace, spirit exquisite, but the reverse of spontaneous and natural, who strings his lyre with only the softest fibers of the heart; a careless voluptuary," etc. M. de Lamartine, who has so well discerned the great features of the eloquence and of the talent of Bossuet, has studied a little too lightly his life, and he has here proposed to himself a difficulty which does not exist; there is nowhere mention made in fact of that *inexplicable predilection* of Bossuet for Horace, *the least divine of all the poets*. M. de Lamartine must have inadvertently read "Horace" instead of "Homer." ... It was Fénelon (and not Bossuet) who read and relished Horace more than any other poet, who knew him by heart.... The great pagan preference of Bossuet (if one may use such an expression) was quite naturally for Homer; after him for Virgil; Horace, in his judgment and in his liking, came far behind them. But the book by eminence which gave early direction to the genius and to the entire career of Bossuet, and which dominated all within him, was the Bible; it is said that the first time he read it he was illuminated and transported by it. He had found in it the source

> whence his own genius was destined to flow, like one of the four great rivers in Genesis.

Sainte-Beuve speaks of the relation of the Hotel de Rambouillet to the future great man:

> The young Bossuet was conducted thither one evening to preach there an improvised sermon. In lending himself to these singular exercises and to these tournaments where his person and his gifts were challenged, treated as an intellectual virtuoso in the salons of the Hôtel de Rambouillet and the Hôtel de Nevers, it does not appear that Bossuet was in consequence subjected to the slightest charge of vanity, and there is no example of a precocious genius so praised, caressed by the world, and remaining so perfectly exempt from all self-love and from all coquetry.

In the following passage, Sainte-Beuve appreciates, not without insinuated criticism, the younger eloquence of Bossuet the preacher. Conceive this atheist critic, for such in effect Sainte-Beuve was, entering into the spirit of the orthodox Christian, exclusively for the purpose of justly judging and enjoying a strain of pulpit eloquence! But that is Sainte-Beuve:

> When he portrays to us Jesus purposing to clothe himself with a flesh like our own, and when he sets forth the motives for this according to the

> Scriptures, with what bold relief and what saliency he does it! He exhibits that Saviour who above all seeks out misery and distress, shunning to take on the angelic nature which would have exempted him from this, leaping over, in some sense, and tasking himself to pursue, to *apprehend* wretched human nature, precisely because it is wretched, clinging to it and running after it, although it flies from him, although it recoils from being assumed by him; aiming to secure for himself real human flesh, real human blood, with the qualities and the weaknesses of our own, and that for what reason? *In order to be compassionate.* Although in all this Bossuet only makes use of the terms of the Apostle and perhaps of those of Chrysostom, he employs them with a delight, a luxury, a gust for reduplication, which bespeaks vivacious youth: "He has," says the apostle, "*apprehended* human nature; it flew away, it would have nothing of the Saviour; what did he do? He ran after it with headlong speed, leaping over the mountains, that is to say, the ranks of the angels.... He ran like a giant, with great strides and immeasurable, passing in a moment from heaven to earth.... There he overtook that fugitive nature; he seized it, he apprehended it, body and soul." Let us study the youthful eloquence of Bossuet, even in his risks of taste, as one studies the youthful poetry of the great Corneille.

Sainte-Beuve cannot let Lamartine alone. In the clause following, italicized by us, our readers are to recognize an irony on the part of the critic:

> M. de Lamartine, who, *with that second sight which is granted to poets*, knew how to see Bossuet distinctly as he was when young, etc.

Having quoted, with significant italics disposed here and there, a highly realistic imaginary picture of the youthful Bossuet from the hand of Lamartine, Sainte-Beuve says:

> Here is a primitive Bossuet much toned down and mollified, so it seems to me, a Bossuet drawn very much at will, to resemble Jocelyn and Fénelon, in order that it may be said afterward [by Lamartine]: "The soul evidently in this great man was of one temper, and the genius of another. Nature had made him tender; dogma had made him hard." I do not believe in this contradiction in Bossuet, a nature having the most perfect harmony, and the least at war with itself, that we know. But what for me is not less certain is, that the illustrious biographer [Lamartine] here treats literary history absolutely as history is treated in an historical romance; there you lightly invent your character, where your information fails, or where dramatic interest demands it. And without refusing the praise which certain ingenious and delicate touches of this portrait merit, I will permit myself to ask more seriously: Is it proper, is it becoming, thus to paint Bossuet as a youth, to fondle thus with the brush, as one would a Greek dancing-woman or a beautiful child of the English aristocracy, him who never ceased to grow under the shadow of the temple, that

> serious youth who gave promise of the simple great man, all genius and all eloquence? Far, far from him [Bossuet] these fondlings and these physiological feats of a brush which amuses itself with carmine and with veins....

You feel, with regard to the foregoing criticism, that it is as just as it is penetrative. Lamartine fairly provoked it.

Here is a trait of Bossuet's that pertained remarkably also to Daniel Webster:

> Bossuet is not one of those ingenious men of talent who have the art of treating commonplace subjects excellently, and of introducing into them foreign materials; but let the subject presented to him be vast, lofty, majestic, he is at his ease, and, the higher the theme, the more is he equal to its demands, on his proper plane, and in his element.

The Abbé Maury is a critic belonging to the classical school of French literature. His best-known work is a treatise on pulpit eloquence. La Harpe is another critic of the same class with Maury, who has a considerable work, historical and critical, devoted to French literature in general. To these two writers Sainte-Beuve makes instructive allusion in the following passage:

> Two opinions found expression when the Sermons

> of Bossuet were first published, in 1772; I have already indicated that of the Abbé Maury, who placed these sermons above everything else of that kind which the French pulpit had produced; the other opinion, which was that of La Harpe, and which I have known to be shared since by other sensible men, was less enthusiastic and showed itself more sensitive to the inequalities and to the discordances of tone. It would be possible to justify both of these opinions, with the understanding that the first should triumph in the end, and that the genius of Bossuet, there as elsewhere, should keep the first rank. It is very true that, read continuously, without any notice of the age of the writer, and of the place and circumstances of their composition, some of these discourses of Bossuet may offend or surprise minds that love to dwell upon the more uniform and more exact continuity of Bourdaloue or of Massillon.

Victor Cousin is one among the somewhat numerous writers who, within the bounds of this same paper on Bossuet, fall under the touch of Sainte-Beauve's critical lance, that weapon borne ever in rest and ready for any encounter:

> A great writer of our days, M. Cousin ... has been disposed once more to despoil Louis XIV. of his highest glory in order to carry it all back to the epoch preceding. M. Cousin has a convenient method of exaggerating and aggrandizing the

> objects of his admiration: he degrades or depresses their surroundings. It is thus that, to exalt Corneille, in whom he sees Æschylus, Sophocles, all the Greek tragic poets united, he sacrifices and diminishes Racine; it is thus that, in order the better to celebrate the epoch of Louis XIII. and of the regency which followed, he depresses the reign of Louis XIV.

It is Sainte-Beuve's specialty—in aim, whether in achievement or not—to be without the tendency thus charged upon M. Cousin, to violate proportion in his criticism. The insinuating delicacy of his adverse, or at least disparaging, critical judgment toward a distinguished contemporary author is well exemplified in the following passage, in which the critic, by his instinct as critic, is irresistibly drawn to make a return to Cousin. The wise reader familiar with Mr. Matthew Arnold will see how exactly the latter caught from his French master the trick of method here displayed:

> Ah, I cannot refrain from expressing another thought. When M. Cousin speaks so at his ease of Louis XIV., of Louis XIII., and of Richelieu, confidently attributing superiority to that which he prefers and which he thinks resembles him, I am astonished that he has never once asked himself this question: "What would have been the gain, what the loss to my own talent, this talent which is daily compared with that of the writers of the great age—what would have been gained or lost to that

admirable talent" (I forget that it is he that is speaking) "if I had had to write or to discourse, were it but for a few years, in the very presence of Louis XIV., that is to say, of that royal good sense, calm, sober, and august? And that which I should have thus gained or lost, in my vivacity and my eloquence, would it not have been precisely that which it lacks in the way of gravity, of proportion, of propriety, of perfect justice, and, consequently, of true authority?"

Lamartine does not escape still another light thrust from this dangerous delicate lance, aimed yet again, with exquisite accuracy, through an unquestionable joint in the victim's harness:

"These two rivals in eloquence," says M. de Lamartine, speaking of Bossuet and of Bourdaloue, "were passionately compared. *To the shame of the time*, the number of Bourdaloue's admirers surpassed in a short time that of the enthusiastic devotees of Bossuet. The reason of this preference for a cold argumentation above a sublime eloquence lies in the nature of human things. The men of middling stature have more resemblance to their age than the giants have to their contemporaries. The orators who deal in argument are more easily comprehended by the multitude than the orators who are fired with enthusiasm; one must have wings to follow the lyric orator." ... This theory, invented expressly to give the greatest glory to the *lyric orators* and to the giants, is here at fault. M. de

Bausset, author of a work on Bossuet, has remarked, on the contrary, as a kind of singularity, that it never entered any man's head at that time to consider Bossuet and Bourdaloue as subject of comparison, and to weigh in the balance their merit and their genius, as was so often done in the case of Corneille and of Racine; or, at least, if they were compared, it was but very seldom. To the honor and not to the shame of the time, the public taste and sentiment took note of the difference. Bossuet, in the higher sphere of the episcopate, remained the oracle, the doctor, a modern Father of the Church, the great orator, who appeared on funeral and majestic occasions; who sometimes re-appeared in the pulpit at the monarch's request, or to solemnize the assemblies of the clergy, leaving on each occasion an overpowering and ineffaceable recollection of his eloquence. Meanwhile Bourdaloue continued to be for the age the usual preacher by eminence, the one who gave a connected course of lectures on moral and practical Christianity, and who distributed the daily bread in its most wholesome form to all the faithful. Bossuet has said somewhere, in one of his sermons: "If it were not better suited to the dignity of this pulpit to regard the maxims of the Gospel as indubitable than to prove them by reasoning, how easily could I show you," etc. There, where Bossuet would have suffered from stooping and subjecting himself to too long a course of proof and to a continuous argumentation, Bourdaloue, who had not the same impatience of genius, was, beyond doubt, an apostolic workman who was more efficient in the long run, and better

> fitted for his task by his constancy. The age in which both appeared had the merit to make this distinction, and to appreciate each of them without opposing one to the other; and to-day those who glory in this opposition, and who so easily crush Bourdaloue with Bossuet, the man of talent with the man of genius, because they think they are conscious themselves of belonging to the family of geniuses, too easily forget that this Christian eloquence was designed to edify and to nourish still more than to please or to subdue.

The "bright consummate flower" of Bossuet's eloquence is to be found in his Funeral Discourses. Of one of these, Sainte-Beuve, with a sudden sympathetic swell of kindred eloquence in description, speaks, in a passage with quotation from which we close our exemplifications of this famous critic:

> The death of the Queen of England came to offer him (1669) the grandest and most majestic of themes. He needed the fall and the restoration of thrones, the revolution of empires, all the varied fortunes assembled in a single life, and weighing upon one and the same head; the eagle needed the vast depth of the heavens, and, below, all the abysses and the storms of the ocean.

It has been to us some satisfaction that the wrong of distortion by reduction in scale done to the

majestic figure of Bossuet in our own treatment of him, and unavoidable there, could thus in a measure be redressed by return to the subject in effective quotation from Sainte-Beuve. Looking back on the extracts preceding, we feel that enough is expressed, or suggested, in them, to justify us in saying, There is Bossuet.

But at any rate we have great confidence in saying, There is Sainte-Beuve.

3. Balzac.

Honoré de Balzac is one of the heroes of literature. He set himself labors of Hercules in literary production, and he toiled at his tasks of will with a tireless tenacity little less than sublime. The moral spectacle of such courageous industry in Balzac, the present writer admires, not the less, but the more, that the intellectual achievement resulting seems to him not commensurately great. Balzac's long "toil and endeavor" was not leavened and lightened and turned into play by that "reflex of unimpeded energy" in him which a lofty philosopher has defined happiness to be. He did his work hardly—with profuse sweat of his brow. His mind did not answer to that definition of genius which makes it a faculty of lighting its own fires. His fires Balzac lighted with late hours, artificial illumination, strong stimulant drinks. He burned himself out early in life—comparatively early, that is to say; he died at fifty-

one.

The moral triumph of Balzac we have but half suggested. Not only did he lack the spontaneous joy of genius at work; he lacked also, for many and many a doubtful year, the encouragement of recognition and success. Book after book of his failed, and still he toiled on. The world was fairly conquered at last. The reverse of Tulliver's experience happened with Balzac. One man, in his case, proved "too many" for the world.

For his own part, he freely confesses, the present writer not only admires; he wonders. Balzac's novels do not please him, either as products of genius or as works of art. They please him solely as monuments of victorious labor. They have to his mind exactly the quality that was to have been expected from the history of their production. They smell of oil, they smack of sweat. They are full of stimulated, rather than stimulating, thought. So much as one passage in which imagination played its magnificent play in easy and easily perfect creation, one passage in which the words flowed of themselves, and did not come each pumped with a several stroke of author's will, he cannot remember ever to have found in Balzac. He wonders, therefore, and helplessly wonders, that Balzac should be esteemed, as he is, and that by some good judges, one of the greatest writers in the world.

What Balzac undertook was to write the whole

"human tale of this wide world"—that is, to represent in fiction all the manifold phases and aspects of human life and character. He calls the entire series of his novels "The Human Comedy." This title, we have seen it stated, was not original with Balzac, but was adopted by him at the suggestion of a friend who hit upon it as a kind of balance and contrast to Dante's expression, "Divine Comedy." It is not quite a cynic conception of human character and human destiny that Balzac intended thus to express. Still, on the other hand, his view of human nature and human life cannot be said to be genial. The disagreeable preponderates in his fiction —the disagreeable one must call it, rather than the tragic. For true tragedy there is not height enough. In reading Balzac, you breathe for the most part an atmosphere of the not merely common, but—vulgar. Of course, the novelist himself would have said, Very well, such is man, and such is life. This one need not deny, but one can say, It was at least not desirable that readers should be obliged to feel the novelist to be himself vulgar, along with his characters. There is such a thing as refined dealing with people not refined.

Realism was Balzac's aim, and realism was the rock on which Balzac suffered double shipwreck. In seeking to be realistic, he became vulgar; and in seeking to be realistic, he became unreal. For there is an air of unreality diffused everywhere over the pages, meant to be realistic or nothing, of this

voluminous writer. Balzac evolved the personages of his fiction out of his own consciousness. They are none of them human beings, such as you meet in the real world. They are *simulacra*, images, bodiless projections, of the author's own mind. They move over his canvas like the specters thrown by the magic-lantern on its screen.

Balzac and Dickens are sometimes paralleled. There certainly is in a number of particulars a superficial resemblance between them. Both undertake to be realists. Both concern themselves chiefly with people of the average sort—sort, perhaps, even tending toward the vulgar. Both exaggerate to a degree that makes them at times almost caricaturists. Both deal abundantly in minute detail of description. But the contrast too between them is great. Balzac is far less spontaneous than Dickens. You feel that Dickens improvises. You never feel this about Balzac. You can hear Balzac drive his Pegasus with shout and with lash. Dickens's Pegasus often flies with his bit between his teeth. Dickens was an observer of men and of things—of books, a student never; there is perhaps scarcely another instance in nineteenth-century literature of an author who owed so little as did Dickens to study of books. From books, on the other hand, Balzac purveyed a large share of his material. Dickens writes as if unconscious that a race of men like the critics existed. Balzac writes in view of the critics. These in fact seem to be his audience quite as much as do the

general public. Balzac, beginning that novel of his from which we are presently to draw our sole brief extract to exhibit his manner, enters, according to a fashion of his, upon an elaborate unnecessary description of the house in which the scene of his action is laid. But he prefaces thus:

> Before describing this house, it may be well, in the interest of other writers, to explain the necessity for such didactic preliminaries, since they have raised a protest from certain ignorant and voracious readers who want emotions without undergoing the generating process, the flower without the seed, the child without gestation. Is Art supposed to have higher powers than Nature?

Such a sentence as that—prefatory, but in the body of the text, and not in a formal preface—would have been impossible to Dickens. In Balzac, it is the most natural thing in the world. And it discloses the secret of the character everywhere stamped on his production. He wrote as a professional writer. He conformed to a law that he himself imposed upon his genius, instead of leaving his genius free to be a law to itself. A real realist, a realist, that is to say, such by nature, and not merely by profession, a realist like De Foe, for example, could never have committed the offense against art of disturbing thus that very illusion of reality which he sought to produce, by exhibiting and defending the method adopted by him to produce it. There could not be a case imposing

more obligation on the artist to conceal his art. But Balzac, instead, forces upon his reader the thought of art by calling its very name.

Balzac paints with a big brush and puts on plenty of color. No one need fear in reading him that he will miss delicate shades. There are none such to miss. Balzac does not suggest. He speaks right out. Nay, he insists. You shall by no means fail of understanding him.

But, over against everything that can thus justly be said in diminution of his worth, there remain the unalterable facts, of Balzac's great reputation, just now looming larger than ever, of his voluminous literary achievement, of his population of imaginary personages projected into the world of thought, by actual count more, we believe, than two thousand poll. There is published a portly biographical dictionary exclusively devoted to the characters of Balzac's fiction.

Paralyzed to choose, even to think of choosing, out of the enormous volume of this writer's laborious production, a single page for exemplifying his quality, we pitch desperately upon the conclusion of that story of his called by the accomplished American translator of it, Miss Katharine Prescott Wormeley, "The Alkahest," "The Search for the Absolute" is the author's own title. This work, belonging in the endless series of volumes dedicated to the display of the "comedy of human life" in all its

phases, is a novel which undertakes to illustrate the effect on character and destiny of an exclusive supreme absorption in scientific pursuits. The hero has at length reached the catastrophe of his career. He is an old man who has wrecked fortune after fortune in chemical quest of a scientific chimera, The Absolute. A monomaniac before, he is paralytic now, and the last night of his life is slowly passing. Balzac:

> The old man made incredible efforts to shake off the bonds of his paralysis; he tried to speak and moved his tongue, unable to make a sound; his flaming eyes emitted thoughts; his drawn features expressed an untold agony; his fingers writhed in desperation; the sweat stood in drops upon his brow. In the morning, when his children came to his bedside and kissed him with an affection which the sense of coming death made day by day more ardent and more eager, he showed none of his usual satisfaction at these signs of their tenderness. Emmanuel [the dying man's son-in-law], instigated by the doctor, hastened to open the newspaper, to try if the usual reading might not relieve the inward crisis in which Balthazar was evidently struggling. As he unfolded the sheet he saw the words, "DISCOVERY OF THE ABSOLUTE," which startled him and he read a paragraph to Marguerite [the daughter] concerning a sale made by a celebrated Polish mathematician of the secret of the Absolute. Though Emmanuel read in a low voice, and Marguerite signed to him to omit the passage, Balthazar heard it.

> Suddenly the dying man raised himself by his wrists and cast on his frightened children a look which struck like lightning; the hairs that fringed the bald head stirred, the wrinkles quivered, the features were illumined with spiritual fires, a breath passed across that face and rendered it sublime; he raised a hand, clenched in fury, and uttered with a piercing cry the famous words of Archimedes, "EUREKA!"—"I have found."
>
> He fell back upon his bed with the dull sound of an inert body, and died, uttering an awful moan, his convulsed eyes expressing to the last, when the doctor closed them, the regret of not bequeathing to science the secret of an enigma whose veil was rent away—too late—by the fleshless fingers of death.

The reader there has Balzac at his highest and best.

Those desirous of acquainting themselves with some integral work of this author's will choose wisely if they choose any one of these four: "Père Goriot," "César Birotteau," "Modeste Mignon," "The Alkahest" ("The Search for the Absolute"). Mr. Saintsbury, a competent hand, edits a series of translations from Balzac, including the novels just named, together with everything else worth possessing from his industrious pen.

4. GEORGE SAND.

In virile quality, Madame de Stael seemed *rediviva*, or should we keep the more familiar masculine gender, and say *redivivus*? in George Sand. "It only happened that she was a woman," said some one, of the latter personage; and indeed the chance that made her such seemed half on the point of being reversed by the choice of the subject herself. For, besides that she has her fame permanently under a pseudonym naturally betokening a man as its owner, it is a fact that she did, at one time, in order to greater freedom of the world, wear man's clothes and otherwise play the man among her Parisian fellows. This episode in her experience doubtless helped give her that great advantage over other women, which her genius enabled her to use to effect so surpassing, in describing the male human being such as he himself recognizes himself to be.

The episode, however, was short, and George Sand is thought by her admirers—and her admirers include some very grave and self-respecting persons, the late Mr. Matthew Arnold being one example—never to have parted with a certain paradoxical womanly reserve and delicacy which ought logically to have been quite lost out of her nature through the coarse and soiled contacts to which she herself willingly, and even willfully, subjected it.

But, poor George Sand! Let us never, in judging her, forget how ill-bestead a childhood was hers, and how unhappy a marriage was provided for her warm and passionate youth. Her life began in protest, and

protest was the early strength of her genius and her endeavor. She protested against things as they were, and, according to her light—a light sadly confused with misguiding cross-lights from many quarters besides her own eager self-will—fought, and pleaded, and wept, aspiring, hoping, believing, for an ideal world in which love should be law; or rather an ideal world in which law should have ceased, and love should be all. From one of the last of her innumerable books, perhaps from the very last, Mr. Matthew Arnold translates this expression, which he repeats as summing up the motive of her work—"the sentiment of the ideal life, which is none other than man's normal life as we shall one day know it."

The word "love" does not occur in this expression, but that word and that thought make the luminous legend over everything hers by the light of which everything hers is to be read and interpreted.

Of course, George Sand's "love" is not the sentiment which the apostle Paul sings in that prose canticle of his found in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. But neither is it the purely animal passion that base souls might understand it. The peculiar affection natural between the sexes it indeed includes, but it includes much more. It includes all domestic, all social affections. In short, it is love in the largest sense. The largest sense, but not the highest. For it is love, the indulgence, the appetite; not love, the duty, the principle. George Sand's gospel is that you may love and indulge yourself;

Paul's gospel is that you must love and deny yourself. Paul says love is the fulfilling of the law; George Sand virtually says love is the annulling of the law.

Because in many passionate and powerful novels, read everywhere in Europe and not only in France, read also in America, George Sand has preached this gospel of love as the virtual solvent of existing society, Mr. Justin Macarthy pronounces the opinion that she is on the whole incomparably the greatest force in literature of her generation. He probably would attribute to her as a chief motor the portentous movements in human society which we of to-day feel, like tides of the sea, bearing us on, no one knows whither. It is no doubt true that George Sand has contributed what mechanicians call a "moment," not sufficiently considered, to make up the urgency that is pushing us all in the direction toward uncalculated social solutions and social reconstructions. This constitutes her a notable social force working by literature; a force, however, that has already chiefly spent itself, or that persists, so far as it does persist, translated indistinguishably into other forms.

For George Sand is no longer read as she formerly was, her fashion having already to a great extent passed away. It is a common testimony that, as she wrote like one improvising, so her writing is to be read once and not returned to. Her "Consuelo," in its time such a rage, and still often spoken of as her

masterpiece, is now even a little hard to get through. You yawn, you feel like skipping, you do skip, and you finally shut up the book wondering why such bright writing should make such dull reading.

There occurred a sharp, decisive change, a change, however, not consistently maintained, in George Sand's quality of production. From producing novels of social ferment, she turned to producing the quietest, most quieting, idyllic little stories in the world. There is a long list of such. "La Petite Fadette," "François le Champi," "Les Maîtres Sonneurs," are among the best of them. From this last, consummately well translated by our countrywoman, Miss Katharine Prescott Wormeley, who has Messrs. Roberts Brothers for her publishers, we shall offer a very short extract in specimen. But first a short passage from one of her earlier books, in order that our readers may get a sense of the change that she underwent, or rather—for no doubt the change was voluntary and calculated on her part—the change that she chose to make, in her manner. It is simply her two contrasted manners that we aim to illustrate—not at all, in either case, the matter or doctrine set forth. To illustrate this last we should have no room, had we the inclination.

From "Lélia," we translate a passage descriptive of Alpine scenery, or rather of the effect on the mind of Alpine scenery. After lighting upon this passage for our choice we found that Mr. Saintsbury too, in his "Specimens of French Literature," had made the

same selection, at double length, for his sole exemplification of George Sand. We are thus confirmed in trusting that we shall show our author, if far too briefly, still at her best:

"Look where we are; is it not sublime, and can you think of aught else than God? Sit down upon this moss, virgin of human steps, and see at your feet the desert unrolling its mighty depths. Did ever you contemplate anything more wild and yet more full of life? See what vigor in this free and vagabond vegetation; what movement in those woods which the wind bows and sways, in those great flocks of eagles hovering incessantly around the misty summits and passing in moving circles like great black rings over the sheet, white and watery, of the glacier. Do you hear the noise that rises and falls on every side? The torrents weeping and sobbing like unhappy souls; the stags moaning with voices plaintive and passionate, the breeze singing and laughing among the heather, the vultures screaming like frightened women; and those other noises, strange, mysterious, indescribable, rumbling muffled in the mountains; those colossal icebergs cracking in their very heart; those snows, sucking and drawing down the sand; those great roots of trees grappling incessantly with the entrails of the earth and toiling to heave the rock and to rive the shale; those unknown voices, those vague sighs, which the soil, always a prey to the pains of travail, here expires through her gaping loins; do you not find all this more splendid, more harmonious, than the church or the theater?"

With our utmost effort to convey, through close

fidelity, the feeling of George Sand's style, the delicious music of it, its sweet opulence of diction, its warmth of color, its easy spontaneity, its lubricity, its flow, we must ask our readers to imagine all twice as charming as they could possibly find it in any translation. As to the substance of what is said in the foregoing sentences? Other travelers may have been more fortunate, but the present writer is obliged to admit that he never saw "great flocks," or any flocks at all, of eagles "incessantly hovering around the summits" of the Alps. Indeed, the eagle is generally supposed to be a solitary bird, not inclined to fly in flocks. Also, he has never happened to meet with "stags" in the Alps, much less to hear them moan passionately or otherwise. "The vultures screaming," etc.? In short, he would be quite unable to verify in its details George Sand's beautiful description, which he thinks must have been written from the heart of the writer, much more than from either her eye or her ear.

Successive generations of readers are not apt to be satisfied with merely subjective truth in what is offered them to read. There must be fact of some sort to correspond with statement, in order permanently to secure the future for an author. But feeling, rather than fact, at least in her earlier work, is the substance to which George Sand's magical style gave such exquisite form.

Now for a specimen passage done in her later manner.

This we take from “Les Maîtres Sonneurs,” or “The Bagpipers,” as Miss Wormeley renders the title. Brulette is a charming peasant girl, who, brought up in the same house with José, has known him only as a shy, recluse, silent, sullen, even downright stupid boy, if not indeed almost a “natural.” He has cultivated music secretly, and he now makes trial of his art for the first time before Brulette. She turns away, and he is in despair, till he sees that she turned away to hide her fast-coming tears. He then demands to know what she thought of while he was playing. Brulette replies, and José in his turn expresses his mind:

> “I did not think of any thing,” said Brulette, “but a thousand recollections of old times came into my mind. I seemed not to see you playing, though I heard you clearly enough; you appeared to be no older than when we lived together, and I felt as if you and I were driven by a strong wind, sometimes through the ripe wheat, sometimes into the long grass, at other times upon the running streams; and I saw the fields, the woods, the springs, the flowery meadows, and the birds in the sky among the clouds. I saw, too, in my dream, your mother and my grandfather sitting before the fire, and talking of things I could not understand; and all the while you were in the corner on your knees saying your prayers, and I thought I was asleep in my little bed. Then again I saw the ground covered with snow, and the willows full of larks, and the night full of falling stars; and we looked at each other, sitting on

a hillock, while the sheep made their little noise of nibbling the grass. In short I dreamed so many things that they are all jumbled up in my head; and if they made me cry it was not for grief, but because my mind was shaken in a way I can't at all explain to you."

"It is all right," said José. "What I saw and what I dreamed as I played, you saw too! Thank you, Brulette; through you I know now that I am not crazy, and that there is a truth in what we hear within us, as there is in what we see. Yes, yes," he said, taking long strides up and down the room, and holding his flute above his head, "it speaks!—that miserable bit of reed! It says what we think; it shows what we see; it tells a tale as if with words; it loves like the heart; it lives; it has a being! And now, José, the mad man; José, the idiot; José, the starer, go back to your imbecility; you can afford to do so, for you are as powerful, and as wise, and as happy as others."

So saying, he sat down and paid no further attention to any thing about him.

Little speeches like the foregoing make up what, throughout the whole story of "The Bagpipers" does duty for dialogue between the characters. Charming, but in no proper sense of the word natural or verisimilar.

George Sand and Balzac are often set in antithesis to each other as respectively idealistic and realistic

writers. Different enough, indeed, they are, but the difference is that of temperament, of genius, and not that of method. Balzac is all conscience (his sort of conscience), will, work; George Sand is all freedom, improvisation, play—around her everywhere a nameless exquisite charm.

5. Musset.

Alfred de Musset makes a melancholy figure in literary history. Few men ever had a more brilliant morning than he; few men ever had an evening more somber. And Musset's evening fell at mid-day. Heine, with that bitterness which was his, could say of the still youthful poet, "A young man with a very fine future—behind him!"

What this writer accomplished, he accomplished by the pure felicity of genius—genius, flushed and quickened with the warm blood of youth. He did nothing in the way of self-tasking, but all in the way of self-indulging. He obeyed whim, and not will. When the whim failed, he failed. Will indeed he seemed not to have, but only willfulness. He died at forty-seven, but he had already ceased living at forty.

It is generally agreed that in what makes genius for the poet, namely, capacity of poetic feeling, propensity to poetic rhythm, command of poetic phrase, and power to see with the imagination, Musset belongs among the foremost singers of

France. What he lacked was moral equipment to match. We mean not moral goodness, though this, too, he missed, but moral strength. He might have soared like the eagle, for he had eagle's pinions; but he had not the eagle's heart, and after a few daring upward flights he fluttered ignobly downward, and thereafter, except at intervals too rare, kept the ground. Some charge this lamentable failure on Musset's part to the ill influence over him of George Sand, with whom in the fresh splendor of his young fame he entered into an unhappy "relation"—a "relation" sought by the woman in the case, who of the two was the older. She, as some think, sucked Musset's heart out of him like a vampire. But what a confession to make on the man's behalf of flaccid moral fiber in him! Such a man, one would say, was certain to fall in due time prey to some one; in default of other hunter, then prey to himself. It is one of the things least consistent with a favorable view of George Sand's fundamental character that, two years after Musset's death, and some twenty years after the time of her "relation" with him, she should publish, thinly veiled under the form of fiction, a story of that relation, in which she herself appeared vindicated, and the unhappy dead was held up to the laughter and contempt of Europe. Paul de Musset, Alfred's brother, replied in a book which claimed to set the facts in their true light before the world. Wretched wrangle! A little more of dull conformity on her part to things as she found them, and a little less of passionate protest against them in literature and in

life, would have helped George Sand shun scandals that happily limit her influence as they deservedly darken her fame. There is too much reason to fear that this woman, in whom genius was certainly greater than was conscience, made, after the manner of Goethe, a deliberate study of Musset in quest of material to be worked up in literary product.

Musset was greatest as poet, but he wrote admirable prose in novels and in comedies. He singularly combined capacity of hard and brilliant wit in prose dialogue with capacity of the softest, most dewy sentiment in musical verse. Some of his comedies are established classics of the French stage.

We confine ourselves here to brief exhibition by specimen of what Musset accomplished in that species of literary work in which he was greatest, namely, poetry. A quaternion of pieces called “The Nights” will supply us perhaps with our best single extract, at once practicable and characteristic. These pieces are entitled respectively “Night of May,” “Night of August,” “Night of October,” “Night of December.” They are couched in the form of dialogue between the poet and his muse. Of course they are highly charged with autobiographic quality. The poet poses in them very pensively before the public. The Byronic melancholy, without the Byronic passion, pervades them. Our extract we take, condensing it, from the “Night of December.” In it, the poet’s muse talks to the poet in what might easily pass for an almost pious vein. We could make

extracts in which the piety would be far, very far, less edifying, would in fact take on the characteristic dissolute French type of moral sentiment. His muse's talk to the poet is somewhat such as might be imagined to be a confidential consolatory strain of condescension from the goddess-mother Venus to her son, the Virgilian "pious" *Æneas*. We make our translation closely line for line, almost word for word. The rhyme we sacrifice for the sake of what we trust may seem to wise judges a fairly good approximation, otherwise impossible in a literal rendering, to the spirit and rhythm of the original:

Is it aimlessly, then, that Providence works,
And absent, then, deem'st thou the God that thee smote?
The stroke thou complainest of saved thee perchance,
My poor child, for 'twas then that was opened thy heart.
An apprentice is man, and his master is pain,
And none knows himself until he has grieved.
It is a stern law, but a law that's supreme,
As old as the world and as ancient as doom,
That the baptism we of misfortune must take,
And that all at this sorrowful price must be bought.
The harvest to ripen has need of the dew,
To live and to feel man has need of his tears,
Joy has for its symbol a plant that is bruised
Yet is wet with the rain and covered with flowers.
Wast not saying that thou of thy folly wast cured?
Art not young, art not happy, and everywhere hailed?
And those airy-light pleasures which make life beloved,
If thou never hadst wept, what worth to thee they?

****

Wouldst thou feel the ineffable peace of the skies,
The hush of the nights, the moan of the waves,
If somewhere down here fret and failure of sleep
Had not brought to thy dream the eternal repose?

****

Of what then complainest? The unquenchable hope
Is rekindled in thee 'neath the hand of mischance.
Why choose to abhor thy vanished young years,

And an evil detest that thee better has made?

Imagine the foregoing in its own original music, and invested with that hovering, wavering atmosphere of pathos which Musset knew so well how to throw over his verse, and you will partly understand what the charm is of this French poet to his countrymen.

Musset exhibits something of the wit that he was, in the following bit of rhymed epigram, which, breaking up two stanzas for the purpose, we take from his poem entitled “Namouna.” The rhymes were necessary here to convey the effect of smartness belonging to the original, and we accordingly preserve them:

Lord Byron for model has served me, say you,
You know not then Byron set Pulci in view?
Read up the Italians, you’ll see if he stole.
Nothing is any one’s, every one’s all.
Dunce deep as a schoolmaster surely were he
Who should dream left for him one word there could
be
That no man before him had hit upon yet;
They somebody copy who cabbage-plants set.

This self-vindicating epigram of Musset’s may be pronounced clever rather than satisfactory.

Musset—the juxtaposition and contrast of the two

men irresistibly provokes the reflection—was as much less than Balzac by inferiority of will as he was greater by superiority of genius.

Already, such is the pace of progress in these last days of the nineteenth century, the "men of 1830" are beginning to seem a generation long gone by. The future will see whether their successors of the present time enjoy a more protracted supremacy.

XXIV.

JOUBERT: 1754-1824; **Madame Swetchine**: 1782-1859; **Amiel**: 1821-1881.

WE come now to that nineteenth-century group, foreshadowed on an earlier page, of French *pensée*-writers.

The longer lapse of time in JOUBERT'S case, constantly confirming his claim to be a true classic, justifies us in placing, as we do, his name not only first but principal in the title to the present chapter.

Joseph Joubert presents the singular case of a man of letters living to a good old age, whose published literary work, and, therefore, whose literary fame, are wholly posthumous. He left behind him more

than two hundred blank books filled with notes of thoughts which were to constitute after he died his title to enduring remembrance.

Everything important surviving from his pen exists in the form of what the French call *pensées*. The sense of this word one of Joubert's own *pensées* very well expresses:

> I should like to convert wisdom into coin, that is, mint it into *maxims*, into *proverbs*, into *sentences*, easy to keep and to circulate.

Another of his *pensées* confesses, perhaps we should say rather, professes, what the ambition was that this most patient of writers indulged with reference to the literary form of his work:

> If there exists a man tormented by the accursed ambition of putting a whole book into a page, a whole page into a phrase, and that phrase into a word, that man is myself.

Joubert was a natural unchangeable classicist in taste and spirit. The Periclean age of Greece, the Augustan age of Rome, the "great age" of France, that of Louis XIV., supplied Joubert with most of the books that fed his mind. He remained distinctively Christian in creed, though not nicely orthodox according to any accepted standard. Like so many of his literary compatriots, Joubert owed a great debt,

for intellectual quickening, shaping, and refining, to brilliant and beautiful women.

We show a few, too few, specimens that may indicate this gifted Frenchman's rare and precious quality:

> Religion is a fire to which example furnishes fuel, and which goes out if it does not spread.
>
> The Bible is to the religions [of mankind], what the Iliad is to poetry.

A comparison, the latter foregoing, however faulty by defect we may justly esteem it, loyally designed, of course, by the author to render profound homage to the Bible.

> Only just the right proportion of wit should be put into a book; in conversation a little too much is allowable.
>
> We may convince others by our arguments; but we can persuade them only by their own.
>
> Frankness is a natural quality; constant veracity is a virtue.

In pondering such golden sentences, one is constantly incited to make maxims one's self; which, indeed, is a part of the value of this kind of literature.

Gravity is but the rind of wisdom; but it is a preservative rind.

The foregoing happy English rendering of the French maxim we borrow from Mr. Henry Attwell, who has published a selection of Joubert's *pensées* translated, the translation being accompanied with the original text.

Children have more need of patterns than of critics.

Children should be made reasonable, but they should not be made reasoners. The first thing to teach them is that it is reasonable for them to obey and unreasonable for them to dispute. Without that, education would waste itself in bandying arguments, and every thing would be lost if all teachers were not clever cavillers.

In a poem there should be not only poetry of images, but poetry of ideas.

Words, like lenses, darken whatever they do not help us see.

Buffon says that genius is but the aptitude for being patient. The aptitude for a long-continued and unwearying effort of attention is indeed, the genius of observation; but there is another genius, that of invention, which is aptitude for a quick, prompt, and ever-active energy of penetration.

Buffon's is a good working definition, to say the least—for genius of any sort.

> The end of a production should always call to mind its beginning.

This may be compared to the law in musical composition requiring that a piece end in the key in which it began.

> Taste is the literary conscience of the soul.

"Artistic," instead of "literary," Joubert might have widened his "thought" by saying.

> When there is born in a nation a man capable of producing a great thought, another is born there capable of understanding it and of admiring it.
>
> That which astonishes, astonishes once; but that which is admirable is more and more admired.
>
> Fully to understand a great and beautiful thought requires, perhaps, as much time as to conceive it.

A few individual literary judgments now, and we shall have shown from Joubert all that our room will admit:

> Seek in Plato forms and ideas only. These are what he himself sought. There is in him more light

to see by than objects to see, more form than substance. We should breathe him and not feed on him.

Homer wrote to be sung, Sophocles to be declaimed, Herodotus to be recited, and Xenophon to be read. From these different destinations of their works, there could not but spring a multitude of differences in their style.

Xenophon wrote with a swan's quill, Plato with a pen of gold, and Thucydides with a stylus of bronze.

In Plato the spirit of poetry gives life to the languors of dialectics.

Plato loses himself in the void; but one sees the play of his wings; one hears the noise of their motion.

Cicero is, in philosophy, a kind of moon. His teaching sheds a light, very soft, but borrowed, a light altogether Greek, which the Roman has softened and enfeebled.

Horace pleases the intellect, but he does not charm the taste. Virgil satisfies the taste no less than the reflective faculty. It is as delightful to remember his verses as to read them.

There is not in Horace a single turn, one might almost say a single word, that Virgil would have used, so different are their styles.

Behind the thought of Pascal, we see the attitude of that firm and passionless intellect. This it is, more

than all else, which makes him so imposing.

Fénelon knows how to pray, but he does not know how to instruct We have in him a philosopher almost divine, and a theologian almost without knowledge.

M. de Bausset says of Fénelon: “He loved men better than he knew them.” Charmingly spoken; it is impossible to praise more wittily what one blames, or better to praise in the very act of blaming.

The plan of Massillon’s sermons is insignificant, but their bas-reliefs are superb.

Montesquieu appears to teach the art of making empires; you seem to yourself to be learning it when you listen to him, and every time you read him you are tempted to go to work and construct one.

Voltaire’s judgment was correct, his imagination rich, his intellect agile, his taste lively, and his moral sense ruined.

It is impossible for Voltaire to satisfy, and impossible for him not to please.

In Voltaire, as in the monkey, the movements are charming and the features hideous. One always sees in him, at the end of a clever hand, an ugly face.

That oratorical “authority” [weight of personal character] of which the ancients speak—you feel it in Bossuet more than in any other man; after him, in Pascal, in La Bruyère, in J. J. Rousseau even, but never in Voltaire.

> The style of Rousseau makes upon the soul the impression which the flesh of a lovely woman would make in touching us. There is something of the woman in his style.
>
> Racine and Boileau are not fountain-heads. A fine choice in imitation constitutes their merit. It is their books that imitate books, not their souls that imitate souls. Racine is the Virgil of the unlettered.
>
> Molière is comic in cold blood. He provokes laughter and does not laugh. Herein lies his excellence.
>
> Bernardin [St. Pierre] writes by moonlight, Chateaubriand by sunlight.

The quality of both writers is such that we seem simply to be making the transition from masculine to feminine in going, as now we do, from Joubert to Madame Swetchine.

Madame SWETCHINE lives, and deserves to live, in French literature—for, though Russian, she wrote in French—by the incomparable exquisiteness of her personal, expressing itself in her literary, quality. Purest of pure was she, as in what she wrote, so in what she was. Through sympathetic contemporary description she makes an impression as of one of Fra Angelico's female saints released for a life from the fixed canonization of the canvas.

Madame Swetchine's life was chiefly spent in

Paris, where the French language, already long before, in St. Petersburg, grown easy and tripping on her tongue, became to her a second, perhaps more familiar, vernacular. She was a high-born, high-bred, refined, and elegant woman of the world—woman in the world we should rather say, for, in the truest sense, *of* it she never was—who held brilliant, choicely-frequented *salons*, but who, without ostentation and without affectation, would go from her oratory, which indeed seems to have been a private "chapel," in the full ecclesiastic sense of that word, to her drawing-room; who had even, as Sainte-Beuve indulgently, but with something of his inseparable irony, intimates, the effect of vibrating from the one to the other in the course of the same evening. Madame Swetchine was married young very unequally to a man twenty-five years her senior; but she set the edifying example of half a century's wifely devotion to that husband whom, at the wish of her father, well beloved, she had dutifully accepted in place of a noble young suitor, the choice of her own affections.

Two volumes—both of "Thoughts," though one of them bears the title "Airelles"—shut up within themselves the fragrance that was Madame Swetchine. We cull a few specimens:

> Often one is prophet for others only because one is historian for one's self.

> The chains which bind us the closest are those

which weigh on us the least.

The best of lessons for many persons would be to listen at key-holes; it is a pity for their sake that this is not honorable.

Go always beyond designated duties, and remain within permitted pleasures.

Upon the whole, there is in life only what we put there.

I love knowledge; I love intellect; I love faith—simple faith—yet more, I love God's shadow better than man's light.

He who has ceased to enjoy his friend's superiority has ceased to love him.

Since there must be chimeras, why is not perfection the chimera of all men?

"Woman is in some sort divine," said the ancient German. "Woman," says the follower of Mahomet, "is an amiable creature who only needs a cage." "Woman," says the European, "is a being nearly our equal in intelligence, and perhaps our superior in fidelity." Everywhere something detracted from our dignity!

No two persons ever read the same book or saw the same picture.

Strength alone knows conflict. Weakness is below even defeat, and is born vanquished.

We are rich only through what we give, and poor

only through what we refuse.

Madame Swetchine was a woman of wealth and of leisure so-called; but it may be doubted whether any poor woman in Paris worked harder. She carried with her when she went hence what, through all her conscientious activity, outward and inward, she had in her own being become; and she found besides that ample further reward, unknown, which she had thus grown capable of receiving.

Henri Fréderic AMIEL, who lived an almost silent life of sixty years—not quite silent, for he piped a volume or two of ineffectual verse—became a bruit of marvel and of praise soon after his death, through the publication from his "Journal Intime" ["Private Journal"] of a select number of his "Thoughts" found recorded there. How permanent a glow may prove to be the brightness of fame for Amiel thus suddenly outbursting, time only will decide. Already two very opposite opinions find expression concerning his merit—one applausive to the point almost of veneration, the other very freely irreverent.

Both these two contradictory opinions admit of being apparently justified from the text of his "Journal." Take the following for an example on one side:

> Is not mind simply that which enables us to merge finite reality in the infinite possibility around it? Or,

> to put it differently, is not mind the universal virtuality, the universe latent? If so, its zero would be the germ of the infinite, which is expressed mathematically by the double zero (00).

The foregoing sentence is unintelligible enough to make, probably, the impression of pretty pure jargon on most minds. But in truth the amount of such writing in Amiel's "Journal" is proportionally very small.

Another line of entries in the "Journal" tending to reflect disparagement upon the writer consists of reiterated confessions on Amiel's part of morbid weakness of will, with habits of helpless morbid introspection, which, disappointing the hopes of his friends, practically shut him up his whole life long in a well-nigh total sterility of genius. On this count of the indictment against Amiel it is quite impossible to defend him. He was inexcusably non-productive. His "Journal" itself shows that its author should have done more than that.

This book, admirably translated into English by Mrs. Humphrey Ward, exhibits Amiel in the character of a man who always thought and felt and spoke and wrote on the side of what was pure and good and noble. He was a profoundly religious soul. As the years went on with him, and he became more and more the passive prey of his own eternally active thought, there appear to be registered some decline

from the simplicity, and some corruption from the wholesomeness, of his earlier religious experience. In fact, he at last seems to let go historical Christianity altogether, still clinging, however, pathetically to God, as Father, all the time that he regards God's fatherly providence over the world as only a subjective beautiful illusion of faith existing in his own imaginative mind!

Amiel judges the present age and the current tendency of things:

> The age of great men is going.... By continual leveling and division of labor society will become everything and man nothing.... A plateau with fewer and fewer undulations, without contrasts and without oppositions—such will be the aspect of human society. The statistician will register a growing progress, and the moralist a gradual decline: on the one hand, a progress of things; on the other, a decline of souls. The useful will take the place of the beautiful, industry of art, political economy of religion, and arithmetic of poetry.

He writes to himself a sort of "spiritual letter" that might almost have been Fénelon's (the date is 1852, he was therefore now thirty-one years old):

> We receive everything, both life and happiness; but the *manner* in which we receive, this is what is still ours. Let us, then, receive trustfully without

shame or anxiety. Let us humbly accept from God even our own nature, and treat it charitably, firmly, intelligently. Not that we are called upon to accept the evil and the disease in us, but let us accept ourselves in spite of the evil and the disease.

The first following "thought" is a deep intuition:

There are two states or conditions of pride. The first is one of self-approval, the second one of self-contempt. Pride is seen probably at its purest in the last.

To do easily what is difficult for others is the mark of talent. To do what is impossible for talent is the mark of genius.

Chateaubriand posed all his life as the wearied Colossus, smiling pitifully upon a pigmy world, and contemptuously affecting to desire nothing from it, though at the same time wishing it to be believed that he could if he pleased possess himself of every thing by mere force of genius.

We are never more discontented with others than when we are discontented with ourselves.

To grow old is more difficult than to die, because to renounce a good once and for all costs less than to renew the sacrifice day by day and in detail.

From entries fourteen years apart in date, we bring together, abridging them, two expressions of Amiel

about Victor Hugo:

> His ideal is the extraordinary, the gigantic, the overwhelming, the incommensurable. His most characteristic words are immense, colossal, enormous, huge, monstrous. He finds a way of making even child-nature extravagant and bizarre. The only thing which seems impossible to him is to be natural.
>
> He does not see that pride is a limitation of the mind, and that a pride without limitations is a littleness of soul. If he could but learn to compare himself with other men, and France with other nations, he would see things more truly, and would not fall into these mad exaggerations, these extravagant judgments. But proportion and fairness will never be among the strings at his command. He is vowed to the Titanic; his gold is always mixed with lead, his insight with childishness, his reason with madness. He cannot be simple; the only light he has to give blinds you like that of a fire. He astonishes a reader and provokes him, he moves him and annoys him. There is always some falsity of note in him, which accounts for the *malaise* he so constantly excites in me. The great poet in him cannot shake off the charlatan. A few shafts of Voltairean irony would have shriveled the inflation of his genius and made it stronger by making it saner. It is a public misfortune that the most powerful poet of a nation should not have better understood his *rôle*, and that, unlike those Hebrew prophets who scourged because they loved, he

should devote himself proudly and systematically to the flattery of his countrymen. France is the world; Paris is France; Hugo is Paris; peoples, bow down!

Amiel had a just perception of the immense healing virtue lodged in happiness:

What doctor possesses such curative resources as those latent in a spark of happiness or a single ray of hope?

A vent of frank French distaste for the German type of book. Amiel had been reading the great nineteenth-century philosopher Lotze:

The noise of a mill-wheel sends one to sleep, and these pages without paragraphs, these interminable chapters, and this incessant dialectical clatter, affect me as though I were listening to a word-mill. I end by yawning like any simple non-philosophical mortal in the face of all this heaviness and pedantry. Erudition and even thought are not everything. An occasional touch of *esprit*, a little sharpness of phrase, a little vivacity, imagination, and grace, would spoil neither.

He who is too much afraid of being duped has lost the power of being magnanimous.

The following shows a good heart as well as a wise head:

> The errand-woman has just brought me my letters. Poor little woman, what a life! She spends her nights in going backwards and forwards from her invalid husband to her sister, who is scarcely less helpless, and her days are passed in labor. Resigned and indefatigable, she goes on without complaining, till she drops.
>
> Lives such as hers prove something.... The kingdom of God belongs not to the most enlightened but to the best; and the best man is the most unselfish man. Humble, constant, voluntary self-sacrifice—this is what constitutes the true dignity of man.... Society rests upon conscience and not upon science. Civilization is, first and foremost, a moral thing.

He first passes judgment on Goethe, and then afterward checks himself:

> He [Goethe] has so little soul. His way of understanding love, religion, duty, and patriotism has something mean and repulsive in it. There is no ardor, no generosity, in him. A secret barrenness, an ill-concealed egotism, makes itself felt through all the wealth and flexibility of his talent.
>
> One must never be too hasty in judging these complex natures. Completely lacking as he is in the sense of obligation and of sin, Goethe nevertheless finds his way to seriousness through dignity. Greek sculpture has been his school of virtue.

Under date 1874, Amiel asks a question and answers it. He had before said, “My creed has melted away”:

> *Is* there a particular Providence directing all the circumstances of our life, and therefore imposing all our trials upon us for educational ends? Is this heroic faith compatible with our actual knowledge of the laws of nature? Scarcely. But what this faith makes objective we may hold as subjective truth.... What he [the moral being] cannot change he calls the will of God, and to will what God wills brings him peace.

A melancholy fall from his earlier state! A whole sky between such conscious false motions toward self-deceiving and the victory which overcomes the world, even our faith. Amiel had now definitely lost his health.

Toward the end, occurs this striking and illuminating word about one of the worst of human passions:

> Jealousy is a terrible thing. It resembles love, only it is precisely love’s contrary. Instead of wishing for the welfare of the object loved, it desires the dependence of that object upon itself, and its own triumph. Love is the forgetfulness of self; jealousy is the most passionate form of egotism, the glorification of a despotic, exacting, and vain ego, which can neither forget nor subordinate itself. The

contrast is perfect.

Doubting Amiel still thinks that Christ is better than Buddha:

> Sorrow is the most tremendous of all realities in the sensible world, but the transfiguration of sorrow, after the manner of Christ, is a more beautiful solution of the problem than the extirpation of sorrow, after the method of Cakyamouni [Buddha].

Amiel was a naturally noble spirit, not equal to making for himself the career that he needed. But the right career, made for him, would have left to history and to literature a very different man from the writer of Amiel's "Journal."

The very latest conspicuous French candidate for renown as a writer of *pensées* is Joseph ROUX, a rural Roman Catholic priest, and a man still living. Out of a volume of his "Thoughts" lately translated and published in America under the title of "Meditations of a Parish Priest," we show the following specimen of literary criticism peculiarly pertinent to the subject of the present chapter:

> Pascal is somber, La Rochefoucauld bitter, La Bruyère malicious, Vauvenargues melancholy, Chamfort acrimonious, Joubert benevolent, Swetchine gentle.

Pascal seeks, La Rochefoucauld suspects, La Bruyère spies, Vauvenargues sympathizes, Chamfort condemns, Joubert excuses, Swetchine mourns.

Pascal is profound, La Rochefoucauld penetrating, La Bruyère sagacious, Vauvenargues delicate, Chamfort paradoxical, Joubert ingenious, Swetchine contemplative.

Pensée-writing has gained such headway in France, there is so much literary history behind it there, and it is in itself so fascinating a form of literary activity, that, in that country at least, the fashion will probably never pass away.

XXV.

EPILOGUE.

HOW much author's anguish of self-tasking and of self-denial, in exploration, study, selection, rejection, condensation, retrenchment, to say nothing of the anxiety to be clear in expression, to be true, to be proportionate, to be just, finally, too, to be entertaining as well as instructive—this little book has cost the producer of it, no one is likely ever to guess that has not tried a similar task with similar application of conscience himself.

For instance, to name Ronsard, the brilliant, the once sovereign Ronsard—lately, after so long occultation of his orb, come, through the romanticists of to-day, or shall we write "of yesterday"? almost to brightness again—to name this poet, without at least giving in specimen the following celebrated sonnet from his hand, which, for the sake of making our present point the clearer, we may now show in a neat version by Mr. Andrew Lang (but why should Mr. Lang, in his fourth line, change Ronsard's "fair" to "young"?):

When you are very old, at evening
  You'll sit and spin beside the fire, and say,
  Humming my songs, "Ah well, ah well-a-day!
When I was young, of me did Ronsard sing."
None of your maidens that doth hear the thing,
  Albeit with her weary task foredone,
  But wakens at my name, and calls you one
Blest, to be held in long remembering.

I shall be low beneath the earth, and laid
On sleep, a phantom in the myrtle shade,
  While you beside the fire, a grandame gray,
My love, your pride, remember and regret;
Ah, love me, love! we may be happy yet,
  And gather roses while 'tis called to-day:

—then, for another instance, to pass over Boileau and not bring forward from him even so much as the following characteristic epigram, wherein this wit and satirist pays his sarcastic respects to that same

poet Cotin whom (pp. 81 ff.) we showed Molière mocking under the name of “Trissotin” (here we must do our own translating):

In vain, with thousandfold abuse,
My foes, through all their works diffuse,
  Have thought to make me shocking to mankind;
Cotin, to bring my style to shame,
Has played a much more easy game,
  He has his verses to my pen assigned—

to achieve, we say, these abstinences, and abstinences such as these, was a problem hard indeed to solve.

The result of all is before the reader; and, good or bad, it is, we are bound to confess, the very best that, within the given limits, we could do. Such students of our subject as we may fortunately have succeeded in making hungry for still more knowledge than we ourselves supply, we can conscientiously send, for further partial satisfaction of their desire, to that series of books, already once named by us, which has lately been published at Chicago, under the title, “The Great French Writers.” Messrs. A. C. McClurg & Co. have done a true service to the cause of letters in general, and in particular to the cause of what may be called international letters, in reproducing this series of books. They are good books, they are well translated, and they appear in handsome form. Madame de Sévigné, Montesquieu, Bernardin de St.

Pierre, and three names that, together with all of their several kinds, economists, philosophers, historians, we here have been obliged to omit, Turgot, Victor Cousin, Thiers, are in the list of authors treated in the volumes thus far issued.

An interesting doubt may, in retrospect of all, be submitted, without author's solution supplied, to entertain the speculation of the wisely considerate reader. Let the earlier still living French literature, that part of the whole body, we mean, ending, say, with the date of Montesquieu, which, in a rough approximate way, may be described as dominated by the spirit of classicism—let this be compared with the later French literature, that section in which the leaven of romanticism has strongly worked, and do you find existing an important fundamental difference in intimate quality between the one and the other? Is the later literature of a certain softer fiber, a more yielding consistence, than characterizes the earlier? Does the earlier present a harder, more quartz-like structure, a substance better fitted to resist yet for ages to come the slow but tireless tooth of time?

INDEX.

The merest approximation only can be attempted in hinting here the pronunciation of French names. In general, the French distribute the accent pretty evenly among all the syllables of their words. We mark an accent on the final syllable chiefly in order to correct a natural English tendency to slight that syllable in pronunciation. In a few cases we let a well-established English pronunciation stand. N notes a peculiar nasal sound, ü, a peculiar vowel sound, having no equivalent in English.

Ab´é-lard, Pierre (1079-1142), 13.

Academy, French, 16, 62, 119, 238, 264.

Æs´chy-lus, 77, 118, 127, 128.

Æsop, 69.

Alembert. *See* D'Alembert.

Al-ex-an´der (the Great), 12, 103.

AM'I-EL, Henri Frédéric, 313-318.

Am-y-ot´ (am-e-o´), Jacques (1513-1593), 14.

An-ac´re-on, 256.

Anderson, Melville B., 281.

An´ge-lo, Michael, 120, 282.

Ariosto, 208.

Ar-is-toph´a-nes, 32.

Ar-nauld´ (ar-no´), Antoine (1612-1694), 94.

Arnold, Matthew, 248, 276, 291, 298, 299.

Arthur (King), 12.

Attwell, Henry, 309.

Au´-gus-tine, St., Latin Christian Father, 67.

Au-gus´tus (the emperor), 103.

Bacon, Francis, 43, 53.

Baker, Jehu, 185.

BAL´ZAC, Honoré de (1799-1850), 174, 275, 293-298, 303.

Bal´zac, Jean Louis Guez de (1594-1654), 15, 16.

Beau-mar-chais´ (bō-mar-sh´ā), Pierre Augustin Caron de (1732-1799), 239.

BÉ-RAN-GER (ba-roN-zhā´), Pierre Jean de (1780-1857), 13, 256-263.

Ber-si-er´ (bêr-see-ā´), Eugène, 157

Bismarck, 244.

Boi-leau´-Des-pré-aux´(bwä-lō-dā-prā-o´), Nicolas (1636-1711), 14, 17, 18, 67, 68, 127, 128, 130, 285, 311, 319.

Bolton, A. S., 57.

BOS-SU-ET´ (bo-sü-ā´), Jacques Bénigne (1627-1704), 16, 17, 62, 63, 100, 127, 129, 137-142, 153, 154, 157, 158, 161, 162, 184, 286-293, 311.

BOUR-DA-LOUE´, Louis (1632-1704), 10, 17, 63, 111, 115, 137, 140, 142-148, 150, 151, 291, 292.

Bryant, William Cullen, 69, 70.

Bryce, James, 192.

Buckle, Henry Thomas, 189.

Buffon (bü-foN), Georges Louis Leclerc de (1707-1788), 238, 309.

Bur´gun-dy, Duke of (1682-1712), 133, 136, 159, 160, 161, 164, 165.

Burke, Edmund, 43, 61, 192.

Burns, Robert, 256.

Bussy (büs-se´), Count, 106.

By´ron, Lord, 43, 307.

Cæsar, Julius, 48, 103.

Calas (cä-lä´), Jean, 211.

Calvin, John (1509-1564), 13.

Carlyle, Thomas, 209, 212.

Catherine (Empress of Russia), 237.

Cham-fort´ (shäN-for´), Sebastien Nicolas (1741-1794), 69, 261, 318.

Char-le-magne (shar-le-mān), 12.

Charles I. (of England), 129, 139.

Charles IX. (of France), 53.

CHA-TEAU-BRI-AND´(shä-tō-bre-äN´) François Auguste de (1768-1848), 10, 18, 159, 175, 226, 229, 248-255, 276, 311, 315.

Cicero, 63, 310.

“Classicism,” 15, 18, 275, 276.

Claude (klōd), Jean (1619-1687), 137.

Coleridge, S. T., 13, 33, 38, 39.

Comines (ko-meen´), Philippe de (1445-1509), 13, 26, 29.

Condé (koN-dä´), Prince of, “The Great Condé” (1621-1686), 112.

Condillac (koN-de-yäk), Etienne Bonnot de (1715-1780), 238.

Condorcet (koN-dor-sā´), Marie Jean Antoine Nicolas Caritat de (1743-1794), 100, 101.

Constant (koN-sto´N), Benjamin (1767-1830), 243.

Coquerel (kok-rel´), Athanase Laurent Charles (1795-1868), 157.

CORNEILLE (kor-nāl´), Pierre (1606-1684), 10, 16, 17, 19, 64, 65, 117-127, 129, 137, 138, 200, 285, 291, 292.

Cotin (ko-tăN´) Abbé (17th century), 81, 319.

Cotton, Charles (1630-1687), 40, 43, 45.

Cousin (koo-zăN´), Victor (1792-1867), 101, 290, 291, 320.

Cowper, William, 173.

D'Alembert (dä-läN-bêr´), Jean le Rond (1717-1783), 17, 219, 238.

Dante, Alighieri, 76, 77, 91, 281.

Demosthenes, 63.

Descartes (dā-kärt´), René (1596-1650), 16, 86, 92.

D'Holbach (dol-băk´), properly, Holbach, Paul Henri Thyry, (1723-1789), 238.

Dickens, Charles, 33, 116, 295, 296.

DIDEROT (de-drō), Denis (1713-1784), 17, 191, 209, 236, 237, 238, 285.

Dryden, John, 43, 127.

Duclos (dü-klō´), Charles Pineau (1704-1772), 238.

"*Écrasez l'Infâme*," 210.

Edward (the Black Prince), 24, 26.

Edwards, President Jonathan, 145.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 43, 45, 52.

Encyclopædists, 17, 167, 209, 235-239, 249.

Epictetus, 54.

Erasmus, 39, 99.

Euripides, 64, 118, 127, 129.

Fabliaux (fab´le-ō´), 12.

Faugère (fo-zhér´), Armand Prosper (1810), 101.

Félix, Père, 157.

Fénelon (fān-loN´), François de Salignac de la Mothe (1651-1715), 17, 134, 137, 153, 158-173, 310, 315.

Fléchier (flāche-ā´), Esprit (1632-1710), 137.

Foix (fwä), Count of, 27, 28.

FROISSART (frwä-sar´), Jean (1337-1410?), 13, 22-29.

Gaillard (gā-yar´), Gabriel Henri (1726-1806), 119.

Gargant´ua, 29, 34-37.

Gibbon, Edward, 118, 241.

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang, 184, 229, 244, 245, 281, 305, 317.

Goldsmith, Oliver, 67, 184, 269.

Grignan (green-yäN´), Madame de, 108.

Grimm, Friedrich Melchior (1723-1807), 238.

Grimm, Herman, 244.

Guizot, François Pierre Guillaume (1787-1874), 199, 320.

Guyon (ğe-yoN´) Madame (1648-1717), 161, 172, 173.

Hallam, Henry, 21, 33.

Havet (ä-vā´) (editor of Pascal's works), 101.

Hawkesworth, Doctor, 169.

Hazlitt, William Carew, 43.

Helvétius (el-vā-se-üss´), Claude Adrien (1715-1771), 238.

Henriette, Princess, 129, 139.

Henry of Navarre (Henri IV. of France), 53, 202.

Herodotus, 13, 22, 310.

Holbach. See D'Holbach.

Homer, 14, 31, 32, 77, 206, 208, 310.

Hooker (“The Judicious”), 158.

Horace, 32, 206, 256, 310.

HUGO (ü-go´), **VICTOR** Marie (1802-1885), 18, 19, 77, 256, 257, 274, 275-285, 315, 316.

Hume, David, 43, 226.

Hutson, Charles W., 21.

Hyacinthe (e´ä´saN), Père (1827-), 157.

Job, 77, 161, 281.

Johnes, Thomas, 22.

Joinville (zhwăN-veel´), Jean de (1224?-1319?), 13.

JOUBERT (zhoo´bār), Joseph (1754-1824), 65, 307-311.

Julian (The Apostate), 135.

Juvenal, 62.

La Boëtie (lä-bo-ā-tē´), 49, 50.

Laboulaye (lā´boo-lā´), Edouard René Lefebvre, 196.

LA BRUYÈRE (lä-brü-e-yêr´), Jean (1646?-1696), 17, 62-64, 118, 138, 311, 318.

Lacordaire (la-kor-dêr´), Jean Baptiste Henri

(1802-1861), 157.

LA FONTAINE (lä-foN-tān´) Jean de (1621-1695), 17, 66-75.

La Harpe (lä-arp), Jean François de, 290.

LAMARTINE (lä-mar-tēn´), Alphonse Marie Louis de (1790-1869), 18, 159, 175, 229, 263-274, 287, 289, 290, 291.

Lang, Andrew, 280, 319.

Langue d'oc, 11.

Langue d'oïl, 11.

Lanier, Sidney, 27.

LA ROCHEFOUCAULD (lä-rōsh-foo-kō´), François, Duc de (1613-1680), 17, 43, 55-62, 103, 106, 114.

Longfellow, Henry W., 44.

Lotze, Rudolf Hermann, 316.

Louis IX. (1215-1270) (St. Louis), 12, 13.

Louis XI. (1423-1483), 13.

Louis XIII. (1601-1643), 15, 77, 291.

Louis XIV. (1638-1715) (Quatorze), 15, 17, 106, 130, 133, 136, 137, 138, 142, 143, 148, 149, 157, 159, 166, 167, 170, 291.

Louis XV. (1710-1774), 149, 212.

Louis XVIII. (1755-1824), 249.

Louis Napoleon (1808-1873), 193, 259, 261, 266, 277.

Louis Philippe (1773-1850), 192, 199, 249, 257, 264.

Lucan, 117, 118, 201.

Lucretius, 77, 127.

Luther, Martin, 13, 37.

Machiavelli, 192.

Maintenon (mäN-teh-noN´), Madame de (1635-1719), 130, 136, 142, 161, 162.

Maistre (mêtr), Joseph Marie de (1753-1821), 255.

Malherbe (mäl-êrb´), François (1555-1628), 15, 18.

Martin (mar täN´), Henri (1810-), 138.

MASSILLON (mäs-se-yŏN´), Jean Baptiste (1663-1742), 10, 17, 115, 137, 142, 147, 148-153, 157, 311.

Matthews, William, 287.

Maury, the Abbé, 290.

McCarthy, Justin, 300.

M'Crie, Thomas, 94.

Menander, 75.

Milton, John, 75, 137, 158, 207, 208.

MOLIÈRE (mo lei-êr´) (real name, Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, 1622-1673) 17, 19, 67, 75-91, 100, 119, 126, 127, 176, 201, 311, 319.

Moltke, Count von, 194, 244.

Monod (mo´no´), Adolphe, 157.

Monod, Frédéric, 157.

Montagu, Lady Mary Wortley, 116.

MONTAIGNE (mon-tän´), Michel Eyquem de (1533-1592), 10, 13, 14, 40-54, 56, 61, 103, 190, 214.

Montespan (moN-tĕss-pâN'), Madame de (1641-1707), 109.

MONTESQUIEU (moN-tĕs-ke-uh´), Charles de Secondat de (1689-1755,), 17, 167, 184-191, 192, 199, 311, 320.

Morley, John, 118, 203, 209, 237.

Motteux, Peter Anthony (1660-1718), 30.

MUSSET (mü-sá´), (1810-1857), Alfred de, 275, 303-307.

Musset, Paul de, 305.

Napoleon Bonaparte, 18, 153, 240, 241, 242, 244, 248, 249, 259, 282.

Nettleton, W. A., 91.

Newton, Sir Isaac, 92.

Nicole (ne-kol´), Pierre (1625-1695), 10, 114, 128.

“Obscurantism” (disposition in the sphere of the intellect to love darkness rather than light), 210.

Pan-tag´ru-el, 29, 35, 37, 38.

Panurge (pä-nürzh´), 37, 38.

PASCAL, Blaise (1623-1662), 10, 16, 17, 43, 52, 54, 65, 91-104, 115, 145, 310, 311, 318.

Pascal, Jacqueline, 92.

Pericles, 247.

Petrarch, Francesco, 23.

Phædrus, 69.

Pindar, 256.

Plato, 30, 45, 188, 208, 240, 318.

“Pleiades” (ple´ya-dez), 14, 15, 18.

Plutarch, 14, 31, 42, 48, 215.

“Pó-co-cu´rant-ism,” 208.

Pompadour, Madame de (1721-1764), 212.

Pompey, 48.

Pope, Alexander, 43, 127.

Poquelin (po-ke-lâN´). See Molière.

Port Royal, 94, 100, 128, 287.

Pradon (prä-doN'), 129, 130.

Provençal (pro-vaN-sal), 11.

Ptolemy Philadelphus, 14.

RABELAIS (rä-blā), François (1495?-1553?), 10, 13, 29-39, 50, 54, 67, 113, 114.

RACINE (rä-seen´), Jean (1639-1699), 17, 64, 65, 67, 117, 118, 127-137, 153, 285, 291, 292, 311.

Rambouillet (rŏN-boo-yā), Hôtel de, 15, 16, 81, 84, 120, 138, 288.

Récamier (rā-kā-me-ā´) Madame (1777-1849), 16, 239, 240, 244, 255.

Renan (reh-nŏN´), Joseph Ernest (1823), 285.

Richelieu (rēsh-le-uh´), Cardinal, (1585-1642), 15, 16, 77, 119, 291.

"Romanticism," 18, 275, 276.

Ronsard (roN-sar´), Pierre de, (1524-1585), 14, 15, 319.

Rousseau (roo-sō´), Jean Baptiste (1670-1741), 212.

ROUSSEAU, Jean Jacques (1712-1778), 10, 17, 18, 48, 159, 167, 175, 209, 212-228, 229, 234, 238, 239, 249, 311.

Roux (roo), Joseph (living), 318.

Ruskin, John, 60.

Rutebeuf (rü-te-buf´) (b. 1230), *trouvère*, 12.

Sablière (sä-bli-êr´), Madame de la, 67, 68.

Saci (sä-se´), M. de, 54.

Saintsbury, George, 20, 49, 298, 301.

SAINTE-BEUVE (săNt-buv´), Charles Augustin (1804-1869), 15, 18, 142, 145, 148, 190, 255, 256, 275, 285-293.

SAND (säNd), **GEORGE** (Madame Dudevant, 1804-1876), 10, 18, 175, 229, 234, 275, 298-303, 304.

SAURIN (sō-răN´), Jacques (1677-1730), 137, 153-157.

Scott, Sir Walter, 13, 22, 26, 85.

Schlegel, August Wilhelm, 243.

Selden, John (“The learned”), 158.

Seneca, 42.

SÉVIGNÉ (sā-vēn-yā´), Madame de, Marie de Rabutin-Chantal (1626-1696), 16, 85, 105-117, 129, 320.

Shakespeare, 19, 43, 53, 75, 77, 91, 174, 201, 281.

Smollett, Tobias George, 176.

Socrates, 30, 227, 251.

Sophocles, 64, 118, 127, 128, 291, 310.

STAEL(-Holstein) (stä-ĕl-ol-stăN´), Anne Louise Germanie de (1766-1817), 18, 229, 239-247, 248.

Stanislaus (King of Poland), 237.

St. John, Bayle, 48, 49, 50.

ST. PIERRE, Jacques Henri Bernardin de (1737-1814), 228-235, 311, 320,

St. Simon, 159, 160.

SWETCHINE (svetch-een´), Anne Sophie, (1782-1857), 311, 313, 318.

Swift, Dean, 35.

Swinburne, Algernon Charles, 77, 276.

Tacitus, 13, 129.

Taine, H. (1828), 188, 286.

Tasso, 208.

Thibaud (tē bŏ´), *troubadour* (1201-1253), 12, 13.

Thiers (te êr´), Louis Adolphe (1797-1877), 320.

Thucydides, 247.

TOCQUEVILLE (tŏk-veel´), Alexis Charles Henri Clerel de (1805-1859), 191-199.

Troubadour, 11.

Trouvère, 11, 12.

Turgot (tür-gö´), Anne Robert Jacques (1727-1781), 238, 320.

Urquhart, Sir Thomas, 30.

Van Laun, H., 20.

VAUVENARGUES (vō-ve-narg´), Luc de Clapiers, Marquis de (1715-1747), 64-66, 318.

Villehardouin (vēl-ar-doo-ăN´), Geoffroy (1165?-1213?), 13.

Villemain (vĕl-măN´), Abel François (1790-1870), 93.

Virgil, 11, 14, 65, 127, 130, 206, 310, 311.

Voiture (vwä-tŭr´), Vincent (1598-1648), 16.

VOLTAIRE (vol-têr´), François Marie Arouet de (1694-1778), 10, 17, 35, 43, 56, 65, 100, 118, 124, 125, 126, 128, 152, 167, 190, 199-212, 238, 239, 245, 248, 249, 285, 311.

Wall, C. H., 85.

Walpole, Horace, 116.

Warens (vä-raN), Madame de, 217, 218, 220, 225.

Washington, George, 250.

Webster, Daniel, 141, 290.

Wormeley, Katharine Prescott, 297, 298, 302.

Wright, Elizur, 69.

Xenophon, 310.

Young, William, 261.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK FRENCH CLASSICS ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG™ LICENSE

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg License when you share it without

charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

> This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project

Gutenberg™ License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg License terms from this work,

or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”

- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.

- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.

- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project

Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability

to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR

IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg

Project Gutenberg is synonymous with the free

distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg's goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 41

Watchung Plaza #516, Montclair NJ 07042, USA, +1 (862) 621-9288. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the

solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate.

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.