FORTY YEARS OF PARISIAN SOCIETY

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BY

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LA DAME AUX VIOLETTES

I

LE BOULEVARD DU CRIME

"Je suis encor tout étourdie,
Je suis encor tout engourdie;
Ah! mon cousin, excusez-moi,
Excusez un moment d'émoi,
Pardonnez à mon bavardage,
J'en suis à mon premier voyage."

FIFTEEN—Juliet's age! And Manon's too, that day when, with all her girl's freshness and suppleness, she jumped out of the hackney-coach in which she had been driving with only her own fancies for company. And from the first note of the absurd little song that was her laughing, impertinent greeting to her cousin Lescaut, we all, young or old, felt a spell had been cast over us. Here was Manon—no longer merely a character in a play or an opera, but Manon in the flesh, Manon as one of those types of humanity that are a complete embodiment of our good qualities and our weaknesses.

The magic of art, as handled by two masters of ripened genius, had worked the miracle of giving body and soul to the creation of their fancy. From that moment we shared her life—laughing, weeping, loving with her: with her triumphant, or crushed by failure, but lenient always, even to her worst flaws; and when she died miserably on the road that was

her way to exile we were to feel that one of the realities of our lives had fled from us.

Happily, Manon is immortal. History calls her Ninon de L'Enclos or Marion de Lorme; but yesterday, in fiction, she was Musette or Marguerite Gautier: in both alike she stands for youth, passion, and fancy, for tragedy and for death. I have never forgotten her, and I am about to attempt to recall her memory and save her from oblivion.

She was nearly fifteen when she escaped from her father's house, where her childhood had been frolicked away, to come to that Paris whose lure was strong upon her. And she too brought her dream. She came to learn, for she felt that, to accomplish all that lay in her, she must acquire culture, yet avoid being a blue-stocking; and she set to work with all that will of her's, gentle yet inexorable, that was the mainspring of her life.

Though I have invoked the haunting figure of Manon Lescaut, I do not wish to push the comparison beyond its proper limits: that would be a mistake. If each began life in similar fashion, how different the future and how manifold other dissimilarities! It is so obvious that the two were of different centuries, different standards, different mentality, and yet they were alike, as representing the eternal feminine.

Manon sought the glare; our heroine preferred the shade. The one captured men's homage by force, and cared nothing for their friendship; the other was cunning to win hearts, and kept her friends by faith unwavering. The one blazoned forth her triumphs, and paraded her escort of noble lords and farmers-general; the other carefully concealed her success,

and was rather happy in her following of literati and famous scientists than vain. And finally, if scandal pursued Manon to her grave, our lady was eager of influence, sought it carefully, and earned it, far beyond the limits of her own circle, by her passionate patriotism, her faithful worship of noble causes.

The creations of our writers can only survive if they have enough of vitality in them to take shape before our eyes, and every man of us fashions them according to his fancy. Thus I see Manon fair and blue-eyed, rouged, powdered, and decked with diamonds, in robe of state, proud and yet familiar; all her white teeth gleam when she smiles, all her willowy shape is given up to ease, yet there is sometimes a hint of bitterness in the curve of her lips. A Watteau portrait, painted by Forain!

I always like to recall our friend as she was when, about 1863, Amaury Duval enthroned her upon the splendid canvas that has its place of honour in the Louvre. Her dress is of so unrelieved a black that its folds are lost in the murky background of the picture. The painter wished to concentrate upon the face, especially upon the eyes, those grey eyes, with their sunlight on shadow, sung by so many poets. The light seems to come from within and to find its way through those magnificent pupils which seek you, look through you, and overcome you with their gentle power. The beautiful black hair is parted in the middle to form bandeaux. The nose is of perfect shape, the mouth small and well cut, the complexion pale. The whole effect is peaceful, calm, harmonious. There are no jewels, merely a little bunch of violets tucked into the bodice—worn with a

purpose, no doubt. The chin, which rests on the left hand with its long transparent fingers, alone betrays the strength of will of the subject. And thus she contemplates you, and seems at the same time to be leaning forward the better to catch your words. To look—to listen : these are the two secrets of the perfect hostess. They are gifts of nature, and she who became the Comtesse de Loynes, though coming to Paris as simply as did Manon, possessed them in a supreme degree. Thanks to this, she was one day to succeed in gathering into the salon whose supremacy she yielded only to unrecognised royalty all the men of the day who added lustre to their high birth, to politics, to letters, or to oratory.

As soon as she came to Paris, the kind fairy who had bestowed on her her charm, that best of talismans, set in her way a young writer whose newly-won fame caused him to be acclaimed as the brilliant son of a brilliant father. The natural son of that father, spendthrift alike of genius and of gold, Alexandre Dumas fils had just succeeded, with the help of the Duc de Morny, in removing the ban which lay on the *Dame aux Camélias.* The success of the play was greater even than that of the novel. It was a veritable triumph, and Dumas' first flight carried him high indeed.

He was at this time a clumsy, broad-shouldered lad, with a strong face and the crinkled hair that hinted his dark blood. It was said that there was a touch of the negro in this Parisian ; at any rate, black though he might be, he had the wit of any two white men, and his words were worth their weight in gold.

The strong are naturally attracted by weakness. Dumas was touched by those evidences of a sensitive nature in which his new friend recalled that Marie Duplessis whom his grateful heart had just immortalised as Marguerite Gautier. But he did not at once perceive the strength that was concealed in the graceful childish form, and thus one day she said to him :

"You know, I came to Paris to learn, and I do so want to be taught."

"Why?" said Alexandre Dumas.

"Because I want one day to have Paris at my feet."

"What! And you so modest! Oh! you will never be a 'Dame aux Camélias.' You are a 'Dame aux Violettes,' and that's just what you always will be, dear child."

Nevertheless, his Dame aux Violettes contrived that Dumas should find her a professor at once; nor was this professor one to be picked up in the streets, for his name was Sainte-Beuve.

At this time Sainte-Beuve was literary critic to the *Constitutionnel*, and an authority in his own line. To look at, he was thick-set, short, and stout, and bald and clean-shaven like a monk; he had a large forehead, hair and eyebrows of a yellowish grey, eyes full of expression, and a mouth humorous but a little scornful. When things did not please him, he twisted his lips in a special fashion of his own that was always hailed by Théophile Gautier, then critic to the *Moniteur Universel*, with :

"Now there's something wrong, you fellows! Uncle Beuve's at it again!"

In character he was very painstaking and very learned, leaving nothing to chance; extremely sensitive too, and so nervous that he had to be avoided in snowy or stormy weather. He was never without a black velvet skull-cap perched on the top of his head, and he adored cats; Polémon, his special pet, was allowed to wander at will among his master's piles of books and reviews. He went to bed early, got up at five, drank a glass of milk, and worked till noon. Then he had a light lunch, and went to sleep till four, after which he would take a walk "to tire the beast out," as he put it. As a rule he was even-tempered, but there was a day when I saw him furious, yet almost crushed. He had sacrificed himself so far as to go to Compiègne, and the Emperor had remarked, very graciously: "M. Sainte-Beuve, I am always so much interested in your articles in the *Constitutionnel*." Now it was two years since Sainte-Beuve had left that paper, and his articles were coming out in the *Moniteur Universel*!

He was a very good friend, and took endless trouble for those he cared about. In 1869 he died, of the stone. His was a particularly bad case, and as he had studied medicine, he knew perfectly well how ill he was and how near his end. A few days before his death he sent for a friend, the collaborator of one of our best-known dramatists, whom he admired greatly. "Dear lady, we must say good-bye. I am so thankful that I have been able to keep faith with my editors. They had advanced me money, and I owed them a book, but it is finished. I should have been sorry to die a dishonest man who did not pay his debts. Mind you tell Félix not to stick to

the theatre; it is a wretched trade. He can write, and he must do so; then he will succeed." Félix Dusquesnel did write—and he has succeeded.

Let us add to this portrait the further detail that Sainte-Beuve was very much of a ladies' man, and would do anything for women. Great was his delight, therefore, at having the pupil whom Alexandre Dumas fils brought him, and he devoted himself to the task of moulding a young mind eager for all knowledge. He taught her much, very much, of that which is learnt from books; and, luckily for her, she was to be given likewise the lesson learnt from facts—the lesson of life. She had told Alexandre Dumas that she hoped "one day to have Paris at her feet," and he thought that her dream was to become one of the queens of the stage. He was connected with Marc Fournier, one of the most important stage-managers of the day, and to him he introduced her.

Marc Fournier was at that time manager of the Porte-Saint-Martin, and a magnificent manager he was; success seemed to have taken a long lease of his theatre. Marc Fournier accepted all his good fortune as his right, staged splendid spectacular pieces to which the public thronged, and spent his enormous takings royally. One can only suppose that he grew a little giddy on the summit of his triumphal car, and never saw the muddy ditch that yawned across his way a few years later. And yet the *Biche au Bois* ran during seven or eight months of the Exhibition of 1867, and brought the Porte-Saint-Martin more than 800,000 francs! Who in this connection will remember the lovely Mlle Delval, whom Marcelin never tired of drawing? Indeed, he started *La Vie*

Parisienne more or less in order to show off her beauty.

Marc Fournier fell in love with Sainte-Beuve's pupil, just as Sainte-Beuve had fallen in love with Dumas fils' friend. He would have been quite willing to give her a part, but an actress' popularity was not within the range of her serene ambition. She scorned the stage—or rather, would only have considered it a short cut to the great stage of the world, on which she dreamed already of playing a lead.

For this, it was first necessary to know Paris and the period. The girl was well placed for learning her lesson from life; she had only to open the windows of the Porte-Saint-Martin and look out. Just at that time the life of the town centred in the theatrical quarter that adjoined the Gymnase, took a stride thence to the Boulevard Saint-Martin, and came to its own in the splendours of the Boulevard du Temple—or, in the slang of the day, the *Boulevard du Crime.* The Boulevard Saint-Martin! There, in a café which had made its name during the Restoration, or under the plane trees that shaded the road, was the meeting-place of the great actors who worked for Marc Fournier or at the Ambigu, the rival theatre. Such were men like Ferdinand Dugué, Brésil, Victor Séjour, and, most famous of all, king of melodrama as Dumas père was king of the drama, Adolphe d'Ennery. Théodore Barrière was serious here, and Lambert Thiboust frivolous. Demonstrative, stern, romantic, Frédéric Lemaître with his bared throat was the master of pose on the boulevard as on the boards, and here too passed Paulin Ménier, who had made his mark in the *Courrier du Lyon,*

quiet in dress as in bearing, and without a trace of the ragged bandits whom he impersonated so truculently in the theatre.

Here, dressed like a somewhat vulgar dandy, would come Paul de Kock, who lived in the Boulevard Saint-Martin, a few steps from d'Ennery. He used to take the same walk by the Porte-Saint-Martin every day, unless he was in the country, at the little box he had at the Lilas, in those days when the Lilas were still in the country. The Boulevard du Crime! All the houses, or almost all, were theatres, packed together, higgledy-piggledy. Leaning one against the other, so to speak, each with its name on its front, they presented a row of old-fashioned façades, going back to the end of the eighteenth century or beginning of the nineteenth.

The Gaîté was here, also the Folies Dramatiques, the Funambules, the Cirque Olympique, the Petit Lazari, the Délassements Comiques, and the Théâtre Historique, and later the Théâtre Lyrique.

At the Gaîté, despite its name, legitimate drama was always sure of a home and an enthusiastic audience, which did not forget that in the same theatre, twenty years before, had been produced that model of its kind, *La Grâce de Dieu.* It was at the Gaîté that Frédéric Febvre, who was as famous as a comedian as he is now as a writer, saw real tears fall from the eyes of his brilliant comrade, Frédéric Lemaître, when he was playing in *Paillasse.*

The Funambules—or "Funambes," as the people called it—had another speciality: pantomime. The elder Deburau, a celebrity of a sort in his day, had retired from his triumphs in favour of his son, whose

popularity was mixed with a touch of sympathetic curiosity. There were whispers that the gay dog, with his delicate, expressive face, had made some tremendous conquests; that Mme Stolz of the Opéra was head over ears in love with him, and had actually carried him off one fine evening. With Deburau, taking the parts of traitor and Cassandre, were two actors with a reputation: Kalpestre, a Hungarian, and Amable, whose son has become one of our best scene-painters.

At the Cirque Olympique the rage was either for military plays or for fairy-tales, and d'Ennery, resourceful, ingenious, and invariably humorous, made a success of both, whether he played in the *Histoire d'un Drapeau*, or gave *La Poule aux Œufs d'Or* and *Rothomago* together. Drama was popular at the Théâtre Historique. Bouffé was a great success there in *Maître Jacques*, though he never succeeded in raising himself to the height required for Frederick the Great.

"Revues" usually were the fare at the Délassements Comiques, and these were the work of Ernest Blum, a young recruit who was to rise rapidly from the ranks. The manager was Léon Sari, whose originality made him founder of a school. He passed high out of the École Polytechnique, and began his career as tutor to Prince Murat. Later, he was to start the Folies-Bergère, the central office for theatres, and the Pari-mutuel. An Admirable Crichton in his way.

It is difficult to characterise the strange and startling plays, combinations of farce, extravaganza, and spectacle, which drew a rowdy audience to the

Petit Lazari. They had titles which recalled the broad-sheet — e.g. *Le Bœuf à l'Huile* and *La Punaise et le Philosophe* — and the actors thought nothing of altering the text to suit their fancy. Not a day passed without an unrehearsed scene, hardly contemplated by the authors. A spectator would make, from his stall or from the heights of the gallery, some comment rather pointed than polite, the actors on the stage replied in the most forcible slang at their command, and there followed an interchange of threats and abuse, delighting the pit, which assumed the rôle of the classic chorus, until authority interposed cheerfully from behind the scenes. In all such houses the play began at six and was so varied and so lengthy that the audience got full value for its money: a dozen or fifteen acts sometimes in the course of one evening! Which pleasant tradition still obtains in some of the provincial theatres.

At this time the love of the play in the Paris crowd was so strong, so universal, even so passionate, that those who wanted cheap seats for some of the plays would come to the doors at three, and stand *en queue* until the overture began. Their patience, as may be supposed, was not of a discreet and quiet order. They were very cheerful and extremely noisy, and got through the hours of their waiting by means of buffoonery, cat-calls, and singing. The gallery critics settled down inside the wooden railings to dine off bread and sausage washed down with half a pint of beer. The meal might be monotonous, but what matter, provided the play were the reverse? Round these squads of devotees surged a picturesque crowd of street-traders: sellers of cocoa, carrying on their

backs small zinc casks daubed with bright colours; sweet-sellers,—"Any lady want a sweetmeat?"; orange-girls, with baskets of fruit slung in front of them. If the former were like philosophers grown old, disappointed and fallen on evil days, the rest were cheerful enough, and the gutter-snipes paid outrageous compliments considerably more familiar than polite.

Among all these representatives of the lower classes were to be found some of the best-known men in Paris, dandies of the first water—*gandins* or *petits crevés* were the latest slang terms for them. Dramatists, critics, writers, each coming out of his favourite café, tramped the pavement, talking of the next melodrama or the article just about to appear. Albéric Second, Aubryet, Scholl, Gaiffe, Monselet, Villemot, Wolff, Jules Lecomte, all fashionable journalists of the day, passed on the "latest" to the Parisians who had lengthened out their walk to the neighbourhood of the "Délass-Com"—nickname for the Délassements Comiques. Here Mlle Rigolboche (who left us some spicy memoirs) was drawing the town to something really sensational—*Le Grand Écart.*

The stalls were filled nightly with young bloods, mostly members of the Jockey Club and therefore of the betting fraternity, who had hurried off to the *bouiboui* in the wake of Comte Charles de Fitz-James to encourage this energetic interpretation of the can-can, most eminently national of dances. First came Édouard, Duc de Fitz-James and elder brother of Count Charles. After him, the Comte de Lauriston; the Marquis de Galliffet, then merely a

lieutenant; the Duc d'Albe, brother-in-law to the Empress; the Marquis de Scepeaux, only descendant, with the Duc de Luynes, of a Constable of France; smart officers of the Guides, led by their brilliant colonel, Comte Fleury, later general, master of the horse, and ambassador, and their commandant, Prince Joachim Murat, a royalty universally popular whether at court or in the faubourg; M. Édouard André, the delightful millionaire who was afterwards to marry Mlle Jacquemart, a famous artiste; the handsome Comte de Comminges, father of our distinguished colleague, and later Marquis de Massa, who died last year, to our great regret (he was author of *Service en Campagne*, a charming Théâtre Français piece, the notes for which were written during the Italian campaign); M. Charles Lafitte, never without a rose in his button-hole; the Comte de Saint-Priest; the Comte Bozon de Périgord, later, as Prince de Sagan, one of the arbiters of fashion; Comte Gérard de Sainte-Aldegonde; the Comte d'Osmont, who, though he had lost an arm in a hunting accident, drove a mail-coach with real mastery; the Comte de Rennepont; Prince Poniatowski, a descendant of the kings of Poland; the Comte Jules de Divonne, officer of the staff; Prince Auguste d'Arenberg and his brother Louis, murdered a few months later in St. Petersburg by his valet and two moujiks, his accomplices; the Duc de Caderousse, whose dandyism is proverbial; Prince Charles and Prince Édouard de Ligne; the Duc de Crussol, then an officer, and a deputy in 1871; two inseparables, the Comte Edmond de Castries and the Marquis de Saint-Sauveur; the Duc de Rivoli,

cherished grandchild of Victory; the Comte Alain de Chabot, later Comte de Porhoet and Prince de Léon and finally Duc de Rohan, yet always, whichever title he bore, an eager champion of God and the king; M. Edgard Cordier, whose wife, the sister of the Marquise de Galliffet, was a famous beauty; the Comte Étienne de Ganay, who adored *bibelots* before collecting them became the fashion; the Marquis de Jaucourt; Vicomte Daru, a whist-player of the first rank; the Comte Robert de Voguë, who was to die like a hero in 1870; the Marquis de Rougé, a man of high birth, fine figure, and huge fortune, who was in the Pontifical Zouaves quite lately; M. Sommier, the future owner and restorer of Vaux; the Marquis de Modène, one of the few survivors of this gay band. His sayings deserve to be remembered. Thus, to someone who was surprised that the moon was so pale, his reply was: "Ah! she has been up no end of nights!" To continue: MM. Albert Couvreux, Alexandre Duval, and Georges Manceaux, three fashionable haunters of boudoirs and dressing-rooms; the Marquis de Forton; General Friant, a brave soldier; and another, Emmanuel Bocher, son of M. Édouard Bocher, my old friend and helper; several pleasant Russians—Paul Demidoff, Count Tolstoy, Prince Soltikoff, Prince Troubetzkoï; various Englishmen—the Duke of Hamilton, who died coming downstairs at the Maison d'Or; Mr. Ashton Blount, a gentleman jockey of very good family; Mr. Vansittart, who after two nights at cards fell asleep so deeply at the first performance of *La Belle Hélène* that he had to be awakened after the last act, the thunders of applause having entirely failed to

disturb his dreams; Mr. Strachan, whose pipe was as famous as Giboyer's; and lastly, Mr. Hope, an inveterate gambler, who built a magnificent house in the Rue Saint-Dominique, to sell it, during a run of bad luck, to Baron Seillières. The Princess de Sagan used to give balls in it, and these we shall mention again later on. To-day it is a regular museum, in which Messrs. Seligmann exhibit priceless art treasures to their rich customers. Houses, like books, have their fate!

Then I can still see a clique of Spaniards who were never apart — MM. Calderon, Antonio de Ezpeleta, Toledo, the Duke de Frias, and Tomas y Caro; racing men whose colours came in first on the course, such as the Comte de Lagrange, the Comte de Cosette, Baron Finot, and the Comte de Saint-Germain, who came to a tragic end in a steeplechase; and various members of the guard of honour at the Tuileries—the Marquis de Castelbajac, the Comte de Komar, the Marquis d'Espeuilles, Baron Davillier, the Comte Clary, Charles Duperré, and, finally, M. Raphaël Bischofsheim, Bich the illustrious, already bent on the discovery of stars.

When these gilded youths, whose doings are chronicled by Xavier de Montépin, had overwhelmed the Queen of the Can-can with bouquets and applause, they went off between the acts to fill the boxes and the front of the stage with their chatter, their laughter, and their cheerful shouts. Here were displayed, in all their youth and elegance, the actresses of the day or the beauties of the demi-monde—such persons as Manvoy, Angelo, Montaland, Massin, Léonide Leblanc, Crenisse, Barucci, Caroline

Aissé or Letessier, Anna Deslions, Cora Pearl, Juliette Beau, Catinette, the sisters Drouard, Emma Vali, Lucie Mangin, and, their leader, Esther Guimond, who had been nicknamed the "lioness," though tigress would have suited her better. As the young men usually had been or were about to be the protectors of one or other of the young women, they were more or less a family party, and the fête, for a good many of them, was continued in a dilapidated building close to Rigolboche's theatre, in which —a somewhat sarcastic comment—was performed the Polka des Dindons. Four turkeys were made to stand on a white-hot iron plate, and as the wretched birds in their torture lifted each foot in turn only to drop it to save the other, there were cries and contortions until the showman put out the fire, fearing that he would spoil his property. This horribly cruel amusement served to make the skin of the spectators creep, and when it was over the tribe of young men—the last people who really understood the art of pleasure—went to recover from their sensations and finish the evening at No. 16 in the Café Anglais, where Ernest, chilly and clean-shaven like an English M.P., was manager, or at No. 6 of the Maison Dorée, which was under the sway of one Joseph, famous for his rotundity and his whiskers.

When darkness had gradually enveloped the Boulevard du Crime, all glittering with lights but a short time before, the actors who had been playing in the various theatres met to spend their time from midnight to three o'clock in more retiring fashion. They assembled in the Place du Château d'Eau, by a fountain that has disappeared, near the spot

where the statue of the Republic now stands. It was a kind of open-air club, to which anyone was admitted, and at which not a few reputations were made or marred.

The authorities were Febvre, Taillade, Clément Just, Lacressonière, Bouffé, Lassouche, Chilly, and Frédérick Lemaître himself, whenever he did not drive Gil Pérès down in his small berlin and pair to spend the night over a bottle or two in his little box by the Barrière d'Enfer.

Sometimes room was made in the circle for a little singer—hardly more than a street singer, though already popular at the Café du Géant. Her name—Thérèse—was to become famous; yet she, who sank later on under a weight of applause, of bouquets, of wreaths, and of jewels, was happy enough then to get cigarettes or sweets for a song or two.

At three a.m. the company went off to supper either at Truchot's or, more often, at Bertrand's, whose more than modest establishment was at the corner of the Boulevard and the Rue du Faubourg du Temple.

There was thus in the first city of Europe a kind of perpetual pleasure-fair, open to all comers, where were mingled in strange confusion the gaieties of those whose amusements were artificial and the ruder pleasures of the people. It was a soil in which flourished all the devil-may-care qualities of the French, all the cynicism of the town which gave birth to Voltaire and Beaumarchais. Such a sight could never have existed outside Paris, and even there it will never be seen again. The Boulevard du Crime,

once one of the most curious details of the panorama of Paris, is shorn of its glories. The only remnants still standing are the Théâtre Dejazet and the Café Turc, then the haunt of the fashionable audiences from the theatres opposite, now merely a kind of "Petite Provence" for the people of the district.

Thus it remained up to the time when the horrid inspiration of cutting through into the opening of the Boulevard Voltaire seized on Baron Haussmann, and the imperial Government resolved on making a race-course at Vincennes. This double decision was very badly received, and raised a formidable crop of objections. All who loved the existing aspect of Paris loathed a plan which was to deprive the city of one of its most original features, and thus, in a way, disfigure it. They declared that the change proposed in one of the queerest corners of the capital would bring about a real alteration in Parisian manners and customs, and they would not give in peacefully to seeing their beloved haunts improved off the face of the earth. As for the Government plan, to that there were moral objections. Loud and long was the outcry among those who made this discovery. They declared that carriages going to the races would have to drive through a working-class district; a spectacle of scandalous self-indulgence would thus be forced upon the view of an industrious proletariat, and the young factory hands of the suburbs, who had often to earn their bread in no very pleasant fashion, would see pass in splendid carriages gorgeous courtesans who had shared their workrooms a few months or years before. This attack of injured virtue affected quite a number of persons, and the campaign of

Puritanism they initiated was specially emphatic because certain eminent journalists, such as Veuillot and Rochefort, lent the aid of their pens. Whereupon a young gentleman from the country, who had rather lost himself in Paris, took it into his head to dress up as a postilion and drive to Vincennes in public a certain Mlle Ferraris, half actress and half cocotte, and a beauty who was anything but shy. Upon this, the scandal reached its apogee, and a silly boy's absurd freak was a pretext for further uproar by the advocates of a Puritanism which must seem somewhat strange to Parisians of 1912.

Thus, by a happy chance, two professors—one illustrious, the other famous—opened before the Dame aux Violettes the great book of life, which has but two chapters—knowledge of the past and understanding of the future. To attain her end, she had now to make friends in whom she could put firm trust; and in this task her tact, her charm, and her power of winning men were to be used with marvellous adroitness.

II

THE SALON OF PRINCE NAPOLEON

Among all the authors who were often at Marc Fournier's, she chose as her friend the best, d'Ennery, and between these two and the lady who later became Mme d'Ennery there grew a close attachment only interrupted by death. One evening, at dinner, d'Ennery put her beside Émile de Girardin, henceforth to be the leading influence in Mme de Loynes' early life: it may be said that his position here corresponded with the one he held in public opinion. Émile de Girardin was our master in journalism: I have said this before, but shall never feel that I have done so often enough. As journalist, he created the cheap press; as publisher, he worked desperately hard to further the triumph of those liberal ideas to which he was devoted. He belonged to, and was really at the head of, the company of those journalists who affirm that we must not be afraid of repeating the same idea, of writing the same article, day after day until the truths thus upheld have really penetrated the brain of the reader. He never forgave himself for the duel in which he killed his political adversary, Armand Carrel, and kept the vow he made never to fight again. He was not without his share in the success of Prince Napoleon's candidature, but found it hard for a time to forgive the Emperor his

arbitrary power. His first wife, Delphine Gay, came of a family in which distinction in letters was hereditary, but he maintained his position at her side instead of being crushed by her laurels. He had the instinct for personality, even when undeveloped, and delighted in drawing out its powers. When he found himself beside our friend at d'Ennery's dinner-table, he perceived at once those great gifts of her's which only needed an opportunity to show themselves to be recognised and made much of. From the day of their first meeting his attachment to her never wavered. Whenever she was in Paris he came to see her every day after five o'clock, and dined with her once a week at least. Those who frequented her house at the same time know that the friendship was something like that between Chateaubriand and Mme Récamier. His greeting was always, "Ma chère douce," and her response, "Be seated, mon grand."

He showed the tenderest care for her, and his confidence in her was of no less degree. He wrote all his letters from her house, asked her advice, and spared her none of his secrets, even family ones. She knew of all the anxieties that troubled his usual calm when the marriage of his son Alexandre, a dear fellow, now dead, was being arranged, and when serious differences broke out between himself and his second wife. It is true to say of him that, up to the day of his death, he was a witness of her life as she was of his.

D'Ennery had introduced Émile de Girardin to "la Dame aux Violettes"; in 1859 Girardin in his turn suggested an introduction to Prince Napoleon in

the following circumstances. The Prince had said to him one day:

"You know how much I honour the Princess, and though I do not share either her ideas or her feelings, I intend them to be respected. My friends are discreet in her presence, but I am always on tenter-hooks. I do wish I knew some clever young woman at whose house I could receive all these *enfants terribles*. My dear fellow, *what* a salon we could give her!"

"Perhaps I do know of such a *rara avis*. Will you come to meet the Dame aux Violettes at dinner?"

"Delighted!" answered the Prince. "Sainte-Beuve has told me about her already. You know, he undertook to educate her, and as he is such a hard master I am curious to see what he has made of his pupil."

As was her custom, Sainte-Beuve's pupil made a conquest of the Prince, and thus began a friendship which lasted several years.

I do not know whether the Prince's violent nature grew softer in her charming presence, but I am quite certain that our friend influenced his undisciplined mind in a way that was much to his advantage upon various occasions.

The Dame aux Violettes had just left the Place Royale and set up house in the Rue de l'Arcade. In the Place Royale she had taken pleasure in reviving the past: in the twilight she had seen the shade of Marion Delorme glide through the garden, or had conjured up the bleeding ghosts of Beuvron, slain there in a duel, or of De Bouteville, executed by Richelieu's orders in the Place de Grève. During the

day she could look from her window at the home of Victor Hugo's youthful genius, and at the house in which Rachel the sublime had slowly died by inches. She tore herself from this abode of those who, being dead, yet speak, to move into one of those new localities that have no history, choosing the Rue de l'Arcade, a street only remarkable for its quiet. Her furniture, half opulent and wholly bourgeois, like the street itself, was a result of her childish impressions. She never forgot her father's house, and besides, she rarely submitted to the caprice of fashion in the arrangement either of her dress or of her rooms, but was always very much of the Second Empire. She sat in her little drawing-room, and from the first made it a rule to be at home every day before dinner. She was always to be found in her easy-chair beside its little table, with a piece of embroidery or, possibly, a paper-knife and the latest book or the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, to which she was always faithful. And she listened. For several years Prince Napoleon came to this little room in the Rue de l'Arcade to talk, to grow excited, to laugh, to rail, and, above all, to rest and to unburden his mind in perfect security. He liked to meet all the friends whom he had brought in at various times, or other people whose acquaintance pleased or interested him. As the faithful Louise let him in he would ask: "Whom have we here to-day?" And if the visitors were not to his mind, it was: "Oh, well, I shall come in again later."

He used to give our friend the names of those whom he would like to meet at dinner: they were usually, as might be expected, his intimates of the

Palais-Royal, or those already famous or on the road to being so—Sainte-Beuve, Renan, Girardin, Flaubert, Taine, Arsène Houssaye, Edmond About, and so forth. He liked to sort out his friends, and the elect always had the entry with the Dame aux Violettes. At her house the Prince tolerated, even encouraged, the freedom of thought and speech he dreaded at his wife's; like his friend Émile Augier, he was Italian to look at, but French in mind. He was, too, a super-excellent talker; his experiences were fresh in his mind, and he never lacked a repartee however distinguished his interlocutor.

Renan spoke little. Before dinner and after he would settle himself in an arm-chair, fold his hands in front of him, and give slow nods of approval like a mandarin. Our lady treated him with respectful affection, and would ask him to sit beside her; but the only person capable of chaffing him was Hector Crémieux. "Sycophant!" was d'Ennery's rebuke to the latter. "Are you trying to attain the heights of the Acropolis of the Pont des Arts?"

In contrast to Renan, Flaubert and Sainte-Beuve made ample use of the liberty the Prince allowed, and the famous pair made a magnificent contrast. Flaubert, with his huge head, drooping moustache, and great height and breadth, was like a re-incarnation of the Frankish soldiers who swooped down upon Gaul. Sainte-Beuve, the free-thinker, curiously enough, was just like a bishop in mufti. His discussions with Flaubert were a haunting reminder of those struggles of the first centuries in which Latin ingenuity contrived to tame and soften the brute force of the German.

Sainte-Beuve remained a faithful friend of his old pupil's, came every Monday, pulled his famous velvet skull-cap out of his pocket, and retailed all the gossip of the court and the town by way of relaxation from his controversial writings.

"Just think," he said one day, "last night I was at dinner at the Duchesse de Mouchy's. We had extracts from Mme de Rémusat's precious memoirs read to us, and I had to listen to passages in which all the gilt was taken off Joséphine, Napoleon, and Pauline. I shall be much astonished if these are left in the text; they will give too much occasion to the enemies of the great Emperor."

The Dame aux Violettes was recruiting by doctor's orders at Arcachon when Sainte-Beuve died. It was a great grief to her to be unable to come back for the funeral; instead, she had to content herself with sending an enormous bunch of Parma violets to M. Troubat with the request that he would put them on his great friend's grave. M. Troubat was Sainte-Beuve's devoted secretary, and his books are of much interest to those who wish to understand the career of the great writer. Like the guard on duty at the Louvre to defend the kings of France, he keeps pious watch and ward at the grave of this prince of critics.

We have remarked upon the contrast between Sainte-Beuve and Flaubert—one a charmer, the other a conqueror. But, given due occasion, the conqueror did not despise the silk and velvet of the courtier. When Count Primoli's mother, the kind and good Princess Charlotte Bonaparte, asked him to write in her album, his contribution was a madrigal on this

theme: "Kindness of heart is the tenth Muse, and fourth of the Graces."

There was a dissimilarity of the same sort between Émile de Girardin and Théophile Gautier. Girardin had formed the habit of allowing no sign of impressions and feelings he desired to keep secret to escape him: if he was angry, he was so deliberately, and indignation found its expression within settled limits. He supported his arguments with a warmth that was always adequate, and usually succeeded in impressing his ideas even on those whom he was not trying to convince. He never forgot that he was a journalist by profession, took an interest in everything, and asked endless questions, pressing everyone into his service. He had a peculiar fashion of looking at you through the glass he wore eternally screwed into one eye, that upset those not used to his ways; however, such people were reassured by a smile, something like Voltaire's, which he tried to make pleasant.

Théophile Gautier, — "le bon Theo," — on the other hand, grew eager, even excited, over the play of his own words, but never really angry except in defence of his friends or the French language, for which he cherished a real devotion.

Taine was brusque almost to rudeness, yet had a heart of gold, carefully concealed. He never sought popularity. He had the rare merit of attaching no weight whatever to accepted legends and second-hand opinions; he spoke out his own beliefs as to the French Revolution at a time when there was some merit in doing so, and exploded many of the most popular wind-bags of that period in which ferocity ousted strength and bravado usurped

the place of courage. He anticipated events by attacking the *Bloc*, which, later on, was to run M. Clemenceau with such skill; and, unfortunately for himself, he was entirely devoid of reverence for "the proper thing." "I've been to the Forest," he announced once. "I ate like an ogre, then stretched myself out on a rock and went to sleep for the rest of the day."

Edmond About's talk was as delightful as his writings, but his often indiscreet vivacity was apt to reduce Prince Napoleon to silence. Our lady would check him gently and soothe the annoyance which the Prince was quite incapable of concealing. "His fireworks," he used to say, "bore me instead of dazzling."

And as a matter of fact Edmond About was too fond of parading his versatility, and was by no means always discreet in the process. He affected a disregard of the Emperor which he redeemed by an attitude of greater deference towards his ministers, and he was sincerely of the belief that a witty remark was a way out of the most difficult situations.

M. Fould, who was devoted to him, gave him once a pencil-case set with a very fine ruby. Without a word of thanks, About, who as yet had no decoration, stuck the case through his button-hole, so that only the ruby showed, and remarked, "Not bad for a beginning, but when are you going to give me the ribbon?"

Edmond About tried to write for the theatre, but was not successful, for the students of Paris made a regular set against *Gaëtana*. They twitted the author with being a hanger-on of Princess Mathilde's

and Prince Napoleon's, and treated him and his play just as they did *Henriette Maréchal* by Edmond and Jules de Goncourt, because they elected to consider the visits the authors paid to the Rue de Courcelles a crime. In those days the students adored the Republic and believed it to be all that was good: now, when all the apaches of the outlying quarters are its devotees, they have transferred their affections.

The Dame aux Violettes was present at the first performance of *Gaëtana*. She knew that the house would be hostile, and she would have gone through fire and water with the author or for him. She was the first to console him, and indeed he was dreadfully cast down at failing to repeat on the stage his brilliant success in literature and journalism. Another case of Ingres' violin—but I spare you the anecdote.

Though she did occasionally break her rule of retirement in favour of Edmond About or some other special friend, it was nevertheless, owing to her dislike of publicity, her custom to avoid first nights. These were sufficiently popular even in that golden age when the newspapers adjudged to each event its due meed of importance—and none whatever to theatrical ones! On the other hand, dramatic criticism was in the hands of masters—and such masters! —Fiorentino, Paul de Saint-Victor, Nestor Roqueplan, Gautier, Jules Janin, Pontmartin, Gaiffe, Frédéric Béchard, and Édouard Fournier, whose son is now a well-known painter. If you look through a newspaper of 1860, you will be surprised at not finding a single paragraph for gossip, whether dealing with town, the theatre, the fashionable world, dress, or

racing—hide your diminished heads, ye fashionable correspondents of to-day! Our columns of the kind were only represented by *variétés*, as they were then called; the smallest possible space was reserved for police news: there were no epics of criminality; and race-meetings and first nights were alike ignored. The Americans had not presented us with the interview, so there were no great revelations or startling indiscretions, much less any scandals. And yet the Revolution of 1789 had been carried through!

Still, there were great journalists, and the French were every bit as witty as they are to-day; and this was all the more to their credit since they did not find their smart sayings ready to hand in the newspaper every morning.

But high as was the wall of privacy, to which the deputy for Guilloutet was afterwards to give his name, in those days, it did not seem to our lady a sufficient defence against indiscretion, so that it was easy enough for her to smile and console her friend Bravais when he appeared, much discomfited, with tickets for the second night of *Mireille*; he had been unable to get a box for the first either for love or money.

This Bravais had come from the land of the Thousand and One Nights with a fabulous reputation, and as the Parisians knew nothing about American millionaires then, and were somewhat bored of Russian boyars and English milords, they were delighted to honour the Nabob, which was the title Alphonse Daudet bestowed on him.

The Nabob became the rage, and there was no limit to his freaks and his ambition. He took it into

his head to buy an estate in the south, solely in order to be able to stand for deputy, and was three times nominated by the electors. But three times his colleagues were smitten with propriety and black-balled him, in spite of the strong influence of the Duc de Morny, then President of the Chamber.

"Is Morny's star on the wane?" was Prince Napoleon's comment to his intimates. The remark was not without a certain amount of satisfaction, for the Tiberius of the Palais-Royal and the Petronius of the Palais-Bourbon were not congenial.

The audience on the second night of *Mireille* reversed the verdict of the first. This had happened to Gounod before, with *Faust*, and it is a most curious thing that the Parisians, usually so jealous of their sovereignty in matters of taste, give but a cold reception to operas the first freshness of which is reserved for them. These, to be popular in Paris, seem to need foreign suffrage or time for the revision of opinion. The two popular operettas *La Fille de Madame Angot* and *Les Cloches de Corneville* are cases in point in a minor way; both had to be taken off because they failed entirely to fill the house.

Gounod came to pay his respects to our friend in Bravais' box, and asked leave to introduce Frédéric Mistral, his collaborator. Mistral had been talked of since the day before, and became famous thereafter. He had just left the Provence he loves so well and has made us love, and had come to Paris for the first time. Naïveté and the lyric gift were of the very breath of his being. He fell head over ears in love with the Dame aux Violettes at first sight, and

came to tell her so the very next day: he would leave everything, he said, to be with her.

"You are just a great boy," was her gentle answer. "I like you and admire you, but go away to-morrow, back to your Provence; write us more poems, and do not come back here until your heart has its white hairs."

Mistral was desperate, but to no avail. Now that time has whitened his hair without chilling his heart or deadening his genius, I know that he will feel, as we do, that she who had the right to wear such homage, and the courage to deny it, was a "real gentleman."

It is interesting that on the same night and in the same box Gounod also introduced Ernest Daudet, brother of the future author of the *Nabab*, and himself to become so tried and faithful a friend to the Comtesse de Loynes that she made him her executor. Ernest Daudet, let us proclaim it with due emphasis, had the rare merit of seeing that it was impossible to live contentedly upon his brother's reputation: he determined to make one for himself, and succeeded. He was entrusted with confidential missions by eminent statesmen, and fulfilled them admirably; and as historian, novelist, essayist, and journalist he has shown that nothing is beyond him. The French Academy would gain in distinction if it nominated him, and would honour a great name and a fine talent.

When Daudet went to pay her his first visit—his last was on the eve of her death—a few days after, she told him she was going to the country for a little change. What! going to the country? How strange! For everyone knew that she, like Roqueplan, missed

the street-lamps and thought the country only good for green peas.

"Yes, we are all asked to Belleau for a few days by the Nabob. You know, Belleau, the estate he bought so as to stand for deputy. Would you like to come too?"

M. Ernest Daudet declined the invitation; his legal duties kept him in Paris. However, he heard from his friend when she came back all about the marvellous fittings of the house, its luxury, and the splendours displayed by the host.

The Nabob wished to surpass himself, for he had Ismaïl Pacha, the Egyptian Viceroy, to whom he owed his fortune, staying with him. He remembered Fouquet and Louis XIV.; but Ismaïl, with more generosity than the Grand Monarque, bore no grudge to the financier he had enriched. Instead, he greatly admired the château and, just as he was going away, coolly asked to buy it.

"But Belleau is not for sale, Monseigneur!"

"That is just why I want it. How much is it?"

So Bravais, wishing to end a rather awkward discussion, answered cheerfully, "Oh, well, if your Highness were to offer me two millions——"

"They are yours," interrupted the Prince, "and the château is mine."

Ismaïl stayed, and went on admiring, for another week, but made not the smallest allusion to his proposal, much to Bravais' satisfaction. On the step of the carriage that was to take him to Vichy, he turned round:

"My dear Bravais, I never forget my word.

Here is the cheque for two millions, and I'll make you a present of the château."

It was a royal way of paying for the hospitality he had enjoyed. The Prince was the real Nabob.

Ah! that house in the Rue de l'Arcade!—I know a great many in Paris, far less deserving, for which the municipal council has complacently decreed memorial plates—what delightful conversations, what interplay of words, what lofty thought, did it once hold! And how much insight into characters and affairs!

Arsène Houssaye was introduced by the Prince, and, like Voltaire at Mme du Châtelet's, after he had left the Comédie-Française, he came here to read his lecture from his forty-first chair: this good-natured piece of revenge was all that he ever took upon the Académie for refusing him the fortieth, and after all it had the sense to give it to his son Henri. Handsome Arsène Houssaye was a frequent guest in the Rue de l'Arcade, and afterwards in the Avenue des Champs-Élysées, up to the time of his death.

Saint-Marceaux, the great sculptor, who was then just starting his career, had known the Dame aux Violettes as a child at Reims, where she was born, and took great pleasure in recalling childish days with her: and he could talk painting and sculpture with Gérôme, one of the finest examples of good man and great artist that I have ever met.

Mocquart represented officialdom among us; his worthy tenure of a high confidential post under Napoleon III. is well known. He often came to the Rue de l'Arcade, and turned up one night thoroughly

upset. He sat down to dinner between his hostess and his friend Mme Édile Riquier, afterwards a much-admired member of the Comédie-Française, and told them that he had just broken with the Emperor! Meanwhile Napoleon III. was looking for him, and went to Mme Édile Riquier's, where he thought he might find him. He sat down to wait for the lady, and said, as soon as she appeared:

"You must get Mocquart back for me. He lost his temper, and I was a beast; we were both of us wrong, myself especially."

The next day Mocquart was restored to favour, and the Emperor sent a magnificent ring to Mme Édile Riquier, who preserved it piously to the day of her death.

Another event at our friend's house was Ernest Feydeau's reading of the first chapter of his *Fanny*, that history of a Madame Bovary of the Chaussée d'Antin.

Ludovic Halévy, whom he loved like a brother, introduced Prévost-Paradol to the Dame aux Violettes one night at a ball at Arsène Houssaye's. She was charmed by the dazzling conversationalist who spent his days in the disguise of a sober man of letters, and he lost his heart to the violet domino whose mask made her more piquante than ever. He came to see her every day, and went wherever he might hope to meet her. He paid these visits on horseback, and to show how liberal, even Orleanist, he was, he chose a white horse, like Lafayette's. Whenever he went to Sainte-Beuve's, the invariable greeting was, "Our friend isn't far off," and a few minutes later the Dame aux Violettes would come in in her turn.

But a revolver shot was soon to cut short their idyll.

Sardou came to our supreme consoler for comfort after his early theatrical disappointments. He was not discouraged, for he was perfectly certain that he would become one of the masters of the stage. He was already possessed of that free and wonderful, and altogether inexhaustible, energy of invention which made his discourse a dreadful and a marvellous thing. There is a caricature of him sitting at table; he is talking, of course, but as he is obliged to drink, he is making imperious signs with his free hand for no one to interrupt him.

The Dame aux Violettes took good care never to invite him and Alexandre Dumas fils together. These two talkers allowed no rivals; otherwise, they never opened their lips. Dumas fils, besides, was as capricious as Columbine and fantastic as Harlequin. A friend of his came to him one day to say:

"We are dining together to-night; may I bring a nephew, an artillery captain who has just come to me on leave? I should like him to be able to talk about you to his brother-officers."

During dinner, Dumas fils, whom the spirit did not move, was absolutely dumb. When the coffee came, the young officer asked him if he was unwell.

"Why?"

"You have not said a word."

"Well, my young friend, did I ask you to fire a cannon at me?"

The retort gives us Dumas to the life; he was like some unattractive shrub which seemed to take delight in hiding its flowers and obtruding its thorns.

The Prince, while desiring that his presence should cause no restraint, would allow no one to forget his rank, and his haughty familiarity permitted no return in kind. This "César déclassé," as Edmond About described him, had magnificent gifts which would have served him well had he been on the throne, but only did him harm in the state of semi-opposition in which he delighted: had he only been born in the middle class, he would have made his name famous. He was remarkably indifferent to popularity, usually so eagerly sought by the younger members of reigning houses, and had a profound scorn of "what people say." He never made an attempt to capture public opinion, or even to defend himself when it pronounced unfairly upon him.

After he had been publicly blamed and disavowed by the Emperor for his notorious speech at Ajaccio, he went to the Rue de l'Arcade, and there met Girardin. Everyone was wondering whether he would not be arrested and taken to Vincennes, and Girardin implored him to give up his pension and retire to Prangins.

"Popular opinion," he told him, "will turn in your favour if you are there, and then the royal power will fall into your hands whenever an occasion offers."

The Prince hesitated for a moment and seemed about to consent, but the sacrifice was too great for him, and finally he stayed on at the Palais-Royal. As Girardin was rather fond of telling him afterwards, this was a great mistake.

One evening at eight he suddenly appeared at our friend's house; she was not expecting him in the least, for she knew that he was dining at the Tuileries.

He shouted from the hall, "Can you give me something to eat? I am dying of hunger!"

Dinner was promptly brought, and he said that they had only just sat down to dinner at the Tuileries when a quarrel broke out upon some point or other, a quarrel so violent that, to put an end to it, he had got up and gone before the soup was finished. Next day he went off to Prangins. "He goes there when he has a grievance to nurse," remarked M. Rouher, adding: "Monseigneur is in the sulks."

The Prince could be gallant upon occasion, but only on condition that he suffered no inconvenience. One wet day he and our friend were both due at Sainte-Beuve's. He got there first, and was just waiting at the door as she got out of her carriage; he rushed down the steps, took her in his arms, and carried her across the pavement so that she should not get her feet wet. But when they were going home, he obliged her, as he wanted to walk, to return on foot from the Rue Montparnasse, where Sainte-Beuve's house was, to the Rue de l'Arcade, never noticing that she was in satin slippers and a white silk dress with a long train.

On the frequent occasions of his dining with Sainte-Beuve, the host would courteously inquire, "Whom would you like to meet, Monseigneur?" He invariably put the Dame aux Violettes first on the list of his friends, but one evening he added Delacroix. Which was revolutionary, but then so was Delacroix in his way.

The Prince made no practice whatever of the religion in which he had been brought up, and never went to church except on official occasions; but he

much appreciated the good sense and sound learning of certain of the Catholic clergy. Mgr Taliani, then secretary to the Nuncio at Paris, later representative of the Holy See at Vienna and a cardinal, was often to be met at the Palais-Royal, and so was Father Lescœur of the Oratory. Mgr Taliani was also not afraid of appearing frequently at the Rue de l'Arcade.

Was the Dame aux Violettes really in love with Prince Napoleon? I do not know, but I should rather incline to believe that she felt a kind of maternal affection for him; this was more suited to her temperament, and she was certainly ready enough to advise, soothe, and encourage him. She was very ambitious, and the part of a younger Mme de Maintenon would have been just what she seemed born for.

I was talking to her once after she had become Mme de Loynes, in the days when I went often to see her, either to her cottage at Parc au Princes in the summer, or to her flat in the Avenue des Champs-Élysées in the winter. She saw me, as a special favour, between two and four, after her daily walk to the Bois. Sad news had come from Rome: Prince Napoleon was dying in an hotel, and Princess Clotilde was praying fervently for his conversion and his salvation.

"Princess Clotilde," said Mme de Loynes, "is a saint. How often have I tried to persuade the Prince to some sort of respect—a hypocritical one, if you like—for appearances! Always in vain. He had deference for her, real veneration even, but he would go no further. There never was a man like him for being able to hold two different opinions at once—

fear of ridicule and scorn of public opinion in this case. Why, people have even dared to say that he—a Bonaparte!—was lacking in courage!

"The truth is that in the Crimea he felt himself powerless; he was annoyed at the way the authorities tried to keep him out of action; and besides, illness had weakened him. So he returned to France without the least suspicion that people would accuse him of having run away from dysentery, but they did so. The legend grew and became history; he had a number of enemies, who made all the use they could of it, turning his nickname of Plon-Plon into Craint-Plomb. When the Duc d'Aumale wrote a pamphlet in answer to a speech of his in the Senate about the Orléans princes, I begged him to fight.

"'What is the good?' he said. 'A duel wouldn't prove that the Duc d'Aumale was wrong.'

"'But public opinion . . .'

"'Oh, that! I don't care a fig for it.'

"What was to be done with such a man? You know the scandal there was about the dinner he and some of his friends went to one Good Friday? The truth is, they dined together at Magny's almost every Friday, forgot Good Friday, and then did not countermand the dinner. Of course they were wrong, and I begged the Prince to keep away. He did hesitate, but then said roughly, 'If I don't go, they'll think me a "clerical," and laugh at me.' And he did go. I refused, although, to persuade me, they had promised that there should be a second dinner fit for a fast day."

I asked Mme de Loynes if she had gone on seeing the Prince up to the time of the war and his exile.

"Yes, but after 1864 he wrote more often. Other influences drew him away, but he did come to invite me to the public rehearsal of the *Joueur de Flûte* in his Pompeian house—that house with a history. You know the Prince was a great traveller, and really knew a great deal: he saw the model in Sicily, remembered the plan down to the smallest details, and when he came back to France he had it copied in the Avenue Montaigne, not far from the Comte de Quinsonas' Norman house.

"They had put the stage in the atrium—or rather, the atrium *was* the stage. And what actors they were! Émile Augier—what a fine man he was, with such brilliant talent! And there were his nephew, my dear Déroulède, 'le grand Théo,' that delightful Favart, who was so magisterial in the *Supplice d'une Femme*, that Dumas and Girardin wrote together; and Samson, Got, Geffroy, and beautiful Madeleine Brohan—oh! a royal company!

"The day after the first performance, which was given to the court, Arsène Houssaye brought me the manuscript of a little poem Théophile Gautier wrote for the occasion. I have kept it ever since, and here it is. Let me offer it to you, but before you take it away, won't you let us read it together?"

VERSES FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF THE "JOUEUR DE FLUTE" AT THE POMPEIAN PALACE

Non, non, c'est trop d'audace et je baisse les yeux,
Car le mortel s'aveugle à regarder les dieux.
Pourtant, j'aurais voulu, grande était ma folie,
Célébrer par un chant cette sœur d'Italie,
Que de Sardaigne en France a conduite un hymen,

THE SALON OF PRINCE NAPOLEON

Où chaque époux tendait un peuple avec sa main,
Vous dire sa beauté, grâce, parfum et joie
Du palais lumineux où la fête flamboie. . . .
Qu'entends-je? Suis-je encor dans le monde païen?
Une flûte à trois trous, en mode lydien.
Joue un air comme Pan en siffle au jeune pâtre.

Des acteurs s'ajustant des masques de théâtre
Se recordent des vers de leurs rôles tout bas,
Thalie en se chaussant prépare ses ébats.
L'Odéon de Pompéi relevé de sa chute
Représente "un prologue" et le *Joueur de Flûte.*
C'est une pièce antique et j'en connais l'auteur.
Un jeune Gallo-Grec en fut le traducteur

Un peu libre . . . il s'égare en sa verve profane;
S'il estime Ménandre, il aime Aristophane;
Mais un cœur attendri bat sous cette gaîté;
Son rire large et franc est plein d'honnêteté.

THÉOPHILE GAUTIER.

I treasured the manuscript, and had it put as frontispiece to the *Last Days of Pompeii*, which Maurice Ray, that most original artist, illustrated so charmingly for me.

"I saw the Prince again in 1870," my friend went on, "just after war had been declared. He was starting for Italy, charged with a mission that failed, owing to the first Prussian victories. He was serious, almost sad. I only saw him once after the war; he had become the Prince Imperial's guardian and his heir-apparent. Later on he declared himself a Republican. I do not care much for the Republic, and he knew it and did not try to meet me again. I should have scolded him a little," she added, with a gentle smile.

She did not tell me, and I only learned it later, that the only time she saw the Prince after the war

was at his own house, the day he was ejected; she went to offer him all her fortune for the cause he served. The Prince refused with thanks, deeply moved at this generous action, which well deserves remembrance.

III

A HERO'S WILL

THERE are people to whom years seem short and days endless; others never notice the passage of either years or days, and of such was our lady. She went on cultivating her hidden garden, and caring tenderly for her friends; and though she lived in quiet, she heard everything. She learnt of the illness and death of the Duc de Morny without a suspicion of the hopeless blank his departure would make in the Empire he had tried to liberalise. She shared in some degree Prince Napoleon's prejudice against the great noble who seemed to take politics so lightly, yet hid, as we say, the iron hand within the velvet glove. Always ready to find fault, and contradictious to the point of confusing himself, the Prince was no kinder to M. Rouher, that hierarch of Imperial authority. He fumed at the expedition to Mexico, and criticised our inaction before Sadowa and feverish energy after the Austrian defeat.

As the Prince had forgotten the way to the Rue de l'Arcade by 1865, it was through Girardin, the faithful friend who never deserted her, that she heard of the mad fit of rage that overcame him on the occasion of M. Rouher's speech against the evacuation of Rome, and his famous "Never!" to

which, unfortunately, events were to give the lie in so startling a fashion. She was further aware that the splendours of the Exhibition of 1867 did not dazzle the Prince to the point of making him blind to the first ominous cracks showing in the Imperial edifice. He had foreseen the end of the Mexican expedition, and was not surprised at Maximilian's execution, though he deplored it. And he wrote to our friend to tell her how angry he was at the proceedings taken against their old friend Flaubert and his immortal *Madame Bovary.*

When Girardin came to her with the Emperor's famous letter to Baron Mackau, the doughty father of our senators, she was not deceived by the grand phrases about "lawful claims," "first conquest of our liberties," "renewing of the Empire by liberalism," which made Girardin so wildly enthusiastic. Her good sense told her that a disguise is a great risk to dignity, and that while a Republic, which is liberty, ceases to be a Republic directly it becomes arbitrary, an Empire, which personifies authority, ceases to be an Empire when it becomes liberal.

When a train is in motion, it is madness to throw oneself in front of it to stop it: one has every opportunity of avoiding getting into it before it starts. She made, therefore, no attempt to stop the movement, but contented herself with declining to take a seat in the train. Still, when the first liberal ministry was formed, and Émile Ollivier made peace with the Empire and put at its service his lofty eloquence, his perfect loyalty, and splendid

faith, she could not refuse her sympathy to so generous an enterprise. She much regretted, as she often told me, that she never saw Émile Ollivier but once. "He is a great wizard," she said later. "He bewitched me to the point of making me doubt for a moment all my own ideas, or rather, all my instincts."

She allowed Girardin to bring to her house the journalists who were defending Ollivier the minister, chief among them Clément Duvernois and Hector Pessard. Our early readers may remember the magisterial style of Hector Pessard's criticism in the *Gaulois*, after the death of my friend De Pène. Clément Duvernois was an excellent journalist before he became the last minister of agriculture under the Empire, and our grandchildren, less ungrateful than his contemporaries, will be just enough to ascribe to him the merit of having had Paris so well provisioned that we could stand the siege for months without suffering too hardly.

Hector Pessard it was who brought Mme de Loynes the first news of the plebiscite of 1870. Her intoxication, like that of the nation, was brief. At that time she was undergoing the most intense experiences of her life—the anxieties of a patriot and the fears of a lover. Ernest Baroche, son of one of the most distinguished figures of the Second Empire, had been introduced to her a few years before. His father, M. Billault, and M. Rouher were the three most eloquent advocates of the Imperial power in the ministry. His elder brother was a successful civil servant, receiver-general at Rouen, and reputed a particularly careful and capable

administrator. His daughter married a distinguished advocate, *bâtonnier* in his profession, M. Busson-Billault, who thus united three great names dear to Bonapartists.

Ernest Baroche, eager, impulsive, and with a passion for novelty, had left the Conseil d'État for business, only to grow speedily tired of it. He then showed an equal eagerness for the affairs of the stage, and was most successful with his first attempt at a play — *Le Testament de César Girodot* — written in collaboration with Villetard and Adolphe Belot. Then, with ingrained love of change, he left the stage for business once more, and started a company to exploit the Malfidano. This time fortune smiled upon him, for the mine became later a second Golconda.

This very changeableness it was that won the heart of the Dame aux Violettes. The boldness of Baroche, the love of adventure carried to the point of destruction of any settled scheme of life, was so violent a contrast to her own ordered existence, with its fixed habits and business of conversation, that she was swept off her feet. Her friends, with Epicurean self-indulgence, had brought forth out of their treasuries, and had enriched her mind with their superfluous wealth; but they cared little for the things of the heart, and had hardly given a thought to the safety of hers. Prince Napoleon, in love as in other matters, had the instincts of a hart royal, but cared little for the feelings of others concerned. How could she, then, be untouched by the pleadings, so new to her, of a love that was strong, deep, and reverential? Ernest Baroche offered her marriage—

yet she hesitated, in spite of the attractions of the proposal, in spite of her desire to escape from herself and to occupy the position towards which all her efforts had been directed.

She was afraid that disillusion would follow the first transports of love, and she was most reluctant that the proposed marriage should bring difficulties and disputes with his relations upon the man she loved. And this in spite of the temptation that it must have been for the "Dame aux Violettes" to gain the right to the title of "Madame"! The first rumours of war broke in upon this conflict of scruples, in which she dreaded victory as much as defeat, and Ernest Baroche, who was a commandant of Mobiles, had to rejoin his regiment.

Without posing too much as a Cornelia, she was of the mind of that Marquise de Presles who, in *Le Gendre de Monsieur Poirier*, calls upon her husband to go to the war. "Farewell, beloved," was her parting. "Do your duty, and we will be married when the war is over." She hid from him the sad forebodings which left her no peace, though she made no secret of them to her great friend, Émile de Girardin.

He came daily to see her, and arranged for her benefit an hourly bulletin of the events of each day. He reported the hopes of peace, the withdrawal of the Hohenzollern prince's candidature, Marshal Lebœuf's boast, "The army is not even a gaiter-button short," and, finally, the false dispatch from Ems. And when war seemed inevitable he tried to reassure her fears by recalling our victories in the Crimea, in Italy, and in Mexico.

"Yes, yes, I remember. How splendid the return of the troops from Italy was! But then I remember too what my friend Ricord told me, and I am afraid!"

"You never told me about that," interrupted Girardin.

"It was a professional secret, and he made me promise not to tell. But it doesn't matter now, and you will understand my fear. In 1867 our friend Ricord was called into consultation with his famous confrère Nélaton by Marshal Niel. Both agreed in diagnosing for the stone, and in thinking there was the greatest risk in operating. Ricord was telegraphed for to Vichy to his old patient the Viceroy of Egypt. Ricord hurried to Nélaton to tell him that he had to go, but assured him that he would not be away more than a week, and, naturally, begged him to put off the decision until he came back. Fate willed that he should be kept twelve days at Vichy. He rushed off to the Marshal as soon as he got back, only to find him in the agonies of death. Nélaton had performed the operation without waiting for him, and a few days after France was mourning one of the finest of her servants. Ricord had hardly recovered from this shock when he was sent for to the Tuileries. There, by the Emperor's bedside, he met Nélaton again. They examined with the most religious care, and Ricord was absolutely certain that the Emperor had the stone, and must be operated on at once. Nélaton hesitated, and finally declared that he was not sufficiently certain of the presence of a foreign body to declare an operation necessary. The Empress, torn between these two contrary opinions,

allowed herself to be influenced by her love for her husband and her terror of an operation then distinctly dangerous, as lithotrity was somewhat embryonic. She accepted Nélaton's opinion against Ricord and even against Germain Sée, who had hurried off to the Tuileries at the first word, in spite of his Republican opinions.

"'I have often wondered, my dear friend,' Ricord added, 'why Nélaton, who is always so clear and quick-sighted, should have objected to an operation that Sée and I thought necessary. I believe Marshal Niel's ghost haunted him at the Emperor's bedside, and impaired his great powers. I have never changed my mind. The Emperor has the stone, and its presence will cause mishaps that will grow more frequent day by day, and will paralyse his will and obscure his judgment. May we never have to regret Nélaton's scruples! And may Providence preserve France from a crisis in which she will have urgent need of the Emperor's will and authority!'

"That was all Ricord said, but now, 'mon grand,' don't you understand why I am afraid? The crisis Ricord dreaded has come, and what is to happen if the Emperor is really ill?"

Girardin was usually master of himself, but he could not control his impatience.

"All that may be possible, yet whether the Emperor is ill or well, France must wipe out the insult that has been inflicted upon her. What does it matter whether the Emperor lives or dies? France will win, and the Empire be safe enough."

The day war began Girardin came to the Rue de l'Arcade as usual.

"Well, the guns have spoken, and we must leave the word with them, so a truce to speeches and articles. We are under the sway of a mysterious force stronger than our own will, and it leads us—no, drives us! Just read the newspapers. They are all of one mind—for the war! We are to drive the Prussians back to Berlin at the point of the bayonet." And he threw cuttings from all the papers down on the table.

As a matter of fact, the same martial note was struck by all alike: by the *Constitutionnel* and the *Pays*, official organs; by the *Avenir National* and the *Siècle*, advanced Republican; by the *Temps* and the *Débats*, both liberal, as well as by the conservative *Univers* and *Union*.

One morning, long after that terrible year, I was with Girardin. He had been violently attacked, and, as he very seldom did, showed that he was hurt. He got up and went to his famous portfolio, while I wondered what he would take out of it, for this portfolio had its legends. Report declared that it was full of pamphlets which the great controversialist had prepared for his enemies and was ready to launch against them at any moment. When Girardin died, the portfolio was opened with awe—and found to contain nothing but masses of newspaper cuttings. Girardin had hoodwinked his contemporaries and spread terror in his own characteristic fashion. On that particular day he produced newspapers from one of his cases: "They dare to put the blame on me, do they? Let them attack the Emperor for his

incapacity, his almost unpardonable mistakes, and it is the business of the Bonapartists to defend him. But if they venture to put in print the statement that I brought on the war by what I said and what I did, I shall surprise them with the contents of some of my papers, and confront them with their own articles." The next day he did publish long excerpts from articles by the very writers who found it so convenient to forget the past, and the laugh was all on his side.

"Take some copies yourself," he bade me. "They'll come in useful some day, and be worth keeping." I took his advice, and in making them public to-day, I shall edify my readers and remind some of the brethren of my craft that it is unwise to play either with fire or with a pen: sooner or later they will get their fingers burnt.

Here, then, are a few of these many extracts; the first set are dated the day after Cochery's interpellation upon the proceedings of Prussia and the Hohenzollern candidature:—

L'Univers (Catholic paper)

"This declaration was the one subject of discussion last evening in all the clubs and in all public places. The firm tone taken by the Government has met *with unanimous approval, and even with applause.* The agents of Prussia may therefore report to His Majesty King William and to Herr von Bismarck that in this affair our ministers have been, undoubtedly and without exception, the accredited interpreters of public opinion."

L'Opinion Nationale (Republican)

"Although it has seemed to us to be our duty to maintain our reserve for so long as the activities of Prussia concerned Germany alone, yet it is just as much our duty to show our susceptibility whenever we see that these activities are being exercised in circumstances fraught with suspicion for the Latin nations.

"In maintaining this ground, the Government should, as in fact it has done, keep a firm and lofty tone. It will have all France behind it. . . . Herr von Bismarck has passed all bounds, and must retrace his steps if he wishes to preserve peace. But we can no longer do the like.—AD. GUÉROULT."

Le Gaulois (independent)

"Our honour is untouched.

"To-day, for the first time since Feb. 23rd, the ministry has employed the only style worthy of a French Cabinet and worthy of the expectations of the country. Had we swallowed this last insult, *there is not a woman in the world who would have accepted the hand of a Frenchman.*

"To-day our honour is untouched; if peace can likewise be maintained, it were well. But if war be the result of the Prim-Bismarck coalition, it were better.—H. PESSARD."

Le Figaro (independent)

"While admitting to-day that Prussia is withdrawing both her interest and her responsibility in

the Hohenzollern candidature—*i.e.* that she is not deeply implicated, that she has no desire to support it, and in fact disavows it—*France has a right to make further demands.* Considering the fashion in which it has been ridiculed, deceived, and played with by Prussia, the French Government ought to *demand guarantees.*"

Le Journal de Paris (Orleanist)

"The Cabinet of the Tuileries had reasons for showing its susceptibilities which that of Berlin should not have brought into play. If M. de Gramont had not spoken, it would have been possible to come to the conclusion that French policy was resigned to helplessness and to effacement.—H. DEPASSE."

Le Correspondant (monarchist)

"Herr von Bismarck has obviously conceived the idea of re-establishing the ancient power of the House of Austria for the benefit of his own country. . . . Blockaded on all sides, enmeshed in a net that cannot be broken, France, helpless and disgraced, must choke out her life between the Rhine, the Pyrénées, and the Alps. . . . We too are among those who applaud the firm stand taken by the Government. Our easiness has been too long exploited for the aggrandisement of others, and our hearts are warm at feeling that we have become Frenchmen again. All patriotic souls have acclaimed as did the Chamber this declaration of our power, hearing revived in it the old proud accent of national feeling. . . . At certain outrages the passions of men cannot but boil over, and when

we reflect that those feelings which have just found vent in an explosion still re-echoing have been locked for four years within our breasts, it is hardly astonishing that the Government itself has given way to popular enthusiasm.—LÉON LAVEDAN."

After the renunciation of the Hohenzollern candidature :—

La Presse

"The *Constitutionnel* speaks of a victory 'that has not cost a tear or a drop of blood,' but this victory would be the worst of humiliations for us and the direst of perils. We hope the Chamber will intervene. May it be inspired again with one of those bursts of feeling with which it received the declaration of the 5th of July. It has upheld French policy when that policy was a bold and a national one, and may it now strengthen those who would fain succumb.

"On the 4th of July we had to choose between prudence and audacity, and we pronounced in favour of the latter. To-day our only choice is between audacity and shame. Is there an orator on any platform or a writer on any newspaper who would counsel us to hesitate?—LA PONTERIE."

L'Opinion Nationale

"To-day and yesterday all the Government journals have been reiterating the statements that peace is made, that all differences are at an end, and that we must be delighted. Only no one is delighted, no one is even reassured. The play which began as a tragedy to finish as an operetta has failed to satisfy

anyone. Public opinion is still depressed, disappointed, and uneasy.

"When we saw the French Government reject the Hohenzollern intrigue in firm and lofty fashion, we remarked that France had done with a policy of concession, that her ill-paid patience was exhausted, and that she was about to take advantage of an opportune disturbance to settle accounts with Prussia, and make that country return to a proper observance of treaties, even if force were necessary to that end.

"France as a whole, we believe, has thus taken the matter. Hence her adherence to the bluster of the Cabinet, and the light-hearted fashion of approaching a war the serious nature of which has, however, been clear to everyone.—AD. GUÉROULT."

L'Union (Royalist)

"The *Constitutionnel* declares that it is proud to accept this peaceful solution. Its pride will hardly be contagious. Our country has been forced to turn its averted eyes to face the work done in the year 1866 and its result in the perilous dominion of a foreign power. It has realised that there is something which must be crushed on the farther shore of the Rhine, and in the first access of the fighting fever the word goes round: 'Let us do to-day what we must do at some time or other if we would escape immediate ruin.' This is why the satisfaction Prince Antoine has afforded us has been inadequate to remove our grievances or allay our excitement.—POUJOULAT."

Le Gaulois

"Paris showed us yesterday, France will do so tomorrow, a great nation overcome with stupefaction at news usually acclaimed with shouts of joy.

"The possibility that peace may be preserved has produced the effect usually felt at the imminence of a declaration of war.

"All hearts are heavy.—H. PESSARD."

L'Univers

"If this renunciation by the Hohenzollern prince be valid, it will have the effect of making our objections absurd. What is to be done? Would it not be best to make the frank announcement that this candidature, though discreetly withdrawn, has revealed Prussia's ambitions and her desire to isolate France and surround her with hostile powers; and that to meet such projects we must at least insist upon exact observation of the treaty of Prague, and shall, in fact, do so?—E. VEUILLOT."

Le Figaro

"France does not wish for war, but neither does she fear it.

"She has been provoked into changing her disposition for peace. She insists upon guarantees. The ministry has no understanding of the temper of the French if, after its prompt and forcible expressions of resentment at the insult offered to France, it contents itself, as report goes this evening, with a satisfaction that is empty, evasive, and without security for the future. . . .

"What will the ministry do to-day? Will it declare for peace or for war?

"For neither, if we are well informed, as we believe we are. Unless the indignation which fills the heart of every Frenchman at the foolish bungling of the madmen who imagine that they can govern their country, unless this indignation, we repeat, is forcibly revealed, to-morrow the Cabinet of the 2nd of February will declare that, though it is not satisfied with the course of events, neither is it altogether displeased, and that, as Prussia has taken action upon the sole point insisted on, the incident is closed. The fate of France and her honour are henceforth entrusted to the patriotism and the wisdom of the legislative assembly and the Senate.

"For an honourable ending to the affair we can only rely for the future upon these great bodies, upon the head of the State—and upon the nation. —J. RICHARD."

Le National (Republican)

"How ill-omened is this peace of which we have been hearing so much in the last twenty-four hours!

"Why do we hear nothing of the Prussian answer, now that it has come?

"Why is it not published as well as Papa Antoine's telegram?

"Why allow this curious silence to give rise to the belief that the answer is formed on the model of the latest articles in the Prussian newspapers?

"Why allow it to be supposed that King William has no explanations to offer with regard to this fact which no longer exists?"

After the declaration of war :—

La Liberté

"France is on her feet at last. She is no longer the France of a few years ago, submissive to a certain policy and consenting to endorse it without a murmur. She is a France born again unto liberty and unable to conceive any better method of celebrating this glorious renascence than that of undertaking, resolutely, generously, and unselfishly, a war of independence for Europe, for herself, even for Germany, for all those oppressed or threatened by the ambitions of old King William.—H. VRIGNAULT."

La Presse

"The shouts for the war which echoed yesterday along our boulevards will be ringing throughout France to-day, and will encourage our army in the heroic struggle to which Prussian insolence has challenged us. The decision for war did not, as we have just learnt, originate with the Government: that was irresolute, and some at least of its leaders would have allowed themselves to be stopped by ridiculous concessions. No, the decision came from the very heart of the country. It embodies the national indignation at a system of servitude which seems about to impose itself upon the whole of Europe, and our revolt, after four years of patience, at a final impertinence.—LA PONTERIE."

L'Univers

"Our present tone will bring oblivion for the miserable speeches delivered in the legislative as-

sembly. . Europe will understand how very much we mean. A comparison of the Imperial pronouncements with the manifestoes now being issued on all sides will show that the war upon which we are entering is not the work of one party in France or an adventure forced upon her by her sovereign. The nation is for it whole-heartedly, unanimously. The clamorous objections of a few deputies, the hypocritical laments of two or three newspapers, cannot prevent universal recognition of this truth."

Le Français

"The reports coming in from the country are excellent: people are accepting the idea of war with Prussia not indeed with the noisy excitement which has been so conspicuous on our boulevards, but with calm confidence and manly resolution. There is far more comprehension of the reasons for this war than there was at the beginning of the war with Italy. . . .

"The Government's proclamation has been put up in every commune, and in all alike it has called forth most energetic manifestations of patriotism."

Le Figaro

"Paris is not solitary in her acclamation of the war: our eighty-nine departments have likewise risen against Prussia. Read the newspapers: whatever their politics, it is obvious that the truth in this case is so convincing and meets with such support that all alike acknowledge an unheard-of and almost incredible enthusiasm on the part of the nation."

It is in the interests of truth that I wish to place these extracts side by side with those that have appeared in M. Fernand Girandeau's *La Vérité sur la campagne de 1870*, a compilation from original documents. His extracts are correct enough, only, as a devotee of the Empire, M. Girandeau has tried to rehabilitate it completely, and that is going rather far. We are merely trying to arrange a schedule of responsibility—a sufficiently complicated task.

I have described elsewhere the tragic sufferings that Providence imposed upon us—doubtless in order that we might expiate faults too great for pardon—from Froeschwiller to the battles fought round Metz, and from Sedan, where the Emperor, prostrated by his disease, sought death and, failing to find it, was forced to abdicate a power that was his no longer, to the investment with which Paris was threatened. The Emperor ill! Ricord right after all! If only he had been listened to! The Emperor a prisoner; the Empress a fugitive, sheltering in England; the Prince Imperial hidden in Belgium, according to a general but false impression—his tutor, Filon, has put it on record that he was elsewhere. If only Prince Napoleon had listened to Girardin's advice after the Ajaccio incident: "Go to Prangins, and your opportunity will come!" Perhaps this would have been his hour, and he might have saved the dynasty by his popularity.

A few days, a few hours sufficed. The Empire, believed to be invincible from without and impregnable from within, disappeared, as though a part of some fairy transformation scene, into a deep abyss hidden up to that moment. Oh, what a fall was there!

Her friends in their despair had vanished or taken their departure, but the Dame aux Violettes would not move. She had lived — that is, as Rousseau wrote at Charmettes, been happy—in a Paris that was free, entrancing, and the envy of the world; she would not desert a captive Paris whose misery was to serve as foil to its heroism.

Just before the siege became close, Ernest Baroche, whose regiment was under canvas in the suburbs, got leave for a few hours and hurried to the lady of his love. Her faithful friend Ernest Daudet was with her.

"My fiancé," was her introduction. Then, turning to Baroche: "I shall stay in order to be near you."

"No, you must go, and go at once, my dearest," he answered. "The siege will be a long one, and I want to spare you all its privations and suffering."

She resisted, but he would have his way. He was her master, since she was engaged to him, and she gave in.

Their farewells were heart-rending; had they a presentiment that they would never see one another again? She left for London, where M. Tissot, one of her friends, was acting as Ambassador. There she received the fatal telegrams that told her of the fight at Bourget, of Ernest Baroche's heroism, and of his death. Baroche had died as a hero should: her heart had made no mistaken choice, but what was her despair! She had lost the man she loved, and in dying her beloved had taken with him all her dreams and all her hopes of a life in which she was to find affection, independence, and a secure position. And upon her heart, thus torn by her private grief, were to fall, like

blows from a hammer, the desolating reports of reverses that followed one upon the other without a day of respite: the surrender of Metz, the taking of Orléans, the Prussian entry into Paris, the treaty of Frankfort, the Commune. The letters she wrote in those days of anguish are full of profound despair, yet also of most complete and Christian resignation. She mourned alike for her lover and for her country.

She had left England, where the climate did not suit her, for Belgium; she waited at Brussels until Paris was freed from Prussians and Communards and she could go back to it. She took pleasure in returning to her house in the Rue de l'Arcade, where nothing was changed. The setting was the same, but how many of the actors failed to answer their call! She could only rally round her those who had escaped the storm.

All that she had been taught to love and to look up to was gone, and she dreaded the future. Some days after her return to Paris she was summoned by Ernest Baroche's lawyer, and here a surprise awaited her. Ernest Baroche had left her all his fortune, and among his securities were those of the famous Malfidano mine, already mentioned. A war, though it destroys certain stocks, often increases the value of others by unexpected counter-strokes, and the Malfidano shares had gone up. Our friend thus found herself possessed of undreamed-of fortune.

She found further among Ernest Baroche's effects a considerable number of shares in a sugar-factory he had started in the Seine-et-Marne department. He had made the Comte de Loynes, one of his friends whom he had introduced to her, manager of this

factory. This Count was of very good family, and one of the handsomest men it is possible to see. He had served as captain in the Carabineers of the Guard, and no one who knew him can forget his lofty bearing and air of distinction. He belonged to the Jockey Club, and all the members were friends of his.

The Comte de Loynes did not escape the spell which our friend laid upon all around her to the very end of her life. The interests of his business brought him into close connection with her, and they often met. He talked to her tactfully and gratefully of her dead lover, whom he loved as a brother, and this was the first bond of union between them.

One day the Comte de Loynes told his love and asked for her hand in marriage. She was touched by the reverence of his feeling for her, and accepted him, thinking, too, that she would thus gain a husband to protect her and help her with the administration of the large fortune that had come to her. However, M. de Loynes begged her to be satisfied provisionally with a religious marriage, and to put off the civil one until he could win from his parents the consent they seemed for the time being inclined to refuse. Of course he was old enough to dispense with this formality, but he thought such a proceeding more correct, and our friend agreed with him.

The religious marriage took place in 1872, under the patronage of the Nuncio, in a convent in the Rue Denfert. With a delicacy of feeling that cannot be too highly praised, and perhaps under the influence of some presentiment, the Comte de Loynes arranged for a legal deed giving his wife the right to bear his name whatever happened. The civil marriage never

took place, for difficulties—possibly a mere incompatibility of temper—arose, and brought about a speedy separation between the husband and wife.

The Dame aux Violettes was now rich, and a countess. She was too intelligent to be vain of her title or set up by her fortune, but she knew the value of each and intended to profit by it.

Her life might remain a romance, but she was determined to make a reality of it too. And the will is a kind of moral muscle which, when developed by steady exercise, gives the mind irresistible strength.

She had wished to learn, and Sainte-Beuve and Marc Fournier had been her masters. She had wanted friends, and we have had the list of all the great and celebrated men whom Prince Napoléon, Adolphe d'Ennery and Girardin had brought into her circle. She had held aloof from the fever of pleasure which had characterised the last days of the Second Empire in order to save herself from being confused with the unclassed. Hitherto she had been outside any class; her marriage placed her definitely.

So far she had been but a planet, but now she resolved to shine as a star and to develop her own personality. However proud she may have been of her friendships, they had been contrived for her by others; henceforth, while keeping her old friends, she was determined to choose new ones for herself. She had been at the head of a kind of intellectual office in which politicians and men of letters had been pleased to hold a literary club. Now she cherished dreams of persuading men of letters and distinguished politicians to help her in maintaining a political salon.

In this way she would fulfil her ambition of being

able to control events in her country's history, to play a sovereign part, to be, in short, an all-powerful Egeria off the stage. And if my readers have sometimes thought that I have delayed them unduly by my analysis of that incarnation of charm and of strength who was the Dame aux Violettes and was to be the Comtesse de Loynes, if they have been inclined to suppose that my faithful friendship made me take delight in heaping honours upon my heroine, let them be patient enough to wait while I make revelation of matters upon which I speak with authority concerning the hidden machinery which sets in motion the wheel of human things. The Catholic preacher is right—there is but one Great Cause, and It is called GOD. Yet apart from GOD the greatest events arise initially from the most trifling of causes. Great achievements have been performed by unknown workers. Let it be known to all that the Comtesse de Loynes made it her pastime to create deputies, senators, members of the opposition, presidents for leagues and municipal councils, directors for reviews, newspapers, and theatres. She has made Academicians, and very nearly made an Emperor.

Our prologue is at an end, and now for the stage! After this little curtain-raiser we will begin our play. Unfortunately it has no fifth act. For that France is waiting—and, still looking for her knight, hears as yet not even the hoofs of his charger.

SALONS PAST AND PRESENT

SALONS PAST AND PRESENT

THE curtain has risen.

Every year at the beginning of the season (another of the terms which our journalists, with their prejudice in favour of things English, have insisted on borrowing, just as though the language of Victor Hugo and Théophile Gautier could not supply the right word) the society papers announce that Mesdames X., Y., and Z. are re-opening their salons. These salons are, of course, of the most correct Paris fashion, but the pity of it is that we no longer have a single salon that is salon and nothing more; for society, though grown to monstrous proportions, lacks a head. I do know hostesses, certainly, who are unwearied in contriving amusements for their guests: they give dances and card-parties, and even encourage conversation in the intervals of bridge; they invite you to meet members of the companies of the Comédie-Française or the Opéra; or they give excellent dinners and furnish their tables with a tame academician into the bargain. But all this is merely the fashion.

However, Mme Aubernon de Nerville's dinners have not been forgotten, for good as was the menu, the talk was better. The hostess, in spite of Sosie,[1] believed that true hospitality provided the "feast of reason and

[1] "Sosie: Le véritable Amphitryon
Est l'Amphitryon où l'on dîne."
Molière, *Amphitryon*, iii. 5.

the flow of soul." She kept a bell beside her, and controlled the conversation with the skill of a stage-manager, taking the lead herself or leaving it to others as she saw fit. Her house was an official residence for the wits, and here she amused herself with raising the nicest literary questions or putting the most delicate of moral problems. Thus one day she hailed a friend of her's, before even allowing her to reach a chair, with: "You have come *just* at the right time, dear! We're discussing adultery, and I do so want to know what you think of it."

"I'm so sorry, darling," was the grave reply. "I've only come prepared to discuss marriage within the prohibited degrees!"

Not one of her friends will fail to recognise, by the swiftness of the repartee, Mme Strauss, daughter of the famous editor of the *Juive*, widow of the no less famous author of *Carmen*, and now married a second time to one of the best-known advocates of the French bar. Mme Strauss gives dinners every Sunday to distinguished men and good talkers, all of whom are delighted to sit at the table of so charming and elegant a hostess.

Like Mme Geoffrin, she takes great pains over the arrangement of her courses, but greater pains still over the selection of her guests, among the most frequent of whom are Anatole France, Jules Lemaître, his cousin Ludovic Halévy, Henri Meilhac, Victorien Sardou, Louis and Étienne Ganderax, Dr. Pozzi, Grosclaude, Porto-Riche, Guy de Maupassant, Capus, Baron d'Eichtal, etc. Although I am not in her set, she was sometimes kind enough to include me in her invitations up to the time when the Dreyfus

affair, which divided so many people otherwise well fitted to be good friends, broke off an acquaintanceship I valued greatly. As I listened humbly to all these brilliant men I wondered why Mme Strauss had not gathered them together as her proper harvest, and made out of so eminent a literary circle a salon which would exercise an undisputed authority. Perhaps she would not care to do this; indeed, I rather think that she, like her friend Mme Baignères, whose sparkling epigrams are repeated from end to end of Paris, is over-dowered with a wit she has not always the grace to conceal. And no one can at once conduct a chorus and join in the singing.

Any hostess desirous of establishing a salon, *i.e.* of keeping in harmonious accord minds and natures often somewhat lacking in mutual sympathy, must possess the supreme art of starting a conversation and keeping it going without ever taking the lead in it herself. She must know how to listen, and how to persuade to audience those whom she excels in making eloquent; with sweet authority she must break in upon asides, check excited arguments, and inspire those inclined to silence. She may present the racquets, but must beware of striking the shuttlecock herself. She may, indeed she should, be something of a coquette, charming alike to all her friends, so that each, when alone with her, will feel himself the specially favoured, and yet never fancy he is slighted when among the rest of the company. She must attract confidences without striving for them, enliven depression, and keep the spark of interest well alight. Further, she must charm away prejudices, and make mutually attractive those who

have no natural affinities, for only when they are compacted together in unity can all the clever men who come to her house employ their powers—intellectual or social, fashionable or political—to further the end she is pursuing while they little suspect it. She is thus the presiding genius of a bright fireside, the light of which illumines or leaves in shadow, at her will, the people and the things she marshals past, controlling them, as we do blood horses, with bridles light as silk. It is a task for a very wizard, and all a woman's art of charm and all her tact are indispensable. Famous men have had their salons, but never in their own homes: Chateaubriand held his court at Mme Récamier's, Guizot at the Princesse de Liéven's. No man, as far as I know, has succeeded in maintaining a salon by himself.

And after all, what man would dream of disputing with woman this realm in which her grace and charm make her invincible, when he has for his own so many provinces where his strength confers on him the victory? Is there not the platform for the orator, the laboratory for the scientist, the factory for the man of commercial mind, and the battlefield for the soldier? What man would adapt himself to so delicate a task or submit to the bondage it imposes? I have been happy enough to meet in the society of the day several ladies for whom this office of director of opinion, always beneficial, sometimes even touched with glory, seems to have been specially reserved. They had, without the least doubt, all the gifts necessary for so fair a calling, but I suppose that, unconsciously, they wasted them or threw them away. The rich are spendthrifts often.

Such a claimant for sovereignty is Countess Greffulhe, herself highly gifted and of high birth, and wife to a charming man whose pleasant temper, delightful manners, and unwearied benevolence win him pardon for his excess of fortune. Whenever she enters a theatre, a picture gallery, a drawing-room, or a musical reception, she makes a sensation, for everyone admires her peculiar elegance, and her ideal and dreamy beauty. *Incessu patuit dea!*—a quotation so admirably to the point that it must be forgiven.

In Paris, in the Rue d'Astorg, and in the country at her estate of Boisboudran, she has seen pass before her in procession all the kings crowned in song, and all the poets who have bestowed the diadem. She watches with delight, but has no desire to bid them stay. Her drawing-room is like the ante-chapel at a society wedding. The bridal party is eager for a crowd and for shoals of congratulations, but equally desirous that the tide should flow on, wave giving place to wave. Mme Greffulhe, a queen of magic as she is, has only to wish it and the ante-chapel will expand to the dimensions of a church—even of a cathedral.

The Countess Jean de Castellane is a "dame of high degree," daughter of the Duc de Talleyrand and Valençay and the Countess Hatzfeld, and widow, by her first marriage, of one of the mediatised princes; her receptions at Berlin, in the suite reserved for royalties, are always popular. French by birth, yet partly Germanised by her first marriage, she is now French again entirely by her marriage with Count Jean de Castellane, second son of the Marquis and

Marquise de Castellane, her cousin, and a true Frenchman, as he has taken every opportunity of showing. Her dinners are famous, invitations to her receptions are sought after by the select few, and her wit keeps round her those whom her beauty first attracts. Unfortunately, the part she might take requires tireless perseverance—and she likes change, travel, and a life full of variety. Will she, therefore, ever take upon her the burden of her calling? With all our hearts, we hope so.

The Marquise de Ganay is the daughter of the Comte de Béhague, himself a man of delicate and unerring taste. She has married the Comte de Ganay, now a marquis since his father's death, a well recognised authority on all matters of art with which I am acquainted. His house in the Avenue d'Alma is a pure gem, all the traditions of his ancestry being observed in its arrangements. In a setting wherein not the most fastidious of amateurs can find a flaw, Mme de Ganay has contrived for herself an entourage of distinguished people. She has the rare gift of being able to listen to them and draw them out upon the very subjects in which they are at their best, but, sad to say, the many calls society makes upon her prevent her from inviting them often enough to make her house their chosen haunt and herself their chosen leader.

I think I shall interest those who may read my book by giving a detailed description of the life of a social personage like Mme de Ganay. At any rate I shall interpret for the research of future ages a typical aspect of modern life.

Sometimes she must go to Fontainebleau, where

she is the capable president of the society she founded with M. René Fouret, our excellent friend, or must supervise at Georges Petit's the arrangements for some exhibition that she has got up. Then she may have to start for some race-meeting with her husband, the owner of a stable frequently triumphant on the turf. Her days are filled with dinners, teas, interminable visits to the great tailors, receptions at the Académie, golf, tennis, bridge. Then come the cure at Marienbad, the Deauville week, and the flittings from hotel to hotel in the wake of King Edward. Shooting and hunting fill the autumn, and finally there is country-house life at Courance, with all the duties of its hospitality. If she comes up to Paris, it is to attend some charitable committee or important meeting, to be present at some much talked-of first night, or to take part in the periodical sessions of the Red Cross Society.

Of course I shall be asked how an intelligent woman can burden herself to such a degree with duties so doubtful and so entirely of the world worldly. The criticism is a superficial one. Every station has its own demands to meet, and no one can escape them by half. The world is not a Thebaïd, to be left or returned to at will, and the risk run by those who try for temporary retreat is that of getting out of touch and so losing the influence indispensable for the playing of any chief part. Time alone can make final selection. Some day Mme de Ganay will discover with Lord Palmerston that life would be quite bearable without its pleasures, and then I shall not be surprised to see the house in the Avenue d'Alma become a *real* salon.

The Marquise de Ganay has a sister, the Comtesse de Béarn, at the moment engaged upon a really faithful and artistic restoration of the magnificent Château de Fleury, the woods of which adjoin the park of Courance. In her Paris mansion Mme de Béarn receives her many friends at gatherings noted for their artistic refinement.

The ever-lovely Comtesse Jean de Montebello has arranged her set in accordance with her tastes and her special capabilities. Her salon is interesting, but almost exclusively diplomatic, and in thus specialising she has deliberately restricted her range.

Since the death of her husband, one of the greatest nobles of France, if not the very greatest, and a man whose perfect manners were equalled by profound learning, Mme la Duchesse de Trémouille has closed her house save to a few tried friends. I will only mention one, the Marquis de Breteuil, once an officer and a deputy. Heredity has not failed this great-nephew of the Marquise du Châtelet, Voltaire's witty friend, and the grandson of Louis XVI.'s famous minister. His shrewdness would make it easy for him to rise to any occasion—but hitherto occasions have been lacking.

The Duchesse de Rohan, on the other hand, has been happily inspired to open wide the windows of her old house on the Boulevard des Invalides to let in a fresh and quickening breeze. She is gifted with a smile that is a revelation of charming kindliness, a lively temper, and simple perfection of manner, a privilege shared with another great lady, the Dowager Duchesse d'Uzès, and with these and the graciousness of her mode of reception she has

captivated the painters and sculptors introduced to her by her daughter, Princess Lucien Murat, whose own attempts in art have achieved the most flattering success. Then the Duchesse has attracted the poets and writers with whom she has a natural affinity, for has she not herself published certain poems by no means left unnoticed? Finally, she is not afraid of including in her invitations those terrible journalists, flattered by so many society people, but often enough neglected all the same.

Supported by two beautiful young women, her daughters-in-law the Princesse de Léon and the Vicomtesse de Rohan, she does the honours of her dinners and her receptions, usually reserved for the most aristocratic and elegant of society, to the élite of the intellectuals. And she invites her society friends to private debates and lectures, thus contriving a happy fusion of professionals and amateurs, who learn in this way to know and appreciate one another.

She has thus formed a real literary circle, carefully refined and chosen, and if from it there should one day arise a new rhythm, an original form, a poet or a writer acclaimed by the public and accepted by the Académie, the Duchesse de Rohan will have achieved the delightful task of creating a salon, that is, an influence. The time is ripe for this.

It is a singular paradox that titles have the greatest prestige in the most democratic of countries, and it is only when feminism in revolt declares war upon the plainer half of the human race that women abdicate the best privileges of their sex.

We shall wonder later how so many women of taste, tact, and intelligence can so long have sub-

mitted to the caprice of fashions dictated by dress-makers, and have accepted the lessons in morality—or rather, immorality—inculcated by authors popular in music halls, and even in certain theatres. By aping men, women have alienated too many already inclined to lose reverence and even respect for them; by following the extremes of fashion in tailor-mades, by allowing manners to be too easy and conversations too free, they have encouraged men to treat them like fellows. If too many men are like women to-day, it is perhaps because too many women are not sufficiently distinct from men. The world has become a sort of mixed school, so let us hope that woman will revert as soon as possible to her natural weapons, and remember

"Que l'éventail toujours fut le sceptre du monde."

A woman's fan! For two centuries it has made all the life of France keep time to its movements. Some hostess or other has presided at each of the great changes which have taken place during this time in society, in manners, and in ideas. Early in the seventeenth century, after the close of the wars of religion, society had not begun its existence in France, but a great and clever lady, well educated, good, and pure, was about to create it. The Marquise de Rambouillet was inspired to gather together, on a footing of temporary equality, nobles and authors, women of the world and men of letters. The ladies were Mmes de Longueville, de Sévigné, de Lafayette; the nobles, La Rochefoucauld and Montausier; the authors, Malherbe and Corneille, Balzac and Voiture. The aristocrats found out what

literature was, and the literary men discovered the world polite. Such was the origin of a society which survived to 1789, and set the fashion in classicism expressed in our dramatic masterpieces. And for these reasons the "chambre bleue d'Arthénice" was a salon, the first in France.

In the eighteenth century a change came over public taste; conversation was no longer popular on its own merits, nor was literature for its artistic charm, for a mania for philosophical propaganda had seized on everyone, and its grand instrument was the *Encyclopædia*. Still, the *Encyclopædia* would hardly have been brought to a successful issue without Mme Geoffrin's meetings for discussion. In her "royaume de la rue Saint-Honoré," as her brilliant biographer, the Marquis de Ségur, calls it, she assembled the encyclopædists, encouraged their audacious speculations, and occasionally checked them with her famous "That will do very well." They expounded their ideas and tested their theories at her house, and it was the starting-point for the new dogmas which were to be spread over the country. As the century grew older the Revolution became imminent, and the age was one of deeds. One woman of wise head and eager heart, Mme Necker, hoped that the change might be accomplished without catastrophe, and, for the seven years that intervened between Necker's two terms of office, her salon was a home for all in France who were at once liberal and moderate. In the Comte d'Haussonville she has now a descendant worthy of continuing her work.

When the Revolution was history, the Girondins

tried to form a political party, and found their Egeria in Mme Roland. Their splendid talents were betrayed by weaknesses of character; we have their like in our own times, and know the party well. As always, those who were ready enough to use violence had their way in the end, and she who had believed it lay within her power to open or shut the sluices of popular feeling paid for her illusions with her head, and was to cry, "Oh liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name!" before they killed her.

The year 1789 had permitted Mme Roland's salon; 1793 shut all salons. Celimène's fan found no more favour in the eyes of the Terrorists than did Lavoisier's crucible.

The rush to escape dispersed all over Europe a French aristocracy rudely awakened from dreams of emancipation and social justice. For years to come these French nobles were condemned to fruitless agitations, intrigues, and conspiracies, or to toil, under wretched conditions, which was, for too many of them, the only way to daily bread. The Terror, without troubling to assume any hypocritical pretensions to justice, beheaded all who had not put the frontier between themselves and the guillotine, and only the Davenport brothers have been able to hold conversations with bodiless heads.

The salons of the Directory were held in the open air. At one extreme Ange Pitou rhymed Barras and Mlle Lange.

"Barras est roi, Lange est la reine,
C'était pas la peine (twice)
Non pas la peine, assurément
De changer de gouvernement,"

while Incroyables and Merveilleuses conspired together, "under their fair wigs and black capes," in the gardens of the Palais-Royal. Here they laid their irresponsible plans for reaction and restoration of the monarchy, without a suspicion that Bonaparte would exploit them for his own ends.

Under the Consulate and the Empire, which reopened the gates of the land to all who had fled from the massacres, society began to breathe again. But, as Musset put it, "one only man was the envy of Europe, and all the rest longed to fill their lungs with the air he breathed."

In times of war there is no leisure for conversation: the tramp of feet and the brilliancy of uniforms eclipse the buzz of talk and the quick interchange of wit.

There were no salons under the First Empire. Napoleon had his own fashion—one that has become historical—of showing his liking for women. The brilliant Mme de Staël and the lovely Mme Récamier were exiled for the somewhat sanguinary views they hardly hesitated to make public as to the Emperor and his imperial authority.

By the time that France wearied of winning laurels, and was ready first to rest under the shadow of the restored monarchy, and then, in the days of Louis-Philippe, to rouse herself again at the trumpet call of liberty, society was again established; yet the Revolution had left its mark—one of division. To some, to those who had learnt nothing and forgotten nothing, the Revolution seemed a horrible thing; others saw in it, provided it were under proper control, a promise of man's independence, a prophecy of future fellowship.

Under the guidance of his Highness the Comte d'Artois, who was full of the old emigré's prejudices and hopes of revenge, the flag of Marsan sheltered all the campaigns instituted against the Duc Decazes, Louis XVIII.'s great minister, who was held to be an incarnation of liberalism, itself author of all evil. The "Ultras" were destined to triumph under Charles X.—and to escort their king to the "Ordonnances," that is, to Cherbourg and to exile and death on a foreign soil.

Beside the couch on which Baron Gérard posed her beauty, half reclining, Mme Récamier kept on their knees the tribe of friends whom she had won, all of them perfectly happy in their adoration of a divinity entirely unaffected by any worship.

Mme Récamier had the almost unique distinction of having seen the passage of a century full of horror and of splendid inspiration, of glory and of degradation. Born in the reign of Louis XVI., she was married under the Terror, and lived to sulk at the Directory, rail at the Consulate, and plot against the Empire. Chateaubriand ruled her salon, and she perpetuated his fame, wreathing him with his laurels, mourning for his sorrows, proud to win immortality at his side. She deplored the fall of the Bourbons, observed without enthusiasm the accession of the Orléans dynasty, and finally, as though she were living her early twenties over again in her old age, she was to hear shouts of "Vive la république" under the windows of the Abbaye-au-Bois after 1848, and was herself to cry "Vive Napoléon" upon the election of the prince president. She might at last

have dreamt that Brumaire and Waterloo were figments of her imagination.

1830, that great date for art and literature, saw rising from soil watered by the blood of the heroes, an array of men of genius so haughty and so independent that a single salon could neither control nor direct them.

While the old aristocracy, which was hostile to the new régime, took possession of almost all the salons, literature and art found a refuge with the Comtesse Jules de Castellane, who had set up at her house in the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré an amateur theatre, directed by the Duchesse d'Abrantès, in which Got made his début; with the Comtesse de Sainte-Aulaire, the Comtesse de Rémusat and Mme Ancelot, all three the wives of well-known académiciens; with Princess Czartoryska, who started the Hôtel Lambert; with Mme Sophie Gay, famous mother of the no less famous Mme. Émile de Girardin, whose frequent guests were Vigny and Musset, Lamartine and Balzac, Eugène Sue and Alphonse Karr, Berlioz and Liszt; and finally, with the lovely Princess Belgiojoso, crowned by Musset's affection. She had a court of artists and authors; Augustin Thierry lived in her house, and among her special friends were Victor Cousin, Mignet, Laprade, Henri Martin, Heine, Villemain, and M. Thiers himself.

The Faubourg Saint-Germain avenged the "fading exiles of Belgrave Square" in a war of mockery, sarcasm, and sometimes rather terrible hits directed against the Tuileries—a war of captains in lace! All day Berryer and his friend the Duc de Fitz-James

made the tribune ring with their eloquent denunciations of the July monarchy, and every evening the young Duchesse received in her salon all the faithful adherents of the old régime. Around her thronged the Duchesses de Doudeauville and de Lévis, the Marquise de Biencourt, the Duchesse de Polignac, the Comtesse de Mortemart and the Duchesse de Gèvres, a charming bevy of conspirators, worthy of inspiring a second Marsillac to sing like the first—

"Pour conquérir leur cœur, pour plaire à leurs beaux yeux,
J'ai fait la guerre aux rois, je l'aurais faite aux dieux!"

While the opposition was thus firmly compacted and irreconcilable, the ministerial salons emphasised their own divisions. M. Thiers collected all M. Guizot's enemies at Mme Dosne's, and M. Guizot asked all M. Thiers' to the Princesse de Liéven's, and in spite of her skill in such affairs the Comtesse Duchâtel came to grief in her efforts to reconcile these modern Capulets and Montagues, incorrigible adversaries as they were.

A fair stranger, radiant with elegance and charm, was happier in her attempt to bring about the fusion of the two camps. This was the Comtesse Lehon, wife of the first Belgian Ambassador accredited to Paris, and she succeeded thanks to her position. At her house were to be seen in splendid assembly the Duchesse d'Ayen, the Duchesse de Dino, the Duchesse de Mouchy, Mme Récamier, the Princesse Belgiojoso, the Vicomtesse de Noailles, the Duchesse de Liancourt, Mme de Chastenay, the Duchesse de Maillé, the Duchesse de Praslin, Mme Liadières, Baroness James de Rothschild, Mme Ernest André,

the Princesse d'Essling, the Comtesse de Contades, the Comtesse Delaborde and her three daughters, Mme Delessert, Mme Édouard Bocher, and Mme Odier, all equally beautiful and equally run after.

The Comtesse Lehon lived first in the Rue de la Chaussée-d'Antin, in a house that looked on to fields and had gardens stretching as far as the Opéra. She had a craze for new districts, and by her moves could be traced, as though on a map, the progress westwards undertaken by fashionable Paris. After the Chaussée-d'Antin she set up in Baron Gérard's house in the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré; then she bought a large estate by the customs-house that then stood at the cross-roads in the Champs-Élysées. Those were patriarchal days! The mansion here grew famous for the exquisitely refined taste of its owner, the great men who visited it, and the brilliance of its receptions. Close beside it there soon appeared a charming house known in joke as "Fidelio's Nest." Still in love with change, the Comtesse Lehon deserted her house at the cross-ways one fine morning and bought a huge estate in the Bois de Boulogne, where Monpelas the perfumer had built a palace. Of this she soon grew weary, and sold it again to his Highness the Duc de Nemours, at whose death house and estate were bought by Mme Maurice Ephrussi, *née* Alphonse de Rothschild. The Comtesse Lehon could never quite finance these whims of hers, for if they were always in the best taste they were likewise extremely costly. The scandalmongers of the day did not fail to remark, when she left Gérard's house, that she had set up within a few yards of the customs to save paying the tolls!

Next to this elegant boudoir, scented with "odeurs de Paris," came the ascetic's chapel, filled with "parfums de Rome." A woman, Mme Swetchine, ruled there, and was treated as a mother in Israel by the friends who, in this mystical salon, upheld the cause of God against the all-pervading spirit of Voltaire; these friends were Montalembert, Père Lacordaire, Falloux, and the Duc de Broglie.

Restored with difficulty after the hurricane of the Revolution, French society was divided against itself at the very moment when it should have rallied all its forces against an enemy dangerous especially because appearing in the charming guise of a younger son of some great English family. I mean—the club.

The emigrés, with the royal Comte d'Artois at their head, had brought back in their old-fashioned carriages certain English customs with which they had been struck during their exile. Brummel formed his best pupil, the Count d'Orsay, in France, and dandyism was naturalised in Balzac's great novels. The cabriolet gave up the crown of the causeway to the tilbury, and mail-coaches ploughed their way along roads long traversed only by ancient diligences. But this was a mere drop in the bucket: French women had managed to combat the foreign invasion with the ideas handed down from their forefathers, and the invasion in question had for the moment been checked. When the club came, however, infiltration opened a breach through which a foreign flood was to come to destroy all that heritage of charming manners, high tone, and perfect courtesy for which we were without a rival in Europe.

A few men of fashion decided to inaugurate the Jockey Club; it, with L'Union, was the first of French clubs, and Mme Émile de Girardin was perfectly right when she wrote: "The clubs we have imitated from the English have been the ruin of our salons."

The Jockey Club was founded in 1833 by two princes—the Duc d'Orléans and the Duc de Nemours —and by the Prince de la Moskowa, Lord Henry Seymour, the Comte Demidoff, the Comte de Cambis, the Chevalier de Machado, and Messrs. Maxime Caccia, Delamarre, Fasqueil, Charles Lafitte, Ernest Leroy, Denormandie and Rieussec. Its object at first was restricted to encouraging the breeding of blood-horses, and developing the races just started at the Champ-de-Mars.

About 1835 the Duc d'Orléans was persuaded by his colleagues to lend his grounds at Chantilly for a Grand Prix race. This was won by Frank, a horse belonging to Lord Henry Seymour, president of the Jockey Club. The prize, like that of the Paris race, was 5000 francs at first. Now it is 250,000, for the men who run racing stables have raised their demands, and so has the Jockey Club.

The club naturally became before long a meeting-place to which men got into the habit of going at the end of the day, to see one another and talk horses, business, hunting, politics, and sport with absolute freedom, and without the restraint and restrictions imposed upon well-bred men by the presence of women. Célimène's fan had survived the Revolution: was it now to be broken once and for all?

It was hardly to be expected that the Second

Empire would head a reaction against the mania for things English. The prince who was to assume the title of Napoleon III. had frequented English clubs during his exile in London, and, as Prince Noir, had appeared at race-meetings. The Emperor Napoleon had not hesitated to join in the Crimean War by way of return for the hospitality he had received in England, though there was another cause—a very small one—for this war. I believe I have already remarked that there is no such thing as a great cause.

When notifying his ascent of the throne to the sovereigns of Europe, Napoleon had made use of the formula "Mon cher frère," the regular one in protocols, and all the sovereigns but one replied in the same terms. The sole exception was Nicholas I., Emperor of Russia, who headed his answer with the words "Mon grand ami"—the formula employed for Presidents of republics. Napoleon III. perceived the innuendo, and when he met the Russian Ambassador, the Count of Kisslewe, at the New Year reception, he went up to him with the remark:

"I have just received a most flattering communication from your Emperor, who writes to me as his "grand ami." Now, one chooses one's friends, but cannot choose one's brothers."

At Sebastopol, therefore, the French army undertook the task of defining the exact nature of the friendship which the Emperor of the French had dedicated to the Emperor of Russia.

After peace was made, the Queen of England and Prince Albert came to Cherbourg and on to Paris to thank France and her Emperor, and the Prince of

Wales, Edward VII. later, was a particularly welcome guest. At that time our streets were not yet lined with English shops, but it was good form already to wear clothes from London and send linen to be washed there.

The Court of the Tuileries, a frivolous one perhaps, but never a corrupt, in spite of all that has been said about it, was of necessity more hospitable than any other to the foreign element. The Emperor had placed beside him on the throne a Spanish lady of high birth, supreme in beauty and grace. The Empress Eugénie summoned the best-born of her countrymen to be entertained at the Tuileries, and Biarritz was the point of contact between the two Courts and the fashionable society of both countries.

The development of means of communication brought to Europe, and to Paris especially, a troop of young Americans who became permanent settlers upon marriage: this was a second phase of the foreign invasion.

French society under the Second Empire fell quite as much into two distinct camps as ever it had done under the monarchy of July. These were the camp of the Tuileries and that of the Faubourg, and though the two might approach one another they never amalgamated.

One salon, *the* salon par excellence, Princesse Mathilde's, dominated the imperialists almost up to our own time. She was the daughter of King Jérôme and a Princess of Wurtemburg, and niece of the great Emperor. Him she had never seen, but she had taken from him her lineaments, those of some Roman Emperor, and her splendid gait; this never degener-

ated into the theatrical, and she kept it to the end of her life. She had been brought up in Florence, and ever since had been a lady of the Renaissance in mind, tastes, and point of view. She patronised the arts, and, better still, herself practised them. She had played over a love affair with her cousin, Prince Louis, to whom she was always a faithful friend. She was exceedingly proud of her exquisite hands, and would never let them condescend to rings, so the little forget-me-not ring her cousin had given her when they hoped to be betrothed was always kept in a tiny casket.

Her salon—in the Rue de Courcelles under the Empire and in the Rue de Berri under the Republic—was accepted as neutral ground by the aristocracy of intellect and by the fashionable world. Talent alone conferred the right of entry, and the Princess was called Our Lady of the Arts. She received all the great writers whom her brother, Prince Napoleon, had gathered round him, and all the great artists as well—Carpeaux, Gérôme, Baudry, Garnier, Hébert, Cabanel, Carolus Duran, Giraud, her first teacher, Frémiet, Bellanger, Pills, Meissonier, Dubufe, Ed. Detaïlle. She played duets with Sauzay in his old age, and painted with her old friend Hébert. She was kind and indulgent to all, and permitted every kind of liberty save trifling with religion and patriotism. She was absolutely devoid of conceit and snobbery, and was proud of her kinship with the founder of her family. Someone was complimenting her once upon the faithfulness of her devotion, and she replied: "Is it not natural? But for him I should have been hawking oranges on the quays at Ajaccio."

She never forgave Taine, once one of her cronies, for his attacks on the Emperor, and the day after his notorious article appeared in the *Revue de Deux Mondes* she sent him a P.P.C. card.

The army was her religion. At the time of the Dreyfus affair her reason and her passion were closely in accord, and certain of her former guests, now notable Dreyfusards, had to avoid her house. They knew that she had remarked, very neatly and very much to the point: "I really have no choice, for there happens to be an officer in my family."

I have heard that when she came back to France (in the time of Louis-Philippe) on the arm of her husband, Prince Demidoff, she kissed on both his cheeks the first soldier she met on the frontier.

She lived at Brussels after the fall of the Empire and through the Commune, and suffered intensely both as a Frenchwoman and a Bonaparte. She came back to Paris with the Versailles force, and settled in the Rue de Berri; the Republicans were awed by her misfortunes and her noble endurance of them, and never attempted to molest her. Her salon soon became the chosen ground on which the illustrious, the fashionable, the faithful adherents of the Empire, and people of every shade of opinion were always happy to meet.

His Highness the Duc d'Aumale was anxious once more to meet the fair and kind princess whom he had known when his father reigned at the Tuileries, and their meeting at Bonnat's house was both moving and picturesque.

When the Tsar Nicholas II. came to visit France, Félix Faure had a touching inspiration. The

Emperor of Russia wished to make a pilgrimage to the Emperor's tomb, and Félix Faure begged Princess Mathilde to be there, so that the Tsar might see, beside the imperial remains, the only living image of the dead Cæsar. The Princess Mathilde did not fail. She was accompanied by the Comtesse Benedetti, charming daughter-in-law of a diplomatist who has been too long disregarded. They were alone in the crypt when, on a sudden, its mysterious silence was strangely troubled. From afar came the tramp of horses, bugle-calls and rolling of the drums; then, from a million throats, the cry "Vive l'Empereur!"

The Princess knelt on her prie-dieu. There came to her a vision never to be forgotten. Would that I had Frédéric Masson's pen wherewith to describe it! It seemed to her that the great Emperor had suddenly lifted the slab of red granite from his resting-place, and erect as ever, with the twelve statues of Victory, now endued with life, before, and Duroc and Bertrand behind, had gone forth from the chapel to pass before his assembled army, as on the morn of Austerlitz.

"Vive l'Empereur! Vive l'Empereur!" Wild cries came from the veterans.

Then silence fell again from the lofty vaulting of the chapel, and shadows gathered around the tomb. The Emperor Nicholas had come in and was kissing the Princess's hand.

There was general mourning at Princess Mathilde's death. She was equally fond of her two nephews, Prince Victor and Prince Louis-Napoleon, but showed special feeling for her other nephew, Count Primoli. She left him all her papers, and

these could not be in more capable hands, Count Primoli is of high importance at Rome, and has been adopted into Parisian society, where everyone is his friend. He is a true artist and extremely eclectic. He takes a special pleasure in inviting to his salon in the Avenue du Trocadéro, on the same evening, well-known persons of every rank, every shade of feeling, and every kind of opinion.

Princess Mathilde's salon was a contrast to the general frivolity. Napoleon III.'s reign was one long fairy-tale, and, like every properly conducted fairy-tale, had its good fairy and its bad. The bad fairy—the one who had not been invited—was Germany; the good fairy, whose kindness shone upon Court and city alike, was the Empress. Her wand gave the signal for every kind of amusement. There were dances at the Tuileries and at the Hôtel de Ville; the ministers gave fancy-dress and public balls; there were plays and tableaux vivants at Compiègne and Fontainebleau.

Every Monday during Lent the Empress opened her small drawing-rooms to her friends. Auber, the famous author of *La Muette*, directed sacred concerts, and Mérimée, who had nursed the young Comtesse de Teba on his knee, supervised the literary department. Letters were rather honoured than studied. One day at Compiègne the author of so many small masterpieces was asked to make up a story and dictate it to his sovereigns and their guests. It was twenty-two lines long, and Mérimée corrected thirty-two mistakes in the Emperor's version. Would Cicero have found one in Cæsar's *Commentaries*, which Napoleon III. was to annotate later?

The Faubourg Saint-Germain remained, as we have seen, obstinately closed to the official world. If it had no leading salon, it had always one to take the position of authority and furnish the passports without which it was impossible to move in this society. At first this place was held by the salon of the Duchessa Pozzo di Borgo, *née* Crillon, which was most hospitable to all who were good company. The Duchessa was a polished example of the French grande dame. Her mode of reception was infinitely graceful, and, besides her great beauty, she had acquired real intellectual superiority in the society of the most distinguished men of Europe.

The Duchesse de Doudeauville, *née* Verteillac, was a lady of lively temper and pleasant character. She never lost an opportunity of being useful, and so great was her kindness of heart that she showed real surprise at being told of any unkind actions or evil words. She was at home every Sunday from January 1st to June 15th, and was helped to do the honours of her salon by her nieces, the Princesse de Léon, the Comtesse de Durfort, and the Princesse de la Tour-d'Auvergne.

The Duchesse de Polignac, a lady of great distinction, received in the magnificent Hôtel Crillon. Her set was the same as that of the Duchesse de Doudeauville or the Duchessa Pozzo di Borgo.

The Marquise de Blocqueville, daughter of Prince Marshal d'Eckmühl, was original enough to like the Emperor very much and yet carry on an implacable war against the Empire. Her salon was academic and Orleanist; death closed it after the war. Her intimates were Cousin, Villemain, the Comte

d'Haussonville, M. Target, the Duc Decazes, the Duc d'Audiffret Pasquier, etc.

The salon of the Marquise de Lillers differed only from those we have just named in the person of the charming dowager who did the honours and made her influence distinctly felt in it.

The chief characteristic of all these great houses which kept up a lively opposition to the Tuileries was that they permitted no foreign intrusion, allowing no exceptions save in favour of diplomatic circles.

After the war, the fall of the Empire, and the establishment of that government which was so long undefined, French society underwent a new transformation. M. Thiers' Government moved from Bordeaux to Versailles, and M. Thiers, who, during his terms of office under Louis-Philippe, had had difficulties with certain political salons, was better fitted than anyone to appreciate, and win for his own purpose, the influence of clever women anxious to play a part of some importance. He had known Princess Troubetzkoï, *née* Besselovsky, in Paris, as she often came to France in the last days of the Empire. Her sister, Countess Paul Schouvaloff, had married the Russian military attaché at Paris; he, at the end of his career, became Russian Ambassador at Berlin. The Princess had always been credited with a leaning towards politics, and a good deal of importance was attached to her remarks, which were rather malicious than really mischievous; still, she did not deserve the sobriquet of viper with which she had been ironically presented. M. Thiers did not forget that she liked to meet important people and collect men of varying opinion at her table, and

he, who always fled the salon of the "Précieuses Radicales," was not above going often to her house at Versailles, or, later on, to the one she had in Paris in the Rue de Courcelles. There he contrived to meet his political adversaries without compromising himself or making them feel ill at ease.

Her salon was certainly a strange one. I do not know whether she wished to be a Princesse de Liéven to M. Thiers, but I am quite sure that M. Thiers preferred making use of her to satisfying her curiosity or her ambition. When she was corresponding with Prince Gortchakoff, then Chancellor of Russia, she was always purposely committing the mistake of pulling out his last letter and reading a few lines of it aloud.

M. de Marcère, the Duc de Grammont, Baron de Saint-Amand, General Fleury, and Baron de Bourgoing were her most regular guests. She had a particular fancy for M. Raoul Duval, then deputy of the Eure, the most Catholic of Protestants and an eager and affecting speaker. He was among the first to dream of a possible republic in which all good Frenchmen were to dwell together in unity, but he died before seeing the Promised Land. It is the fate of all Girondins, at least of all those who have been able to struggle back to their flag, to come to Jordan, flowing between, only to dye it red with their blood.

Gambetta and General Fleury met one day in her house at a private tea-party, and came to an agreement upon various points of foreign policy. And in the same place M. Thiers and the General discussed the question of the Civil list and of the private property

of the Emperor and Empress which Fleury had been sent to claim.

M. Thiers did not forget that the sowing of discord is a necessary step towards winning power and retaining it. With his soft, flute-like voice he would say to the Orleanists: "It is impossible for the Comte de Chambord to be king; that would mean the white flag and the enforcement of the confessional again," while he was telling the Royalists: "The Empire stands for Waterloo and Sedan, and France will have none of it," and insisting to Fleury: "Your friends are quite wrong to make these ceaseless attacks upon me, and to join with the extreme Right to bring about my overthrow. Their internal divisions make monarchists who uphold divine right and constitutional monarchists alike impossible. You ought to succeed me—but who knows what will come after me?"

All these devices did not prevent M. Thiers from being deprived of his power by a handful of opponents, and he died before he could regain it.

Towards 1880, Princess Léon Troubetzkoï gave up politics, and never did more than pass through Paris. She spent her winters at Nice and the rest of her time upon her Russian estates. She was clever enough, but had very little charm in spite of her would-be seductive airs and learned manner, which had a certain amount of effect upon a few political parvenus. Napoleon III., who knew a good deal about her, called her a pretty, plain woman.

In the Rue de la Ville-l'Evêque, the Vicomtesse de Renneville had a salon reserved exclusively for the members of the Right in the Assembly. She was

an extremely pretty woman. Her husband had a seat in the Chamber, after performing brilliant services in the war of 1870.

In her splendid family mansion in the Rue de Varenne, the Duchesse de Bisaccia received the Light Horse, as they were called—*i.e.* the party of the extreme Right in the Assembly. *Née* Princesse de Ligne, the Duchesse was remarkable for her extraordinary affability, as well as for her beauty and elegance. I have already, in my first book, done justice to the constant faith, the exquisite breeding, and the great political sense of the Duc de Bisaccia. I shall add just one other case in point, if I am allowed a digression.

The Duc had accepted the position of ambassador to England, and filled it splendidly, as was the tradition in London; Chateaubriand was nearly ruined there. M. Thiers saw clearly that certain appointments, especially under a republic, had to be kept almost exclusively for men of high birth and good breeding. Thus France was represented in London by the Duc de Broglie and then by the Duc de Bisaccia, at Constantinople by the Marquis de Voguë, at Berlin by the Vicomte de Gontaut Biron, at Vienna by the Marquis de Bouille, at Rome by the Comte de Choiseul, at The Hague by the Marquis de Gabriac, and even at Washington, though in a republic, by a representative of a great house, the Marquis de Noailles. For it is a fact that birth creates links which cannot be improvised, and education endows with a tact that can never be acquired without it, and is to-day an absolute necessity in diplomacy, since the telegraph and the telephone paralyse initiative

and make independence of mind useless. The Duc de Bisaccia had a great opportunity of vindicating this truth triumphantly.

The Emperor Alexander II. was on a visit to Queen Victoria, and a review was held in his honour. As the Emperor was riding past the troops he noticed a young man on horseback who was keeping modestly among his Woolwich comrades. When he went back to head his staff, Alexander II. whispered to one of his aides-de-camp, who went off at once to find the young officer. The Emperor called him to his side as soon as he came, and thus the English troops marched passed the Emperor Alexander and Prince Louis-Napoleon. The Tsar had remembered that the lad's father, Napoleon III., had been his host at the Tuileries, but he had forgotten that Napoleon III. was dead and that his son, the Prince Imperial, was heir to his throne, and therefore the chief opponent of the Republic.

The incident did not escape the Duc de Bisaccia, ambassador of the French Republic, who was present at the review. Ought he to take it up and make it the occasion of a note? This would really have exaggerated it out of all proportion. Could he pass it over and thus make M. Thiers do so likewise, when he knew that the latter was haunted by the ghost of the Empire? That evening he was going with the Duchesse, his wife, to the Duchess of Manchester, who had asked them to a dinner that was purely a society function and had nothing official about it. M. and Mme de Bisaccia had long been personal friends of their hostess. Lord Derby, then at the head of the Foreign Office, was also among

the guests, and as soon as he saw them he came forward to pay his respects to the Duchesse and shake hands with his friend the Duc. M. de Bisaccia preserved an air of studied politeness but also of studied reserve, and during the dinner he maintained a chilly demeanour which was surprising in the contrast it offered to his usual cheerfulness. Lord Derby was not the last to show his astonishment, and after dinner he went up to the Duc—

"My dear Duc, there are no ambassadors or ministers here, only guests—friends, I might say. Why are you like this? Has anything happened? If so, what?"

The Duc de Bisaccia seemed to hesitate for a moment; then he described in detail the incident at the review and the embarrassment it caused him, and did not disguise the fact that it might be necessary for him to resign, if he were placed in such delicate and difficult positions.

"You are right," said Lord Derby, "but trust me until to-morrow."

At noon the next day the Emperor of Russia was announced at the Embassy, and the Duc came to receive him at the bottom of the steps. The Emperor asked first to see the Duchesse, and when he was alone with the Duc told him how pleased he was that the Republic had appointed such an ambassador. He recalled various occasions on which he had had the pleasure of meeting him, adding that he would never have forgiven himself had he left London without shaking him by the hand. Finally, he excused himself for having paid a surprise visit at so early an hour, by a reference to the numerous engagements he

had to keep before he left, chief among them a visit he intended to make to the Empress Eugénie at Chislehurst.

"And here, my dear Ambassador, I must ask your advice. The Empress received me at the Tuileries, and I owe her this visit of courtesy, and hope to pay it. Yet if you think that such a step would be an affront to the Government of the Republic and cause you personally any annoyance, I will give it up at once."

M. de Bisaccia bowed respectfully. The incident was closed, and that in the best of taste. I do not know whether the Empress ever heard of it, but I do know that she sent the Duc de Bisaccia, then Duc de Doudeauville, a Book of Hours that had been Marie Antoinette's, in memory of the Prince Imperial after his death in Zululand.

I dedicate this anecdote to our present authorities; in it they will find matter for meditation. It would hardly be fitting to weigh the merits of our diplomatists by this standard, but I should like to know if there is one among them whose rank would enable him to escape so gracefully from such a difficult situation.

Marshal de MacMahon's accession to power brought into prominence an illustrious family to which the Maréchale de MacMahon, *née* de Castries, was related; I refer to the house of Harcourt, which can trace its descent back to a companion of Rollo, first Duke of Normandy. The family has been long divided into two branches—the one of the Duc d'Harcourt, and the other, our subject at the moment of the Marquis d'Harcourt, whose younger brother, the Vicomte, held a position of trust under the

Marshal, and showed a power and an attitude of mind hardly to be expected in so young a man.

The Marquis d'Harcourt made proof of his love for France on an occasion which is worth recording. He was not a rich man, and one day was summoned to England by a distant member of his family, the last representative of a third branch which had followed William the Conqueror and settled in England. He was a peer, rich and childless, and offered to adopt the Marquis as his heir and leave him his titles and his wealth, on condition that he would abjure his religion and become a naturalised Englishman. The Marquis refused both peerage and fortune. Marquis Bernard and his brother Emmanuel did their duty gallantly during the war; they served on MacMahon's staff, and were made prisoners with him after Sedan.

The Comtesse d'Haussonville, President of the Red-Cross Society, is the sister of the Marquis d'Harcourt. I know of no woman who would do the honours of some French Embassy abroad more charmingly.

The Marquise d'Harcourt, *née* Biron, is sister to two distinguished ladies, the Princesse Charles de Ligne and the Marquise de Saint-Sauveur. She opens her house to a few friends beyond her own family, which is very large, and, besides, remarkable for its cohesion. This is one of the most valuable of the traditions of French society; thanks to it, differences are softened yet not lost, and characters are moulded in the family likeness without losing their distinctive features.

The Marshal de MacMahon was the only right

President we have ever had, for a nation of soldiers should have an officer at its head, a general at least, if not a sovereign. After his fall the Republic went again on its usual way—the way to the abyss. But with all its lack of other qualities it has one—the art of self-defence, which gives it the advantage over all the other forms of government which have preceded it. It got the better in turn of Boulanger, of Marchand, of Déroulède, and of the whole army at the time of the Dreyfus affair. It is kept alive by the exercise of this art, and when it has no opponents it invents them. Thus it has declared war upon God Himself, and is resolved to drive Him from our churches and our schools.

The opposition, reinforced by a multitude of malcontents, found the salons too small for it. The leaders of society took these for their province, and as they were excluded from making themselves felt in politics or literature, they fell back upon the control of the fashions. The Rue de la Paix grew famous, and the finances of the city benefited, but the national reputation was not increased.

The Princesse de Sagan, who lived in the magnificent house built by M. Hopp, gave entertainments noted for the refined taste displayed in every detail of their arrangement, and for their choice of amusements. She gave three fancy-dress balls that are still talked about; to the first the guests came as shepherds and shepherdesses, to the second as peasants, and to the third—which stirred the wrath of some of our best known censors—as animals.

The Comtesse de Montgomery has never lost

her youthful activity and healthy cheerfulness, and, if we may believe a lady who knows her well, has always played Providence to young people. She is a faithful and devoted friend, and talks gaily and with spirit, but has an absolute horror of affected phraseology; it does indeed suit ill with her frank and straightforward nature. At present her favourite residence is the Château de Fervacques, which gave its name to a successful race-horse.

We must not forget one figure, charming in its slender grace—that of the Vicomtesse de Courval, who made her house in the Rue Fortin a regular museum of eighteenth-century art, and was one of the first to do so. She gave few parties, but she started the fashion of dining at small tables; and we have not forgotten an evening that reproduced the scheme of decoration in Watteau's "Bal de May."

The Vicomtesse de Courval was the mother of the Princesse de Poix, a highly-gifted woman. Her husband died when she was quite young, and since this blow she has devoted herself almost entirely to the education of her children.

At Cours-la-Reine the Comtesse de la Ferronays, who was much attached to the Comte de Chambord, gave frequent and crowded receptions. She was generous with her invitations, and considered that her house was a guarantee for her guests; besides, her doors were open to any woman provided she was accompanied by her husband. Her son was one of the most valiant champions of the royalist cause, and her grandson has followed in his father's footsteps.

Countess Aimery de La Rochefoucauld's salon,

as was that of the Duchesse de Maillé for a long time, has remained very popular with young people. The Countess's beauty has not suffered with time, and she is still just what she was when Chaplin's brush immortalised her. Under the influence of her husband, Comte Aimery, who is highly thought of in the Faubourg, and her son, Comte Gabriel, who has a reputation in the literary world, her salon, without growing too large, has been enriched by clever men belonging to the Académie and to art circles. One of their cousins, the Comte Guy de La Rochefoucauld, with the help of his friend M. Fournier-Sarlovèze, is the capable President of the Society of Amateur Painters and Sculptors. He married the sister of the Duc de Mortemart, in whose family brains as well as faithfulness to noble causes are hereditary.

The beauty and grace of the Comtesse de Pourtalès shed light upon the Imperial Court. The publication of the papers seized at the Tuileries, especially of a letter from "the Countess" to General Ducrot, showed that she had brains in that pretty head of hers. She is undoubtedly a spoiled child of fortune; her beauty has made Time drop his weapons, and of all her gifts she has cultivated the choicest—the art of pleasing. She has given pleasure, she does so still, and will continue so doing to the very day of her death. Her artistic house in the Rue Tronchet is familiar ground to all the princes and aristocrats of the world, and it is open several times a year to Parisian society. She has shown an unwavering attachment to the sovereigns who smiled affectionately upon her first entry into the

world of fashion, and is still the greatest friend of the Duchesse de Mouchy, whom she consoles in her voluntary retreat. Fate has apparently resolved to make Madame de Mouchy pay heavily for her oft-praised beauty, and has taken from her, one after the other, her two children and, more recently, her husband, a particularly gracious grand seigneur.

The Comtesse de Pourtalès is carrying on with her friend the Princesse de Metternich a much-read correspondence. Lively and penetrating, dignified and acute, it would not be out of place in a collection of letters of the eighteenth century, when women were really great letter-writers without knowing it. The Princesse de Metternich was the chief ambassadress under the Second Empire, and brought freakishness and originality into credit at Court. The impetuous qualities which made up her originality would seem old-fashioned nowadays: the times have run to excess, and eccentricity has dethroned originality. The Princess had a perfect horror of conventionality; but if she was one of the first to take delight in Thérèsa's little songs, in the couplets from trifling *revues* and choruses from operettas, she may claim the credit of defending the daring ventures of Carpeaux, Manet, Flaubert, and their like against the old-fashioned salons. She even tried to make us appreciate Wagner before his time—or rather, ours: it has never been forgotten that at the first night of *Tannhäuser* at the Opéra she tore her gloves in the vigour of the applause with which she tried to combat the hisses that greeted its magnificent score. To describe her as she is to-day, I am going to make use of the words of a clever lady from

whom I am proud to borrow on this occasion, after having committed other slight thefts. "She is the most attractive of white-haired grandmammas, and has kept the delightful originality of her mind and combined with it the cooler sense of advanced years. She is a thorough musician and helped to preach Wagnerism to the world, and each of the wonderful triumphs of this new departure in art brought her a share of glory. She is deeply interested in literature, painting, and music; and though her ardour is sometimes that of a paradoxical mind, its manifestations are interesting, thanks to their unexpectedness." This is a canvas by a master hand: there is nothing to add to the description.

To be a faithful guide in our Louvre of female beauty, we must not forget to describe certain figures sketched in outline upon the ogee; they are of different rank, station, and age, but I should not forgive myself if I forgot them. Her Royal Highness the Duchesse de Vendôme opens her house at Neuilly too rarely to satisfy her adherents. Her Highness Princesse Murat, whose faithful friendship is sought eagerly, entertains royally in Paris during the winter, and through the summer and autumn at Rocquencourt and Chambly. Prominent Russians and French at Boulogne meet every Sunday at the house of the beautiful Comtesse de Hohenfensen, wife of His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Paul. The Comtesse R. de Fitz-James has very popular Wednesdays, and there is competition for cards for Mme Jules Porgès' both in Paris and Rambouillet. The Marquise de Brou, helped admirably by her daughter, the Marquise de Saint-Paul, gives artistic

soirées, crowded by people of high rank, in Paris and at Versailles. Very fashionable receptions, more or less full, are given by the Princesse de La Tour d'Auvergne, the Marquise d'Argenson, and the Princesse de Brancovan; by the châtelaine of Montjoie, Mme Standish, *née* des Cars, who has made an art of beauty and a science of grace.

The Princesse de Polignac, who models and paints, gives musical parties, and carries on her hospitalities in her Venetian palace just as she does in Paris. Then there are two delightful Englishwomen, who entertain respectively at Ferrières and at Presles; one, the Marquise de Jaucourt, is a blonde like Di Vernon, the other, Baroness Alphonse de Rothschild, who died last year, was dark as Rebecca at the fountain. The Baroness survives in several of her nieces, especially in Baroness Henry de Rothschild, wife of the admired author of *La Rampe*. Next comes that wittiest of Parisiennes, the Comtesse Adhéaume de Chevigné, the bright jewel of her own house in which she receives her troops of friends, and the light of certain salons to which she often goes. Her daughter has just married a young author, M. Francis de Croisset, who has several successes to his credit. We must count, besides, the Comtesse de Waru, whom tragic bereavement keeps on her estate at Rambouillet; she has fixed beauty and grace as though they were imperishable. A very distinguished artist, Mme Madeleine Lemaire, and two pleasant women, Mme Hochon and Mme Ernesta Stern, show much ingenuity in the surprises they prepare for their guests, and Mme Bulteau allows a few writers of special refinement the entry

to her house. And for the last few years quite a young woman has attracted a whole circle of men who have made their names in literature, art, and politics, by the charm of her intelligence, and has kept them as her friends by her diligence in pleasing. This is Mme Lucien Muhlfeld, widow of a writer who failed to accomplish his destiny, and sister-in-law of M. Paul Adam and M. Cappiello, who hold high rank among literati and painters.

Chief among the great who are to be found daily at Mme Muhlfeld's comes, naturally, a member of the French Académie—we have remarked that every Parisian salon should have its Académicien—and by no means one of the least important, for M. Henri de Régnier is the most original of poets, the most exquisite of writers, and, a further recommendation, the most gallant of any men alive.

I have now left no one out. I wished to notice, beside the salons which have a claim to being considered institutions, those others which confine themselves to the amusement of society, and thus will be remembered as examples of brilliancy, not as influences. Those alone really belong to history that have been the starting-point of some important action, or have assisted at some metamorphosis of the national mind and soul.

Such transformation was never more profound than is that of to-day. No woman presides on this occasion, for the change is taking place in spite of woman. Democracy, by breaking down all distinctions, has done away with the barriers which for centuries had guarded the old social hierarchy, and to-day our salons at their best have little individual

character, and at their worst are all exactly alike. Then cosmopolitanism is extending its ravages to society in every country by depriving it of any features of its own, that is, of any national features. I have said in my former book that there is only one type of hotel nowadays—the Ritz. The case is the same with the salons, and while I denounce the copies, I do not undertake to find the model. All salons, I say, are alike, or merely different in date and language. In Paris during the "Grande Semaine," in London during the season, at Baden during the races, at Seville in Holy Week, at Rome after Easter, at Biarritz and Nice in the autumn, and on the Riviera or by the Pyramids in winter, you find the same people, the same style, the same dresses by the same tailors, the same worship of Mammon, the same snobbery, the same love of the limelight, the same fear of serious questions, and the same speech in different tongues. Everyone chatters nowadays instead of talking, hops instead of dancing, flirts instead of courting, and takes fancies instead of falling in love. People used to care about improving themselves, now they make bargains and arrangements. "Tout s'arrange," as Capus used to say.

Men are all-powerful with regard to law, but women alone can influence manners. If woman wishes to regain her empire over us, she must rule her own spirit first and become true woman again; and a true woman, as we have hinted already, is a creature of true womanly grace, not of false masculine strength. Then she must assume the task of restoring rhythm and harmony by combating the in-

fluence of the foreigner, the snob, and the millionaire, these three conspirators against the right balance of society. And we own that we should like to see Frenchwomen take the lead of this new crusade in all their pretty frills.

Our country would soon return to its old allegiance to women. Personally, I am convinced that however undisciplined and insubordinate we are under masculine dictation—perhaps precisely because of this—we should bow our heads more willingly to a woman's yoke. What a pity it is that we have kept up the Salic law! Brantôme once wrote: "How was it that France did not abandon the Salic law in favour of the charms of Marguerite?"

A queen of beauty to-day would have the happiest prospect of bringing us all to our knees before her sceptre—her fan, that is. Which of all the fair ladies who are my readers will thus tempt fortune?

THE COMTESSE DE LOYNES

I

MASKED BALLS AT ARSÈNE HOUSSAYE'S

THE Comtesse de Loynes did not belong by birth, connection, or custom to the world I have been trying to paint in fresco. And she was wise enough not to wish to attach herself to it; she would have been the last comer in society, whereas she was first in the circle she had created, inspired, and given life to.

Chance, which is often pleased to appear blind in the distribution of its favours, had presented Mme de Loynes with qualities for which it seemed that she would never be able to find a use. Who would have dreamed, when she ran away from home and came to Paris, that she was one day to be mistress of a famous salon? But the good fairy had laid in her humble cradle all the gifts that go to make a perfect hostess. Like a man of letters who puts precious materials on the shelves of his library against the day when he will need them, Mme de Loynes had classified her gifts, and had cultivated, developed, and refined them in some degree in her contact with her first instructors, and with all the distinguished men whom she had met; she seemed to have an undefined, superstitious presentiment that some day she would bring them into play. We have already stated that no one was a better listener than she; and no one, either, was more skilful in choosing a subject that would show those who discussed it at their best;

hence all her friends went away satisfied with themselves and, consequently, with her. She had an instinct for proportion: with a word, a look, a gesture she could calm a dispute and restore harmony. I remember one day her soft velvety tones acted chorus to Paul Déroulède's loud voice. He, who rushed into general conversation like a nephew of Augier's, and sometimes, even, like a grandson of Pigault-Lebrun, could still less resist the temptation of giving himself up to a doubly revisionist propaganda, knowing as little about it as it was possible to do. Any pretext was good enough to make the President of the Patriots' League come to the conclusion "Delenda est Carthago"—*i.e.* that the overweening influence of Germany must be destroyed—or affirm that the Constitution of 1875 was the prime cause—he would have liked to say the only cause—of all the troubles of the Republic. For, sad to say, this outcast from the High Court was still fond of the Republic; he goes so far as to love it still, and all the Sancho Panzas on earth would never open his eyes to the defects of his Dulcinea.

On the occasion to which I am referring the discussion was rather patriotic than political. Déroulède had chosen as his opponent a man inclined to give France up as hopeless, and was being a little unkind to him.

"People have no right," he was saying, "to think and speak evil of their country. It is worse than ungrateful to attribute to the whole nation the fault of its Government. Our whole history exists to give the lie to that perpetually exposed blasphemy, 'Finis Galliæ!'"

"Well," replied the accused, "everything that your Republicans do simply revolt me; I am a Catholic first and a Frenchman afterwards."

We all rather expected some violent and insulting remarks from the excited tribune, and did not like the prospect, but Mme de Loynes' prompt and witty interposition left him no time.

"A Catholic first and a Frenchman afterwards!" she laughingly repeated. "Oh! you lucky man to have been baptized before you were born!"

The storm was stayed, and gentle Henry Houssaye managed to avert it altogether by turning the conversation to the low standard of our picture-shows, and to the scandal that the ministers of fine arts arranged their purchases to their own electoral advantage.

Mme de Loynes showed herself grateful towards the kind fate that had loaded her with favours, and still held unexpected good fortune in reserve for her. Broken-hearted at the death of Ernest Baroche, she thought at first that her life was ruined; yet her instincts were too strong for her, and she contrived to take it up again.

Sainte-Beuve, her first master, with his experience of life, had taught her that Fate plays with our petty schemes, often turns to nought the opportunities that we thought specially important, and at other times makes us certain of success we had never foreseen.

Sainte-Beuve was right. Fate took from our lady her betrothed and a fortune; yet, by an unexpected turn, put in her path something better than a fiancé—a husband; better than a fortune—riches; and better than a name—a title. Sainte-Beuve had shown her,

too, that everything that happens is deserved and finds its true balance, so that we must merit happiness, and keep it by exercise of will and intellect, since, to put it shortly, none are happy save those who understand what their own happiness is. He used to add:

"Do you know what being lucky really is? Well, it is to be in possession of just those qualities and those gifts which are neither above nor below, but exactly on the level of those circumstances that opportunity gives us to make the best of. This coincidence constitutes luck. It is quite clear that, if Bonaparte had been born a century before or after he was, he would probably not have had the chance of becoming Napoleon."

And Mme de Loynes remembered this lesson so well, that she was annoyed when in connection with certain people she heard of a run of good or ill luck.

"Such words," she remarked one day, "are too often, with those who use them, a cloak for laziness, want of energy, and, most of all, jealousy. Of course, fortune has its part in human affairs, but conduct is really much more important. I remember what my great master used to say about Bonaparte, and that especially when I see what has become of Boulanger. I do not draw a comparison, but I do put them side by side, for both were born at such a time and in such circumstances that their special gifts might have had full play and brought them assured victory. And that is what your equality except for luck is worth! Sainte-Beuve would have made it clear to me that one of them was master of his fate and became an emperor, while the other shrank from his destiny and com-

mitted suicide in exile, and would have added: 'And there is your inequality when success depends on will-power!' So I cannot bear to be told that So-and-so is lucky. Too often the phrase is a covert attack upon the man; for what does it amount to in plain speech but that he is an idiot with nothing but his luck to recommend him?

"Just look at our friend Gaston Calmette. I wonder how often I have heard him called a very lucky man! But not a single person goes on to add that no one could have worked or struggled harder than he did for fifteen or twenty years. He got his promotion step by step, as I know, because I was a special friend of Magnard, his director and his chief. Calmette is director of the *Figaro* to-day, but he got the position by hard work; there was no luck in it. And did he let his paper go downhill? No. He has so improved the *Figaro* that it is in the way to get back to its former position: this is where his brains come in. And do you think that his civility to men and his courtesy to women count for nothing?"

Mme de Loynes was right. When Gaston Calmette first came to Paris, a very long time ago, he came first to the *Gaulois*, of which I was manager. I was unlucky enough to have no vacant post to offer him. If I had been able to put him on the staff of my paper, who knows if he would not have been my partner to-day and my successor to-morrow? I do not regret it for him, but I do for myself.

Fertile in expedients, and always ready to try experiments, he lowered the price of the *Figaro* to a penny. His new departure was a surprise, but it proved

successful. He knew his public, and so made further proof of sagacity.

Just as I was saying good-bye to Mme de Loynes, my excellent contemporary, Henry Simond of the *Echo de Paris*, was announced.

"Here is another man who can use his brains," said she.

"Yes," I answered, "and a lucky man who well deserves his good fortune; in a few weeks he is going to marry Mme Récipon, a most charming young widow."

A witty man once wrote: "Tenants do not change, but apartments do." Mme de Loynes was to disprove this clever axiom. Her rooms did not alter, neither did she, and least of all her friends. They merely redoubled their kindness and their devotion, to make her forget her sorrows and her hopes betrayed. She had given them an example for all times of security in friendship. They knew they would find her at home every evening from five to seven. At a word, she would wait for them at any hour they chose to name, ready to give advice or consolation as was required. She liked to say that she only lived in her friends and for them, and they knew this.

If love grows more intense at meeting with obstacles, friendship needs to be shared and fostered. They knew, too, that her friendship, which had not a little of tenderness, was quick to take alarm, and they took care of her. She did actually adopt the motto: "Je ne crains que ceux que j'aime," and had it put at the top of her note-paper.

A few excerpts from a letter, written to one of her

friends just after she had come back to the Rue de l'Arcade, will show, better than I can hope to do, the value that Mme de Loynes put upon friendship, her courage in the evil days, and her hopeful determination to begin again.

"*Monday Morning.*

"My very dear Friend,—I have already written to you: most extraordinary that I should have been the first! Only, as my memory for addresses has grown confused since I have been among my friends, I put Calvados! The letter will make various journeys, but will reach you in time.

"I got yours this morning. How kind it was! It went to my heart and did me much good.

"I am so profoundly wretched that when I am alone I am simply crushed. So you see how much your affection means to me! Yes, dear friend, I do believe in it, and, what is more, I will count upon it, since you wish it so.

"It is sweet to think that years and time will change nothing, and that old age will come without interruption to this precious friendship of ours, which is so deep and so devoid of self-seeking.

"I have few, very few, such—have I not?—as you know. We will chatter like this together when we are old—and how often we shall say: 'Do you remember——?'

"That is a good hope to have. It softens me, keeps my heart from hardening, and gives me courage.

"Sometimes I dare not look forward to the future, I am so afraid of it. . . . But when I lean upon you, I can almost smile at it, I think.

. . . . . .

"The big fête was a success, I believe; I did not see it, of course. But somehow, I do not know why, the popular excitement, the shouts, the singing of the

'Marseillaise,' and all the people with their tri-coloured cockades, left a bad impression upon me.

"I wonder if it was because it all reminded of certain episodes in our history that were followed by so many unhappy things?

"I do hope that it is not a presentiment. At any rate, if I were the Government, I would not over-excite the mob, as was done yesterday.

"How wise it is to retire into a pretty corner (I never thought it ugly), which is green and full of blossom and the scent of the sea and the flowers, and there do useful work and feel alive in oneself and in nature!

"It must be good to feel one is strong! Ah! why am I a useless creature, and why have I been so bruised? But I will gather myself up and lean upon the dear friends who do not weary in their efforts to uphold me.

"To-day I am leaning with all my weight upon your love; it soothes me, and I feel that I run no risk in giving back what it gives me.

"J. DE LOYNES."

One friend was missing from the Rue de l'Arcade, and his absence left a great blank. When he died in that terrible year, Théophile Gautier, that great maker of metaphor and of music, was comforted in that he left behind him a life's work that was to make him immortal, and a daughter—Judith Gautier—and two sons-in-law—Catulle Mendès and Émile Bergerat—to whom he bequeathed his worship of our beautiful mother-tongue, the great love of his life. Théophile Gautier likewise had a respect for his profession in which he would allow no one else to be deficient.

One day a theatrical manager was annoyed at a criticism by our friend Adolphe Gaiffe, and took it into his head to write and tell him that he would not be admitted.

"We'll see about that!" said "le grand Théo," and on the night of the first performance after this edict, Théophile Gautier took Adolphe Gaiffe's right arm, asked Paul de Saint-Victor to take the left, and thus they presented themselves at the controller's office.

"We are coming in all three or not at all," said Théophile Gautier to the controller. He bowed on being appealed to, and even began to apologise to Adolphe Gaiffe.

Ernest Daudet, who had been one of the early witnesses of the Comtesse de Loynes' success as a pretty woman, grew very closely attached to her when he saw how much she had to go through. To divert her, he used to keep her informed of current events, talk to her about the National Assembly, about his patriotic attempt to reorganise the country, about M. Thiers' intrigues and his downfall. When the Marshal de MacMahon was called to power she was delighted to hear of her friend's complete confidence in the three Dukes, as they were called—those three great Frenchmen, the Duc de Broglie, the Duc Decazes, and the Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier. And when Ernest Daudet, then manager of the *Journal Officiel*, decided to follow them into retirement and sent in his resignation, she congratulated him. "You are an honest man," were her words.

But as yet her mind was not occupied with the problems of political affairs; she only grasped whatever in them could interest her woman's heart.

Her adorations were still the same, and all of them — Renan, Taine, About, Flaubert, Gérôme, Victorien Sardou, Arsène Houssaye—resumed their visits to the Rue de l'Arcade. Flaubert wrote out for his friend a few suggestive maxims from *Bouvard and Pécuchet*, which he was then busy with.

One day he brought a tall young man in with him. "My godson," he said, on introducing him to Mme de Loynes, "Guy will go farther than I."

But here Flaubert exaggerated. Guy de Maupassant did reach his master's level in some of his stories, and that is a great deal to say.

Gérôme could not be consoled for our disastrous misfortunes. He used to take our friend to picture-shows, and would always make her stop before battle-pieces by Meissonier and his best pupils, Detaïlle, Alphonse de Neuville, and Henry Dupray.

Renan dined with her weekly, and after dinner he seemed to meditate; but I rather believe that he used to doze. He only roused himself from his half-stupor to applaud the clever speeches of Anatole France, whom he had brought to see Mme de Loynes.

Taine still concealed his real kindness of heart under a melancholic air. He sometimes remembered that he had been professor of æsthetics, and proceeded to advise our friend as to the way to do her hair; but this was his sole concession to feminism.

Edmond About had never quite been able to get over the checks he had received on the stage, in spite of his immense success with novels and pamphlets. Was he to be more fortunate in politics? He flung himself headlong into them, and with this

hope founded the *Dix-neuvième Siècle*, and prepared to lead a violent campaign in it against the Government of the 16th May. His writings were most successful. His first summary of events, signed Valentin de Quevilly, ranked him with the most popular of newspaper men, and his first political articles put him among the most redoubtable controversialists.

Although slightly startled by his audacities, Mme de Loynes begged her friends to vote for him when he stood for the Académie. His talents flung its doors wide open for him. She was prepared to applaud his lecture upon election; but, like Émile Ollivier, Edmond About died before the date announced for it, and therefore was elected, but never received into the Académie.

Arsène Houssaye never lost his remarkable fairness. The sun seemed to have left in his hair and beard rays which death alone could extinguish. He was a wonderful talker, so ready to revive those happenings in politics or art which he had come across in the course of a life so full, so happy, so brilliant, and so cheerful, according to his biographer, Édouard Drumont, that master in journalism, that he seems to have been invariably under the influence of the most benign conjunction of the stars.

One day he brought with him a youth as fair as himself.

"Here," said he to Mme de Loynes, "is the little boy you used to know in short frocks. The boy has grown and so has the frock; it is a Greek peplum to-day, and I am presenting Alcibiades' grandson to you, my dear."

Henry Houssaye at that time really was like a young god shedding soft influence. My friend Vandal has written the final description of him, and I shall take the pleasure of quoting it at full length.

"Henry Houssaye had a most refined and handsome countenance, with absolutely regular features, a profile of classic purity, and a small beard with golden lights in it; and there was a supple strength in all his figure. Paris smiled upon his first attempts, and to see him was to wish to applaud him. His father's fame went with him and distinguished him, and he bore proudly and with real affection a name for which success in literature and in the world would seem to have been exhausted. Yet he had never to fear a posthumous rivalry from his father's memory, for he very soon, by his own work, made himself as famous as his father, but in quite a different way.

"His clearly ordered mind, his bright fancy, his power of discerning a beautiful and artistic side in everything, and even the harmonious lines of his person, made him seem an Athenian visitant. His study of antiquity was the outcome of natural predisposition. His Life of Alcibiades, his works upon Attic and Byzantine Greece, were extremely well received. He had devoted years to them, and that with real delight, for it was characteristic of him to give his heart to the subjects he dealt with. His study of ancient Greece made him an eager and devoted Philhellene, and to the end of his life Greece was one of his passions and an object of generous attachment.

"The last time I saw him—he was ill and dying—he spoke to me of the Greeks of the present day and

their trials. A melancholy obsession appeared to be haunting him, yet sometimes he seemed to attain to serener visions. There is no doubt that he saw modern Greece, his beloved Greece, in the golden mist of its glorious past, and looked at it across the Propyleia, through the glorious Portico, and between the marble shafts which the Athenian climate has tinted golden brown and soaked with sunshine.

"We were expecting him to undertake a great work on classic antiquities, when he turned suddenly aside, changing his road and its direction. Without losing his love for Greece, he was taken captive by Napoleon and his Gallic Rome. This Athenian of Paris was conquered by the last of the great Latin emperors.

"This imperial hold upon him is easily to be explained. Henry Houssaye was primarily a patriot, as his actions proved in 1870. The army seemed to him the incarnation of his country, and Napoleon I. and his army the supreme expression of military genius and military virtue. He set to work to reconstruct its exact appearance, faithfully and in detail, and without legendary accretion. From his heart, thus on fire with love and loving curiosity, there came '*1814 and 1815*,' one of the really great works of our day."

It was only after the death of his adored father that this hero, as Vandal called him, consented to become a god—a god of Greece!—both at the Académie and in the house of Mme de Loynes. When this lady established her famous Friday dinners she put Henry Houssaye opposite to her; this place was kept for him till his death, and no one would

have dreamed of disputing it with him. And Henry Houssaye was so fond of coming to sit there that no invitation and no consideration whatever would have kept him away.

If the Comtesse de Loynes dined out very little in Paris, she often did so with her friends M. and Mme d'Ennery. She had begun the custom when they lived in the Boulevard Saint-Martin, in the house close to the theatre, which disappeared in the conflagration of 1871. She used then to meet her master's acquaintances, friends, and collaborators. She went on going to the Avenue d'Eylau, and when they came to live in the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne she was delighted at seeing again, at dinner-parties since famous, that real magic-lantern with slides perpetually changing, yet always representing the actual events of the day.

For from 1878 to 1898, that is to say, for twenty years, a set of old friends met almost without invitation every Sunday, though very often a new guest was brought in among them. The conversation was brilliant, and wit flowed in a full tide. The guests were: Aurélien Scholl, always in good spirits; Meilhac, quiet and thoughtful; Ludovic Halévy, a charming raconteur; Edmond Tarbé and his cousin Captain Donop, a general later; two musical collaborators of the master of the house, viz., Gounod author of *Faust*, and Massenet author of *Manon*; Eugéne Spuller, who discovered the mind of the new age, and Jules Verne, who had glimpses of the world as it will be in the future; Alexandre Dumas sometimes; and our friend and collaborator Félix Dusquesnel, for whom d'Ennery had a special sympathy.

Rochefort was quite at home in the house, and was the delight of every assembly there, thanks to his inexhaustible wit. Mme de Loynes met him at d'Ennery's for the first time, and if she was a little nervous at finding herself in very close quarters with the author of *La Lanterne*, she could remember that her lover Baroche, when fate made him cross swords with Henri Rochefort, had said laughingly to her:

"It really is extraordinary to have to fight a man one respects for a government that one doesn't like."

On that first evening Henri Rochefort told the story of his escape from Numea, and his account of it, embellished with vivid touches, was a feast for epicures. Mme de Loynes was entirely conquered.

The d'Ennerys' house was eclectic, and was neutral ground, on which people could meet without bitterness. Gambetta dined there occasionally, and one evening he arrived almost unexpectedly, having merely sent a message he was coming by one of his special friends who was in front of him. He seemed to have something on his mind, and Mme d'Ennery questioned him affectionately.

"I certainly am worried," he said, "and really, as the four of us are friends, I might confide in you; I should be rather glad, besides, to know your opinion. Just imagine, Waddington, who has just successfully managed some delicate negotiations at Berlin, came to see me this morning almost straight from the station, and I kept him to lunch. He told me that at the end of the last official sitting of the congress, Bismarck took him on one side and, after

complimenting him on the tact he had shown during their discussions, had suddenly remarked, with brutal frankness: "And now let us talk a little about Tunis, if you do not object." On a movement from Waddington, he added:

"Yes, I know France has other thoughts in the back of her mind. I do not believe that a realisation of them is possible—or at least immediate," he corrected himself for politeness' sake. "At any rate, without mortgaging the future, it seems to me that you would create a magnificent sphere of action for yourselves if you consolidated and extended your Mediterranean empire. For my part, I can see nothing in the way."

You may well suppose, my dear friends, that Waddington was a little taken aback at this address, so very much in Bismarck's style. What was he to say in reply? He took refuge in the opinion of the country, the feeling of Parliament, and the necessity of talking to his minister, but Bismarck had a reply for every one of his objections. Waddington came to an end of one line of arguments, and tried a fresh one.

"Well, let us suppose that France is willing to follow you along this line, there are England and Italy to be reckoned with. What will England say, for she is aiming at Tangiers? And what will Italy, who is keeping a watch on Tripoli?"

"Oh!" said Bismarck, "Italy won't say anything; *she hasn't been beaten yet.*"

Here Gambetta stopped, and the rest of dinner-time was taken up with subjects more purely Parisian. We know what followed. It was good advice for France, and we reaped the benefit of it. As far as

Italy was concerned, it was a mere caprice. However, she became the ally of Germany, and has shown just lately in Tripoli that she knew how to speak with sufficient energy, and to fight gallantly besides.

Another time Mme de Loynes was asked to a dinner which General Boulanger had been requested to attend. He was magnificently received, with a table decorated with red carnations in his honour. They were artificial, and the economical mistress of the house trimmed a hat with them afterwards.

The wittiest of all the guests was undoubtedly the host himself, who never missed the chance of a smart retort, which he fired off without hesitation. His good things are famous, and I should like to quote a few, taken at random from my memory.

Speaking of plays by his contemporaries, he said: "When they are bad they bore me, but when they are good they—madden me."

"Where are you going?" he said once to his wife.

"Where I please."

"Certainly, but when are you coming back?"

"When I please."

"À la bonne heure,—but don't let it be any later."

In a moment of philosophy he asked: "Do you know what serious people really are? Why, people who do silly things—and don't laugh at them."

Scholl had asked him: "When you put so much wit into your talk, why do you leave it out of your plays almost entirely?" and he retorted: "Ah, so as not to disturb my audiences. If I made my plays witty they wouldn't believe they were mine."

About 1882 he married Mme Desgranges, a very clever woman, and once a very pretty one. She had little mercy on women younger than herself, and Fursy would say of her nowadays that she was "a bit of a jade."

D'Ennery was rather afraid of her speeches in character, and countered with some of his own whimsical remarks.

One evening at the "Ambigu" Mme d'Ennery reached the first floor on the way to her box, while d'Ennery was lingering below. She called down to him: "Adolphe, do come up!"

As he apparently did not hear, she began to scold him.

"Tiresome old thing! Come along, or I shall go off with someone else!"

D'Ennery calmly scanned the wrinkled face of his elderly companion and contented himself with the remark:

"Hardly now, my dear."

The last of his good things that I mean to quote was said on his wedding-day. As a special favour the maire came to perform the ceremony in the museum that now bears d'Ennery's name, but he declared that, to comply properly with the law, all the doors must be opened so that anyone who pleased could come in.

"Very well," said d'Ennery, "but you know perfectly well that nobody will come in—except draughts."

Adolphe d'Ennery left a nephew, who carries on his connection with the theatre, and this M. Pierre Decourcelle, author of the *Deux Gosses*, married

Edmond About's daughter, so the family is a very literary one.

During the last years of the Empire, the Comtesse de Loynes made the acquaintance of Kalil Bey, a prince straight out of the *Arabian Nights*: had he lived in our own times, all the authors of burlesques would have seized upon him as their proper prey. Kalil Bey was pure Turk in his generosity, and his taste for women, for play, and for splendour; but he had become Parisian in intelligence, in wit, and in his love of art and the theatre. The minor newspapers of the time were always giving accounts of his smart sayings, his extravagance, and the fabulous entertainments he used to give in the most talked-of circles of society.

Kalil Bey gave a dinner in honour of our friend when he was living in the splendid suite at the corner of the Rue Taitbout and the boulevard. Lord Henry Seymour had occupied them for a long time, and Raphaël Bischoffsheim was a tenant too until he died: plainly they were not the abode for a poor man, therefore.

After dinner he took her and some of her friends over his picture-gallery, almost a museum in itself.

The dinner and the whole evening were so delightfully arranged, the host was so hospitable and so charming, that Sainte-Beuve wrote to our friend the next day: "There could not be a wittier and more magnificent Excellency." What was her surprise at hearing, a fortnight later, that Kalil Bey was putting up for sale all the masterpieces of which he had made such wise purchases under the enlightened advice of M. Durand-Ruel, who gauged

future values admirably: America had not yet sent over her buyers. Still, the prices for which these famous pictures went seem ridiculous to us of to-day, for we pay more for an etching by Rembrandt. I remember some of the figures, and will quote them.

Ingres' "Turkish Bath," which was sold at 150,000 francs a few months ago, was knocked down for 20,000. Delacroix's "Assassination of the Bishop of Liège" was a picture with a history; it had belonged to his Highness the Duc d'Orléans, who paid Delacroix 1500 francs for it. At Kalil's sale it realised the then enormous price of 46,000 francs, but its present owner has refused 500,000 for it. Another Delacroix, "Tasso," had been offered by the Duc to Dumas père, and went for 16,000 francs, though it is worth 80,000 at present. A Corot, now worth from 60 to 80,000 francs, was knocked down for 2054; a Courbet of the same value, "Calling the Death of the Buck," only found a purchaser at 4000 francs; a Daubigny fetched 3500 francs, though it was sold for 150,000 the other day, as was Fromentin's "Nomads on the March," which realised 23,000 francs.

Rousseau's famous "Avenue of Chestnuts," which had been rejected at the Salon, belongs to-day to the Marquise Carcano, who has refused 500,000 francs for it; Kalil Bey bought it for 10,000 and sold it for 27,000.

And "Landscapes with Animals" by Troyon, which would cost 100,000 francs to-day, could then be had for 6500.

The same extraordinary prices prevailed for the pictures by seventeenth and eighteenth century artists. A Greuze brought in 2000 francs, and a Boucher,

"The Painter's Studio," 14,000, though it sold for 100,000 a few years ago. A Paul Potter, "The Meadow," went for 2250 francs; you would not get it for 80,000 to-day. Ruysdaël's "Windmill" sold at 1175 francs; Teniers' "Gallery of the Archduke Albert at Brussels," at 15,000; Terburg's "Post-haste," at 7300; all are worth at present from 60,000 to 100,000 francs.

Lastly, Watteau's "Le Voyage à Cythère," one of the best things in the sale, barely reached 4600 francs; we should have to add a couple of noughts to this figure if we wished to buy such a masterpiece.

Haro, a famous expert, was auctioneer. The sale lasted three days, and produced a total of 636,705 francs. At the finish of the final day's engagement Haro remarked, "What a triumph!" His son, who carried on his business with equal success and died a few months ago, would have said, "What a failure!"

Kalil Bey had to realise all these wonders to pay his enormous losses at baccarat; they were supposed to amount to several millions.

He had been particularly kind to me when I was introduced to him at the beginning of my journalistic career. I met him again later, after the war, when he had become Kalil Pasha, but though his position was a higher one he was a poorer man. Still, ill-luck had not cured him of his pet failing. One evening when the charming Duchessa Caracciolo had invited us to dinner in her villa at Dieppe, Kalil Pasha, Gaston de Saint-Maurice, Prince Poniatowski, the painter Édouard de Beaumont and I improvised a baccarat table in the smoking room in honour of Kalil. The highest stakes had been fixed at ten francs, he won five louis, and was radiant as Allah himself. He died

a few days later, still dreaming of a startling revenge upon those special enemies of his, such as Narishkine, Plancy, and Pompignan, who had defeated and ruined him in former years.

Girardin was faithful of the faithful, and would have remained to the last in the great square at Waterloo. He came to the Rue de l'Arcade every day, just as he used to do, and went back to his old chair. Time itself had to cede to this obstinate fighter, and have respect to his grey hairs. He had not changed in the least. I can still see him just as Sarah Bernhardt's chisel fixed him in bronze about 1876; his famous lock of hair is still describing its **S** upon a forehead that hardly had a line upon it; his eyes are as full of life as ever, and his face as smooth; only the features are sunken, and the mouth has settled into the ironic smile which was merely indicated before.

I have piously assigned its place in my workroom to this bust, as though it were that of an ancestor whom I revere but can never hope to equal.

One evening after dinner in my own house Sarah Bernhardt picked up a volume of de Musset from a little table, and read a few pages aloud in that glorious "voix d'or" whose charm will never be surpassed. She went on reading all the evening; the time passed as though we were under a spell, and not one of us dreamed of interrupting her. Suddenly Girardin jumped up, went over to her, and kissed her with effusion.

"Oh! master of mine," said Sarah Bernhardt, "how you please me! Would you like to do so even more? You never sit to anyone—please sit to me?"

It was in this way that Sarah Bernhardt managed to do a bust of Girardin, and later on she offered it to me.

Girardin left Paris in 1870, before it was invested. He went first to La Rochelle, to his nephew Léonce Détroyat, an old sailor who had been made a general and ordered to organise a camp. He rode with his nephew on his rounds, for, like M. Thiers, he rather liked to play the part of a great captain. Then he took refuge at Tours and had recourse to his pen, writing a great many letters to provincial newspapers. He collected them afterwards in a volume which came out under the title of *Les Cent Jours.* In it he attacked the government of the National Defence with his usual bitterness, and when he came back to Paris he fought the Commune with energy and the same violence, calling on M. Thiers to get rid of the men of September 4th, whom he considered to be responsible for the defeat of France and the rising in Paris.

In the meanwhile he championed a scheme for a federal republic, then a plan for a poll of all electors throughout France. No wonder it was said of him that he went in for a new idea every day! At another time this indefatigable person told Mme de Loynes that he had bought the *Petit Journal* with M. Jeanty, deputy for La Vendée, and M. Gibiat, general manager of the *Pays* and the *Constitutionnel,* who were already partners with him in the *Semaine Financière.* Under his clever management the *Petit Journal* developed in the happiest fashion, but it was M. Marinoni who gave it the scope which our ex-

cellent contemporary, M. Prevet, has contrived to keep for it, so that the *Petit Journal* has remained a rival of papers with an enormous circulation like the *Matin*, the *Petit Parisien*, and the *Journal*. About the same time, too, Girardin married his son, and threw his house open for a series of dinners, evenings, and fancy-dress dances, at all of which his daughter-in-law, Mme Alexandre de Girardin, helped him by being an admirable hostess.

On yet another day he bought *La France*, and was broken-hearted at not being able to put life into it when the 16th of May came upon us, and he reconciled himself with Gambetta in order to carry on a most vigorous campaign on behalf of the Three Hundred and Sixty-Three. This reconciliation with Gambetta was merely a political move, and entirely on the surface. He had formerly accused him of having betrayed Paris and France, and such attacks may be disregarded but can never be forgotten.

Girardin was as jealous as a woman, and prevented Mme de Loynes from knowing Gambetta, whose influence he distrusted; she never met him in consequence.

Besides, Gambetta was the central figure of another salon, that of Mme Adam. One day Edmond Adam, a very pleasant fellow and then chief secretary to the discount office, brought in to his wife one of his friends whom he had asked to dinner. This friend—Gambetta—wore a black frockcoat, a Panama hat, and white drill trousers. Mme Adam had to instruct him as to the wisdom of wearing black all over, and to explain to the opportunists the

expediency of sporting the government colours. It was at her house that Gambetta prepared his friends for the 16th and the 24th of May.

Mme Adam was fair to see at that time, as was the Republic to all those who had not yet been undeceived. To-day her patriotism is making her veer towards the opponents of her former friends. At Gif, where her new friends know that they will find her every Sunday, she has written and published certain memoirs which are a diatribe against radicalism and even against opportunism, the régime of her first love. She has even gently poked fun at the great orator who, report says, used to be consumed with love for her, though without the least success.

Mme de Loynes, who was very jealous over her own friendships, was always careful to respect those of other women, and would not for a moment have thought of disputing possession of Gambetta with Mme Adam. When Anatole France gave up coming to see her and became the oracle of another great salon, she regretted him, but made no effort to recover his allegiance.

After the appearance of M. Grévy, Girardin, without deserting politics altogether, devoted his ever-active energies to finance. Between 1880 and 1882 our country went through a "furia francese" of a new kind. The only street in Paris was the Rue Quincampoix and its prolongation, where there are a hundred banks beside the "Union Générale." Girardin had his, the "Banque Nationale," which he founded with Messrs. Gibiat and Jeanty, and its shares went up to a marvellous figure. Girardin,

author, controversialist, director of dozens of newspapers, dramatist in his day, ever busy with ideas, plans, business, and wild-cat schemes, was nominated as a senator in 1870, just before the war, yet was never able to take his place in the Senate, and was elected as a deputy in 1879, though he had never sat in the Chamber; he refused office, yet dreamt possibly of being President. He had always lived in luxury, without any calculation, expecting a fortune from his journalism, though it actually came from speculation—another kind turn of fortune's wheel! When he died he left his son Alexandre de Girardin an enormous number of shares in the Banque Nationale. M. Joubert offered him eight millions of francs for them, but Alexandre de Girardin was too greedy, and refused. Then came the crash—the sudden crash of 1882—and shattered this jar of milk and many another. It would really have been interesting to have seen the old champion struggle to defend his interests against the storm, just as he had fought for his convictions against every kind of tyranny.

What have we left that was Girardin's? A few brochures that no one reads, and various articles the very names of which no one knows. It is the lot of journalists to be quickly forgotten, and their successes resound the more because they are so ephemeral. He used to take pleasure sometimes in putting his grandson, Émile, on his knee and muttering: "Another legitimate Girardin! This sort of thing hasn't happened in our family for three or four generations."

Alas! little Émile on whom so many hopes rested is since dead; he was laid in his grave some years

before his father, Alexandre de Girardin, who died only a few months ago. And, in spite of myself, I think of Lamartine's lines—

> "Ici gît . . . point de nom. Demandez â la terre;
> Le nom, il est inscrit . . ."

There I end the quotation. The name of Êmile de Girardin, our famous predecessor, is written nowhere; not a trace of it remains; a child died, and so effaced it from the sand in which his grandfather had written it.

Êmile de Girardin, who introduced all his friends to Mme de Loynes, had brought to her M. Jeanty, one of his partners, and M. Ernest Lalou, who afterwards succeeded him on *La France.*

M. Jeanty's jovial manner concealed profound business experience, and a most valuable power of persuasion. He gained great influence over Mme de Loynes' mind, and initiated her into finance, in which she wished to have some concern. Êmile de Girardin, at M. Jeanty's instigation, advised her to sell a number of Malfidano shares and invest in the Banque Nationale. The crash spared nothing, and thus Mme de Loynes had but a few scraps of paper for the fifteen or eighteen hundred thousand francs she had entrusted to her friends. Girardin died before the catastrophe, and she was not the woman to cry over money lost, though she wept long for, and never ceased to mourn, the great friend who was gone. For more than thirty years of her life he, better than any other witness, had known how to mark, like a recorder, her every heart-beat, and to penetrate the inmost recesses of her mind.

When I have been at Fontainebleau just after a forest fire, I have often noticed a little bush spared by the fate which has thrown down huge trees, and burnt or mutilated them. Poor little bush! One felt that, robbed of the shelter which protected it, it was doomed to perish in its turn at the first blast of the next storm. *Sunt lachrymæ rerum!*

Mme de Loynes was in like case. Accustomed for so long to the warmth of the kind hearts that had surrounded her with their affection, she now found herself isolated, almost deserted, since death had descended in turn upon all those lofty heads which, like the oaks in the forest, lived upon the hill-tops. Like the great fabulist, she knew that we must be able to bend to avoid breaking: she bowed, but under what a weight of sorrow!

How many of those she loved were gone! Prévost-Paradol, who had died in America; next, Sainte-Beuve, when she was away and so could not console him in his last hours; then Gautier and Flaubert the illustrious; Marc Fournier, who had first made her understand the people and the affairs of Paris; Feydeau, and About, whose mocking smile had not been able to deride inexorable death; and Amaury Duval, whose brush had brought her renown. Renan was struggling vigorously with old age. Taine was absorbed in his writings. Sardou was hugging himself in his newly-acquired fame. Prince Napoleon, who had been robed in the imperial purple after the young Prince Imperial's death, had thrown it aside for the tribune's red tunic, and had cut himself off from his old friends. A whole generation was

disappearing. What would be the generation that was to succeed it?

Twilight was falling upon her: would a new dawn ever come? Yes, of a truth. She was determined to believe it. Had she not written to one of her closest friends, in that sweet letter from which we have quoted:

"It must be good to feel one is strong! Ah! why am I a useless creature? Why am I so bruised? But I will gather myself up . . ."

And she did so gather herself! Sainte-Beuve had often told her that nothing is lost, for everything is of use. She felt within her a long accumulated store of initiative and culture, of suppleness and of strength. And why should fate have so favoured her hitherto, if it meant to allow her to be useless for the future?

She was fifty, it is true, but she alone could suspect it: she still had her eyes of aqua-marina and her ivory hands; her hair was hardly grey, and took nothing from the freshness of her smiles. She still had the most haunting voice imaginable; she hardly felt the burden of her years, and was still light of heart. Was she to give up hope? Was she to come to the terrible fate of fearing everything? It was not possible.

One morning in March, Arsène Houssaye, who, with Ernest Daudet and Gérôme, was one of the most vigorous survivors of the old guard, came to see her as usual.

"I am going to give a masked ball in a few days. You are the first to hear of it, and I have come to invite you."

"You cannot think of it," said she. "I am an

old woman, but you will always be, through eternity, a young man. A masked ball under the Republic! You are behind the times. . . . We are no longer under the Empire."

Arsène Houssaye insisted, in terms that may be imagined.

"You are a naughty flatterer, and if I come it will only be not to vex you. I should not like to cause a fold in Olympio's brow."

"Ask Loizillon for me."

"The general will not come. He is just marrying a most ladylike woman."

"Ah! Well, I count on you, in any case."

Arsène Houssaye's masked balls have become traditional. In order to revive them in all their striking reality, and mistrusting my own memory, I appealed to my old friend and excellent contemporary, Émile Blavet. Thanks to him, I am able to recall from the past, with some assurance, a period, a society, various personalities, and an atmosphere, none of them even suspected by the Parisians of to-day. At these balls one seemed to breathe the perfume of the balls at the Opéra under the Regency, when Mme de Parabère reigned there, and under the Restoration, when the Duchesse de Berry ruled the fashion with a smile. The Chevalier de Grammont was at the former, the Count d'Orsay at the latter. Every Parisian fashion is incarnated in some person who fixes its date, and for the fashion of masked balls this person is Arsène Houssaye. The two are inseparable.

How did his balls begin? Chance has wonderful caprices, and they were the offspring of one of these.

BALLS AT ARSÈNE HOUSSAYE'S

On the Shrove Tuesday of 1868 the famous author of the *Quarante et unième fauteuil* had some friends to dinner at his house in the Avenue Friedland. It was one of those mask dinners which afterwards became the rage, and in compliment to the host's love of the stage all the guests had arranged to come got up as Poquelin, so that the affair was as merry as a ceremony from the *Malade Imaginaire.* When they reached the champagne, some ladies, on their way to a fancy-dress ball, saw the gallery all lit up, and invaded the house with the delightful humour of the ladies of the Second Empire. This improvised carnival was such a success that the fair intruders forgot their ball, and the guests were so mutually delighted that they arranged to begin all over again the next Tuesday, and every Tuesday in Lent, except the one in Holy Week, the ladies wishing to devote that day at least to the welfare of their souls, in order to be in a state of grace at Easter.

The next Tuesday certain singers and actresses were of the party, under pretext of providing songs and improvised plays. There were twenty-five the first evening, and a hundred the second, although Houssaye had invited no one. On the third Tuesday the ladies of the Court wished to play their part in the picturesque and many-coloured assembly, and came in a perfect avalanche, ladies even of the highest rank being among them. They were all muffled in the loveliest of dominos, and were got up like paintings by Velasquez and Isabey, or like fiends! Certain familiars of the Tuileries — Persigny first, then Canrobert, and then Nieuwerkerke—had opened the way, but the most weighty persons followed them.

It was said openly that Napoleon III. had ventured into the Avenue Friedland, masked as the Duc d'Albe or de Vivier, to surprise in all their frankness the opinions of his lieges male and female. The actual truth was never known, but on the fourth Tuesday the Duc d'Albe et Vivier was there without a mask, and a third person was imitating Napoleon III. to the life. There was certainly nothing of Don Juan, Lovelace, or d'Orsay about Napoleon III., but it will be remembered that great attention was paid to women at his Court. The way in which the loveliest were eager in pursuit of him in Arsène Houssaye's long gallery was worth seeing. Somewhat in the manner of Joseph he left his domino in the hands of these ladies Potiphar who, when he had gone, fell back upon the ribbons of the ambassadors and ministers. And if all this is a legend, it probably comes very near to the truth.

The queerest part of the proceedings was that the master of the house never sent out any invitations. People invited themselves of their own accord, and came as though to a public reception, and Houssaye cheerfully remarked that he was just as well entertained at home as though he were out somewhere.

Everything comes to an end, alas! and so did this happy Lent, but a plan of meeting again was made for Lent 1869. That year the Moorish house, adjacent to the Renaissance one in which the balls were first given, was finished, and the owner could assemble a thousand guests, all the choicest spirits of Paris from the Court down to the theatrical circles. Patti, then in all her glory, Marie Sass, Delphine Ugalde, Thérésa, Blanche d'Antigny, whose house,

96 Avenue Friedland, was close by Houssaye's two, were his sweet singers. Sarah Bernhardt, full of the poetry of her youth and her powers, acted "Le Passant" with Marie Colombier. And how she acted! She was carried off in triumph amid sheaves of flowers!

Beside these stars, actresses for good and all, society ladies played their part of "charmeresses," to quote Arsène Houssaye, with "charmeries introuvables"—another phrase of the master of the house. It was a comedy continued from midnight to sunrise; not a white night, but a night of royal purple. Those who could not live through it on sheer happiness had an unceremonious supper at a table laid for eighty which recalled Bauville's song.

"Nous étions quatre-vingts rimeurs!"

There were verses enough, with lines billing and cooing like birds in love, while all up and down the magnificent staircase tender conversations were carried on, and the most delightful intrigues arranged!

The illustrated papers contained immortal sketches of this Venetian merry-making, a most characteristic example of the Vie Parisienne, at which the much regretted Arnold Mortier, then at the beginning of his career, had constituted himself an ideal ringleader in the fun and here sketched gaily all the mischief of these never-to-be-forgotten balls. M. Deloye the sculptor, who painted too in his spare time, was inspired to a delicious water-colour which is in my possession. These precious records still give us an idea of the careless languorous grace of the women of the Second Empire. They are lovely in spite of their masks, as to which Houssaye had made a rule that no beauty

should appear without one, for he did not wish to have anyone betrayed at his house.

The Princesse de Metternich, who was always curious, risked coming, and determined that she, too, would have her ball "in fiocchi." She arranged the setting as cleverly as any archduchess of them all, and, except for a few actresses, the same people went to her and carried on the conversations which had been left unfinished at Arsène Houssaye's.

The chief attraction of these delightful parties was their eclecticism, and the fact that they formed a common meeting-place for all the titled people, all the clever ones, all the beauties of the day, masked, and people of every shade of opinion—these more or less unmasked. That is why, when they were started again under the Republic, they were at first just as much the rage as under the Empire, so that in 1875 there were to be seen, elbowing one another, the Comte de Paris and Admiral Pothuau, General Türr who took Gëta, and General Bosco who defended it, the Greek Minister and the Turkish Ambassador, Paul de Cassagnac the doughty director of the *Pays*, and Maggiolo the excitable editor of the *Union*, Alexandre Dumas fils and the Comte d'Haussonville, etc. etc., and all this without any exchange of cards.

Only nine years later, in a smaller setting in the Rue du Bel-Respiro (now the Rue Arsène-Houssaye), we had the same spectacle, and the magnificent impresario who presented it could say, in his delight at his renewal of its popularity:

"It is very easy and very pleasant to receive my guests as I do, since the guests themselves undertake all the trouble of the entertainment by furnishing

beauty, wit, and cheerfulness. No one pays to go in or to come out, yet how lavish are all of pretty speeches and sweet smiles!"

Unfortunately, a great many more people were anxious to come to this ball than could possibly be admitted, the comparatively small size of his new house having obliged its master to cut down numbers. He collected into an album the enormous number of letters he had accumulated in the previous month; Émile Blavet was allowed, as a special favour, to look through the precious volume, and made some very curious finds in it. First came this excuse from the political heir of the Comte de Chambord:

"It is not my greatness which keeps me on the Riviera, but the Riviera, with its sun, its sweet-smelling flowers, and its winter shade, that keeps my greatness on the Mediterranean."

And another, from Her Majesty Queen Isabella:

"I have long been waiting for the swallow flying south to bring me a message from my friend Houssaye. I wish I could borrow the bird's wings and come to visit my friends in France again."

Kings and queens grew poetical when writing to the poet. Then came a series of little scented notes, and letters on crested paper. One great lady wrote she was coming specially from Parma, to bring violets of . . . pleasure; others told him that they were arranging for a special train from Nice to Paris. The signatures of all the beauties of the old Court figured at the foot of notes asking for an invitation in this unique collection. Camille Doucet, in a protest against a black velvet mask being *de rigueur*, declared: "You ought only to force the ugly

to mask themselves." Paul de Cassagnac declared that he was not in the least afraid of masks, because he, unlike small children, never went out for a walk in the woods without hoping to meet a few of them. The young Duc de Momny wrote: "I rave about the white teeth that drop pearls from under their masks." A pretty countess who had been "cloistered by her tyrant" because it was Lent, vowed that she would jump out of the window to come to the ball. Lord Lytton wrote from London: "I am afraid I shall not be able to come in time to pay my respects to the King of Sparta in his Louvre." (Arsène the golden-haired, so completely an Athenian, was president of the Spartiates' dinner.) Baron de Billing begged a card of admission for a Royal Highness. And there were I do not know how many more. But of all the various forms of request, the most original was certainly this, written on a visiting-card:

"Le Prince ——

Will stay at home on Friday, March 28th, if M. Houssaye will not vouchsafe him an invitation for the fête he is going to give that evening."

It is hardly necessary to say that Prince —— did not stay at home on the 28th of March 1884.

. . . . . .

Let us now make a rapid examination of the setting in which glittered that splendid ball only once more to be repeated.

First comes the immense gallery, which runs the whole length of the house and ends in a great balcony looking on to the Avenue des Champs-Élysées, and

reached by several steps. Here Gayarré sang, here Saint-German and a fair partner, masked, improvised a comedy in perfect fashion. The walls were hidden by magnificent canvases. Sketches by Théophile Gautier and Victor Hugo formed pendants to Arsène Houssaye's own "Avril." Actresses by Nattier alternated with six portraits of Rachel. Armande Béjart, Mlle Molière, smiled at Diderot's wife by Chardin, who was next to Marie Antoinette. Watteaus, Greuzes, and Fragonards came in turn or were hung close together. Voltaire in his youth, by Largillière, was laughing at Voltaire in his old age, by La Tour. On the mantelpiece a marble huntress, a gift from M. de Persigny, was opposite a Louis XV. console loaded with precious enamels and miniatures. Further on came the bust of the Empress Eugénie, by M. de Nieuwerkerke, and that of Napoleon I. On the pillars of the banisters were two exquisite busts by Coysevox; near them shone Michael Angelo's marvellous Leda; then came Manon Lescaut and Des Grieux, by Boucher, etc. etc. As Lord Lytton said, it was a smaller Louvre, with a hundred square metres of painted canvas, worth several millions, to its credit.

A drawing-room at right angles to the gallery led to a refreshment-room that had been arranged as though by miracle. Room for one was wanting: what was to be done? At the last minute Houssaye heard that a flat next door was to let. He pulled down the partition, had the extra rooms hung with splendid tapestries, and thus provided space for refreshments and conveniences for conversation.

The ball began at half-past ten. It is of no use

to describe it, for Houssaye's great art lay in refraining from imposing upon his guests any set programme of amusements. He threw open his house, received into it the cream of every circle in society, and installed an orchestra—Métra's—under the great arch that overhung the gallery; he gave every facility for dancing, for talk, and for supper, and after that he left every guest free to find pleasure where he chose. He as host was really no more than his own guest, and I assure you that he was not the least well amused.

An unauthorised individual had managed by sheer persistence to obtain an invitation. When this tiresome person came in, all glorious in his Venetian cloak, two dominos attached themselves to him, one on the right and the other on the left, and without the least warning began to chant in unison, to the tune of the "Signe à mam'zelle Bousque"—an air by Serpette which was then the rage—the following loyal rhyme—

"Depuis quinze jours il essaye
D'aller chez Arsène Houssaye!
Maintenant il sait
Chez Arsène où c'est!"

This sort of thing is very infectious, and everyone present was soon chanting in chorus. The intruder took flight and was seen no more.

Though discretion does not allow me even so long afterwards to untie the ribbons of the masks, I am not constrained to a like reserve in the case of the male guests. So I will quote some names from every section of society just as they come into my head.

A Royal Highness—to put the highest first—the Comte d'Eu; Académiciens then present or to be, Messrs. Camille Doucet, Émile Augier, Henri Meilhac, Halévy, Sardou, Hervieu, Richepin, Prévost-Paradol, Cherbuliez, Victor Duruy, Jules Simon, Caro, François Coppée, F. Masson, Francis Charmes, Édouard Pailleron, Jules Claretie, André Theuriet, Ernest Daudet, Becque, Marcel Prévost, Capus; well-known or famous painters, Hébert, Cabanel, Pills, Georges Clairin, Henri Gervex, Jean Béraud, Falguière, Gérôme, Chaplin, Madrazzo, Léon Commerre, Bellanger, Bouguereau; newspaper directors or journalists, H. de Villemessant, Adrien Hébrard, Francis Magnard, Henry de Pène, Paul de Cassagnac, Robert Mitchell, Paulin Limayrac, E. Portalis, Edmond Tarbé, Blowitz, J.-J. Weiss, Louis Teste, Anatole de La Forge, Édouard Lockroy, Henry Fouquier, Gaston Jollivet, Aurélien Scholl, Albert Wolff, Charles Monselet, Albéric Second, Gaston Bérardi, Jules Lecomte, Chapus, Georges Boyer, de Saint-Albin, François Oswald, Pierre Véron, the Marquis de Cherville, Molinari; the son of the founder of the *Herald*, M. Gordon Bennett, a young American who went everywhere; diplomatists, Prince Metternich, the Chevalier Nigra, Count Kapnitz, Count Solms; great composers, Gounod and Bizet; writers and poets of every school and of every degree, Théophile Gautier, Paul de Saint-Victor, Théodore de Banville, Edmond de Goncourt, Lavoix, Paul Féval, Jules Barbier, the Baron de Saint-Amand, Georges Ohnet, Richebourg, Jacques Normand, Ponson du Terrail; officers in the army and the navy, Marshal Canrobert, who was

specially honoured, General Fleury, General Thur, General Riou, General Pittié, General Read, General Schmidt, General Comte de La Salle, General Billot, Admiral Coupevent des Bois, Commander Charles Duperré; two famous controversialists, Émile de Girardin and Rochefort; that great Frenchman, Ferdinand de Lesseps; politicians of all parties, MM. Ferdinand Duval, Lambert de Sainte-Croix, Armand Roll, Abattucci, Dugué de la Fauconnerie, the Vicomte de la Guéronnière, Baron de Heeckeren, the Duc de Rivoli, and, later on, Bardoux, Rouvier, Antonin Proust, Oscar de La Fayette, Camescasse, Andrieux; famous theatre managers, MM. Vaucorbeil, Montigny, Félix Duquesnel, Marc Fournier; members of the most fashionable clubs, the Prince de Sagan, the Marquis de Massa, the Vicomte de La Redorte, the Marquis de Rougé, the Comte de La Ferrière, the Marquis de Breteuil, the Vicomte de Savigny, the Comte de Viel-Castel, Emmanuel Bocher, Count Walewski, the Marquis de Bois-Hébert, the Comte Hallez-Claparède, Xavier Feuillant, Comte Hubert Delamare, Count Raczinski, Comte Raynal de Choiseul, Edmond Veil-Picard, the Duca di Perdifumo, the Barons Antoine and Daniel de Ezpeleta, the Comte de La Riboisière, Georges de Heeckeren, MM. Edmond de Lagrenée and Gaston de Saint-Maurice, Count Nicholas Potocki, the Comte de Mercy-Argenteau; savants and doctors come to forget their laboratories or their surgeries for a moment, MM. le Verrier, Jules Oppert, Robin, Ricord, Corvisart, du Sommerard, Jobert de Lamballe; financiers who in such society had nothing borrowed, the Comte Pillet-Will, Baron

Alphonse de Rothschild, Baron Hottinguer, Bamberger, Joubert, Henry Thors, Pereire, Donon, Mirès, Raymond Seillière, the Baron de Soubeyran, Badel, etc.

It appears, therefore, that at Arsène Houssaye's that night it would have been possible to found, start, and publish a newspaper, to hold an election to the Académie, to arrange a loan, negotiate a treaty, form a scenario, compose the score, settle the parts and the staging, open an exhibition, cure a disease, discover a planet, and, above all, form a whole concourse of beauty and fashion!

If his Highness the Comte de Paris had been at this ball he might have repeated, with even more justification, what he said to M. Duvergier de Hauranne at the one held in 1875:

"It is a very long time since there have been so many clever people in one salon. If the house were to fall it would be practically night in Paris tomorrow."

This ball was Arsène Houssaye's last big one, for that of 1886 met the fate of all repetitions of good things, and was almost a disillusion!

She had arrived! Directly he saw her violet domino, Arsène Houssaye rushed towards her, to take her to a little corner he had kept for her; from it she could see and watch everything, without being inconvenienced by the flood of guests who jostled one another in the two drawing-rooms of the houses in the Avenue Friedland, and even on the staircase.

It was the same setting; the same pictures hung on the walls; the violins were the same, only they played different tunes. Before, Métra's orchestra had

brought out the rhythm of "Il Baccio" or "La Chanson de Fortunio"; to-day, Désormes' band beat out the bars of "La Boiteuse" and "Le Petit Bleu." Times were changed, and music too. There was the same crowd. Beautifully dressed dominos were hanging on the arms of men who were reputed well known, but she did not know them. There were few survivors from the Second Empire, if any: in all the press she hardly saw one of the beloved forms of a time now fled, forms that seemed with her to mourn for the absent, and to be hardly consoled by the cheerfulness of all the fresh faces.

The dominos certainly were well dressed—too much so, in fact; there were too many flowers, too many jewels, too much lace. The phials might be exactly alike, but the perfume was less subtle; it smelt too strong. The gaiety was more pronounced, the conversation less discreet, the laughter louder. To escape from all the stir she closed her eyes for a moment to recall the first ball at which she had been present in the same room. It was twenty years ago—twenty already! Just there she had walked about on Nieuwerkerke's arm; here, she had stood talking to Canrobert; at the foot of that statue she had paused with Ferdinand de Lesseps; farther on, Sagan and Massa as they passed had presented her with flowers and compliments; and lastly, she had been sitting in the same easy-chair in the very same corner when Ludovic Halévy had introduced Prévost-Paradol. What a long, long talk they had had!

Just at that moment someone touched her on the shoulder and awoke her from her dream.

"I was looking for you, dear friend," said Henry

Houssaye. "I want to introduce one of my young friends, M. Jules Lemaître. You know that everyone has been talking about him since his article on Georges Ohnet appeared."

She asked M. Jules Lemaître to sit down beside her, and in the very corner in which she had talked for such a long, long time with Prévost-Paradol she talked still longer with M. Jules Lemaître. It grew late, and Mme de Loynes asked to be taken to her carriage.

"Come and see me," she said. "I am always at home towards evening."

"Only tell me who you are!"

"Ah! you are curious. Ask our friend Henry."

When she reached home Mme de Loynes felt soothed. Her room seemed less silent, less lonely. She fell asleep, and dreamed that all her great friends were still alive, and were pressing closely around her to leave room in their midst for a young author, full of simplicity, modesty, and talent, who talked wonderfully; she dreamt further that her life was to be lived among them all, until she saw her secret hopes triumphant, with one friend the more, and he as anxious as any of the old ones to second them.

M. Jules Lemaître had allowed a friend to take him to Arsène Houssaye's ball. At first he was frightened at the idea of penetrating, even for one night, into a circle so new to him and so different from that in which he had lived hitherto; however, he gave way, attracted by the love of making discoveries, which was always strong in him. Intellectual curiosity is one of his main characteristics, and is the key to the essential part of his character,

though not to the whole of it. He flattered himself that at Arsène Houssaye's he would make acquaintance with a fashionable and elegant, and artistic and political Paris at which he could only guess. Little did he suspect where his first exploring expedition into this hitherto unknown world would lead him.

Jules Lemaître was then thirty-three, and in the first blush of his fame, just at that privileged moment when an author can take all advantage from the surprise the revelation of his talent has caused; when some of his readers have not yet repented of admiring him, and before others have prepared their weapons of attack. He had just joined the *Journal des Débats*, and was to occupy the most prominent place in it, the first floor shared by such men as Geoffroy, Jules Janin, and J.-J. Weiss. Every week his dramatic feuilleton was eagerly looked for by the whole of the reading public, and appreciated, enjoyed, and discussed; it was the literary event of the week, in short. I will try to recall to my memory the Jules Lemaître of those days, just as one saw him at public rehearsals or first nights, and analyse the impression he made on those who talked to him.

I had not then the pleasure of any connection with him. I saw a great deal of him afterwards, but we have nothing to do with each other now.

The most striking thing about him at first was an air of reserve, and even—it must be said—of peculiar want of ease. He also seemed to be slightly melancholy. Was he sorry for anything? But for what? In the world of letters, where hardly anyone is entirely devoid of self-advertisement, where it is almost a necessity of the trade to make oneself

conspicuous, to appear frequently and to enforce a hearing, he made himself observed by a kind of voluntary effacement. Was this an instinctive feeling for proportion? Was it a modesty partly composed of that spirit of mistrust which is remarkable in our central provinces? Everyone knows that Jules Lemaître was the son of small country-folk in the Orléans district; he was born at Tavers near Beaugency, where he is almost as often to be seen as in Paris. He was very fond of the house where the mother he adored lived until just lately; it had belonged to Dr. Charles, husband of Lamartine's Elvire. He was even fond of the meetings of the Municipal Council, and would not have missed them for anything in the world.

He went to a seminary, and it is impossible to deny that his ecclesiastical education has left a deep impression upon him. He finished at the École Normale, then under the control of Ernest Bersot, a true man of letters and a sage, who died with all the heroism of the Stoics. Something of all that he had experienced was left in this peasant's son brought up by the priests, and then a university student.

He always kept a little behind everyone else, and a little to one side; the malice of his glance was screened by professorial spectacles; his gestures were slight and unfrequent, as he was determined they should be; his speeches ended with a little set smile. At first amused by a conversation, he would contribute short remarks singularly apt and discerning, whimsical, with touches of fancy; then, very quickly, he grew weary, as he grows weary of every-

thing. You felt that his attention had wandered, and that his mind was elsewhere.

After his time at the École Normale, the young professor had been sent to Havre to lecture to young girls. As a poet he is skilful rather than inspired, and he has portrayed his dainty listeners in his *Médaillons* with their gentle irony.

At Algiers, under a sky of unrelieved azure, he dreamed of the clouds and waving poplars of the Loire country; there, too, he wrote a treatise on Dancourt, which obtained a doctor's degree at the Sorbonne for him, and is a proof that even then his curiosity was stirred by things theatrical.

At Grenoble, faced by the "magnificent horror" of the Alps, to quote Mme de Staël, he could hold out no longer; he resigned his official chair of French literature, and took the first train to Paris, where he arrived bent on exploration.

We have already stated that his desire to know everything was, after Sainte-Beuve's, the most active, the most ingenious, and the best-informed to be met with in literature.

The first discovery M. Jules Lemaître was destined to make, in this Paris which had drawn him to herself, was that a literary clique was then occupying the front of the stage. He made an examination of all those who thus counted, who, rightly or wrongly, occupied public attention. He read all they had written, and evolved for each by far the best portrait yet drawn.

There was then a review—the *Revue Bleue*—still in existence, and still worthy of its brilliant past, which just at that time was at the height of its

success. Its manager was Eugène Yung, who, during the last years of the Empire, had started the discussions at the Athenæum with Francisque Sarcey, Émile Deschanel, Alfred Assollant, and Henri de Lapommeraye. The review was a continuation of these, and was at first entitled *Revue des Cours et Conférences.* Maxime Gaucher was reviewer, Hector Depasse wrote its political articles, and Brunetière, Larroumet, Bourget, Anatole France, and Faguet its leading ones; Gaston Bergeret gave the news of the day with characteristic French humour; Henry Roujon and Hugues le Roux undertook lively summaries of events. So it was conducted by another Pleïade, and the literary world formed its public. There is always need of another review as well as the important ones, whose very weight entails certain obligations, a review which is less restrained in manner and tone, and more in touch with the life of the moment. Such a position was then held by the *Revue Bleue.*

It brought out the fascinating series of "Contemporains." These portraits, studied and carefully prepared as they were, were written in such an easy and rapid style that Jules Lemaître, with his almost miraculous pace, was able to compose them and polish them to the point of perfection they attained within the short space of a week. They were a triumph, as success is in Paris, and their author's name was famous the very day the first of them appeared. This first article, over which Paris went into ecstasies, was that on Georges Ohnet. It was a shattering criticism, and unjust because cruel.

Yet Jules Lemaître, at Eugène Yung's request, had watered down or suppressed some of his unkind remarks!

Renan's portrait was not a very kind one either. "This man has made an exhaustive study of the most terrible tragedy that exists to harrow our consciences," wrote his critic; "he has spent his whole life in the examination of the most disquieting problems—and he is a frivolous person!" It is a fact that the Renan of the past few years—the Renan whose motto was "Gaudeamus igitur"—had begun to scandalise his best friends, or at any rate to make them uneasy. "And now," Lemaître was told, "you have got to go and see Renan." This piece of advice astonished him at first—I have said that he had a great deal to learn—but he allowed himself to be persuaded upon this occasion likewise. Renan received him with unctuous politeness—an almost sacerdotal unction was one of his peculiarities—and they parted the best friends in the world.

Gaston Boissier was slightly ruffled by the chapter devoted to him, but as he was from the South he was not easily put out of countenance.

"Lemaître," he said. "Ah, yes! I know him quite well; he used to be a pupil of mine. He ought to be called the beginner who is trying to make a name for himself at the expense of celebrities."

From Leconte de Lisle to Coppée, from Feuillet to Maupassant, from Dumas fils to Daudet, Loti, and Bourget, the ingenious critic had gone the round, had studied all their work, and had recorded their every characteristic with decided strokes. Was it because he had no house of his own that he had invaded

their privacy, and made himself a familiar, and malicious, visitant?

The feuilleton in the *Débats* had opened another world—that of the stage—to him. He wandered about in it like a new-comer, looking round him amusedly and with assumed naïveté. Some fun was made by the press of one of his first articles, in which he "discovered" Sarah Bernhardt. He was assured that for the last twenty years and more this "débutante" had been very well known in Paris, and even in the world. However, that mattered little to our dilettante, who went on his way like young Anacharsis in Greece.

Such was M. Jules Lemaître at the time of his first visit to our modern Athens, to which Henry Houssaye, quite at home in it, constituted himself guide in so friendly a fashion. I have tried to draw a final portrait, such as is the due of an immortal.

I imagine that it was in some such guise he appeared to Mme de Loynes. I am not in M. Jules Lemaître's confidence, but one can easily suppose that he, being led by his natural curiosity to Arsène Houssaye's, there to observe Parisina in her most characteristic guise, was equally surprised and delighted at discovering, in addition, the most completely Parisian of all women in existence.

They had talked for a long time, a very long time, at the ball. He felt, I have been told, that her questions as to his work and his endeavours seemed a grace vouchsafed to him, and her silence, while he was replying with the story of his struggles and his hopes, a caress. She knew everything about

him, and he nothing of her, not even her name, since she had refused to tell it to him.

The very next day he went to ask Arsène Houssaye what it was.

"Come and call for me to-morrow," replied he, "and I will take you to see her."

So next day, for the first time, he entered that salon in the Rue de l'Arcade made famous by all his literary seniors. She was, as usual, sitting by the fire, on which was singing the log that was there all the year through. There were no preparations. She had merely asked Renan, Halévy, and Ernest Daudet, whom he knew already, so that he might feel at home from the first. The conversation was interrupted for a moment, then continued lightly, easily, touching upon all subjects, resting heavily on none.

Mme Heilbronn was just dead. Halévy, clearly much affected, was saying how he had known her, and helped her with his advice, when she made her first appearance in the *Brigands.* Fragoletta had developed into Massé's Virginie, Gounod's Juliette, and Massenet's Manon—three great lovers whom love had overthrown. "Her soul woke late to the tragedy of their tears," he added; "then it broke like a harp-string overstrained." Octave Feuillet had given *Chamillac* at the Comédie-Française the evening before. Renan, fresh from a meeting at the Académie, told how warmly he had congratulated his confrère on this new success.

He did not share his ideas or his feelings, he declared, but thought highly of his original and distinguished powers, his remarkable literary honesty, his lofty and disinterested point of view.

"He is the last left among us of those who deserved respect," said Henry Houssaye.

Other subjects were glanced at: M. Jules Lemaître did not say much, but wore his usual little fixed smile. When he left with Henry Houssaye, Mme de Loynes said to him:

"Now you know the woman who was disguised in the violet domino. Come to see her again, if she did not too greatly deceive you."

M. Jules Lemaître did come back — went on coming, in fact, for more than twenty years. And nothing could have been more affecting, from the point of view of those who saw them at the beginning or watched them later on, than this perfect union of two persons, each the perfect complement of the other. It was actually a union, never merely an association, for that suggests a concerted aim, a programme, a personal end. Mme de Loynes certainly never said to herself: "I have lost almost all my friends, the great men who directed my career. Here is a young man of remarkable gifts; I will direct him in my turn. With him, for him, and by his means I shall have an important literary salon again, and, if circumstances are favourable, one that is political too. And perhaps, some day . . ." No, she merely thought: "I should like him to become my friend and warm me with the fire of his youth."

In all probability, too, M. Jules Lemaître never said to himself: "This woman has been a conquering force and will be so again. Thanks to her, I shall achieve literary eminence, and perhaps one day . . ." I should be very much surprised if he did not merely

think: "I should like her to become my friend, so that I may rest on her grace and her charm."

They say that in chess a player can arrange his plan of campaign at the very beginning of the game, and so dispose his pieces as to checkmate his opponent with almost mathematical precision. That may be, but I doubt whether the cleverest diplomatists are wise enough to take in the whole horizon at a glance, and regulate their proceedings scientifically. Bismarck may have dreamt from the first of a united Germany, but his combinations could only develop by favour of circumstances, and he had often to modify his own plans, and baffle those of his adversaries, before his patriotic ambitions could unfold and attain realisation. This purely spontaneous union, therefore, was unsullied by vulgar calculation. If I may be allowed to borrow from M. Jules Lemaître himself the title of one of his prettiest plays, I should say it was a sort of "Mariage blanc," growing in time pearl-grey, as advancing age turned hair to silver.

There is, of course, no doubt that Mme de Loynes was at first delighted to adorn her salon with an author still in the first flush of his fame. I have said that I never knew her entertain a base motive, but I should not like to declare that her motives were never personal. Her salon was her darling indulgence. She adorned it for herself, not for a public with which she never troubled her head; she avoided publicity, having a perfect horror of its indiscreet revelations. Her natural kindliness forbade her to close her doors, even at moments of acutest crisis, to old friends turned to adversaries. She only

made a single exception. One of her most frequent guests, a young artist, had repeated a proposal suggested at her house. She wrote to him that she would never see him again, nor did he reappear.

She loved success, and showed a certain inclination towards the divinities of the moment, or men who happened to be the fashion. These she liked to attract, and hence she conquered all those esteemed conquerors — Clemenceau and Paul Deschanel, Boulanger and Rochefort, Déroulède and Drumont. Her salon gained in prestige, and she found pleasure in measuring her power to charm against their energy. There is no gold piece without alloy, no human action which has not its share of egoism, but egoism itself may have a touch of beauty: if it be employed for the sake of those who are dear to you, may you not draw moral profit from their elevation? Selfishness may therefore have entered into the absolute and exclusive affection which Mme de Loynes wrapped round M. Jules Lemaître, but this most human failing was redeemed by the love which inspired it. She wished him to become a famous author, and he was one. She dreamed that he was a party leader, and a leader he became. It was not her fault that he did not become the chief personage in the State; but her work for him, though it soon absorbed her altogether, was so discreet that it remained invisible to her friends, perhaps even to him who was its cause and its end.

Like Girardin before him, M. Jules Lemaître got into the habit of coming to see Mme de Loynes every day. He often had *déjeuner* alone with her or with most intimate friends, for it was only later that

these *déjeuners* became political occasions. And of course he dined with her every Friday, with the friends she chose to honour or to please him. He dined too on Sundays with her relations, and very often, if no one else had asked him, he dined alone with her. After dinner they talked or played cards, and M. Jules Lemaître went away early, for Mme de Loynes had extremely delicate health and was obliged to be very careful.

On Fridays the place of honour at the table was kept for Henry Houssaye; on Sundays the oldest member of the family had it. These Sunday evenings always ended in a game of billiards, which Mme de Loynes played very well—a touch of the provincial in one otherwise so notably Parisian. Mme de Loynes thus gave herself one day of rest in the week otherwise almost entirely filled by her friends and their affairs.

The other days belonged to Paris, that intellectual, artistic, fashionable Paris, always to be met from five o'clock till seven, on Fridays especially. On that particular evening, her dinners had their individual character; they were not in the least like Mme Adam's brilliant parties, or Mme Aubernon de Nerville's academic feasts. They presented one of the last brightly coloured and picturesque spectacles in a Paris that has looked like a painting in grisaille ever since. Those who, like myself, had the great pleasure of being invited to them, will never be able to forget how admirable an hostess was this woman, who had even contrived to check the advance of age lest she should sadden the eyes of her friends.

Her gentle authority made itself felt without being

in the least an imposition. Conversation ran easily, and, in spite of the proverb, she and her friends were always contending about tastes and colours, just the things that clever people do most frequently dispute. For a long time politics were excluded by this varied assembly, which kept the peace under the sway of Mme de Loynes' magic wand. She had achieved the feat of uniting the regular guests whom she assembled around her.

At first her friends of every party had come to dine at her hospitable house as men of letters. Only when passion was let loose abroad were their minds open to the welter of politics; and then breaches appeared. Fashionable tittle-tattle, a little highly spiced, in which MM. Grosclaude and Alfred Capus played the part of Tallemant des Réaux, appeared when the first cigars were lit and the guests had taken refuge in a large ante-room used as one of the drawing-rooms. This was not because Mme de Loynes affected a rigorous prudery, but because she could not bear tobacco-smoke. She was extremely fond of Coppée, and had been obliged to give him leave to light his eternal cigarette after the roast was removed—but she found it very hard to forgive him for having asked permission.

Mme de Loynes did not care much for the pleasures of the table—her health did not permit—but she took endless trouble for her guests. Her dinners were excellent, and that in regular French fashion, without being too elaborate. She was very particular about her menus, and never dined out or in a restaurant without obtaining the recipe of any dish that had pleased her. She knew the best shops to go

to, and the best brands: such points stamp an hostess as one who is most anxious to please.

After the day on which she found a fresh interest and a fresh object in a life she had considered useless, she was all the more eager to do so, and that in order to win friendships and valuable influence for her new friend. She could not claim the discovery of a Jean-Jacques, like Mme de Warens, for M. Jules Lemaître had made himself a public character before she met him. But she was at least determined to help him by combating his want of self-confidence and his distrust of others, and by adapting his whole being, moral and physical, to the new environment in which he was henceforth to develop: thus she meant to increase his talent by dividing it, just as the prism does with light. I was a witness of the skill with which she transformed the critic into a creator, by turning his attention to the stage, to discussion, and to politics.

Though she opened her salon to such of his friends as she wished to know, and even asked them to dine, she contrived to keep all her own old friends and make them further her designs. M. Jules Lemaître therefore found a circle of friends and a warm hearth all ready to his hand.

There were then in Paris three descendants of Voltaire who had inherited his wit, but with a difference. First came M. Anatole France, who took a slightly satanic delight in his own merciless and all-embracing mockery: a Satan he, destined later to cross swords with the God of battles Himself. Next, harshest and most biting of the three, Francis Magnard, then editor-in-chief of the *Figaro*, a

citizen of Paris like Molière and Regnard, whose formula for wit was: common sense pointed with irony. He was prodigal of such wit day by day in his newspaper, in which he created the famous editorials, continued so successfully by M. Gaston Calmette. Lastly came Ernest Renan, most illustrious of the trio, with the touch of sacerdotalism which had clung to him ever since his time in the seminary: a "disaffected cathedral" was Edmond de Goncourt's clever summary of him. M. Jules Lemaître well deserved to be the fourth of these three musketeers whom Mme de Loynes took such pleasure in assembling on Fridays. The most piquant, the most delightfully ironic of all his articles, was one devoted to an account of one of these evenings, when Victorine Demay, a café-concert singer then very much the fashion, met the author of the *Origins of Christianity*, and the two of them made certain of their ideas public property.

I

A DILETTANTE'S CONVERSION

M. JULES LEMAÎTRE had been delighted to meet Arsène Houssaye and his friend Henry once more. The latter, by the way, never ceased to plume himself at having brought about this conjunction of the stars. He met, too, M. Ernest Daudet, for whom he professed from the beginning great friendship and profound esteem, and M. Biart, the worthy keeper of the records, who enjoyed Mme de Loynes' confidence to such a degree that she appointed him her executor before she died. The dramatists who frequented the house paid him great attention: was he not a great and authorised critic? Sardou even tried to disarm him, but without much effect, for shortly after, when dealing with *La Tosca*, M. Jules Lemaître called him the Caligula of the stage, declaring that "he took us back to the mortal combats of the gladiators, and had a thirst for blood." The future author of *La Bonne Hélène* kept his sweetest smiles for the author of *La Belle Hélène*, for at the time that *L'Abbé Constantin* was being given, he wrote: "One feels oneself grow better as act succeeds to act. The play deals with a Catholicism that is quite attractive, and should bring about a number of conversions."

His own conversion, however, was long in coming.

M. d'Ennery's fresh and witty old age took his fancy, and the *Deux Orphelines* found favour, although his severity was so rarely relaxed. He saw in this play a trick of fate, "which," as he put it, "makes us pass close beside happiness or misfortune, so that we are separated from them merely by some trick of chance."

Mme de Loynes' house was still eclectic. M. Clemenceau and M. Paul Deschanel were alike received, though they had their different days, just as they had their special places on different sides of the house. M. Lemaître was to say later of M. Clemenceau: "I like his cleverness, but I abhor his ideas"; as for M. Deschanel, he had no idea that they would one day sit together under the same dome. Mme de Loynes, however, had her suspicions.

When M. Paul Deschanel was elected to the Académie, she was present at his reception. This was not the sole token of her sympathy upon the occasion—witness the charming note she wrote that very evening to one of her friends:—

"*Feb.* 2, 1900.

"You are quite well again, are you not, my friend? It was sad to see you depressed—you, whom no storm can cast down.

"I was at Deschanel's reception yesterday. Extra select it was, too! There were women, ladies even, standing *en queue* in the courtyard at nine o'clock! My servant saw them as she was going to Pingard's! How silly!

"He was very, very eloquent, and spoke wonderfully, almost too well. His lecture was anti-German, as you will have seen, but extremely French—bravo! It was very English too. I hear that his mother is an Englishwoman. Well! he has the wind with him —what a dream such an existence must be! How far will he go?

"Go out for walks, don't work, don't worry about anything, be calm!

"I am very fond of you. J. DE LOYNES."

She had guessed the course of this brilliant destiny, and was proud of it. Her friendly feelings for M. Deschanel survived political struggles and passions. But, to be quite frank, what first attracted her were the rumours of his conquests in the town and in the boudoir. Women who have been idolised are a little like generals no longer on the active list: they like to hear battles described. It is the smell of powder for the one set, the *odor di femina* for the other. Mme de Loynes found pleasure in drawing confidences from him, as she did later with General Boulanger or the Comte de Castellane. She felt young again while she listened.

If my memory serves me, the above were the first to be invited to Mme de Loynes' Fridays, but she liked her salon to be adorned with new recruits. M. Anatole France brought in one day a tall beardless youth, holding his head high, doing much listening but speaking little, and that in an unmodulated voice with a strong Lorraine accent. M. Maurice Barrès, then twenty-four, had only published a somewhat advanced little play, *Les Taches d'Encre*, and one book, *Sous l'Œil des Barbares.*

Yet real originality was revealed in these first attempts; they contained irony and deep feeling, philosophical vigour of thought and the sudden illuminations and inspired phrases of a poet. A little later, after the appearance of Bourget's famous article, —"Avez-vous lu Barrès?"—these qualities were to make the young author the most important representative and the most prominent leader of his youthful contemporaries.

M. Maurice Barrès was delighted to meet friends of his own age, such as M. André Maurel and M. Auguste Germain, two clever young journalists, in the Rue de l'Arcade, and to pay his respects to his seniors, who treated him affectionately as a young novice in the trade, later to become a brother.

M. Jules Lemaître introduced in his turn a school friend, M. Émile Faguet, of whom he was particularly fond, and a very young dramatist, M. Henri Lavedan, whose rare talent he divined. M. Émile Faguet had not only gone through the École Normale with M. Jules Lemaître, but, like him, had been a professor, had written remarkable descriptions of the great men of the time, and was engaged on a dramatic feuilleton.

In my earlier volume I have described his capacity for work, his fertility, and the inexhaustible resources of a brain formed by study and developed by experience. I will add one word more: he is a good man.

M. Henri Lavedan, son of the autocratic manager of the *Correspondant*, was a youth of five-and-twenty when he made his first appearance, in 1885, with a volume bearing the suggestive title of

Mam'zelle Vertu. The French Académie soon conferred one of the Montyon prizes upon him—a most fitting prelude to the eulogies of M. de Montyon himself, in which everyone knows that M. Lavedan has not been found lacking. Then he invented those rapid dialogues, so brisk, so picturesque, and so curiously alive, which made his fortune. He collaborated in the *Quarts d'heure* at the Théâtre Libre in the heroic year 1887. Mme de Loynes already had an interest in M. André Antoine, and was to have her share in persuading M. Henry Roujon, director of the Beaux-Arts, to appoint him director of the Odéon.

Less than ten years were required to bring M. Lavedan the celebrity he attained at one bound with *Le Prince d'Aurec.* And there has been no check in his successful career.

M. Émile Faguet and M. Henri Lavedan were candidates for the same chair in the Académie. Mme de Loynes had learnt to like and to respect them equally, and she had a little attack of conscience, for Sainte-Beuve had inspired her with a taste for Académie contests, and she always threw herself eagerly into them. Under M. Jules Lemaître's influence, and in spite of all her admiration for M. Lavedan, she became a partisan of Faguet's. M. Henri Lavedan was elected nevertheless, and took a moral revenge by campaigning for M. Faguet when he stood again a few months later. This time he gained his nomination, and Mme de Loynes' salon was the richer by two members of the Académie.

She was a diligent reader of the *Revue Bleue*, to which M. Jules Lemaître was still a regular

contributor. She noticed certain articles in which her friend drew attention to the budding merits of two young authors, and she asked him to introduce M. Grosclaude and M. Alfred Capus to her. M. Alfred Capus had just revealed his powers in his first novel, *Qui perd gagne.* M. Grosclaude was writing the "Humours of the Week" in *Gil Blas*, and his fun was always overflowing, even when the week had been distinctly lacking in humour.

They were the twins of Paris, and our readers of that date cannot have forgotten the articles, so full of go and youthful fantasy, that they published in the *Gaulois* under the pseudonym of Dupuis and Cotonnet.

We know what success in literature awaited them. M. Alfred Capus, still a journalist off and on, has won fame in the novel and, more especially, in the drama: to give a list of his plays would be to write a series of dispatches announcing victories. We may be grateful to M. Grosclaude for deciding to remain a journalist and no more; he has invented a line of his own, so that we say of certain beginners, "He is a Grosclaude." Whenever I hear that wit is dead in France, I proceed to say that as long as Adrien Hébrard, Grosclaude, Capus, and Maurice Donnay, to go no further, are still in the world, it will be as much alive as ever.

Mme de Loynes' salon had thus been reconstituted somewhat after the fashion of decimated regiments, into which are drafted young recruits eager to rival the veterans; the young recruits had brought into this regiment of the elect the breath of the outside world, full of dissatisfaction, scepticism, and irony.

Mme de Loynes had been brought up in the school of the great fighters who struck for the right to freedom of thought: she was of their temperament, shared their frank openness, and admired their mighty strokes. Hence she cared little for fine play of fence, in which the cunning foil feels its way and slips in, whereas the naked sword takes aim and strikes home. Her new friends had not won a firm hold on her allegiance and her faith. She defended against them the tiny blue flower she had picked one morning on the balcony of Jenny the workwoman. It was a fragment of the ideal!

She had met General Boulanger at the house of her friends the d'Ennerys, and he, who could magnetise crowds so well, had taken her captive. She had heard what Prince Napoleon, who had received him at Prangins, thought of him. What would Girardin's opinion have been? She decided to make up her mind upon closer acquaintance, and asked M. Lalou, director of *La France*, to bring him to see her. Boulanger did come, several times. He told her about his campaigns, his relations with M. Clemenceau, his entry into the Government, his reforms in the army, his misery and his patriotic hopes at the time of the Schnœbelé affair. Ernest Baroche, who had died for his country, would have talked in just the same way. She admired Boulanger the patriot.

He went on to tell her of his rupture with M. Clemenceau, his fall from the ministry, his departure by train for Clermont-Ferrand, the ovations he received from the crowd, the intoxication of popularity. He confided to her how he had hurried back to Paris in disguise, not to see his fellow-conspirators

again, but to fly to the sick-bed of the woman he loved, Mme Bonnemains, without thinking of the position he was in, his hopes or his ambitions, since he had been told that she was dying. Baroche would have done just the same. She loved Boulanger for having loved so deeply.

By a strange coincidence, Mme de Bonnemains had taken an old maid of Mme de Loynes' into her service, and Louise had often come to tell her late mistress of the kindness she received from her present one.

M. Jules Lemaître, and certain others of her friends, did not share Mme de Loynes' enthusiasm for the "good general." M. Jules Lemaître still belonged to the *Journal des Débats*; he was thoroughly representative of it—was even the quintessence of its spirit, dignified and sceptical, formal and censorious, which recalled the temper of the great bourgeois of 1830, and Bertin their leader. At the *Débats* dinners, when our friend Nalèche made so excellent a president, M. Jules Lemaître liked to sit next General de Galliffet. The General followed the example of women who spurn their lovers, but never forgive those other women to whom the lovers repair. He was not sufficiently energetic to win popularity, and hated to see it go where it was earned.

This little company of intellectuals made quiet but merciless fun of the blue-eyed, fair-haired general on his black horse, whom Paulus sang; in their eyes there was very little difference between the "Marche à l'Étoile" and Caran d'Ache's "Épopée" at the Chat Noir.

Later on, when the critic became a man of action, and the sceptic showed himself a patriot, M. Jules Lemaître saw that there had been performed upon these stages of the market-place, so rude in his eyes, a great popular drama, with a very noble lady —France herself—for heroine. She had dreamt of Boulanger as her liberator, setting her free from the masters she despised within her borders, and without from the conquerors whom she hated with an eternal hate. The soul of the crowd has mysteries which only the initiated can divine.

How many times has M. Jules Lemaître been heard to say, since his return from Canossa: "I ought to have been a Boulangist. Boulangism was a symbol!"

Mme de Loynes never hoped that a miracle would bring about a sudden change in her friend's mind. She counted upon time, upon the teaching of events, and upon his skill to see the true nature of these and draw the necessary conclusions. His first success was calculated to encourage him, and finally M. Jules Lemaître decided to go on to the stage itself, from the front, where he had been amusing himself by dissecting the ingenious mechanism of the plays, from the wings, where he had noted the tricks of the actors he was one day to make fun of in *Flipote*. He appeared at first as a lecturer. Now that he has become the most popular lecturer in Paris, we may remember that his first lectures at the Odéon gave no promise of the brilliant success that was to attend his courses on J.-J. Rousseau, Racine, Fénelon, and this year's on Chateaubriand, at the Société des Conférences. His study of his subjects

was certainly fine, full of mind and of ideas, but his delivery was sadly defective! It is perfectly true that the man who was to become the first speaker in Paris, whose voice, with its subtle inflections, was to bring out every shade of meaning, and make every point tell and comprehension easy, then spoilt what he said by the way in which he said it. His voice and his eyeglass fell together at the end of every phrase, and the speaker lost himself in his sentences and his papers. The effect was naturally spoilt. Kind Henri de Lapommeraye made a proposal to one of his friends: "Oh! if only he would give me five minutes! I would teach him how to do it!" How to do it! He knows that well enough now — but is it exactly as Henri de Lapommeraye would have taught him?

At last came the day when the critic had seen enough plays by other people to make him say to himself that he could do as well as that himself—better, perhaps, sometimes. There followed a set of delicate comedies, with characters drawn almost as cleverly as Racine's: they were, *Révoltée*, *Le Député Leveau*, *Mariage blanc*, *Le Pardon*, *L'Aînée*, *La Massière*. This brilliant series belonged to a later date. The first performance of *Révoltée* took place in 1889, and its success is well known.

Now that M. Jules Lemaître had become a creator, he multiplied his incarnations. He was in turn literary and dramatic critic, writer of articles in the *Figaro* and the *Temps*, producing delightful *billets du matin*, novelist and popular dramatist. Thanks to the growth of his reputation, he was to see the doors of the Académie open for him of their own

accord, without the least effort on his part, or any need of working for him on Mme de Loynes'.

She was content to be his sweet and familiar spirit. Her horizons were enlarged: now that the first halting-place was passed, others must be attained.

We have shown how clever Mme de Loynes was at renewing her salon perpetually. She felt that she must surround herself with young faces to avoid growing old, yet she had, too, a superstitious attachment to the familiar things in the midst of which she lived, and it cost her a great deal to part from them; had she been a pagan, her sacrifices to the gods of the household would have been frequent. She had lived for nearly thirty years in the Rue de l'Arcade, which she had chosen originally to save her friends a journey from the Place Royale, and she would have been happy to live on amid people and things equally dear to her. But Paris had changed quarters in its turn. Life and movement had been transported to new districts, where the greater number of her friends now lived. It was therefore necessary that she should be transplanted, lest she should die lonely and neglected. She decided to look for a flat in the middle of this new Paris, found one in the Avenue des Champs-Élysées, close to the four crossways at the Étoile, and there established herself.

Although the Champs-Élysées had undergone various transformations since 1850, twenty-five years ago they presented an appearance which was daily altering. One could still walk in the avenue without risking one's life every time one crossed it. On the lower side there were restaurants, cafés, concert-rooms, and theatres, sparsely scattered in an oasis

of green. The Palais d'Industrie, like an unsupported sentinel, seemed to stand up against the encroachment of the modern style. It certainly was not a beautiful building, poor little Palais d'Industrie, but it had housed our first Exhibition and our first horse-show. It was like a friend of one's college days!

Ledoyen's restaurant was hidden behind great clumps of trees, and the Jardin de Paris, which had taken the room of the Besselièvre and Musard concert-rooms, stretched out its walks, trodden by so many pretty feet, as far as the Panorama National, where were exhibited the sad scenes of the terrible year '70.

On the other side, the Ambassadeurs and the Alcazar had a row of gas-lamps over their modest entrances to ensure their being seen. Laurent's restaurant, in its garden setting, side by side with the Folies-Marigny, had the correct appearance of a house that keeps good company, and a few paces farther on the Cirque d'Été stood like a weeping-willow, lamenting its famous Saturdays, now gone for ever, and fearful of immediate demolition.

The Champs-Élysées were thus a green park diversified by charming buildings, each with its garden. To-day nature has desperately to dispute every inch of ground, every thicket, every clump, every tree, almost every leaf, against the buildings which attempt encroachment on all sides. The Jardin de Paris, which ousted the Restaurant de l'Horloge and now occupies its place, extends almost up to the road. Ledoyen's has swollen to bursting,

and the top of the gilded dome of the Palais de Glace rises proudly into the air. Opposite, the Palais Paillard is a white spot at the end of the Élysée gardens; the Folies-Marigny has grown two stories higher, and overlooks and dominates the Avenue Marigny. Lastly, the two Palaces, the large and the small, make a gap in the otherwise uninterrupted Avenue des Champs-Élysées, and turn their ugliest and dullest side towards the passers-by in the Avenue aforesaid, reserving their fine façades for those Parisians who take the trouble to go across the Alexandre Bridge.

When evening comes, all are brightly illuminated and blaze with lights. The Palais de l'Électricité blinds you with wreaths and arches, clusters and pyramids of flame that pursue you to the cross-roads. There the kingdom of the shades would stretch out a desperate hand, were it not for the lighted fronts of various hotels and the illuminated signs of the automobile shops which rend the darkness. Private houses grow rarer day by day: here and there you may find some, such as Païva House, an interesting survival of the Second Empire, lately turned into the Travellers' Club; Sommier House, hidden behind its garden; the Duc de Gramont's elegant mansion; M. Dufayel's magnificent palace; and especially notable, the Duc de Massa's residence, a witness to the fashions of the eighteenth century, with façade and park carefully preserved by the owner.

But, on the other hand, the Avenue has become a regular place for hotels, almost all of which bear a foreign name. The Palace, the Carlton, the Astoria stand side by side with English tea-rooms, bars, and

chemists', grocers', and furniture shops, which have multiplied to any extent. This domain the foreigner has conquered is shared in brotherly fashion with motor-manufacturers from all countries, who have driven the livery-stable keepers and the coach-builders from the houses they used to occupy. This seizure of the most beautiful avenue in the world is characteristic of our century. It is now occupied by the hotel in which the foreigner, master of Paris, instals himself, and by the automobiles which enable Parisians to escape from a Paris which is theirs no longer.

Nothing will check this movement which has driven the life of the town from the Place Royale and the Palais-Royal successively, and now threatens the Place Vendôme; the Bois de Boulogne is already becoming nothing but a huge park in which restaurants and cafés confront you at every corner. The motor-car insists upon longer drives than are possible in the Bois de Boulogne, and whenever new roads put Paris and Saint-Germain, Versailles and Paris in direct communication, the Bois will become a playground for the children of Paris—and goat-carriages will be the only vehicles to be seen! The Municipal Council is always issuing new decrees and by-laws to safeguard the trees and the grass against the invader who threatens them. It is a praiseworthy effort, but even if the torrent is checked for the moment it cannot be stopped altogether.

The Comtesse de Loynes, then, established herself near the Champs-Élysées. Her friends, on their way to the Bois or down the hill to Paris, had only to enter her hospitable door, and from her windows

they could see, upon occasion, the selfsame crowd applauding, with equal energy, the sovereigns who were escorted to the Élysée to pay their respects to the President, or the revolutionaries who were trying to rush upon it to drive him out.

She managed to remain faithful to her worship of her "things," at least. Her flat was an exact reproduction of the one in the Rue de l'Arcade: there were the same pieces of furniture, the same curtains, the same ornaments, the same carpets, the same small treasures, the same flowers, and the same scents. And a tiny fire went on discreetly brightening the hearth both in spring and autumn.

The same arm-chair was close beside the same little table; the mistress of the house had the last number of the same *Revue des Deux Mondes*, or the book of the moment, in her hand.

"Toute chose est encore à la place connue," as Werther sings in the opera by our famous friend Massenet.

She had sacrificed her old-fashioned engravings and hung in their place a few paintings by master-hands, but these were the only new adornments allowed. Amaury Duval's perfect portrait of her was reflected in the mirror over the mantelpiece, which was opposite. She had given it two magnificent companions—the "Flight into Egypt," the best work of that great artist Luc-Olivier Merson, and the "Shulamite," by her great friend, Hébert. And finally, as a delicate attention, she had put on the mantelpiece a superb tinted Aphrodite of Gérôme's.

So when her friends came to the Avenue des Champs-Élysées, they had the pleasing impression

that nothing had been changed; the furnishing of the flat was kept to the same date—that of the wrong Empire, the second, which was far uglier than the first. Ugly furniture, ugly bronzes, ugly trifles, ugly dresses! Mme de Pompadour would have exclaimed, "Oh! what horrors!" and Richelieu have retorted, "For shame!" Yet the passage of time had already conferred a certain distinction upon all these eyesores: the dresses had become costumes of long ago, and the furniture belonged to a period.

Mme de Loynes had made no pretence of a reaction against the fashion for Louis XV. or Louis XVI. which floods our houses with diamond panes, imitation mirrors, arched doorways, ceilings and panels crowded with pastry-cook ornamentation, and furniture called old and all desperately alike. Only she knew the value of habit, and remembered a profound saying by a dramatist who was one of her friends: "The public only likes the plays with which it is familiar." She had resolved that the attention of her guests should not be distracted by anything new, and that the conversation interrupted in the Rue de l'Arcade should seem to be continued in the Avenue des Champs-Élysées.

Conversation certainly did continue. A newcomer took his share—and what a talker M. Maurice Donnay was! M. Jules Lemaître had gone to meet him at the Chat Noir one day, and had brought him back, still bubbling with wit, to the Avenue des Champs-Elysées.

The Chat Noir! I wonder if all my readers have heard of this cabaret, descended as it was from the abbey of Thelema? Just midway between the

Paris of the day, which works and thinks, and the Paris of the night, which forgets itself and plays the fool, the Chat Noir, run by a "gentleman," Rodolphe Salis, revived the fashion for cabarets among the artistic set. That ingenious seller of lemonade had conceived the idea of reawakening the Muse of Montmartre, who had been more than half asleep for a long time, and of offering Parisians—or providing them with—a mixture of humour and chaff, half Bohemian and half artistic, which blended the tradition of romanticism with that of the Caves of Harmony. He was very clever at collecting artists — Caran d'Ache, Villette, Henri Rivière: singers, such as MacNab, author of two masterpieces still popular, "Le Bal de l'Hôtel de Ville" and "L'Expulsion des Princes"; Jules Jouy, whose gloomy ditties had a touch of the absurd which the most melancholy could not resist; real musicians like Fragerolle; and poets like our friend Jean Rameau.

But the stroke of genius was a shadow-show. On a small sheet at the end of the little hall filled with spectators and blue cigarette-smoke appeared small silhouettes artistically cut. Salis supplied the patter, unless the author himself recited his composition in verse or prose.

It was just at the time when the glories of the Napoleonic era were beginning to appeal to our imaginations again. The Chat Noir added its voice, in its own special way, to the chorus of popular enthusiasm. Caran d'Ache's "Épopée" corresponded, in the art of the theatre, to Meissonier's "Dix-huit cent quatorze" in historical painting. Thus at the beginning of its career the Chat Noir suddenly

rose to the sublime: it was perfect, provided you departed at dawn and did not confuse the heights of the Butte with those of Olympus. For instance, one evening in January 1891, in this same little theatre, there was given a whole series of sarcastic and delightful pictures recalling the story of Phryne, in a modernised version by the authors of *La Belle Hélène*. While the accompanist softly played the setting, the author, standing, with his elbow on the piano, recited verses—verses by a satirist and verses by a poet—in an almost toneless voice, with a smile that was hardly visible hovering about his mouth. The author was M. Maurice Donnay.

M. Jules Lemaître was in the first row, applauding with all his might. Would you care to have his own recollections of one of these evenings? This is how he described it a few years later:—

"I always see him as he was the first time he recited his verses in the tiny Chat Noir theatre, with his brown face, blue-black hair, soft dark eyes, sweet mouth half-hidden by his drooping moustache, and lazy, caressing voice. I compared him at once with a mandarin from Annam, because he looked like one, and also because he seemed, like an educated man of the yellow races, to be subtle, indolent, pleasure-loving, and a believer in a very refined and very cheerful form of nihilism."

This was the new guest whom M. Jules Lemaître had brought to Mme de Loynes. He became a regular attendant at the Friday dinners, and his fun was one of the best things they offered.

When he thus came down sometimes from the Butte, M. Maurice Donnay hardly suspected that the

Avenue des Champs-Élysées was the best way to the Académie; but so it was.

M. Maurice Donnay had ambitions for larger theatres than that of the Chat Noir. He made a tremendous success with *Lysistrata*, and even more so with *Les Amants*, in which those two incomparable actors, Mme Granier and M. Guitry, showed unequalled mastery of their art, and again in the *Retour de Jérusalem*, which brought about a minor revolution. The author certainly did not deny any of the ideas that were known to be his, but he was an artist first of all. He cared far more that his play should deserve success than for any scandal which might arise with regard to it. He read his play at Mme de Loynes' house, and when he had finished, he asked his friend M. Jules Lemaître: "Well, what do you think of it?"

As answer, M. Jules Lemaître might again have given his friend to read the lines he had devoted to him in the *Débats* in 1891:

"In M. Maurice Donnay's symbolic *Ailleurs!* you will find translated into life some of the most cherished ideals of M. Lavisse and M. de Vogüé, those two accepted guides of contemporary youth. For, to please the first, the old young men who are symbolists and pessimistic are treated with generous scorn; and to please the second, we have traces of a vaguely evangelistic point of view—a Christ appears who is perfectly well-disposed towards our modern world, and the dawn of a new age is hailed with joy. *And the author has managed to include a little fashionable anti-semitism and neatly put socialism, in order to please enlightened men of the world.*"

In this delicately ironical fashion did M. Jules Lemaître contrive to convey an attitude of mind entirely scornful in matters of social life and of religion. But these ironies of 1891 were all to be cast aside, like parts of a costume which no longer fitted his new shape; the hour was at hand when his mind was to rise to all the heights of a burning faith in his country and in the army. Such a change is not a rare one with great thinkers and great writers, and with M. Jules Lemaître it was the mark of a growing soul.

One day, when something was said before M. Émile Faguet about a fresh incarnation of his friend M. Jules Lemaître, he remarked: "Yes, Lemaître is serving his five years."

It was a pretty way of putting it. We might add, with M. Faguet's permission, that his future fellow-member of the Académie earned a fresh stripe every time he re-enlisted.

At first a Republican pure and simple, he became a liberal Republican, and, very nearly, one who upheld the plebiscite. The future president of the "Patrie Française" and the president of the "Ligue des Patriotes" met at Florence. Déroulède recited Vergil to him. Then they admired the Pitti Palace and the Uffizi in company, and this brought them together. M. Jules Lemaître began to think of the companion with whom he went to the museums as something more than a mere demagogue. He even got to the point of thinking that there might be something in the teaching of those who believed in the plebiscite, provided their advocate was a lover of Vergil and had won a prize for Latin verse.

On his side, M. Paul Déroulède had an impression that this superior person, who would not make up his mind, would do his duty resolutely as soon as he saw what it was: just at the moment he was in search of it. Boulangism had made him smile; the sentence passed on Rochefort, unfairly implicated in a Royalist pseudo-conspiracy, had filled him with wrath. Rochefort, who exposed Napoleon III., Rochefort the prisoner of Numea, always and from the beginning a Republican, exiled by Republicans! What ingratitude! What a scandal! And what a far worse scandal was the Panama affair!

M. Jules Lemaître went definitely against the Parliament when M. Jules Delahaye mounted the platform to denounce the Hundred and Four Members. And when he saw France mourning and humiliated behind the screen upon which our friend M. Maurice Barrès, in a splendid transport of righteous indignation, had held them up to public scorn, he became as hot a patriot as the president of the League himself. The feelings which stirred him are reflected in an article he wrote upon *Messire Duguesclin*, Paul Déroulède's splendid play, which was performed in 1895:

"I care greatly for patriotic poetry, but I care for it according to its beauty, and I prefer to read it modestly alone, not to hear it thundered by an actor. I was therefore slightly unhappy the other evening; but when I thought the matter over, I saw that my feelings were too circumscribed. After all, and putting literary merit on one side, what we were cheering was Courage, Purity, Faith, Heroism, France and the French Army, and these are actually more

interesting and more affecting than plastic beauty, or even than truth and depth of dramatic presentation. I was a little ashamed at realising how far superior to mine on this occasion were the ideas of the audience—which most assuredly contained no girls, no holiday-makers, or mischief-makers either, no slippery politicians, no cads in the topmost gallery —and so I clapped like my neighbours."

M. Jules Lemaître, then, applauded M. Paul Déroulède under emotions shared with his neighbours, thus refusing to allow his reason to refine upon his heart any longer, and avoiding unnecessarily delicate distinctions. He had become a nationalist like his neighbours, and when Dreyfusism fell upon France like a cyclone to rend, divide, and destroy God, the motherland, and the army, he became violently militarist. The dilettante's conversion was achieved. Mme de Loynes looked for the moment, now close at hand, when the man of action should eliminate the critic.

It was about this time that a friend of both of us took me to Mme de Loynes' house again. I had been introduced to her by Émile de Girardin shortly before his death. She had expressed displeasure at an unlucky piece of gossip published in the *Gaulois* without my knowledge, and I had been mistaken enough to avoid her house: now I was delighted to find myself within it again.

She made no allusion to the trifling incident which had separated us. As before, she was all grace, all charm and ready welcome. She begged me to come often to see her, adding that in her house I should only meet friends who exalted the ideas I was upholding and she in love with.

I had come across M. Jules Lemaître fairly often, and though I admired his gifts I did not know him personally. I had been told that he did more listening than speaking, that his opinions and his feelings were alike undecided, and that everything about him, even his smile, was blunt in outline. Had he then been transfigured? M. Jules Lemaître took a frank delight in the anecdotes which were retailed on all sides; upon due occasion he made clever remarks, always very much to the point and often somewhat wicked—like his friend Donnay, there was in him a touch of the Paris street-urchin, but of a street-urchin who had been to school with Aristophanes. And he was particularly simple and natural.

There is, by the way, one point which I should like to record, as I was able to make careful observations upon it. During the whole course of the Dreyfus affair, when every passion was let loose, among all the great literary men who had taken their stand upon the question, I never saw the least affectation, the least desire to scandalise the respectable citizen. They were living through their country's tragedy, not presenting it upon the stage.

People are fond of saying that authors are always posing, even to themselves; love, suffer, and struggle with an eye on the gallery, and when they make their emotions public are only preoccupied with the article that has to come out; they are fond, too, of wresting from their real meaning and applying to them those lines of profound disillusion which Louis Bouilhet wrote to the address of poets like Byron and Alfred de Musset, who shrouded themselves in their sorrows in would-be romantic fashion:

"Je déteste surtout le barde à l'œil humide,
Qui regarde une étoile en murmurant un nom,
Et pour qui la nature immense serait vide,
S'il ne portait en croupe ou Lisette ou Ninon."

The intellectuals of the Right would be much upset at being confused with poets, and M. Jules Lemaître never dreamt of assuming the attitude of the gladiator of antiquity. They remained simply what they were, good Frenchmen and great writers.

M. Jules Lemaître went on with his feuilletons in the *Débats*, and had the pleasure of praising the success of his future colleague in the Nationalist cause and in the Académie, M. Henri Lavedan, in the *Prince d'Aurec*. He himself made a success at the Vaudeville with *Le Député Leveau*, at the Français with *Mariage blanc*, and at the Gymnase with *Le Pardon* and *L'Aînée*. If politics had gained a vigorous fighter, literature had not lost one of her finest champions.

Mme de Loynes was quite pleased that her salon should assume a tendency towards politics, but had no desire that the latter should absorb it altogether. Up to the moment when a definite rupture took place, she was working, with perfect tact and skill, to make the transition from yesterday's opinions and to-day's an easy matter, and to smooth intercourse between friends who had not as yet become each other's opponents.

M. Anatole France still came to dinner on Fridays. One evening he announced that he meant to dramatise the *Lys Rouge*, as he wanted to work for the theatre like his friend M. Paul Hervieu, whom he greatly admired. In *Crainquebille*, M. Anatole France showed that a writer of the first rank recognises

no boundaries. He was not sparing of congratulations to his colleague François Coppée, who had just done brilliantly at the Odéon with *Pour la Couronne*, or of compliments to Henry Houssaye upon his desertion of the Parthenon for the Panthéon. In *Dix-huit cent quatorze*, and *Dix-huit cent quinze*, Henry Houssaye had lately woven coronals for Napoleon, after having crowned Alcibiades with roses. This dinner—a feast for Girondins—was the last at which M. Anatole France was present.

Sardou announced a prompt revival of *Madame Sans-Gêne*, and was very proud of it. Still, he expressed his sorrow at having unintentionally hurt the feelings of Princesse Mathilde, for whom he professed particular regard. At the first appearance of *Madame Sans-Gêne*, Princesse Mathilde had been so hurt at the conversation the author ascribed to the princesses of the Bonaparte family that she went away without waiting for the end of the act.

At the dinner which followed M. Jules Lemaître's election to the Académie, there was an ice made in the shape of an Academician's hat, and the sword was beside it in icing-sugar: was this mere chance, or prophecy?

M. Henry Roujon rose to address M. Jules Lemaître in a very neat little speech. M. Henry Roujon is one of the daintiest wits of our day, and is one of the best men we can ever hope to meet. He did not share the opinions popular in Mme de Loynes' house, so there was a little arrangement between them. It was settled that in his presence only those topics on which the company could agree should be introduced, never those which might cause division; I

have witnessed the loyalty with which this compact was carried out.

One Friday, M. Jules Lemaître was just back from Tavers. He had taken refuge with his mother from the last of the hard labour imposed upon candidates. He told us that he had had with him Heredia's *Trophées*, Bourget's *Disciple*, and Barrès' *Déracinés*, three magnificent works between which his admiration was divided, and Pierre Loti's last books, of which he said: "I read them lying on my mother-earth, and got quite intoxicated."

Faguet rose to hyperbole when speaking of the first night of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, saying that he did not know whether he admired Rostand most or the spectators who had applauded him, and adding: "I should have liked to kiss that enthusiastic audience on its two thousand cheeks."

Mme de Loynes did not conceal the impression that M. Édouard Drumont's lecture—"La France juive"—had made upon her. She had sent congratulations through a friend to this great professor of anti-Semitism. She was, it is true, not anti-Semitic in the exclusive and violent sense forced later upon this word by a certain school, for she belonged to a period in which all Frenchmen lived together in pleasant relations, when majorities were not oppressive, or minorities insubordinate, when differences of race and of religion were ignored, in short. Later, she agreed with all proper persons in thinking that certain Jew politicians, by putting the welfare of a single individual and the interest of their race before the sacred cause of their country, had disregarded the debt of gratitude they owed to France

—France, which had received all Jews upon conditions they could find nowhere else.

The pleasant peace which Mme de Loynes, most perfect of hostesses, had tried so hard to maintain, was about to be rudely disturbed. Already jarring notes had made themselves heard, relations had been broken off. One morning a furious flood spread with awful sound right over the half-awakened town. Thousands upon thousands of ragamuffins were shouting the famous pamphlet *J'accuse!* at every street corner. With the hand that had corrected la Mouquette, M. Zola smote France in her tenderest spot—her adoration of the army. At which affront all right-thinking persons felt the blood rise to their cheeks: from that moment France saw red.

I was dining with Mme de Loynes on the evening that Coppée, still by no means recovered from it, told us of a visit he had had paid him.

"Yes, my friends, Zola actually came to ask me to join his brigade of intellectuals and proclaim Alfred Dreyfus' innocence. Thus I had a sort of rough draft of his wretched production, for he told me what its main lines were to be. Oh! I was much troubled, deeply moved. I like Zola, and I admire his huge powers. He is my old literary comrade, my master. I canvassed for him when he stood for the Académie, and now I feel that we are going to be separated for ever. I said—I even screamed—everything that my heart prompted, to turn him from his horrible plan. I did my best to prove to him that his work would be less a piece of special pleading for Dreyfus than an impious attack upon the army; that there were no probabilities that

his client was innocent, whereas it was absolutely certain that France was. Zola was immovable. I came to an end of my arguments, and hurled at his head a sentence that I hoped would settle the matter. 'You have all your public against you, you poor fellow,' I said. 'You'll not sell a single book!' I really thought he was going to give in. He thought for a long time, but finally said in tragic tones: 'You're right—but I have given my word.'

"To whom? What had he promised? It is a terrible enigma, and my friendship forbids me to attempt a solution."

There Coppeé stopped. We were all profoundly stirred, and M. Jules Lemaître was the most indignant of us all. How far off seemed those Friday dinners at which M. Anatole France would end a discussion with the words: "What does all that matter if one looks at it from the height of Sirius?" and M. Jules Lemaître would follow with the echo: "After all, why not?" We had not the least suspicion that we were doomed to assist at a spectacle which, even if it were viewed from Sirius, would raise a shudder of horror even in the most callous!

First came Zola's inquiry, then Félix Faure's mysterious death, the scandal of the High Court, the opening of the gates of power to a Socialist by Waldeck-Rousseau, who had been a moderate Republican, the suicide of Colonel Henry, the revision, the reinstatement of Dreyfus, the disorganisation of our army, the ruin of our fleet, the humiliation of Fashoda, the rise to power of Combes, André, and Pelletan, the division of the loaves and fishes, the accusation, the death of Syveton, the Imperial action

at Tangier and our humiliation, the separation of Church and State, the expulsion of the congregations, the spoliation of churches and convents, the scandal of the inventories, the blood-stained repression of strikes, the submission to the C.G.T., when the tricolor was lowered to the red flag, the revolt of the vine-dressers of the Aube, and, to crown this splendid record on the part of the Republic, the capitulation of France and her cession of part of her territory in the Congo without fighting in its defence. Truly, a very chamber of horrors!

Zola's declaration of war was final, and obliged every one to take his place in the fighting line. His fife served to call all good Frenchmen to arms—M. Paul Deschanel is quite rich enough to forgive us for borrowing from one of his recent speeches, though it is true that he applied the phrase to Herr von Kiderlen Waechter.

Hard as it was for her to go against old friends, Mme de Loynes never hesitated. The firm yet simple attitude she adopted henceforward, the preponderating influence she exerted upon those around her on behalf of the ideals we love, should win for her, as I declared at the beginning of my little book, esteem beyond the circle of her friends, the esteem of all those who willingly do reverence to active and persistent courage in a being all made of weakness and of charm. For the future she never separated two desires equally dear to her—fame for her friend M. Jules Lemaître, and safety for her country. She connected the two, even confused them. She foresaw the great conflict, and was not much afeared. As M. Jules Lemaître was a writer

and a poet, she wished him to hearten the troops into battle, as did Tyrtæus; possibly she desired yet further that he should guide them to victory. Was not this a trespass upon the domain of Providence? We shall see later.

III

THE AMBITIONS OF A PATRIOTIC FRENCHWOMAN

"LONG live the 'Patrie Française'!" "Long live the army!" "Long live Jules Lemaître!" were the shouts that might have been heard on Friday, Jan. 13th, 1899, in the dining-room in the Avenue des Champs-Élysées. M. Jules Lemaître's smile was sarcastic no longer; on this occasion his laugh rang heartily.

He returned thanks from his place at the table, declaring that his friend François Coppée, honorary president of the "Patrie Francaise," was far better than he at ardent improvisations. François Coppée jumped up, threw away his eternal cigarette, and managed to find a faltering voice with which to congratulate M. Jules Lemaître upon his acceptance of the position of president of the "Patrie Française," which was to combine all centres of resistance against the enemies of our country.

These enthusiastic shouts, these toasts, found an echo in Mme de Loynes' heart. She listened, as usual—but what joy was there, what triumph, in her silence! Now at last in her house, round this table where, for so many long years, the conversation had toyed with subjects that were light, witty, and frivolous, was the discourse to take flight and soar to the topmost summits in political affairs.

Closing her eyes, she saw Prince Napoleon once more. When the great Emperor's nephew had met her first, he might himself have become Emperor had he taken Émile de Girardin's advice; unfortunately, he had used his extraordinary intellect only to lower himself in rank. She looked at M. Jules Lemaître; when she first knew him, he was a most eminent critic; since, he had become an author, a playwright, a popular lecturer, and this son of humble and worthy citizens of Tavers might possibly yet be ranked with the rulers of history. The Comtesse de Loynes was realising the most ambitious dreams of the Dame aux Violettes.

She had not tried to conceal her delight when she had been asked to use her influence to persuade M. Jules Lemaître to accept the honorary presidency of the "Patrie Française." She had declared: "I will get him to do it," and had thanked M. Barrès for having carried self-sacrifice to the point of refusing this position for himself, and suggesting his friend M. Jules Lemaître as best fitted to occupy it.

So, as the architect plants a flag upon the summit of some completed building, she thought of the time when she would be able to float a banner, her country's banner with its three colours, over her own completed work.

M. Maurice Barrès certainly did not decline responsibility. His soul rose to the height of any duty, just as his talents and his character made him worthy of the first place. Our readers will remember his modest first appearances at Mme de Loynes' house. He was twenty-seven, I think, when he made a more sensational one in the Chamber, where

he attained recognition without any attempt to force his way. He made discreet and occasional inroads upon the sphere of politics, confining himself to calling attention, with much cleverness and good sense, to abuse of power, especially with regard to men employed by the authorities. He felt that it might be dangerous to venture upon great achievements without a proper acquaintance with the platform. He was not rash enough to attempt it, but chiefly devoted himself to compelling the attention of his adversaries before engaging them. He left the Chamber without doing himself justice; his retirement was useful, however, and when he returned to his place as a deputy for Paris, after M. Archdeacon's much lamented death, he returned likewise to reap a popularity of which he had sown the seed, and soon contrived to acquire an authority which assured him a hearing and applause even from his opponents. In recent debates he has risen to the level of the greatest and the bravest of orators.

However, the Dreyfus affair had already caused deep division in our country. On the one side those who styled themselves "intellectuals" apparently refused to admit that it was possible to put one's country above a certain ideal of justice, whereof they claimed to possess the formula. On the other hand, there were others who considered that love of country should come above all things, and that it was impossible, without committing a crime, to maintain in face of it any action, any ideal, any feeling, even though convinced of the excellence of the said act, ideal, or feeling.

It must also be owned that at that time, already

distant, the idea of country had lost its distinction; every one knew that the rulers of the Republic had made up their minds to give up, undergo, or accept anything whatever, without making the least attempt to draw the sword. It was the hour of the intellectuals, of those who dreamed of making France into a Byzantium where learned pundits controlled generals, and there was no difference between a soldier and a police-constable. For a long time, and with curious rigour, our governments had been applying the old principle "cedant arma togæ," and university graduates, believing that at last the time had come for making certain the triumph of free thought over enslaved soul, of mufti over the military uniform, gathered themselves together round a man whom they professed to consider a scape-goat, and resolutely gave battle to military and patriotic France.

Very many of them, of course, had not any idea of damaging their country, but they had what they thought was a new idea of it—one that had taken shape in far-away times, when nations weary of military glory made up their minds to slumber in an atmosphere of literary research and philosophic controversy.

MM. Havet, Séailles, Gaston Paris, Psichari, Zola, Anatole France, etc., undertook to work this anti-militarist change in their country, and the Dreyfus affair seemed a means, to some extent providential, of realising their aim.

They set to work and tried every method in order to shake public opinion and turn it into the new path, addressing themselves in the first place to professors

and to authors; the battle joined round Dreyfus, the victim of the chief commanders of the army.

Possibly those who conducted the campaign did actually believe in the innocence of the man whom the courts-martial had condemned, but that is not the main point. They aimed higher, and had a purpose beyond reinstating Dreyfus: the new France, the France of the intellectuals, was attempting to establish itself upon the ruins of a military barbarism, and the kingdom of the mind was to be set up once the kingdom of brute force had been destroyed. We saw later what was the revenge taken by force.

Very many were led away by this new doctrine in which so much was heard of truth and justice; an even greater number, however, were astounded at seeing Europe—the whole world, almost—grow wildly excited over a matter no one, save those who had gone into it judicially, could really understand, and cry shame upon the courts-martial which had sentenced Dreyfus.

Meanwhile another party had been silently growing. When those who had passed through the Écoles Normales rose *en masse*, and brought their caste spirit and their scorn of those they called Bœotians to the aid of Dreyfusism, a counter-demonstration, genuinely national, was promptly arranged. M. Judet, in the *Petit Journal*, was one of the first exponents of the country's opposition.

Still, he was reluctant to throw himself into the thick of the fight: not that he had any doubts whatever as to his own opinions, or that he shrank from exposure to danger. He was writing in a paper he did not control; and, although he was given an

absolutely free hand, he was reluctant to embroil it in the quarrel into which his own feelings were urging him. However, he finally made up his mind to take the step; and no one led the fight with more power, ardour, and real daring. He leads it still in the *Éclair*, which he is calmly conducting on the same lines.

M. Henri Simond, director of the *Echo de Paris*, upheld the same ideas with equal clearness and courage, but in more methodical fashion. Although still quite young, he had complete control of himself, and devoted his time to studying mankind and learning to appraise affairs at their proper value. When M. Jules Lemaître left the *Figaro*, he hastened to put him in the first rank of his staff.

And M. Jules Lemaître at once undertook a campaign worthy of all praise. He threw remorseless light upon the shady underside of the Dreyfus affair, showing with his usual cleverness that the camp of those who claimed to be defending France against the split with which she was threatened, contained none but persons from the elementary schools. He encouraged those of the intellectuals who did not nurse the dream of an anti-militarist decadence. Before long a certain number of professors, strongly opposed to the "deliquescents" of the Institute, determined to give a dinner to M. Judet, and employ the occasion to disentangle the idea of patriotism definitely and clearly from the sophisms behind which it had been intentionally veiled. They were not, actually speaking, anti-Dreyfusards, but they were absolutely resolved upon defending their country, which, they knew, was menaced by these so-called

intellectuals, recruited for the most part from persons foreign to our country, our traditions, and our temperament. In their front line stood Zola—Zola of whom M. Barrès wrote: "This man is no Frenchman; a frontier lies between him and me. What frontier? The Alps!"

They came to an understanding and formed their party, but they needed a leader. M. Jules Lemaître seemed the very man, with his talents, his experience of former campaigns, and a position in the Académie which enabled him to oppose M. Anatole France.

He was approached and asked to stand, but hesitated, declaring that Coppée was far better fitted than himself, and that he must be chosen. M. Barrès said to M. Dausset: "There is only one person, Mme de Loynes, who can overcome these scruples of M. Jules Lemaître's, which would do him so much credit on any other occasion." We have already referred to her share in the matter. She did not hesitate for a moment, and managed to persuade M. Jules Lemaître. Still, before definitely committing himself, he requested that the honorary presidency should be reserved for Coppée, and that the first meeting of the "Patrie Française" should take place at his house.

IV

THE STAFF OF THE "PATRIE FRANÇAISE"

On 27th January 1899, in the full tide of the Dreyfus affair, was founded the "Patrie Française." Its first officials were: M. François Coppée, hon. president; M. Jules Lemaître, president; M. Louis Dausset, general secretary; MM. Maurice Barrès, Brunetière, Marcel Dubois, de Mahy, representatives; M. Gabriel Syveton, treasurer; M. Henri Vaugeois, assistant secretary. On the committee were MM. Cavaignac, Clunet, Detaille, Forain, Vincent d'Indy, Colonel Monteil, and Rambaud, an ex-minister. It certainly was a staff of the elect!

The third of its rules defined the purpose of the association: to maintain and strengthen patriotic feeling and reverence for the national army, and to observe and oppose foreign interference and propaganda. Was there ever a nobler programme?

Coppée took the chair at the meeting in his own house, and was full of excitement and enthusiasm. Paul Déroulède sent a letter conveying his sympathy to the "Patrie Française."

Déroulède, as we have said before, was a Republican, and does not care who knows it; he is one from patriotic motives, and that is somewhat difficult to understand. He grew up at a time when belief in the virtues of our great predecessors was

still an article of faith for true democrats, and when every one had a reckless trust in volunteer armies never wearied of victory.

From another point of view, the word republic had a magical and irresistible power over him. He has sought his republic in vain, and does so still, much disheartened at having hitherto failed to find it. No one is more severe upon the succession of self-seekers, exploiters of the public need, and figure-heads who under this name have governed our country. And yet before Joan of Arc's statue he could solemnly excommunicate patriotic Frenchmen, whom he liked and respected, on behalf of these persons of doubtful reputation whom he hated and despised.

His mistake lies in his refusal to attack the holders of power except with a Republican army, and to realise that any revolution is doomed to failure unless it has the active or passive support of Frenchmen of all parties.

Déroulède could be the popular leader of the whole of the opposition; instead, he contents himself with being the central figure in a group of Republicans, discontented, indeed, but not wholly disillusioned.

He was finely inspired at Reuilly, when he tried to carry General Roget off to the Élysée, but he never took into account the useless nature of any undertaking without a definite object. His plan was to strike a sudden blow at the Republicans—without the assistance of the enemies of the Republic. He was much taken aback at not finding at Reuilly the general for whom he was waiting, the said general having turned aside towards Paris, possibly because he understood Déroulède's intentions.

Déroulède was quite willing to stand to his defeat, but he remembered Ducrot's declaration just before Champigny—"I will come back in death or in victory"—and did not wish to make himself ridiculous.

Nor was he. His acquittal by the jury, the scandal of his summons before the High Court, the abominable verdict for which M. Fallières, though President of the Congress, was not afraid to vote, his exile, his regrettable duel with Buffet, his triumphal return to Paris, his voluntary and honourable retirement, not made altogether final, are all matters of the history of yester-year.

Paul Déroulède, when he sent his assurance of support to the "Patrie Française," wished to make it clear that he saw that the work of this league was quite different from his own—which had a good deal of retaliation about it. He became the right wing of the "Patrie Française," the protest of patriotic intellectualism against intellectualism that was international. He felt all this so strongly, that his inseparable, the excellent M. Marcel Habert, went to see Mme de Loynes, assured her of his sympathy and his admiration for M. Jules Lemaître, and remarked: "Funds will be needed for this dinner that is being arranged. I should like to be the first subscriber, and will give a thousand francs."

M. Marcel Habert often came to see Mme de Loynes, for he as a Frenchman had understood her as a Frenchwoman. He was born to play leading parts, for he possessed courage and talent, the two master-qualities which decide an ambitious man's career. He preferred to link his fate with Dérou-

lède's, play second fiddle, and take the second place. He believed that Déroulède would find occasion to reform the Republic, and that events would grant to him the position he had every right to claim, and therefore he quietly and nobly effaced himself before what he considered his duty as a patriot. Déroulède had not only the gifts of a leader; he was, besides, absolutely made of strength and energy, and determined to persuade men or to beguile them. MM. Maurice Barrès, Gauthier de Clagny, Henri Galli,—municipal councillor to-day, deputy to be, and always a patriot,—Millevoye, who is not heard on the platform half often enough, all these, to mention no more, have what amounts to devotion for him.

Thursday, January 19th, should be a date remembered by the "Patrie Française." It was their first full meeting in the hall of the Agriculteurs de France. M. Jules Lemaître was to make a speech.

More than fifteen hundred people—all of them highly distinguished in literature, science, or art—were present at this first meeting. François Coppée was received with cheers, and proceeded to thank the members for the readiness with which they had come. "I will not," he said, "try to invent fine phrases to express our gratitude. I simply tell you what we feel in our hearts."

Then M. Jules Lemaître rose to speak. In words of rare fitness he explained the reasons which had led to the formation of the league of the "Patrie Française"—"The league is to confound the famous 'affair.'" It was formed for this purpose, but, added the speaker, it is to outlast the "affair." "One day," he said, "we decided to reassure all worthy people

by showing them that all the intellectuals were not on the other side. We have most abundantly proved it, I think, and to-day's manifestation must have others to follow."

François Coppée asked the meeting to confirm the powers of the provisional committee, and this was done unanimously; with equal unanimity MM. Cavaignac and Forain and Colonel Monteil were added as members. The scene was one of wild enthusiasm.

It was asked whether Mme de Loynes were present at the meeting; she was, sitting in a balcony, the only one in the hall. "There she is! there she is!" might be heard on all sides, and all eyes were turned towards the little box she had entered with her faithful companion Mme Pauline, who was known and respected by all who came to the house in the Avenue des Champs-Élysées. Retiring as she was, Mme de Loynes could not escape the sympathetic curiosity aroused by her presence. She seemed somewhat troubled by it; and yet——

This striking inauguration of the "Patrie Française" was her own work, long fondly dreamed of, and realised at last. Her influence was acknowledged, but even yet it remained discreet. She had her share in the settlement of every problem; and though she was certainly gratified that it should be noticed, yet, with somewhat excessive coyness, she preferred that this should not be openly done. She made no mistake as to the line she was to take; meetings at her house became customary, and on her part she made a habit of keeping the leading members of the "Patrie Française" to *déjeuner*. Here were discussed the

subjects to be dealt with in Paris and in the provinces by the speakers of the "Patrie Française."

There were in the league two rival influences: that of Syveton, ardent and impulsive, and that of M. Dausset, more moderate and more reflective.

M. Dausset had neither the appearance nor the instincts of a party man. One of the first to initiate the nationalist movement, he presented a strong contrast, morally and physically, to M. Syveton, his colleague at the university. Syveton was phlegmatic, distant, and somewhat haughty; M. Dausset, on the contrary, was lively, pleasant, and modest. He was a Republican, and is one still, but became a revolutionary by force of reason, when events proved that the spirit of true conservatism was to be found outside the Chambers, and that our country could only regain her strength when those to whom she had apparently entrusted her future should be overthrown.

Mme de Loynes saw his real nature beneath the peaceful outside of the university man, and undertook to have him elected president of the Municipal Council, against M. Paul Escudier. She succeeded in her enterprise, though success seemed hardly possible, and M. Dausset was the chosen candidate.

M. Escudier had qualities, notwithstanding, which made him well worthy of the suffrages of all good Frenchmen. He showed an inclination towards those men of moderate views who, without opposing the Republic, upheld those ideas of order and social stability upon which the Republic, then as now, was making ferocious attacks. He looked very much like Henri IV.; and as he had taken to heart that great king's lessons, his "violent amour" for his country

would have made him accept beforehand, as fair and honourable, transactions which others, more violent, would wrathfully have rejected.

He was almost too moderate, and M. Dausset was elected instead, because he was supposed to take a far greater interest in new departures. After M. Dausset's term of office, M. Escudier occupied the president's chair, and showed that he could take the national side without being exclusively a nationalist.

At that time, besides, nationalism was high in popular favour, and its victories at the municipal elections seemed to make a triumph certain in the approaching general election.

The Tsar's visit to France was rather a hindrance to the movement which had begun to take shape throughout France. He was the guest of the Government, therefore the Government benefited from the great popularity the Russian sovereign acquired among us.

Was it possible to repudiate a form of government to which our ally was publicly paying homage? The mass of the people knew nothing of diplomatic requirements, or of the obligations to which our Imperial friend had to submit. To the Tsar, the Government was France herself; and, as was becoming, he gave his hand to those who were her official representatives.

If Nicholas II. went through a certain amount of disillusion while he was at Compiègne, he contrived to conceal it for the sake of the alliance. He saw that he was prevented from going to Paris, in spite of his promise, to punish Paris for not thinking and feeling exactly as did M. Waldeck-Rousseau. It was only when at St. Petersburg, after his return home,

that he learnt of the step taken by M. Dausset, president of the Municipal Council.

On Sept. 19th, 1901, M. Dausset betook himself to Compiègne, accompanied by his principal secretary, intending to repeat in person the invitation the committee of the council had sent to His Majesty.

It was five o'clock when M. Dausset reached Compiègne, to learn that the Imperial train was two hours late. Under such circumstances the president of the Municipal Council could only await the Emperor's return, and this was what he did. At eight, he went to the château, only to be opposed by the strictest orders. He then asked to see M. Waldeck-Rousseau. The President of the Council had just sat down to dinner with the President of the Republic, and one of his secretaries came to convey to M. Dausset the regrets of the President of the Council at being unable to receive him.

M. Dausset then left his card, in order that the Tsar should be informed of the courteous approach that had been made him, but I am assured that the card never reached him. On this occasion M. Dausset showed himself to be a true Mayor of Paris, a faithful interpreter of the feelings of the country.

MM. Jules Lemaître and François Coppée redoubled their efforts. It may be said that they poured out floods of eloquence all over France, while other speakers, moved by the same zeal and inspired by the same patriotic fervour, made the good cause familiar everywhere. These speakers were MM. Maurice Barrès, F. Brunetière, General Mercier, Marcel Dubois, René Doumic, Syveton, Dausset, and Vaugeois.

Politics had made M. Jules Lemaître a fighter, and he

fought on, often winning the victory with the weapons that his studies had furnished for peaceable literary journeys. He was an extempore speaker, and it is greatly to his credit that he never lowered his powers to exploit the excitement of his audiences at public meetings. Still, he could not long remain unaffected by the intoxication of popular applause; its coarse incense has demoralised the most sensitive. One Friday evening he came very late to Mme de Loynes'. He was very dusty, somewhat tired, but still palpitating with excitement. He had just taken three meetings, and at all three had been loudly cheered. "It is a good omen for the elections," said he. M. Jules Lemaître, but yesterday an author by instinct, had actually become a speaker, and a popular speaker at that. A similar phenomenon, inverted, came to pass in the case of our friend the Comte de Mun. After having been an ornament of the platform, he won a leading position in journalism.

François Coppée, equally eager but considerably hotter of head, had adopted the political style of speechifying from the first, and made an art of invective, very much in the same way that certain famous imprecations are thundered from the stage. He took an amateur's delight in this paradoxical performance, and was never more delighted than when his audience hailed the appearance of some neat joke or violent attack, prevented from being really bitter by the speaker's good nature, as well as by the general tone of his speech. In these political harangues, Coppée ventured on remarks that no one but himself could possibly have made, and found the sport extremely amusing. "I gave them something

pretty stiff that time," was the regular phrase in which the dear good poet, who had hurled himself wholeheartedly into the fray, was wont to express his delight at any lucky shot in this new art.

M. Jules Lemaître made no shots, but went straight home every time. By this I mean that he disdained all extraneous aid, all facile employment of stock phrases or conventional effects, so common when all political orators are in the field at once. Instead, he fared forth alone, with his own peculiar art, so characteristic and so much in earnest, and so rigidly preserved in its original purity, and went straight to meet his audience, bringing truth and conviction at his own quiet, steady pace. The curious thing was that the audiences at these political meetings, though by no means noted for refinement, were immensely pleased at this style of oratory really intended for enlightened minds. My excellent contemporary, M. de Maizière, who thoroughly understands how to observe and how to listen, reminded me the other day of our going to an opposition meeting arranged near Paris by the "Patrie Française." The business in hand was the election of a deputy, and it was a case of seeing who could exhibit most attachment to the Republic—for at that time we were all still talking about the Republic! One of the candidates—I think it was M. Aymond, who is to-day a senator—was a clever man, who spoke well and loudly. He gave his constituents, as Coppée would have said, a whole set of proclamations in the most approved style. This man, who thundered away at very close quarters, seemed to have a great reputation with the crowd, and it was quite possible to be rather nervous for

M. Lemaître. But we were utterly wrong, for in no time the new combatant, who entered the lists with his charming little ways, so pleasant, frank, and gentle, had by far the better of the truculent courage displayed by the previous fighter. Apparently a crowd likes to be flattered, and it took this being treated as educated persons are accustomed to treat one another as a delicate piece of flattery. It was delighted with this polished gentleman for presenting it with careful arguments expressed in beautiful phrases and with artistic grace. The other speaker, the candidate himself, seemed to have blown a trumpet to call attention to the talent of his opponent.

This was the fashion in which M. Jules Lemaître used to fight for the Republic. He could not remain at this point, and it was impossible for a philosopher so imbued with sincerity not to continue his labours and researches. One day we shall know how many barriers have been surmounted by this dilettante, this elegant man of letters, in order to discover the integral part of nationalism—that is to say, monarchy.

Coppée always remained faithful to his beliefs and his opinions; he lived and died a Catholic and a Bonapartist. Nature had endowed him with the face of the First Consul, and I quite believe that he was rather proud of it. However, this Catholic, this conservative, had a liking for action, and I can imagine meeting him on a day of revolution in the streets, possibly behind some barricade, perfectly ready to fight in person for his ideals and his opinions.

I knew him well, and I was very fond of him. He was easily moved by a fine thing, even in spite of

his political opinions. When His Highness the Duc d'Orléans came to Paris to claim his right to serve for his country, I asked him to write an appreciation of this noble and manly resolution in the *Gaulois*. Here is his answer—

"My dear Meyer,—I have been trying, in the last few days, to make up some lines on the young Prince, whose action seemed to me a very chivalrous and affecting one. The Government is showing real malice towards him. But it did not come off, and I threw my lines into the fire. After all, I find that I have an unconquerable repugnance to everything that borders on the political. François Coppée."

I was talking politics to him one morning when he was already ill and in bed, and ventured a question, probably indiscreet, about the persistence of the political opinions of his youth.

"I still belong," he replied, "in accordance with that witty saying of Girardin's that I was reminding my friend Troubat of the other day, to the party that was in power when I was a pretty woman."

It has not been granted to every one to have been a pretty woman, and the author of the *Passant* was recalling, in his own mind, that glorious evening at the Odéon, when all the audience rose in their wild excitement to cheer the young poet, who, aghast at such a success, was trying to hide himself in a corner of the huge house.

I went to see him every day until he died. He suffered a great deal; but, fortified by the Christian faith that ennobles pain and inculcates resignation, he allowed nothing of it to appear. Knowing my love

of beautiful books, he sent me a magnificent edition of the *Passant*, the principal attraction of which, in my eyes, was a sonnet of his own that he had tried to write on the fly-leaf with his failing hand. I believe this to have been his last poetical composition.

His funeral was that of a citizen whose country shows her pride in him. There was a crowd, an absolute crush, at St. Francis Xavier, in the square, and in the neighbouring streets. The police were quite unable to control the enormous number of people who came to pay the final honours to the "poet of the poor."

François Coppée cared little for a Parliamentary career. What had pleased him in the "Patrie Française" had been the declaration of war against the Government, its corruption, and its fatal course of action, so it was pain and grief to him to see the league diverted from its original mission. As a matter of fact, Syveton's influence increased as M. Dausset's diminished, and, a most curious phenomenon, it was the moderate Dausset who tried to keep the "Patrie Française" upon the lines of hostility to Parliament, whereas the militant Syveton was persuading it to a course of action that was plainly parliamentary. It was a great mistake, and we shall always be surprised that a man of Syveton's stamp should have committed it, and have made M. Jules Lemaître take his share.

By the eve of the elections, M. Jules Lemaître had risen to the level of the bravest and most manly of politicians. He issued as a poster a last appeal, in which he published General Galliffet's declaration:

"On one side are the whole of the army, the majority of Frenchmen, and all the agitators; on the other, the Ministry, the Dreyfusards, and the foreigner."

I wonder if Mme de Loynes, intoxicated by the verbal triumphs M. Jules Lemaître had won in every contest, dreamt at this moment of making him a candidate for the highest office of all. It is possible. The general elections took place, and his successes were discounted. For it is one thing to make a successful speech and win over your audience, but quite another to make sure of your electors.

V

THE TRAGEDY OF THE AVENUE DE NEUILLY

THE "Patrie Française" changed by imperceptible degrees into a parliamentary committee, whereas it had originally been a centre for propagandism throughout the country.

Syveton, who guided it in this direction, had certain of the physical and mental qualifications which are the hall-marks of the leaders of great parties. He was tall, held his head high, and seemed to be fully aware of his undoubted superiority. The monocle, which appeared to be screwed into one eye, gave him a disdainful air, which contrasted strangely with M. Jules Lemaître's kindly smile, François Coppée's cordial good-nature, and M. Maurice Barrès' sympathetic gravity.

He was fond of verse, comic verse especially, in which French disputes with Latin the privilege of sailing nearest the wind, and he often found it convenient to fall back upon the language of the gods at the dinner-table.

He cared very little for psychological studies, but showed a pronounced taste for novels of adventure! It pleased him to trace a likeness to himself in some of the elder Dumas' heroes, and I quite believe that he was of the stuff of which great adventurers are made. In another age he would have worn the

jerkin of a free-lance ; and Fate, which put him into a college and made a professor of him, was entirely mistaken as to his character, his tastes, and his temperament.

He was treasurer of the "Patrie Française," and nobody knew whence he drew his supplies. Later on, we got to know what sums were due to the liberality of a certain lady whom I will particularise no further, as I know her horror of publicity. When all was going well with him, Syveton liked to betake himself to the Bodega for a glass of port. This port was a barometer, and on its days the monocle wore a cheerful air, but was more superior than ever.

Meetings were very often held in M. Jules Lemaître's house in the Rue d'Artois. MM. Syveton and Dausset, the representative members of the committee, made their reports, and told how matters stood. M. Jules Lemaître listened, and nearly always left the responsibility of making decisions to M. Dausset at first, and then to M. Syveton as he later obtained full influence. Later on, appointments to meet at the Maison Dorée were made : this was the restaurant that had sheltered the Dreyfusard staff in the terrible days of the "affair."

The mistake made by the "Patrie Française," which might have been so weighty a weapon, lay, first, in joining issue upon parliamentary ground ; and, secondly, in concerning itself with the elections. In doing this it turned its back upon its own programme ; and, besides, there was the "Action Libérale" to be reckoned with in this connection ; M. Piou needed all his tact to avoid offences and conflicts that seemed inevitable.

The "Action Libérale," started by M. Jacques Piou, was, properly speaking, only an attempt to form a Republican Right Wing, which was to be recruited from any party of conservative opinions. M. Piou had already tried, in 1889, to form, in the Chamber, a constitutional party without any precise denomination, yet with the object of establishing among Republicans a combination which was to attack the Government although acknowledging its legitimacy. This new party had but an ephemeral career; it was looked on with suspicion by the Opposition and denounced by the majority, so that it disappeared with the Government during which it had come into existence.

M. Piou was a most gifted speaker, who tried rather to persuade than to convince. If we lived in an age when political passions could be ruled by reason, when electors really sought the truth, and when popular suffrage could be controlled by motives loftier than hatred or profit, M. Piou and his league would certainly have had very great influence in France. It is true, though, that logic, if it succeeded in convincing the electorate and winning them over to its ideas, would lead them to turn their backs upon the Republic, even though supported by great and worthy men, and seek the way of safety in another direction.

Another mistake was made when, in order to play its new part, the "Patrie Française" tried to gain the public ear, follow the fashion, and adopt the password of the day. It remained militarist; but as popular opinion was anti-clerical, it thought it a piece of Machiavellic prudence to do something which should prove its anti-clericalism.

Coppée was well known to be a Catholic, a believing and a militant Catholic; he must be sacrificed, and therefore provoked into sending in his resignation.

On May 23rd, 1902, Coppée sent a troubled letter to M. Jules Lemaître, giving reasons for his resolution. This letter was published — but not in its entirety. For one sentence might so have been construed that the Catholic members of the league, had they seen it, would have been certain to follow Coppée into retreat. Many advances were made to the poet to persuade him to sacrifice it in the interests of the party; he resisted at first, but was noble enough to give way finally. I do not think this sentence has ever been made public. The few people who knew of it then are now dead, or have forgotten it most likely, and M. Daniélou alone possesses the complete text of the document—a printed proof with the famous phrase scratched out by the poet, and his initials, F. C., in the margin.

M. Daniélou has communicated it to us. "It is with regret," wrote Coppée, "that I am leaving my comrades in this strife; but my conscience impels my action, and my duty is as imperative as it is plain. I cannot allow public opinion to be unaware of the fact that the presence of a Catholic with the courage of his convictions is found troublesome by the managing committee of the 'Patrie Française.'"

M. Daniélou agreed to communicate this document only because he considered that its publication could no longer harm anyone, and because it is a true expression of the great faith which inspired Coppée from the hour of his conversion to the last moment before his death.

M. Daniélou is a young man who has recently asserted himself, and he deserves notice. He was M. Syveton's secretary when the latter was treasurer to the "Patrie Française," and made his first essays in journalism in the *Echo de Paris*. This was an excellent school, and he soon drew attention to himself. For a year he laid his plans cleverly for an electoral campaign, which he afterwards carried resolutely through. He flattered his compatriots in Finistère by appearing at all public meetings in the old Breton costume, and was elected. He made his appearances on the rostrum when pressing home his questions upon the affair of the powder in our men-of-war; he showed courage and capability, and won a hearing and applause. His début was thus a good one, and full of promise. Mme Daniélou is an excellent help-meet. She carries on the open École Normale for the young girls of the Rue Oudinot, just opposite the official establishment.

The news of François Coppée's resignation produced on the nationalist party as a whole a most regrettable impression. A lively proof of this will be found below. M. René Doumic had lent the "Patrie Française" the disinterested support of his eloquence, but had never become a member of the managing committee.

M. René Doumic was professor at the Stanislas, but had asked unspecified leave, and had obtained it. He was one of the first and most influential of the university men who had been horrified at the unpatriotic propaganda of the "intellectuals." Since then he has gained much promotion. He is now one of the most popular contributors to the *Gaulois*,

the regular critic of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, which, under M. Francis Charmes, is still the first Review in the world, and he is a member of the French Académie. He knew nothing of the causes that lay behind this resignation, and in the first heat of his emotion he addressed an open letter to François Coppée, which appeared on the first page of *La Voix Nationale*, M. Dausset's paper. M. René Doumic is rather fond of being ironical. On this occasion, he pretended, with really bitter irony, to believe that those who had just thrown Coppée overboard were really extremely sorry for what they had done. He recalled all the services Coppée had done them with his brilliant reputation and his unwearied devotion, and concluded thus:

"I cannot speak in their name, but I can do so in their place.

"When the conscience of France was undergoing an eclipse, you raised your voice in protest like an honest man. You rallied round you several of those who love their country and abhor treason. You flung yourself into the fray with all a poet's enthusiasm. You had nothing to gain; you sacrificed your repose, and risked a health already doubtful. Not one of those who have heard you speak will forget the warmth of your tone and the generosity of your words.

"For myself, I am rejoiced that I do not belong to Parliament or to any political party, and so have kept the right to send my humble greeting to the man who did his duty so valiantly and set so noble an example in an hour of national crisis."

This letter breathes the indignation of a true citizen of our dear France. What would M. Doumic

have written had he known of the sentence which Francois Coppée had consented to suppress?

For more than twenty years François Coppée showed me an affection which is one of my proudest recollections. When I was married, he wished to be witness, with M. Mézières, the well-known President of the "Société des Journalistes Parisiens." After reading Coppée's letter of resignation I went to see him in the tiny house, a true poet's retreat, in which he hid his sufferings, so bravely borne, beside his sister, "la bonne Annette." I showed that I was sad and uneasy, and he consoled me.

"I accepted the position out of devotion, and I am giving it up without bitter feeling. Only I really wasn't very troublesome! You remember Job's words: 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; the Lord's will be done.' All the same, it is rather amusing to think of Syveton, an old University man, driving an old Catholic like myself out of the temple. He must have indoctrinated my friend Lemaître with the idea that it was for the good of the party. Well, I liked Jules Lemaître yesterday, and I shall like him just as much to-morrow. Very likely the people about him think that he can save France by his own unaided exertions! Let him succeed, and I shall be the first to congratulate him! Mme de Loynes has just asked me to dinner next Friday. I shall go, and you will see that I shall not be the least sulky. What does rather annoy me is that the 'Patrie Française,' which, according to my ideas, should have aimed at reconciling all Frenchmen, even the worst, is now causing division even among the good.

"I have acted in quite a different fashion, I flatter myself. I made fun of General Mercier when he was War Minister. But when I declared that he was one of the noblest victims of the Dreyfus affair, when I saw him always showing a brave front to his enemies and never blenching at their attacks, I treated him as a brother in arms and defended him with all my heart.

"Then look at Cavaignac. As a Bonapartist, I can never forgive him for having refused to accept a prize at the Concours Général from the hands of the Prince Imperial. There was a row about it! Since then he has given proofs of an honesty that is almost exaggerated. He did not hesitate to sacrifice and doom to death an officer under the Minister of War who had forged a document intended to be added to the proofs already received against the condemned man. A great many people thought that he ought to have destroyed the document, but his uprightness could not endure what he thought to be a fraud. I only thought the more of him; I was delighted to be his colleague on the 'Patrie Française,' and took every chance of shaking hands with him. What I did alone in my own little sphere, the 'Patrie Française' ought to have tried to do in its huge one. That was what it was meant for. It turns me out, it is going to ruin, but that is its own affair. God grant that it will never regret all this. Try to get an invitation to the Countess' next dinner. You will see what a fine performer I can be!"

The Friday dinners certainly did go on, but their character was changed. They were like meals taken on bivouac, and the guests, fearing an alarm, laid

down their arms, indeed, but kept them within reach. Politics, which really are pleasant enough to live with, if you know how to approach and how to control them, sometimes gave way to literary or artistic topics of the day; but as a rule the conversation was busied with a recital of the excesses, the iniquities, and the villainies of all those future victors who were henceforth to occupy France as though it were a conquered country. And you may suppose that the zeal of those present was goaded afresh by these methods.

Besides the influential members of the "Patrie Française," who all, or nearly all, took their turn at Mme de Loynes' table, our friend liked to invite anyone whose energy, powers, or courage seemed to point to as a useful ally. Three of these—Henri Rochefort, Édouard Drumont, and Colonel Marchand—stood out as being particularly distinguished.

Rochefort about 1900 was exactly what he is to-day. There is no need to describe him when the very children in the street say: "Look! there is Rochefort." His wit is a golden coinage, undated because it will be current for all time. You have doubtless seen pictures of primitive men dancing in a ring and hurling darts at invisible foes: in such fashion does Rochefort transfix his enemies with a laugh.

Though a late comer among his contemporaries, Édouard Drumont held a high place. He was the high priest of anti-Semitism, but it must not be thought that he assumed airs to correspond in his talk. Nor must you expect him to say every instant: "Well! was I justified in doing that?" He leaves the proof to time. He was the first to make a full stream flow from a rock till then unknown: many

have drunk of the stream, and have even been intoxicated by it. He talked with much spirit and good-nature, and without showing any excess of bitterness against those who so soon forgot the immense services he had rendered towards the defence of religion and society.

I had the pleasure of meeting him for the first time after our duel at the house of Mme Alphonse Daudet, the distinguished widow of the famous author. She had had the happy thought—perhaps it had been suggested to her—of reconciling two old antagonists in the house of the man who had stood second to one of them. I know that Édouard Drumont found great pleasure in Mme de Loynes' dinners.

"I regret," he said later, "that I did not go more often, but I am a barbarian, and do not much like putting on my dress clothes. Mme de Loynes did say to me 'Come just as you like,' but then I don't care either for being different from the rest. So I went less often than I should have liked, and now I regret it—I regret it!"

The evening Colonel Marchand came to dine with Mme de Loynes was a marvellous occasion. No one could meet Colonel Marchand without being vividly impressed. There was a touch of the Mahdi —*i.e.* of the inspired prophet—about this poet-soldier, and in him too the sublime and the childlike lay close together. The sun of the East seemed to have set within his eyes, which yet preserved its rays. This is because, in spite of La Rochefoucauld's assertion, he did dare to look the sun and death in the face.

All through dinner Colonel Marchand spoke of his hopes, of the endurance of his men, of his ride across unknown countries, of his despair when he was checked at the very moment of his triumph, of his return to Paris, of his violent dispute with M. Delcassé. No one dreamed of interrupting him. We knew that he had won by force, and we felt that he could likewise overcome by persuasion.

To do honour to François Coppée, who, as we have said, had accepted her invitation, Mme de Loynes summoned all who loved and admired the dear poet: M. Jules Lemaître, Albert Vandal, Henry Houssaye, Ernest Daudet, Gaston Jollivet, Paul Escudier, Robert Mitchell, Syveton, Dausset, etc., and she had not forgotten me. Enlightened by certain informing phrases of Coppée's, I watched the actors on this private stage, where was played out, in part, the fate of the "Patrie Française." The dinner was cheerful—almost too much so. We felt there was something in the minds of the guests that they would do anything to avoid showing, and we avoided all political subjects. Mme de Loynes, as a rule equally ready with attention for all her guests, was occasionally a little absent-minded. Her eyes seemed to turn most readily in Coppée's direction. Who can tell what lay behind this look, what was the trouble of her mind, and what the conflict between her heart and her reason? Only a psychologist like M. Paul Bourget—greatest student and analyst of Woman since Balzac—could estimate all that there was in that glance softened by friendship and yet full of uneasy triumph. She was genuinely fond of François Coppée, and she had allowed Syveton to

subject him to trouble he had not deserved; she was a devoted Catholic, and she had allowed a believer to be smitten.

And finally, Frenchwoman and patriot as she was, she had approved the ejection from the "Patrie Française" of the purest and most patriotic of poets. She could not but suffer, and I learnt later that she had indeed done so. It is clear that she allowed herself to be dominated by a blind and exclusive affection—friendship often is as jealous as love. They must have taken advantage of her feelings, and proved to her that Coppée's popularity might conceivably stand in M. Jules Lemaître's way. Then she allowed Coppée to be sacrificed. I have never said that Mme de Loynes was perfect. I am very much afraid that she went through an attack of reckless ambition that day, and in the struggle her heart, usually attuned to loftier things, succumbed to the narrow and selfish prejudices out of which Gabriel Syveton made capital so skilfully. To gain his ends he could not allow himself to be stopped by any considerations whatever. He wished to exert an influence that should be unique, absolute, and exclusive, and from that moment his empire over the "Patrie Française," as over Mme de Loynes, was undisputed. Syveton, as we have said, was of first-class intelligence. In order to keep the high position to which his energies had carried him, he only needed to be a little less sure of his own value and a little more so of that of others. He might also have been a little more sensitive.

I dined with Mme de Loynes on the evening when Syveton introduced his wife and his step-

daughter. After dinner, Mlle Syveton—I mean Mlle de Bruyn—sat down to the piano, and sang love-songs in a most delightful voice. The young girl reminded one of Margarete before Mephisto appeared; her face was framed in a thick coronal of fair hair. She was all modesty in bearing, gesture, and attire—a virgin stepped out of a missal. Mme Syveton was stout, with fine eyes, and the ample figure, generously displayed, of a woman who refused to be put on the shelf; her attire had the would-be elegance of a provincial who dresses in the last Paris fashion but one.

Syveton made an effort to be kindly, and to show humanity a condescension he hardly thought it deserved.

The time was at hand when he was to occupy the stage in startling fashion, and then abruptly disappear on the eve of a trial in which he might—and should—have triumphed. He never dreamt, when he took from the temple the cross that made it holy, that he was shaking its columns and would one day be crushed in their fall.

By arrangement with M. Guyot de Villeneuve, he had brought a formidable indictment against Freemasonry and its accomplices, the officials of the Republic. M. Guyot de Villeneuve had made public revelation of the infamous practices of the Fils de la Veuve, and had shown how they had brought the Government into connection with the basest spies, organising a report system in every rank of the Republican hierarchy, and tempting and corrupting the soldiers, who were not afraid to disgrace themselves by spying on their comrades and denouncing them.

During a famous sitting, and from the platform itself, Syveton did not hesitate to point an accusing finger at the supreme controller of the army, the Minister for War, as the humble and obedient slave of Freemasonry, the traitorous soldier who handed over the army, of which he had the charge, to the vile malice of an association of evil-doers, faithfully serving the interests of the enemies of France. General André, in his seat on the Ministerial bench, smiled and shrugged his shoulders. Suddenly Syveton jumped to his feet, rushed at him, took him by the throat with one hand, and with the other administered two resounding slaps on the face. The Chamber was horrified, but no one dared, by word or deed, defend the General thus publicly disgraced. All understood that Syveton had just boxed the ears of the whole Government, not merely of one person of ill-repute.

As a consequence of Syveton's action, Vadécart, the collector of the masonic imposts, disappeared, and the Republic seemed to be shaken to its foundations.

The "Patrie Française" was triumphant. Mme de Loynes, who had been grieved at seeing it throw itself into electioneering intrigues, took heart again. General André might have risen, sword in hand; he preferred to demand that the assize court should avenge him — not clear his name. And while Syveton's apotheosis before the juries of the Seine was being prepared for, the latter stood high with the public, so often led away by bluster.

By a curious turn of chance, Syveton had raised the army while humbling the Minister for War.

I have just remarked that the Government was

preparing an apotheosis for Syveton by summoning the court of assize to try him, and really we all thought that he would appear as the chief justiciary in the lurid light of the judgment-hall. In Government circles there was much contriving of means to escape the inevitable; in the masonic temple agitation and hasty attempts at self-control. What plan was being concerted? What project had they hit upon for avoiding the dreaded peril?

Syveton had entrusted his case to Maître Henri Robert, a talented young advocate, whose successes before the court of assize are now past counting. He was certain of obtaining a striking victory.

On the very eve of the day so anxiously looked for, a fatal report spread through Paris. At first an undefined murmur, then a vague rumour, it grew to a thunder-clap. Syveton is dead! Syveton has committed suicide! Syveton has been murdered!

Coppée and others of his friends rushed into the *Gaulois* office that evening, hot, mad with excitement. "The scoundrels! They have murdered Syveton!" The nationalist papers beat to arms. The dead man was to have a funeral that should be imposing—perhaps tragic. And then another version began to circulate through the crowd. Syveton had shrunk from the revelations which the public prosecutor was to make at the court of assize, Syveton had found a way of escape through death. A post-mortem was held. Some of those present hurried on to M. Jules Lemaître. "We have seen with our own eyes," they said, "and we are quite clear. There is no possible doubt that Syveton committed suicide." And M. Jules Lemaître, with much

wavering and hesitation, finally decided to adhere to this point of view after what must have been a Shakesperian struggle between his conscience—which was convinced, for he quite believed in the theory—and the duty incumbent on the leader of a great party to consider the cause, not the individual, and never to sacrifice, upon information more than doubtful, the interests he had in his keeping. He was a particularly well-read man, so he should have been familiar with the doctrines of Machiavelli's "Prince."

M. Jules Lemaître believed it was suicide. He made a declaration to that effect before the examining magistrate, and affirmed it in public likewise. There is no doubt that he acted honestly, for he was clearly convinced; but the representative of a great party, the leader of a great movement which was on the point of victory, had no right to help its enemies to render its efforts fruitless by hastily adopting a version of the affair which was exactly the one those enemies had every reason for making current.

I believe this was what the Comtesse de Loynes felt, and this was the only cloud that ever came upon the close friendship which united them.

In the midst of the wrath and angry differences to which Syveton's death gave rise, Maître Ployer was called in to say a few conciliatory words at the house in the Avenue des Champs-Élysées.

All Paris knows Maître Ployer. Great heart, great wealth, great powers his epitaph might well run—but may it be many a day before it is written! However, his privileged position has brought him no enemies, and his friends have remained faithful. Maître Ployer is rich, but he could easily have won

at the Bar, where his superiority is unrivalled, the wealth that is his by inheritance.

Everyone bows to this superiority. I might almost say that everyone forgives him for it, since his skill—a combination of persuasive force and smiling graciousness—is combined with perfect good faith and absolute professional honour. When the Dreyfus affair was in full course, Maître Ployer, then a *bâtonnier*, resigned his commission, and everyone praised the firm dignity with which he set the example, a dignity he maintained worthily thereafter.

Various confidences, which I could not think of betraying, were made to me over this melancholy chapter in the history of the "Patrie Française." I have pledged myself only to deal with matters on which I may speak with authority.

If Maître Ployer were not a discreet person, he could tell much more than I can about the storm raised by the "Syveton tragedy." He was familiar with every detail of it, and his prudence succeeded in allaying it.

Syveton's funeral, in this atmosphere vitiated by report and poisoned by calumny, may easily be imagined. There was no procession, but an escort of police.

As for the committee of the "Patrie Française," M. Jules Lemaître had unwittingly caused it to commit suicide; it did not survive Syveton long. It was reconstituted later, with M. de Marcère, one of the most upright of malcontents I know, as president. Admiral Bienaimé, the distinguished occupant of Syveton's seat in the Chamber, was one of the vice-presidents.

A few days after I received the only visit which M. Jules Lemaître did me the honour of paying at the *Gaulois* office. It was at night. He laid bare before me his conscientious struggles, his grief —I might almost say, his despair—and also his absolute conviction of Syveton's guilt. And this conversation made such a vivid impression on me that it was a long time before it faded from my mind.

I may add that this honest revelation of the state of his mind notably increased the esteem in which I had always held him. Yet at the same time I thought how difficult it was for a great author, a great poet, a great critic, or even an absolutely upright man, to undertake the task of guiding a political party. Tyrtæus and Themistocles should not be confused.

By his visit to Mme Syveton a few days after her husband's death, by the lecture he gave that evening and the plea he added in his favour, by his whole attitude, and by the deposition he made before the examining magistrate, he lost all the advantage which might have been drawn from Syveton's tragic death—far too convenient for the Government and the Freemasons to be a natural one. By Mme Syveton's selection of a very eminent advocate, M. Michel Pelletier, a particular friend of M. Jules Lemaître, any direct or parliamentary course of action was put a stop to, and any exploitation of the tragedy became impossible, for it told against Syveton's friends. On the other hand, Mme Syveton gained every one of her law-suits, a success to which Maître Michel Pelletier's talents contributed not a little.

He came from Saumur to enter at the Palais de Justice. When he towers above his audience with outstretched arm and face turned to the storm, he is, in spite of his gown, far more like an officer heading an assault than an advocate dealing in chicanery, and it is true that some counsel's speeches are of the nature of an attack. At any rate the red ribbon which adorns the gown of this new member of the council of the Order has known very few defeats. I may well allow, therefore, that Maître Michel Pelletier was of much service to Mme Syveton.

But in an age when the credit of the magistracy is very much under discussion, when privileged fees have been replaced by promotion, when even the court of appeal permits accusations of dishonest practice to be made without prosecuting its accusers, we may be allowed to ask why it was that Mme Syveton suddenly became sacrosanct in the eyes of the members of the *Bloc* and the Freemasons. And we can only infer that they were grateful to her for having saved them for the time being from the vengeance that awaits them.

I saw a great deal of the Comtesse de Loynes just at this time. She was clearly very unhappy at the ruin of her ambitions, and she mourned for M. Jules Lemaître's abandonment of the immensely important, almost imperial, position he had aimed at and almost attained. Yet it seemed to me that she was even more unhappy at the outcast state into which France was doomed to fall—to quote M. Millerand, one of the best known of the Republicans. For herself, she awaited fresh turns of fate—and the knowledge of how to wait is the secret of fresh

accesses of good fortune. She might console herself for this defeat by remembering that noble purposes are judged by the effort devoted to them, not by mere success. Lofty ambitions suit not with vulgar minds: Prometheus, doomed to eternal torment for desiring to steal fire from heaven, was none the less among the divinities of pagan mythology.

The "Patrie Française" was the noblest scheme of modern times. It has been the last assault made in the domain of the Republic against the sectarian spirit that is international and hostile to our army. Those who threw down the gage, those who carried on the struggle, and those connected with it, have a right to the admiration and the gratitude of true Frenchmen. God, who alone is Lord of the hour, has not yet decreed our liberation. Let us await that hour in pious resignation to His commands, yet with all honour to those who, with M. Jules Lemaître, tried to bring it nearer.

VI

A SMALL HAT: AND A CHRISTENING CEREMONY

THE general elections were upon us. We were greatly excited, and the mind of the mob seemed stirred and deeply influenced, even won over, by the unwearied speakers who had gone everywhere in defence of freedom, of the army, and of our beloved country. We were having an advance celebration of the rout of our hated masters, who had chosen their victims from among our worthiest citizens. The list grew longer every day, and I remember how, at one of the Friday dinners in the autumn of 1901, Mme de Loynes' guests were deeply moved at hearing the names of those who had gone in the last tumbril.

The guests were, if I remember right, François Coppée, Ernest Daudet, Henry Houssaye, Robert Vallier, and Albert Vandal. M. Jules Lemaître, who was not among them, was holding forth in the good cause in some town or other in the South. Albert Vandal was one of the most regular comers, and his refinement of feeling, mind, and manners met with much appreciation. He was tall, gaunt, and extremely distinguished looking, and there was often a somewhat nonchalant and unsympathetic expression on his thin moustached countenance with its single eye-glass; yet he was very far from being indifferent

to humanity and the facts of life. He understood perfectly how to become indignant, not how to conceal the fact that he was so. He was an honest man in every sense of the word, like his comrade M. Faguet. As politician, his clear-sightedness, his frankness, and his good faith were on an equally high level. He was the son of the head of the Post Office under the Empire, and never concealed the fact that he was a Bonapartist, but a Bonapartist of the Consulate—which means that he, the historian of the Consulate, cared little for the doctrine of heredity. I used often to have friendly differences with him upon the point. His leanings and his convictions did not keep him from confessing a kind of inclination towards M. le Comte de Paris, of whose noble character and upright life he had a high opinion. He watched with kindly interest the young generation whom he instructed as to the revolutions of the past, smiling to see it lose its heart in turn to the leaders of the Extreme Right or the Extreme Left.

All his life Vandal was Parisian—Parisian to his finger-tips—and scorned no one of the aspects of the great town or its diversions; after spells of hard work he was very fond of recreating himself in the wings of some minor theatre or music-hall. One of the points about him which was least likely to incur Mme de Loynes' displeasure was a certain tender gallantry, borne witness to, discreetly yet strikingly, by the marked attentions he paid to women at table or in a drawing-room. His quick, brilliant talk adapted itself to every subject with sympathetic interest, and when, as historian, he dealt with serious topics of the day, he soon found trenchant phrases.

That evening during dinner we happened to mention Waldeck-Rousseau. Vandal took up the subject, and sketched an amusing and satirical portrait of the minister.

"La Bruyère," he said, "would have styled him the Disdainful Man. He is always looking down on mankind, which seems to him to be separated into two unequal divisions: the common herd, the countless crowd over which he never even casts an eye, on one hand, and on the other, his own personal friends. I am perfectly aware that he is very loyal to these, for his personal character is sound enough, but then chance, or his lucky star, has ordained that the majority of his friends should be provided with luxurious yachts, splendid shootings, and magnificent country-houses. So Waldeck plays the prince, and I think we may remark, just among ourselves, that princes are not very fond of paying——"

"Princes?" exclaimed Mme de Loynes, "why, they are always receiving invitations, all their lives long!"

"Waldeck the Disdainful," went on Vandal, "is rather inclined to be impassive, but then this strong man, whose icy countenance allows no sign, save a quick, nervous contraction of the muscles of the jaw, to escape him at critical moments, is capable of a most extraordinary amount of spite. He has never forgiven one of his friends, a Parisian whose articles are much sought after, and a journalist in high favour with the Parisians, for wishing to become his brother-in-law. He will never forgive Paris for having elected a nationalist Municipal Council. He will never forgive France for not sharing his opinion

about Dreyfus. At this very moment he is proving how violent and obstinate his spite can be, and is really offering an extraordinary psychological study of how far a great mind, really capable of grasping large ideas and dealing with big questions, can suffer itself to be misled, hindered, and confused by petty details and mean trifles——"

"Everyone knows now," interrupted François Coppée, "that it was Waldeck-Rousseau alone who hindered the Tsar from coming to Paris the other day. The Tsar was surprised; he would have liked to come in person to thank the great city so well disposed towards his own people. But what did that matter to our disdainful harbourer of spite? His only thought was to punish the Municipal Council, our friend Dausset, and the nationalist city by depriving them of an Emperor's visit!"

"The spite that he is nursing just at present, my dear fellow, will cause us much more real harm and danger," continued Vandal. "If my information is correct, he is thinking of nothing less than offending, disgracing, and getting rid of two of the best servants France has——"

We pressed him hard with questions, and Vandal confessed that he was referring to the Marquis and Marquise de Montebello, our ambassador and ambassadress to Russia.

"You know," Vandal went on again, "how brilliant and how steadily successful M. de Montebello's career has been. He entered the diplomatic service very young, and served without interruption save in 1870, when he left St. Petersburg to enlist in the army of the Loire and won a cross of honour before

Blois. Every time that well-deserved promotion has called him to a higher position, he has risen to its level and fulfilled his duties with ease. His zeal for work and for great affairs is controlled by sound sense and clear judgment. He is a regular type of the handsome Frenchman, with his great personal distinction, his elegant figure, his address, his regular features, and the politeness and charm of his manners. He represents us with dignity, and conducts negotiations with real efficiency. And he adds to all his other merits the qualification that Mazarin cared for most of all. "Is he lucky?" the clever cardinal used to ask whenever a candidate was proposed to him. Gustave de Montebello is lucky; grandson of Marshal Lannes, he has the gift of success.

"In Russia, our ambassador has won an exceptional position for himself. A plain man amid all his magnificence, very approachable, and with the affability of good-breeding, his salon is the first in St. Petersburg. He is assisted by an unrivalled hostess, who never tries to exceed her position, yet is capable of filling any one she wishes. Whenever she likes, she can have the leading salon in Paris. The exquisite grace, the sparkling wit, the quick yet profound intelligence of the great ladies of the eighteenth century, live again in her, and she has, too, their delicate features, smiling beauty, and powdered hair.

"The best Russian society, the diplomatic circles, and the members of the Imperial family are all eager to come to our ambassadress's house, and delighted to appear there. The Grand Duchess Vladimir has always shown a most flattering affection for her, and

used at her house to meet the Tsarevitch, now Nicholas II. Although she is German by birth, the Grand Duchess Vladimir has never disguised her French sympathies, of which she has given rather remarkable proofs.

"I will mention one. She advised Mme de Montebello one day to give a dinner in honour of the Emperor and Empress, and to invite them in person. Mme de Montebello exclaimed:

"'Surely, Ma'am, Your Imperial Highness cannot think of such a thing. The Emperor and the Empress dine at an embassy! It would be a revolution, really!'

"'Never mind, ask them,' replied the Princess.

"Mme de Montebello followed her advice, as it was so good. She invited Emperor, Empress, and Court, and Emperor, Empress, and Court accepted. It was a magnificent dinner. Only two Frenchmen —Prince Louis Murat and the Comte Louis de Turenne—were asked to it. The reception afterwards, to which were invited the diplomatic corps, the heads of the army, and the principal officials, was unparalleled. Mme Bartet came from Paris for the occasion, to show our friends and allies how well worthy of applause were those great French poets whom they had been taught to admire.

"Mme de Montebello was not mistaken in saying that the unusual presence of the Emperor and Empress would be much commented upon in various Foreign Offices. It was a little couplet added to the mighty strophes of the alliance with Russia.

"Now, at Compiègne one morning, at luncheon,

Mme de Montebello committed what amounted to a crime in Waldeck's eyes. The Marquise, who thoroughly understands what is the right thing, saw fitting to come down to *déjeuner* in a small hat. It was summer, they were in the country, and in a house with its own park. However, she had omitted to inform Mme Waldeck-Rousseau, and to deliver the protocol to the ministers' ladies. So at luncheon there was only one other hat, though it did belong to the Empress of Russia. I will leave you to imagine how mortified the other ladies present were at being thus caught out in ignorance as to the proper thing to do, and how promptly the poison entered into the souls of some of them, as well as into the brain of the President of the Council."

"Here's another story about a small hat! What an incorrigible Bonapartist you are," remarked M. Ernest Daudet.

"Yes, but good gracious! my dear Daudet, that wasn't anything like all of it! Only a little while after something else happened to rub up our thin-skinned Lord of Disdain. The Tsar was on the look-out for every possible occasion of showing honour and kindness to our ambassadress, and one day, when he was talking among a number of the ladies after lunch, he said to her:

"'Ourosoff was to represent me at your grandson's christening. Do not forget, Madame, that I promised to be a sponsor, and as I am in France I shall be very happy to be present at the ceremony.'

"'Sire,' replied Mme de Montebello, who knew how dangerous was such a proposal in such surroundings, 'I am most grateful—but Your Imperial

Majesty is so very much engaged! Every moment of your time is full.'

"'You are mistaken, Madame. My day to-morrow is quite free.'

"'But, Sire,' replied Mme de Montebello, embarrassed by this persistence, 'the baby is not here, and is not ready——'

"'Now do not make excuses,' finished the Emperor, 'I wish it to be so.'

"This was a command, and Mme de Montebello curtsied.

"Did the Emperor want to give a warning to our rulers, whose attitude had greatly displeased him? I really do not know, but what I do know is that M. de Montebello asked to be received by M. Loubet that very evening, and told him exactly all that had passed.

"'Excellent, but I do not want to know anything about it,' bravely replied our dear President, head of our forces by land and by sea.

"They had to have a chapel, and of course there was one at Compiègne, but, equally of course, it had been pronounced disaffected and turned into a lumber-room!

"To obey orders, which ran that nothing was to be disturbed, they had to improvise an oratory by putting an altar and some seats into one of the rooms. Thus in the palace where two great French Emperors, Charlemagne and Napoleon, had lived and thought and prayed, and in the presence of the Emperor and Empress of Russia, who alone were at the ceremony, was baptized, in the year of grace 1901, the grandson of the ambassador who had been chief architect of the alliance with Russia.

"M. Loubet had expressed a wish to know nothing about the ceremony that was going forward, so M. and Mme de Montebello could not invite any members of the Ministry.

"These gentlemen and their wives pretended not to know the reason, and showed great offence. One of the ladies put the general feeling rather wittily into words that evening.

"'Are you not even going to offer us any christening cake, Madame?' said she to the Marquise.

"Without turning a hair, Mme de Montebello replied: 'Oh! you must ask the godfather for that, Madame.'

"Waldeck-Rousseau himself showed really impossible ill-temper at being kept out of a ceremony at which he had hoped to be present.

"Republicans and courtiers are alike in one psychological respect; they both magnify trifling occasions in which their self-importance is concerned, and small disappointments are sufficient cause for long enmity.

"A few days later, Waldeck sat next Mme de Montebello at a big official dinner at Compiègne. At once, and quite openly, he turned half round in his chair, and thus all through dinner made a show of turning his back on the ambassadress, to whom he did not speak a single word; further, with what was deliberate intention in a man of his bringing-up, he performed none of those small services which are an essential of good manners towards the lady next you at table. Such an affront is an indication of the depths of Waldeck's spite, and a prophecy that it will not be satisfied with rudeness at dinner. Un-

fortunately it is quite clear that, without paying the least attention to the immense services they have performed for our country, Waldeck will make the Montebellos—France, that is to say—pay dear for this affair of the small hat and the christening ceremony. To-day our rulers—he and his satellites—content themselves with small pieces of rudeness; before long they will reward these two who brought the alliance about in some astoundingly ungrateful fashion!"

VII

BY-WAYS OF DIPLOMACY

"THEY would not dare!" said M. Robert Vallier.

"They would not dare?" I retorted. "They have dared to behave most disgracefully to a good Frenchman, a Frenchman born, General de Boisdeffre, who had devoted rare gifts as a soldier and a diplomatist to his country's service. But what were all his deserts, and all he had done, compared to M. Ranc's approval or disapproval? And Boisdeffre happens to be Ranc's *bête noire*, for, in the eyes of this sectary, the ex-head of the general staff is stamped with two hateful attributes—the sword and the asperge. The sword, because he drew it at the time of the Commune; the holy-water sprinkler, because the General knows Père Dulac and is a friend of his. Clearly, M. de Boisdeffre, chief of staff and a soldier in the service of Republican France, was in his secret soul a Catholic, and further, had, very possibly, scant tenderness for the Republic. This, although it was incontestable that he never expressed any opinions to which the Republicans could take exception, and a government cannot ask an officer to give account of more than his opinions—*i.e.* the feelings he expresses, not of the private feelings he keeps locked in his own breast."

"What does it matter," said Henry Houssaye,

"if the Government does treat the Montebellos and men like Boisdeffre badly? History will record their share in bringing about the alliance with Russia."

"Yes, my dear Houssaye, and splendid pages to write they will be. Then everyone will know how much Chanzy, Laboulaye, Boisdeffre, Montebello, Hanotaux, and Freycinet have done for France. People who live at the time when things happen always know least about them, and just now there is hardly a Frenchman who is aware how much our country is indebted to the skill and patient tact of such a man as Boisdeffre."

"Do go on, my dear Meyer," said Mme de Loynes, "and mind you leave nothing out."

"M. de Boisdeffre—who had been one of the most brilliant scholars at Saint-Cyr, and had passed first out of the Staff College in 1860—was Chanzy's orderly officer before the war. As such, after General de Wimpffen's expedition on the frontier of Morocco, he was made Chevalier of the Legion of Honour in June 1870. During the first actions under the walls of Paris, he was present, serving in Vinoy's staff; but on the night of the 21st to 22nd of December, he left the capital in the Lavoisier balloon to rejoin his old chief. He succeeded in doing so, and finished the campaign in the army of the Loire, fighting beside General Chanzy.

"During the Commune, De Boisdeffre, then commandant, learned one day that Chanzy was a prisoner in the hands of the insurgents, and that the worst was to be feared. He rushed off to the Santé, where the brave General was indeed imprisoned, but leave to see him was refused to M. de Boisdeffre unless

he came provided with a permit from Gougenot, a journeyman printer who, now that the press was idle, was governor of the prison. However, he would not take upon himself the responsibility of granting M. de Boisdeffre the permit he wanted, and sent him to the Hôtel de Ville. There, they were very much inclined to keep him, but he managed to escape the clutches of the communards, and went back to Gougenot, who now advised him to go and see Duval.

"'But suppose I don't get back?'

"'Suppose you don't get back? You'll do that all right,' replied Gougenot, 'for my head is answerable for yours.'

"The efforts made by the brave officer were rewarded at last, and he did get Chanzy set free. A few weeks later, when the troops had entered Paris, Gougenot was arrested, and was going to be condemned and executed. He let M. de Boisdeffre know, and he in his turn saved the life of the rebel who had protected his own. A good deed is never lost."

"They were fine fellows, no doubt of that," exclaimed Vandal.

"There are more such than we think, be sure of that, dear friends. . . . But let me go on:

"Thus the misfortunes of the time, a mutual esteem, and various exploits performed in company, had all combined to strengthen the bonds between Chanzy and his aide-de-camp. After the war, the latter again joined his chief, then Governor-General of Algeria. In 1879, when the Governor of Algeria was made French Ambassador to Russia, Lieutenant-Colonel de Boisdeffre was sent to St. Petersburg as

military attaché. It was a happy choice, for in his new post the young Colonel's wonderful gift for diplomacy was to have marvellous results.

"You cannot conceive how unerring was his instinct, or how infallible his judgment. He had no need of lessons or masters, but fortune had put him to a good school, since General Chanzy, at a particularly difficult moment, managed to do more than represent France faithfully and with dignity—he actually won affection for her. With the tact of all fine natures, he had the good taste not to insist on the fact that we were a Republic, and not to pronounce this word which has no pleasant sound in the ears of an autocratic government. Admiral Jaurès has been very far from following this prudent example, and his Republican enthusiasm has often been very much out of place. It was he who, in the middle of an official dinner, exclaimed, in answer to a Russian who was talking of finance and administration: 'It will be like this as long as you do not have a republic!'

"'With you, yes,' was the sharp retort of the Minister of the Interior, 'but not with us.'

"Colonel de Boisdeffre was bound to please by his great capacity, the charm of his mind and the perfection of his manners, and please he did. The Emperor Alexander II. honoured the military attaché with special kindness, yet did not always try to conceal his wholly German sympathies. A trifling incident one day led to his allowing his admiration for our conquerors to appear in his conversation. It was at Tsarskoë-Selo, during a grand review; Colonel de Boisdeffre was present, and had been asked by the Emperor to keep close to him, which was considered

a special favour. The manœuvres of the troops came brilliantly to a close—one of the supposed armies surrounded its opponents with a well-contrived movement well carried out. Alexander II. in his enthusiasm turned to General Werder, the Emperor William's aide-de-camp, saying, 'That is like Sedan on a small scale!'

"These unlucky words were too emphatically said for M. de Boisdeffre to avoid hearing them, and at once, and in spite of etiquette, the French officer made a very quick and a very pronounced half-turn. The Emperor saw, went up to him, and said:

"'Oh! my dear Colonel, you Frenchmen have far too many victories to your credit for one to be unable to speak of a defeat in front of you without offence!'

"To which our military attaché, bowing to his horse's neck, made reply:

"'Yes, Sire . . . but we have hardly forgotten Sedan!'

"The future Alexander III. and his Grand Duchess, one day to be the lovely Empress Marie Féodorovna, showed a kindness for M. de Boisdeffre from which our country was one day to benefit. I should not forgive myself were I not to repeat here that in France we never paid the Empress the grateful homage that was her due for the feelings she showed towards our country, feelings for the sake of which she was quite ready to set all the charm of her fine nature to work."

"Another fine woman!" exclaimed our friend Coppée, with little reverence for etiquette.

"From this time forwards, the cordial friendship of General Obroutcheff—then second in command of

the Russian General Staff—helped Colonel de Boisdeffre to make ideas favourable to France current in St. Petersburg. General Obroutcheff had married a Frenchwoman, and a true Frenchwoman, whose fervent patriotism was not content to remain idle.

"Colonel de Boisdeffre stayed in St. Petersburg until 1882, at which date he became chief of staff to General Chanzy, who was summoned to command the sixth division at Châlons. The kindness with which our military attaché had been surrounded during his stay in Russia was not to be without its effect.

"A few years later, in 1890, a curious circumstance offered proof of this. The German Emperor had engaged himself to go to the Russian manœuvres, and the Tsar Alexander III. had no intention of furnishing a fine pretext for mis-interpretation by appearing with but one important guest at his side, and that guest the Kaiser—our enemy. On the other hand, as he was very fond of simplicity, he did not wish to be troubled with any foreign emissaries; still, as he wished to give France a proof of special good feeling, he had the happy inspiration of asking General de Boisdeffre to come to the manœuvres, this absolutely alone. A purely personal invitation was thus sent to the French ex-attaché in Russia.

"The General accepted, as a matter of course. The Kaiser was possibly a little surprised at this unusual invitation, and at the presence of so unexpected a guest, but he did not show it; in fact, he prided himself upon showing the most kindly civility. They tell me that, delightful as he is, he is always trying to delight, and that he makes use of ingenious devices to show off the amiable side of his nature.

"To be in close attendance on a monarch in the happy-go-lucky life of a camp is a very good position for an observer. While on horseback, talk goes on. During a war or during manœuvres, characters are less hard to study, and the psychologist can more easily seize them in all their freshness, and fasten upon significant features.

"During one of the days of these Russian manœuvres in 1890, the Emperor William said to General Obroutcheff, who was also there:

"'I am an Emperor of peace, but some wars are unavoidable. It is in London that a treaty of peace for the whole world will be signed one day.'

"The Kaiser possesses very extensive military information, and is by no means averse to having it known. On the very ground where the great march-past of the troops was to take place, he sent to ask General de Boisdeffre to come beside him; at the time he was almost alone, on one of the many hillocks that overlooked the manœuvre-ground. Just after getting the first invitation, the General had a second messenger, and then a third, both repeating the Kaiser's eager wish to have a talk to him. He could hardly escape such insistence, or avoid a conversation requested in such fashion. He therefore went towards the rising ground on which the Kaiser was established, wondering what on earth the Emperor was going to speak about.

"'General,' said William II. as soon as he saw him, 'who, in your opinion, is the greatest cavalry leader since armies have been in existence?'

"To this unexpected question M. de Boisdeffre unhesitatingly replied:

"'I should say Hannibal, Sire.'

"'And I, Napoleon.'

"Then a lively discussion began between the two experts. The General brought forward weighty arguments on behalf of Carthaginian tactics, and described the battle of Cannæ from the technical point of view. The Emperor quoted Napoleon's finest manœuvres, and proved with astonishing precision what exactly had been the cavalry's share in his victories. So the time passed without M. de Boisdeffre's opponent being aware of it. After the interview had lasted an hour, the Grand Duke Vladimir made up his mind to give the Emperor a hint.

"'Sire, I should inform Your Majesty that the review is just going to begin. . . .'

"The General took leave of the Kaiser, and, before withdrawing to another part of the field, went to make his bow to the Empress. She remarked, smiling: 'You seem to be in high favour at the German Court, too, General.'

"The Emperor of Germany was not contented with supporting his theory thus warmly. He promised the General to write to him on the matter when he got back to Berlin, and could look up certain documents bearing on this historical discussion that he had in his library. And so far was he from forgetting this promise that not long after he sent General de Boisdeffre a long autograph letter in which he made use of plans to prove the justice of his point of view, and added a map into the bargain.

"Strange are the chances of fate and politics! The story of the autograph letter became known, and the

Dreyfusards in consequence took it into their heads to spread the report that the staff had made use of the MS. in order to forge certain documents—a memorandum annotated by the Kaiser, and, better still, a letter addressed to Dreyfus by him! Is there any need for me to add that the Emperor's letter about the battle of Cannæ had never left the General's safe, where I should imagine it is at the moment? Still, what do truth and even probability count for in some controversies? Let a lie be put forward with sufficient assurance, and it finds credit with numbers of fools. Others, even more foolish—or more dishonest—have, I know, tried to persuade the Kaiser that his autograph has been made use of for a whole set of the most evil forgeries! So stupid a libel is not worth contradicting—the General took no notice of it."

"He did quite right," said Houssaye.

"But we have got a long way from the 1890 manœuvres—let us hurry back to them. They are an interesting point in the history of the Franco-Russian entente, which General de Boisdeffre was doing his best to arrange all this time, with great skill and perseverance. Seen from a distance and through the mists of twenty years, that entente seems, to most of our contemporaries, to have been quite naturally and easily established between us and our old enemies of Sebastopol. This is an optical illusion. Those worthy sons of France who expended their talents in contriving the alliance, found many difficulties in the way. They found at first that the atmosphere in Russia was by no means favourable for their plan. They had, I assure you, to get rid of a great many

prejudices. It is true that M. Laboulaye—who in 1890 was still our ambassador at St. Petersburg—had been continuing General Chanzy's skilful manœuvring cleverly, wisely, and quietly; it is only fair to recall the extent to which this excellent diplomatist served his country's interests in the realms of the Tsar, and his proportionate claim upon our gratitude. General Boisdeffre's secret efforts, during the manœuvres to which he had been invited, were helped by the goodwill of the Emperor and Empress, and by the friendship of General Obroutcheff, now Chief of Staff and a real power. Yet we must repeat again and again that these three—the Tsar, the Tsarina, and their faithful Obroutcheff—were perhaps the only persons in Russia favourably disposed to a French alliance; almost all the Grand Dukes, and the Court behind them, were, if not actually hostile, at least opposed to any such plan, and the leading note in their conversations and opinions was a German one, due to the Emperor Alexander II.

"This mattered little, for M. de Laboulaye and M. de Boisdeffre knew well how to sow the seed, and this, once sown in Russian soil, quickly brought forth its fruit. Two years later, M. de Freycinet and M. Ribot, who knew how popular the General was at St. Petersburg, sent him to Russia as head of a French military commission, dispatched nominally to deal with the question of an order sent by the Russian army to the Châtellerault arsenal. It had a more particular and a more important object, but the intention was to avoid drawing the notice and the suspicions of Europe to it. General de Boisdeffre's orders were to negotiate with General Obroutcheff—the Chief of

the General Staff, as we have said—discuss *certain military conventions* with him, and sign an arrangement. These conventions were the basis of the alliance, the only form in which the Emperor would allow it, and then only on condition of the strictest secrecy. Thus Alexander III. dealt with France not over the head of the President of the Republic, but actually without him.

"These Conventions of 1892—for a long time the only document authenticating the Franco-Russian entente preserved in the department for Foreign Affairs—established a strictly defensive alliance. The Emperor intended them to make peace assured: they did this, and rather too much so, as a matter of fact."

"Wasn't it a little our fault, too?" interrupted François Coppée. "We simply spend our lives in upbraiding the Russians about the thousands of millions we have lent them. It is not very good manners in the first place, and besides it's an excellent investment—or so I have been told. I haven't much to invest myself. Did we ever ask Russia for anything in exchange that she didn't give us? I'm all for the Russian alliance, but sometimes I rather wonder whether it was a mistake or not."

"Well, my dear Coppée," Vandal went on, "Faguet gave me a very good answer to your uneasiness, when he said to me yesterday at the Académie: 'The Russian alliance was an excellent thing in itself, no doubt of it, but it was misinterpreted. When Europe learnt that it was only defensive, it got an impression that we had somehow persuaded Russia to affix her signature to the treaty of Frankfort, in return for an

assurance that we were to suffer no further dismemberment. It meant a diminution of our prestige in the world. Then we ourselves, from the very day when we began to sleep in a false security under cover of this alliance, bade farewell to great effort, and to great hopes in consequence. Oh! if only the alliance had been an offensive one!' was Faguet's conclusion."

"General de Boisdeffre agreed with M. Faguet," continued I. "So, during the discussion of the terms of the 1892 Convention, as he wished the question of preparation for war to be brought forth from the nebulous region in which it was being allowed to float, he ventured respectfully to insist that the question of the offensive, in case of war, should at least be raised.

"'War, my dear General?' said the Tsar. 'What is the point of taking precautions against that? Trust my information—it is absolutely to be depended on. The Republic will never make war!'

"Alas, my friends, the late Emperor's prophecy has, so far, been realised. The Government has signed the most ridiculous and most inglorious treaties, has lent its support to alliances that are anything but advantageous for France, and all in order to avoid going to war. If the Emperor had had no experience of republics, he knew what Republicans were, at any rate!

"The Emperor was, moreover, disturbed at our faulty political organisation, and revealed his anxiety to Boisdeffre one day as follows:

"'Now, General, how could you arrange for the mobilisation of the French army by any given time, when you have a weak Government that really bears

no rule at all, and an unstable and undecided Chamber which meddles with everything?'

"M. de Boisdeffre answered without hesitation: 'Sire, I give you my word of honour that President Carnot would issue orders for mobilisation and have them carried out the very day that you did!'

"When the General got back to Fontainebleau he repeated the discussion to the President of the Republic, and explained how he had been led to give his word.

"'You were quite right,' said M. Carnot simply. 'I fully endorse it.'

"On the day M. Félix Faure entered on his Presidency, General de Boisdeffre went to see him at the Élysée, and told him of the important conversation he had had with poor M. Carnot. M. Félix Faure shook his hand.

"'That's quite understood, my dear General! I too consider myself bound by the promise you made to the Tsar.'

"Such was the part played by General de Boisdeffre. Yet, a few years later, we saw this great soldier-diplomatist, this man of honour whose mere word was bond sufficient between a great people and a great country, this Frenchman who had laboured for an alliance which he might well hope would have allowed his country to realise glorious expectations, traduced, disgraced, relieved of his office by opponents who cared more for the fate of a single officer who had been found guilty than for the fate of France! That, my friends, is how the Republicans treated the man who was surety for France!"

As I finished I begged Mme de Loynes and her

guests to forgive me for having so long occupied their attention. She was kind enough to say that I had interested them, and as we rose from the table my friend Vandal came up to me.

"Heaven grant that they dispatch no more victims!" said he. "What a memorial chapel they will be compelled to build to them later on!"

VIII

FROM CONVENTION TO ALLIANCE

ALAS! Albert Vandal's forebodings were realised. The Republicans did not stop short in their work of destruction. To be exact, it was M. Combes' administration, not Waldeck-Rousseau's, which rudely retired M. de Montebello; but the minister who accepted, or had thrust upon him, the office of carrying through certain important pieces of work, had been a member of the preceding Cabinet, and in the actual deed M. Delcassé merely followed Waldeck-Rousseau's inspiration.

Some months before, a special occurrence had given occasion to the initiated to suspect the Government's intentions with regard to the ambassador who had arranged the Imperial visit to Compiègne, and then M. Loubet's to Russia. The President of the Republic spoke one day to the Tsar of some diplomatic changes the Government had in view. Nicholas II., somewhat surprised but always polite, contented himself with saying in answer to this vague remark: "I hope very much that we shall keep M. de Montebello."

M. Loubet lingered no longer over the matter, and, as is his usual fate, he had made little impression. However, doubtless in order to pay the debt of gratitude which circumstances had forced him into

owing M. de Montebello, he promised himself that the ambassador should disappear. M. Delcassé, who on various occasions had loudly denied any intention of interfering with M. de Montebello, was weak enough to give way. Fortunately he has showed more courage upon other occasions. He asked the French Ambassador to Russia to send in his resignation. "There was no doubt that M. de Montebello's services were greatly appreciated by the French Government, but the views of the Marquis differed too widely from those professed by the said Government; the political situation compelled the Ministry to recall the ambassador; to save the latter any appearance of disgrace, he was to be asked to retire himself. . . ."

M. de Montebello refused to countenance an arrangement he very justly considered unworthy of him, and replied:

"I had been intending to resign. You have prevented me, and now I will not resign. I believe I can still be of service to my country and to the alliance. You must take the entire responsibility of my departure."

Quite abruptly, during August 1902, the Russian Chancellery was informed by the French Government that M. de Montebello was to be recalled, and that the Emperor's consent to the appointment of his successor, M. Bompard, was requested. This proceeding was, to say the least of it, contrary to etiquette; a government does not supersede an ambassador without first arranging the matter with the head of the State to which the ambassador is accredited. The Russian Chancellery asked the French

Cabinet for explanations. The latter, in a purposely confused statement, referred to a conversation M. Loubet had had with the Emperor, in which, it was maintained, there had been mention of M. de Montebello's eventual recall.

M. de Montebello himself was informed by the Chancellery of the astonishment of the Russian Government and the great surprise of the Tsar. Moreover, Nicholas II. at once offered his interest to our ambassador, who thanked him and, very nobly, declined.

"Sire," he said to the Emperor, "I am profoundly grateful to Your Majesty, but you will understand that I cannot possibly represent a government which no longer has confidence in its ambassador."

Thus without consulting the Tsar, contrary to all usage, the Marquis de Montebello was recalled without more ado, and his successor was appointed. M. Bompard was an official hitherto concerned with affairs commercial and consular, a very worthy man, even a very upright one, but quite without his predecessor's diplomatic prestige. To make such a change in such a fashion was to subject the interests of France to grave risks.

The many and heartfelt regrets caused by the Montebellos' departure from St. Petersburg was an indication of the influence they had exercised. It was in the midst of most touching, flattering, and enthusiastic proofs of their popularity that they left the embassy where, for twelve years, they had so adroitly and so splendidly represented France.

The Government of M. Loubet and M. Combes had observed no forms in its insulting decision, but

the Tsar Nicholas II. resolved to present our ambassador with a special mark of his favour, and gave the Grand Cross of the Order of St. Andrew to the Marquis de Montebello when the latter presented his letters of recall. History repeats itself: this supreme honour had already been bestowed upon two Montebellos, great-grandfather and grandfather of him who brought the alliance about—Marshal Lannes, Duc de Montebello, and the Duc de Montebello who, under Napoleon III., had also been French Ambassador in Russia.

M. de Montebello was, as my friend Vandal put it, "possessed of everything which could charm and console the close of a noble life." Both in Paris and in the country he was surrounded with sincere and devoted friends. But inaction was misery to him: this great servant of his country knew real suffering at being of use no longer. His health soon became impaired, and his wife and his friends grew uneasy. The disease could not be checked, and we soon had the grief of hearing of his death. I have known ever since how great a loss to France was this loyal diplomatist. I knew how great his services had been, and what the part he had played in preparing the alliance and ensuring its success. Among those who helped me to form a just conception of the value of his services and the high merit of his performance, I ought to place first Baron Mohrenheim, whom I knew very well in the early days of the alliance. At his instigation I wrote two or three articles strongly in favour of a better understanding between France and Russia.

Baron Mohrenheim, at the beginning of his

career, had been adviser to the Russian Embassy in Berlin, and was thus able to keep a close watch upon the proceedings that went forward, and think out a method of checking their consequences later.

When Baron Mohrenheim succeeded Prince Orloff as Russian Ambassador in Paris in 1884, it was soon easy to see that France would have a friend in him. He conceived the idea of an understanding between his country and ours from that moment, and laboured to remove the numberless difficulties that lay in the way of carrying out his plans. Others have proclaimed his popularity in France when he brought these to a successful issue; further, no one could possibly fail to be acquainted with it. It might be said that the Baron had almost become a Frenchman when he gave his eldest daughter in marriage to a delightful officer in our army, the Vicomte de Sèze. I myself, when I remember the conversations—acute, able, and ever cool—which went on in his study (it now belongs to that great and brilliant diplomatist, M. Isvolski), find I have not forgotten the warm terms in which he expressed his sympathy with France and his affection for her.

But let us return to the Marquis de Montebello. Before representing France at St. Petersburg, M. de Montebello had done so at Constantinople, and there had gained a signal success over British diplomacy. The clever English Ambassador, Sir H. Drummond-Wolff, had got the Porte to consent to a convention very much in favour of his own country. England was to consent to evacuate Egypt, but was to "reserve to itself a permanent right of re-occupation." This convention was going to be concluded

—M. de Montebello managed to persuade the Sultan not to ratify it.

His conduct of this affair, and of others, that made less noise, increased M. de Montebello's reputation, and marked him out for promotion. M. de Laboulaye retired in 1891, and his post at St. Petersburg was offered to the French Ambassador to Turkey. He had to undergo most flattering attacks from the Sultan, who did everything possible to prevent the Montebellos from leaving. He asked to be allowed to keep the Frenchman for whom his feelings were most cordial, the Frenchwoman who filled him with admiring respect. Mme de Montebello had a truly Oriental proof of the goodwill of the Commander of the Faithful, for when her husband went to Yildiz-Kiosk, she had permission, as a special favour, to walk in the Sultan's magnificent gardens.

The ambassadress's family were by no means easy in their minds at her resolve to go to St. Petersburg; it seemed to them most imprudent for her to leave the warm lands of the Bosphorus for the frozen shores of the Neva. They were quite certain that the health of a Parisian lady would be risked by such a change of climate, and insisted that M. de Montebello should give up the idea of representing France in snowy Russia.

It was all useless. M. and Mme de Montebello saw that their place was at St. Petersburg. Thither they went, but as they wished M. de Laboulaye to have the honour of receiving the first French squadron to go to Russia, the visit being due to his initiative, they wished not to arrive until after the festivities connected with this event. Almost before

he had settled in, the new French Ambassador achieved a first success by arranging the visit of Admiral Avelane and his Russian sailors to Paris. Everyone knows how this visit was received, and I have recalled elsewhere—in *That which mine eyes have seen*—the manifestations of the warm and spontaneous enthusiasm of the capital, which ought thus to endorse the carefully planned undertakings of our diplomatic service.

In the preparations made for the alliance, this service gave abundant evidence of that tact which is the most reliable and the truest form of skill. M. de Montebello possessed in the highest degree this quality, which is, in my opinion, as I said when speaking of the Duc de Bisaccia, the most essential requirement of the modern diplomat. When the first telegraph was installed in Paris, Count Lœwenheim, then Swedish minister, took his daughter, the Duchesse de Fitz-James, to see this astounding novelty, and said to her: "Take a good look at this little instrument, my child; if it succeeds, diplomacy ends!" This witty remark of my wife's great-grandfather has been too often borne out by the happenings of our day, yet the Marquis de Montebello proved that, in spite of telegraph and telephone, diplomatists still exist in our day by virtue of tact.

Admiral Avelane's visit prepared public opinion for the alliance. General de Boisdeffre's journey, as we have seen, assured the success of the preparations discussed with Obroutcheff. In so delicate an undertaking, and one which had so many adversaries to encounter, even a mutual understanding between two

remarkable minds was none too strong a support. M. de Montebello and M. de Boisdeffre worked in concert to the same end, and diplomacy proper looked with approval upon the work done by a military diplomat. M. de Montebello's private fortune, which enabled him to keep up a magnificent suite, his fine manners, and his rank, which, as we observed before, gave him the entrée into houses otherwise most exclusive, enabled General de Boisdeffre at least to approach certain great and lofty personages not then inspired with hostility against our country.

When M. Hanotaux came into power, the alliance was a military secret convention, not a finished achievement of diplomacy.

The Emperor Alexander III. died, and M. Carnot was assassinated: thus the two rulers, whose secret opinions had coincided, disappeared together. In Paris, M. Dupuy and M. Hanotaux saw it was necessary that Europe should be informed of our understanding with Russia. M. de Boisdeffre's performance in the military sphere and M. de Montebello's in diplomacy—completing as they did the work outlined by M. de Laboulaye—made us certain that a compact was possible. It was not sufficient that the said compact should be made: it was imperative that its existence should be divulged—or proved, at the very least. M. Hanotaux sought an occasion for obtaining such proof, and was helped in his patriotic endeavour by a Russian—Prince Lobanoff—very intimate with our Minister for Foreign Affairs, thanks to the bond of a common enthusiasm. The Prince took the greatest interest in historical research, and when in Paris sought the society of

historians; his secretary was a distinguished Frenchman, a professor of our University, and he knew every hole and corner of our records. He remarked one day to M. Hanotaux:

"You should have, at the Foreign Office, a memorandum of the beginning of the nineteenth century, dealing with the Court of Saxony, and containing various scandalous stories."

"I don't think so," replied M. Hanotaux. Search was made. The Prince's information was quite correct, as usual. The memorandum had, as a matter of fact, been kept a certain time in the Foreign Office; then it had been handed over to Louis XVIII., who asked to borrow it, and had never returned it.

"A perfect man of the world, and most particularly clever," wrote the Princesse de C—— of him. This description is a brief but exact portrait of Lobanoff, who was soon to be the public representative of the Russian alliance.

The Kiel affair came unexpectedly upon us, and France, in dreadful embarrassment, did not know what position to take up. The details of the problem may be recalled. Germany, through her Emperor, invited the Great European Powers to attend the opening of the huge canal just completed. Russia had accepted—should we send our navy to Kiel or not? It was a serious moment.

With M. de Montebello's assistance, M. Hanotaux contrived a delightful way out of the difficulty. We went to Kiel, but our squadron and the Russian one sailed in company, entered the roads together, and took up a position side by side in the German canal. As Albert Vandal wrote later, a due observance of

courtesy became a means of making our entente known to the world.

Still, the full meaning of so subdued a demonstration escaped the greater part of the country and most of its representatives. M. Millerand questioned the Cabinet about the Kiel affair, and during this debate M. Hanotaux pronounced the magic word *alliance*. The Tsar, though on his part it had never been mentioned, appeared not ill-pleased with the intelligent initiative taken by our Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The negotiations for the visit of Nicholas II. and the Empress to Paris were assisted by Lobanoff's friendly zeal, and brought to a triumphant conclusion; but poor Lobanoff died suddenly, just after he had written to M. Hanotaux: "Don't be disturbed at anything! I am coming—and we will go and hunt old books together." The Emperor became the guest of Paris, and that great city gave the Sovereign and his august consort a triumphal entry. A review at Châlons enabled French soldiers and Russian ones to fraternise. Everything was going as well as possible—if only the Tsar would say the one word expected of him, instead of being content to talk about the "friendship between the two nations."

M. Hanotaux and M. de Montebello would not be discouraged. They made arrangements for the President of the Republic to go to Russia, and, during the summer of 1897, M. Félix Faure, accompanied by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, went to Peterhof and to St. Petersburg. He pleased everyone there as here, and won much sympathy for France. But was he to take his departure without hearing the

wished-for word once openly pronounced? On the "Pothuau," the day before that on which M. Félix Faure was to propose the toast of the Tsar, M. Hanotaux said to the President:

"It is a nuisance—but let us risk upsetting the apple-cart! You put that word *alliance* in your speech to-morrow!"

That evening he sat next Mouravieff at dinner, and did not hesitate to speak to him about the necessity that existed, in his opinion, of proclaiming the alliance publicly.

"Have you got your notes?" asked Mouravieff.

The French minister passed the sheets containing the rough sketch of the speech to him under the table. Mouravieff read them, and after dinner came up to him:

"The Emperor will expect you to-morrow morning."

And next day, when he received M. Hanotaux, Nicholas II. remarked:

"Since it is so, why not say so?"

Félix Faure proposed the Tsar's health, and in speech pronounced, at last, the word *alliance!* In his reply, the Tsar hailed an "allied and friendly nation." Thus was the agreement between France and Russia ratified before the world.

Such was the triumphant conclusion of the efforts of one of the finest diplomats of the last fifty years and of one of the few Ministers for Foreign Affairs who, since the time of the Duc Decazes, have had an instinct for a real French foreign policy. That day on the "Pothuau" was the brightest in M. de Montebello's life, and hardly less so in M. Hanotaux' career.

In these recollections in which I am trying to pay homage to all those who had a share in either the preparation or the completion of the Franco-Russian alliance, I should find it hard to forgive myself were I to omit the name of a most admirable Princess and a lovely Frenchwoman—that great patriot who was the daughter of the Duc and the Duchesse de Chartres. At the Court of Denmark our diplomacy always received the most valuable assistance from Princess Waldemar. Every time the Tsar paid a visit to the august patriarch of Copenhagen, the Princess, by her persuasions, made him more inclined to the alliance. She contrived that M. Félix Faure should stop at Copenhagen, and thus have an opportunity of seeing the Emperor of Russia in more intimate and familiar fashion. In this connection, allow me once more to draw attention to the happy results that so often follow royal marriages. I am not deceived as to their real importance; clearly, they neither arrange peace nor cause war, but they have undoubted influence—often most favourable influence—upon the mechanism of politics. In short, they are an advantage of which countries with democratic governments foolishly deprive themselves. I cannot, for instance, imagine M. Fallières' niece or sister-in-law having any influence whatever even with the best friends or allies of France.

The Princess Waldemar was one among those partisans of our country who waged war around the Emperor with the older and far more numerous partisans of a friendship with Germany. These latter spared no intrigues, no stratagems, no subterfuges even, to turn the Tsar from his friendly

intentions towards us. They had already tried to discredit such good Frenchmen as General de Boisdeffre and Admiral Gervais, when these came to represent France at Alexander II.'s funeral, and they were not beaten yet. At the time of the coronation at Moscow, the Montebellos gave a magnificent entertainment at their own house. The most gorgeous decorations had been provided, notably illuminated fountains, then a great novelty. The Tsar had promised to be present, but a few days before the day fixed for the reception a terrible catastrophe, hardly yet forgotten among us, threw the city of Moscow into mourning.

"You cannot, Sire," said they to the Emperor, "go to the Marquise de Montebello's ball after such an event."

"I shall not dance, but to France I promised to go—and go I will!"

And the Emperor, with all his family, went to our ambassadress's house. Then his perfidious advisers tried to prevent him from staying to supper—tried to get him away before it was ready. But the Emperor stayed.

Alexander III. had been a sincere friend of France, and his son, who worships him still, could not but continue his father's attitude towards us. Besides, Nicholas II.—whose character is far less well known in France than his person—has much affinity with the French upon the sentimental side of his gentle and sympathetic nature. He has a strong sense of duty, and never acts from impulse or caprice. If he does happen to be mistaken, his mind has betrayed his desire to act rightly, and his strong

sense soon corrects his first false impressions. He can be described in two words as conscience incarnate.

The present Empress loves to live privately in the bosom of her family, and never attempts to come out of her woman's sphere. She has none of the political ambition of the Empress Féodorovna, Alexander III.'s admirable consort, who, as I have said, was most eager to help us, and very properly passed for one of the most loyal upholders of French influence. The young Empress was very fond of her mother-in-law, but was somewhat ready to take offence at the power Féodorovna kept over her son, the Emperor. Nicholas II.'s wife lives for her children and for her husband, who is very much in love with her. Her private life would be a happy one, were it not that her fears for those she loves are a continual torment to a very impressionable mind, almost touched by superstition. The misfortunes which have shaken Russia have caused the unfortunate Empress to suffer from a nervous affection which magnifies to her all the dangers she may well dread for the Tsar—dangers, however, that she is always ready to run the risk of with him and at his side.

Those good Frenchmen to whom Nicholas II. gave both sympathy and esteem—Boisdeffre, Montebello, and their like, as well as Hanotaux and Freycinet—have been rewarded with ingratitude by an unscrupulous Government. After sketching the beginnings of the Franco-Russian alliance, it is painful to have to confess that all those who played therein parts as useful as they were brilliant, and as

adequate as they were disinterested, have been ill-treated on the one hand and dismissed on the other by these democrats, always ready to smite those who rise a head—or even a hairsbreadth—above the miserable level of their own stature.

THE END IN SIGHT

I

PRINCE PIPKIN

MME DE LOYNES said to me one evening—

"Just imagine, I have been besieged as though I were Fort Chabrol; my friends' persistence flatters me, but it is rather embarrassing too. Of what further use am I? We spent our courage in vain. You know Louis XIV.'s remark to Villeroy: 'Luck is over at our age.' I am very old, my friend, and I am not fortunate. And perhaps God needs no common hands for so holy a task. When those chosen by Providence attempt it—for I believe firmly in a resurrection for my country—they will infallibly succeed. Ah! if only I were allowed to help them by my advice! And I should be glad to see more clearly—I am surrounded by friends who pull me in every direction. Every one of them puts in his plea for his own saint, and vows he only needs a niche. Déroulède, and his friends Gauthier de Clagny and Marcel Habert, are always hotly praising an elective republic. Édouard Drumont is always shouting his battle-cry—'France for the French!' I read the *Patrie* every evening, and in it Henri Rochefort champions a nationalist republic—with what vigour, you know. Ernest Daudet is always faithful to a liberal monarchy. Calmette, Judet, Berthoulat, and

Spronck extol a moderate and tolerant republic which is to redress all wrongs—but that is the Blue Bird! Coppée, Vandal, and Houssaye have dreams of a Napoleonic consulate. Delafosse, Robert Mitchell, Gaston Jollivet, and Thouvenel go further, and aspire to restoring the Empire and the Constitution of 1852. Our friends General Bonnal, Boni de Castellane, and Léon Daudet see salvation in nothing but a restoration of the royal family, and I think they call that complete nationalism. Besides, M. Jules Lemaître is rather inclined that way, so my mind is turning in the same direction and longs for enlightenment. You know how complete is the confidence of which my friendship for you is a proof?"

"I do."

"Then, I should like to know the reasons for your fidelity not only to royalist ideas but to the Duc d'Orléans as well. You have remained a royalist through so many changes and chances that this must obviously be the result of strong and solidly based convictions. I have heard Dr. Toutée, who is M. Constans' doctor too, say that you had a share in the Duc d'Orléans' charming expedition to Paris. Will you tell me about it? Perhaps the story will bring unexpected enlightenment."

"Dr. Toutée exaggerated, Madame, I assure you."

"But tell me. I am curious to know all about it. I should so like to have a good look at the great overthrower of Boulangism and his victim."

"Others had a more important share in it than I, Madame. But you really wish to know the story? I see nothing against it; it is all to the Prince's credit. Here it is, then. It was one evening in

1890, at the end of January or the beginning of February. I was dining with the Duchesse d'Uzès at the Château de Bonnelles, and among the other guests were Count and Countess Dillon. We talked of many things—the political situation, General Boulanger's exile, the Comte de Paris, and the Duc d'Orléans. Someone remarked that the Duc was nearly one-and-twenty, and then Count Dillon recalled the Prince Imperial's coming of age.

"'I think I remember,' he said, 'that, when the Prince Imperial was twenty-one, M. Rouher wrote to the President of the Republic and demanded permission for the Prince to come back to France and perform his military service. Why does the Duc d'Orléans not do the same?'

"There the subject was dropped, and we began to speak of other things. The Duc de Luynes had looked at me, and we understood one another, though we only said a few words before we got back to our rooms. The next day I heard that the Duc de Luynes had left in a hurry for Dampierre, and later on I was informed that he had started that very evening for Lausanne, where His Highness the Duc d'Orléans happened to be with his friend and tutor, Colonel de Parseval.

"The Duc de Luynes is blessed with most prompt intelligence. He is very open-minded and has plenty of decision, and hides a will that can be iron at the right time under the quietest and most reserved exterior. He is as brave as the founder of his family, and as cultivated as his ancestor, the Duc de Luynes, a Mæcenas whose liberality the Louvre still recalls. He married the eldest daughter of the

Dowager Duchesse d'Uzès, and she has all her mother's good qualities.

"Well, before seven on the 7th of February, my servant woke me and said that the Duc de Luynes wanted to see me at once. I got up in a great hurry and went to him.

"'It's done,' he told me.

"'What's done?'

"'Oh! the Duc d'Orléans is in Paris.'

"'Really?'

"'My goodness, yes. I had hardly told him what M. Dillon said, and our few reflections on the matter, when the Prince interrupted me:

"'"That's another letter. I hate letters, but I like travelling. Why shouldn't we just go straight to Paris and do the business ourselves? Only we mustn't say a word about it to Parseval, who would be sure to make paternal objections."'

"'We did exactly as the Prince wished. We got into Paris this morning. The Prince had a false beard, and we were not disturbed in the least. Now we have to take action. It is decided that the Duc d'Orléans comes with me at two o'clock to-day to the depôt in the Rue Saint-Dominique. We depend upon you to keep the press informed of the very smallest details of the day.'

"All this was excellent, and I had only to bow my acquiescence, but I wondered what would come next. If the Minister of the Interior decided to send the Prince back to the frontier at once and in secret, after seizing him as he came away from the depôt, the step would have been taken none the less, but would pass almost unnoticed. Here lay the danger. In my

first book I have recorded how well I knew M. Constans. I asked him to give me an interview at a quarter to two that very day, as I wished to inform him of a matter of importance which could not be delayed.

"At a quarter to two I was taken into the minister's office. I need not say that he was smoking his perpetual cigarette, or that he received me with the slight air of raillery he is never without.

"I pulled out my watch, and put it upon his writing-table. I knew I was risking my watch—but no, M. Constans remarked that he was boring himself to death, and that a watch meant nothing to him.

"'M. le Ministre,' I assured him, 'at two o'clock exactly, I shall do you a great service, and until then we can talk about everything and anything, if you like.'

"M. Constans seemed amused at my method of broaching the question, and waited, I must own, without impatience. And when the hands were at two o'clock precisely, I went on:

"'Yes, I am going to do you a great service, but first you must give me your word of honour to grant me in exchange the favours I am going to ask.'

"'H'm, h'm! Go on.'

"'No, you really must promise.'

"'Very well. You have my word.'

"'The service I am going to do you is that of saving the police—not M. Lozé's, the secret police—from making themselves something of a laughing-stock in the eyes of Parliament, of Paris, and of all France. Do you know what is happening this moment at the recruiting office in the Rue Saint-Dominique?

A young Frenchman of twenty-one has appeared there, and is claiming to be enrolled in the contingent in order to perform his military service with other youths of his age.

"'"What is your name?" asks the sergeant to whom he is speaking.'

"'"Write: His Royal Highness the Duc d'Orléans, son of the Comte de Paris," he replies.'

"'You *have* something worth telling!' said M. Constans at this.

"'Haven't I? That is like me. The Prince has been in Paris since the morning, when he came to the Dowager Duchesse de Luynes at her house in the Rue de Varenne. I have just told you the rest. And you know at the same time that the Director of Public Safety is a mere schoolboy, for he has seen nothing, done nothing, and prevented nothing. You are forewarned, and it is for you to see what can be done to prevent any annoyance. Now I have done you the service I promised, and we will go on to the conditions. Here they are:

"'First, you will not arrest the Duc d'Orléans until six this evening. At that time you cannot send him back to the frontier.'

"'Agreed.'

"'Secondly, the Prince is to be prosecuted and sentenced to two years' imprisonment.'

"'That is the law, not a favour,' replied M. Constans. 'And now that you have asked me something for your Prince, have you nothing to ask for yourself? I shall be very happy to be gracious.'

"'Since you tempt me, yes. The Prince will be sentenced to two years' imprisonment; he is too

proud ever to ask for a pardon, but will you not promise me to grant it to him without his asking? We Royalists would be sad to see our Prince so long in prison for an action so characteristically French."

"'You mistake, my dear sir. I am no king, and I do not sign pardons; but I have promised, and I will keep my word. In two or three months I shall suggest to the President of the Republic the act of mercy you are asking. He will make the decision.'

"Then, as I was going to thank him: 'Do not thank me. In the first place, I consider your Prince's action quite charming; and then, as a Republican, I prefer a Prince in exile to a Prince in prison.'

"A profound remark, well worthy of a member of the Government!

"The minister then rose, went over to the telephone in leisurely fashion, and asked if the President of the Republic would see him at once. Then he summoned the military governor of Paris.

"'Oh no!' I exclaimed. 'That isn't playing the game——'

"M. Constans smiled, gave up this second connection, and set out as in duty bound to inform President Carnot of the arrival in Paris of the young Frenchman of one-and-twenty who was just then giving his answer:

"'I am Louis-Philippe-Robert, Duc d'Orléans!'

"You know all now, for you do not forget that at six in the evening of 7th February 1890 M. Clément, commissary to the justices, appeared at the Duchesse de Luynes' house, and there arrested the

youth to whom France was shortly to give the nickname of 'Prince Pipkin.'

"You know also that five days later, on February 12th, the Prince was taken to the court of misdemeanour, and there made a proud and touching declaration; that his counsel, Maître Allou, put forward an eloquent plea: yet the Duc d'Orléans was sentenced to two years' imprisonment. And finally, you know that the pardon came on June 4th, and the young Prince was removed from Clairvaux. You know that he received his pardon without pleasure, stating positively that he 'preferred prison to exile, for in prison he was at least in France.'

"While the Prince was at the Conciergerie, and then at Clairvaux, I had occasion, at the Duc de Luynes' request, to see M. Constans again. I obtained from the minister the necessary permits to visit the Prince for his friends and for myself, since the Prince was anxious to thank me for the steps I had taken on behalf of his friends.

"On the day fixed by M. Constans for the Prince's pardon, I was summoned by the minister.

"'You came,' said he, 'to tell me of the Duc d'Orléans' arrival in Paris, so I wished to keep for you the honour of concluding the affair. You shall take the Prince the order for his release.'

"Tempting as the offer was, I refused it. The Royalist circles would have been puzzled at my intervention, and His Highness the Duc d'Orléans would certainly have been obliged, like the rest of the world, to take no notice of it."

Mme de Loynes avoided confirming my conclusion, and said, after a long silence:

"So it was from this very French and very charming adventure there arose the idea that is still the popular one of Prince Pipkin—a pretty name given to a pretty performance."

"Yes—it was a very pretty one. The Prince's coming to claim an equality in rights and in duty was what took the popular fancy."

Again a long silence. Then she asked: "And what do you think of the Prince and the party to which you are devoted? Is it reason—the charcoal-burner's idea of faith—that guides you?"

"It is, Madame. I am not Royalist by tradition, and make no silly pretensions of being descended from crusaders. If my family did leave the Holy Land long ago, it certainly was not in the following of Peter the Hermit. But a course of reasoning, study of history, and experience have made me take the part of the hereditary principle against the elective one. You know how we owed to it a France well-organised, strong and united, and firmly established for centuries. Look abroad: there is no single sovereign owing his throne to chance of birth who is not better than any man elected by the people. All systems men have invented are imperfect and liable to error, like themselves, but the hereditary system offers least imperfection. Therefore, for the honour and glory of France, I prefer the hereditary system to all others.

"I may add that I find it hard to understand the disputes between Royalists and Bonapartists. When I hear Royalists casting the shame of Waterloo and Sedan at Bonapartists, and Bonapartists retorting

with stories of foreign carriages and the émigrés' berlins, I cannot help thinking that these are weapons and methods of strife which, while they certainly explain the heat of the conflict, will bring success to neither Royalists nor Bonapartists. The Duc d'Orléans and Prince Napoleon are playing two totally different games. One stands for a *right*, in abeyance for the moment yet never to be lost by prescription. The other represents a *combination of circumstances* which has not yet arisen. After civil strife, the country has never turned anywhere save to the Bourbons, who personify the unity of France. Always, at threat of a revolution, or in fear of a popular rising, it has turned to the Bonapartes, who, whether justifiably or not, represent the cause of order or authority. An Orléans who tries to step into a Bonaparte's shoes, a Bonaparte who envelops himself in a false legitimacy, is contradictory to the history and the tradition of his family. I own there is a third combination possible for a restoration of the monarchy—the appearance of some general or minister who would carry his authority beyond due limits. A general or a minister who had no desire to play the game for his own ends would adopt whichever solution of the problem seemed capable of prompt realisation. Princes, therefore, must occupy such a position in the public favour that general or minister would feel that universal approval would follow any combination of the kind. And you will allow that a Prince who has earned a popular nickname stands well with popular opinion. The pipkin is the best cooking-pot for that famous fowl of his ancestor's, Henri IV."

Mme de Loynes listened without a frown, but she said only the one word, "Finish!"

"In my opinion, no better thing than the return of the Bourbons could befall my country. You say it is impossible? You think it improbable? Why, those words are no longer in the French language. Jules Ferry came back to power after the Langson catastrophe. Waldeck-Rousseau, leader of the moderates, was the first to call a socialist into the Government. Who knows if to-morrow your friend Clemenceau may not be at the head of affairs? Nothing is impossible, nothing improbable, in our country. There are only men lacking in perception or in courage, and, above all, men who will run no risks."

"Oh, I know those incapables so well!" rejoined Mme de Loynes. "Our drawing-rooms are packed with them. Prince Napoleon once told me a saying of Rouher's to Vuitry which hits them off exactly: 'For my part, my friend, I am just now studying the ideas of a Chinese philosopher, and they appeal to me immensely. The philosopher's name is Je-Men-Fou.'"

M. Rouher never suspected that the Chinese philosopher Je-Men-Fou would one day become a god in Paris.

II

A SALON OF DISILLUSION

I DO not know whether my conversation had any effect upon my clever friend and her own close allies. It was enough for me to have said my say. The sower matters little: it is the seed sown that is all-important.

Luckily for the harvest of the future, other sowers among the Royalists had Mme de Loynes' ear more than I. She had named them — the Comte de Castellane, General Bonnal, and M. Léon Daudet.

I will speak briefly of M. Léon Daudet. Readers of the *Action Française* and M. Léon Daudet himself would think it somewhat strange were I to praise him, and those who know me would not recognise me were I to screen behind the pages of a book the retorts I will not permit myself to publish in the *Gaulois*. I will simply remark that in defence of his ideas he displayed the temperament we all know to be his, and that Mme de Loynes listened affectionately to him.

General Bonnal, one of the latest arrivals in Mme de Loynes' salon, soon won the leader's white plume. He was greatly approved for the clearness of his speech and the critical faculty he showed was his in all circumstances. The General had been led to monarchism by the gradual and progressive

evolution of his thought. His is one of the most reflective minds of our day, and one that is strikingly positivist. His extremely rapid and brilliant career should carry him as high as it is possible to go. He is considered our best tactician, and the younger portion of the army owes to him that nursery for young officers which, as professor first and then as head, he made at the École de Guerre.

Mme de Loynes would have liked to see General Bonnal at the Académie, and his friends urged him to it at one moment. The attempt was soon given up, however.

The Comte de Castellane was Mme de Loynes' favourite among us all. He, charmer of women, had captivated her, charmer of men. Célimène grown old—I do not mind repeating myself—always feels herself young again as she listens to Don Juan's adventures. Every man about Paris talks of Boni as if he knew him. I say Boni, since he shares the privilege of certain favourites of fame, and is known everywhere by his Christian name. Boni stands to everyone for unhoped-for good fortune in marriage, for the Palais Trianon, for famous *bibelots*, for the Château du Marais, for millions scattered to the four winds, for notorious duels, much reported lawsuits, separation, and retirement.

That is merely a summary, and there are plenty of chapters missed out in this rapid review of the book. Often enough the public hardly opens the cover, and gives but the most rapid glance at what lies within!

The Comte de Castellane is the most finished type of the nobleman of the old régime who deter-

mined to do something and be someone. He is not the only one, but he is the most striking example of the genus.

One day at the Princesse de Léon's he dressed up as the Duc de Richelieu, whereupon was made the very just remark that it was no pretence at all. He would have been at the Regent's supper-parties, but he would doubtless also have been summoned to the Council of Regency. Son of the Marquise de Castellane, one of the most popular and highly thought-of ladies of Parisian society, and of the Marquis de Castellane, whose first appearances on the rostrum, about 1873, made a great sensation, he too desired to be a deputy. He was made one. He wished to be successful in the Chamber, and he was. He wished to write, and produced articles and pamphlets that are quoted to this day. Most of all he wished to make a marriage that should bring him power, and he did it.

To those who criticised the sometimes futile use he made of the sinews of war, I have often heard him reply that if he did spend more than 400,000 francs for one evening's fête at the Bois de Boulogne, he had, as a set-off, persuaded Mme de Castellane, in the generosity of her heart, to devote twelve or fifteen hundred thousand to establish a house to take the place of the Bazar de la Charité. That if he had seemed to squander his dollars in fantastic purchase of works of art, it only depended on himself to make millions over them by selling them wholesale. Finally, that he had never failed to recognise the imperative duty of any good Frenchman who possessed a like fortune, since he had set himself

to finance the nationalist coalition against anti-patriots, anti-militarists, and internationalists. I can fully bear out this last statement.

Déroulède was lunching with me one day, and the Comte de Castellane and M. Marcel Habert were there too. Déroulède waxed eloquent upon his own political views and the end he desired to attain. When we got to the cigars and the coffee, M. de Castellane said to him:

"We are not working towards the same solution, but we both have the same hatreds and the same loathings. I do not know whether I shall convert you, but at any rate you want to destroy, and so do I. When it comes to rebuilding, we shall see who is the better architect. Whatever happens, if you should be in want of money, just let me know: I have a million at your disposal."

Everyone has heard of the clearness of his insight over M. Loubet's visit to Rome, and M. Delcassé's policy in Morocco. I should doubt whether, save for a few lofty souls who seem to be above our human nature and with whom no man dare compare himself, any mortal had a more unshaken faith in his star. Like the cats on the gutters, he has no realisation of the abyss—his eyes are always raised above the roofs. And, like the astrologer in the fable, he never noticed, or scornfully kicked to one side, the grains of sand which were slowly accumulating at his feet, until they became the stone of stumbling upon which he was to be broken.

I had the pleasure of being received as an intimate friend by the Comte and Comtesse de Castellane, and I have never forgotten the rare

kindness with which the latter treated me. I had always been much impressed by the admiration, almost amounting to a mystical adoration, Mme de Castellane showed towards her husband.

One day after *déjeuner*, when recalling the Reuilly affair, about which I knew everything, I said to Boni de Castellane:

"You got off very lightly that day. You might quite well have been arrested."

Whereat Mme de Castellane exclaimed: "Arrest Boni? They would never have dared to do it!"

Is not the exclamation delightful, in its sincere and simple faith?

Like everyone else, I followed the unhappy development of that domestic tragedy with regard to which opinion was so hotly divided. How on earth did the first disillusion ever arise? How was the final split ever reached? Whither had fled all that tender love, that admiration, that worship, I might almost say? Mysteries these of the heart, and no savant will ever be able to reduce them to terms!

People who do not know him well might suppose that disaster would disturb M. de Castellane's cheerful serenity. But he has lost nothing of his confidence, and it is so superb that it influences all around him, leading them to think: "Perhaps Boni hasn't said his last word, after all."

He came to see Mme de Loynes almost daily, and surrounded her with attentions. She gave him advice, cheered him up sometimes and always heartened him, but did not conceal her anxiety at his scorn of danger.

"Take care, dear friend," she would say. "Yes, I know you have made a covenant with Fortune; but though she will have no help, she will not allow herself to be defied. Above all, do not play with the blind adorers you have round you—the eyes of the blind have been opened, you know."

Sometimes she teased him. "Why, you are talking about monarchy as though it were Versailles and its architecture. It seems to you to be a personification of order, harmony, unity of line, perfect tradition. How do you manage to be a Republican deputy?"

"Oh! I simply accept the constitution. The question of monarchy or republic is not up for settlement. I keep to my programmes. Besides, there are some republics—Déroulède's, for instance—that no one could refuse to accept."

She too had dreamt of the ideal Republic in all its beauty, and had worked with M. Jules Lemaître in the hope of realising it. But what was it save a splendid dream? Now, at any rate, as she told me, she felt too old to be anything more for the future than a consulting advocate, an honorary nationalist.

Whenever I went to see her, I found her with her head resting on her hand, as in Amaury Duval's famous portrait. Her eyes were fixed far into the future. What was she seeking there?

She met me with her own sweet smile, yet it was never quite open: our sympathy was founded upon a common defeat. We had both tried to raise our beloved country up again—she by nationalism, I by Boulangism. Where we failed others will surely succeed, and I wish it with all my heart.

She coughed a little, and it made me uneasy. There was a larger fire on the hearth, and her faithful Pauline was continually gliding noiselessly over the carpet to see that all was well with her mistress.

III

HER REFUGE IN LITERATURE

ONE morning I found her a different being, all transformed. She looked just as she used to do in her active years, and as a matter of fact she was on the eve of a decisive combat. We were almost at the night fixed for the first performance of *La Massière.*

Thus she was to learn whether the political and party side of M. Jules Lemaître had absorbed the author in him. His enemies took delight in spreading a report that the penetrating and versatile critic of contemporary literature, the very original dramatist who had written *Pardon*, *Le Député Leveau*, and *L'Age Difficile*, would find it hard to recover from the hazard into which she had drawn the president of the "Patrie Française." Under these peculiar conditions, in this atmosphere of hostility and disparagement, it was at great risk that he would once more come before the sarcastic Paris public of an open rehearsal or a first night. Yet this risk had to be run, for avoiding it meant entire abdication. M. Jules Lemaître understood it all perfectly; still, he hesitated. Mme de Loynes knew no more hesitation now than at the time of the "Patrie Française," and her clear counsels were what decided him. Nor did she object when he expressed a wish to ask

his friends, who were more up to date than she as to the arrangements of the different theatres, which would be the best stage for his play.

The subject and the style of *La Massière*, not to say the fame of its author, made the undertaking easy. The few to whom M. Jules Lemaître had read it had been charmed. In any fashionable theatre it was sure to be a great success, and that both with literary men and with the public: a sympathetic success, in short, just what M. Jules Lemaître needed at this critical point in his career. *La Massière* is perhaps the deepest, the most human, of all his plays, and now that it has been sealed for approval by public and critics alike, its proper place would be our principal theatre. Will not M. Jules Claretie, great man of letters as he is, and of truly liberal mind, think before long of adding this beautiful piece to his collection of French dramatic art?

Lucien Guitry's was the first name mentioned in Mme de Loynes' salon when the question of the chief performer came up. As Guitry was then managing the "Renaissance" with extraordinary success, theatre and actor were simultaneously decided upon.

The manager of the "Renaissance" received the play enthusiastically. The part intended for him he thought one of the happiest he had ever played. The character was picturesque, and though comedy, it was serious comedy.

Rehearsals were begun at once. M. Jules Lemaître came to them all, from the first to the last, cheerful and light-hearted, and as though delivered for a few hours each day from the weight of political care

which had pressed so heavily upon his nature and his temper.

There was real friendship between him and Guitry, not merely the slight and illusive tie between manager and author which lasts up to the first performance, tries to pass for sincere, and is really nothing but a temporary community of interest. Author and actor in this case, on the contrary, were drawn closely together by a common cast of mind, by sureness of judgment, and delicacy of taste.

Guitry is, besides, a stage-manager of a very special type. There is no pretentious solemnity about his management of his company. He puts on no superior airs about giving them instruction in order to pose before the author, who is present at these little ceremonies, and sometimes takes part in them. No, he is calm and friendly, and is rather anxious to make himself understood than to enforce his own point of view. When an actor seems to him to be speaking out of character and with a wrong conception of his part, he takes care not to say so, but begins to go through the part himself, just to "try something or other," and "to see if this will go well." And it is all so amazingly right that the artist is inspired simply by remembering his model.

Guitry at rehearsals, in the half-dark theatre or behind the scenes, is a *genre* study the authors who have been acted by him will never forget. Heavy steps going from one actor to another, a hand laid lightly on their shoulders, a few exact directions so clearly given that it is impossible to be doubtful about their meaning, and so convincing that the hearers obey instinctively, almost without an effort. Mean-

while the play is taking shape, each performer is falling into his right place, the scenes get arranged of themselves and fit well together. Gradually the details unite in a common rhythm, and the play emerges as a whole with that harmony which cannot be dispensed with on the stage.

All this delighted M. Jules Lemaître and suited him exactly. He saw at once that Guitry understood his play absolutely and would produce it to perfection, so he contented himself with smiling approval. His smile had come back to him.

Mme de Loynes appeared at the last two or three rehearsals of *La Massière*. She found there was nothing she need say, not a detail of the setting or the dresses to alter, no single error in taste or in tact. She foresaw the success of the play, and the real reasons for this success. A friend who heard her talk to Guitry was astounded at this critic so well versed in literature and in criticism. What good sense, what discernment! What knowledge of the sensibilities of the public and of the conditions of success! And how delicate were the compliments she paid to the great artist who was interpreting M. Jules Lemaître's work!

Hidden in a corner box, she was present at the public rehearsal, which was a triumph. At its end, she made a sad little remark to her friends, "This time I have made no mistake about the play."

Always ready to make excuses in her love, she preferred not to confess that, if she had been mistaken, it was not in the play, but possibly in the chief performer, ill fitted to the part he was cast for. What does it matter? The triumphant success of *La Massière*

gave her back her self-confidence. She certainly was never for an instant sorry that she had joined in the great fight for her country's sake, and had made M. Jules Lemaître join likewise; she recognised that if damage had been done it was the law of battle. But she did anxiously wonder whether she had been right in calling away from literature, from the stage, from criticism, from all that forms the intellectual wealth of the country, a great writer and a great dramatist, thus lessening the national heritage. The public gave the answer in its applause. The "Patrie Française" became, in M. Jules Lemaître's life, a glorious interlude in which he proved that, besides Athens and Rome, "the two ideal countries for every man who thinks," he had a country of his own, a country claiming the unshared devotion of every Frenchman.

The interlude was at an end: no regrets, therefore, or remorse. From that moment Mme de Loynes set herself to conceal her own melancholy, to remove every trace of the passionate struggles of the past.

At the finish of the Empire, I saw the "Blouses blanches," during their demonstrations, go along the boulevards as high as the Boulevard Montmartre, and gather there in great crowds, uttering hoarse cries and forming a human wall in which nothing, as it seemed, would be able to make a breach. Then came a sound as of a wave coming down from the Madeleine: these were the forces of law and order. Headed by the commissary and the drums giving the time, they came on slowly in order of attack, then stopped. Only a few yards separated the soldiers

from the demonstrators. The commissary thrice summoned them to disperse, the drums gave a muffled roll, and then the infantry opened out and let the municipal guards come galloping furiously between. The demonstrators broke up and fled wildly, then the regiment moved on in its turn. When the flood had passed, the roadway behind it seemed, as it were, to be washed clean, and left smooth as a mirror and polished like marble. Even so was it with Mme de Loynes' salon after the nationalist hurricane. No more blows, no more discordant notes, no shadow of a wrinkle any longer on the smooth surface. Just now and again there would be a discussion which the hostess would hush up, so great was her terror lest the patriot slumbering in M. Jules Lemaître should happen to awake. All the friends who had shared her hopes and her beliefs had rallied round her. All those who, though not disappearing altogether, had come more rarely, now went back to their beloved custom, and came to see her almost every evening before dinner.

Her house became once more the great literary salon that had grown a little dull, during the nationalist period, under the weight of politics. By a regular swing of the pendulum it had come back of itself to its original position. Literature, so pleasant to live with if politics are not banned altogether, henceforth assigned their place to the latter, and, like any other well-bred person, objected to militant conversation and to gossip.

One was sure of meeting, at Mme de Loynes' house, besides Jules Lemaître, Henry Houssaye, Maurice Barrès, and Faguet, poets like Coppée,

dramatists like Sardou, Henri Lavedan, and Maurice Donnay, and historians like Vandal and Gabriel Hanotaux; writers were naturally attracted to a house which had such men for its familiars. New arrivals soon gathered round these old comers; among them were the Marquis Costa de Beauregard, that spotless gentleman who seemed to have stepped out of some earlier age, whose gifts combined so happily with his soldier's courage; and the Marquis de Ségur, that delicate and varied painter of the society of the eighteenth century, from Mme Geoffrin to Julie de Lespinasse, that great lover of her age who, beloved as she was even in her retreat by every frequenter of Mme du Deffand's salon, could never win the heart of the Comte de Guibert, the only man she loved, and died of sorrow.

Through her friends Mme de Loynes wielded real influence in the elections to the Académie; we may fairly say that hers was the last Académie salon. She readily put this influence at her friends' service without making it necessary for them to ask her, although only when she considered the chance a favourable one and the time well chosen.

In 1900 M. Paul Hervieu's friends thought of him as successor to Édouard Pailleron. Mme de Loynes certainly admired the novelist who wrote *Peints par Eux-mêmes* and *L'Armature*, and showed himself a dramatist of the first rank in *Les Tenailles*, and *La Loi de l'Homme*. She considered him entirely worthy of this supreme distinction, but she wished him to receive it on his merits as an author alone. At the time, the Dreyfus campaign was at its height, and M. Hervieu's success, since he

had declared himself among the most zealous of the "intellectuals," might just then have been interpreted as a political as well as a literary triumph; therefore she advised her friends to wait for the near future in which the sky would be clear again. Henry Houssaye did not regard her wishes, and busied himself, as did Albert Vandal, in getting his friend elected. Mme de Loynes was a little annoyed, and this was a real grief to Henry Houssaye, with his tender and sensitive nature, and long depressed him.

Next year, another chair, Henri de Bornier's, fell vacant too. The author of *L'Aiglon* was thought of as successor to the author of *La Fille de Roland.* Edmond Rostand had been the most brilliant recruit to the Dreyfusard staff, but men's minds were now beginning to calm down. Edmond Rostand's election was held by all men of letters to be his just reward, bestowed only for his genius as the most entrancing poet of our age, the poet who even in *Cyrano* had achieved true poetry. As I have written earlier, Mme de Loynes joined the allies of the "national poet" who had been no nationalist, and determined on his election.

I could instance many others besides. Maître Barboux, the head of the Bar, who was introduced to her by Maître Ployer, and not long afterwards was to succeed Brunetière at the Académie; M. Jules Delafosse, good man, vigorous speaker, and born journalist, to whom the Académie has already accorded almost all the votes necessary for election, thus showing its intention of keeping one of the next chairs at its disposal for him; M. Henry Roujon, who needs but one chair more in his flat on the Quai Conti, and

will soon complete the number; M. Adolphe Brisson, who found among Francisque Sarcey's effects the pen of the *Temps* critic, and is making everyone say: 'Like father-in-law, like son-in-law"; M. Camille Bellaigue, the discerning critic of *Revue des Deux Mondes*; M. Abel Hermant, that acute observer of the life of Paris, who knows how to impart a special charm to his idlest speeches; M. André Beaunier, who has the art of insinuating a gentle yet very real irony into his. Mme de Loynes divined his powers, and recommended him to Gaston Calmette, a very good judge of men and things, and to-day M. Beaunier is one of the most popular contributors to the *Figaro*. Thanks to all these literary people, she could always follow the movements of the world of the drama, letters, and the arts.

Although she made efforts to allow politics to invade her salon as little as was possible, she took care not to prevent our distinguished contemporary, M. Berthoulat, from expressing all his patriotic fears when the separation of Church and State began to be discussed. She remembered that people had smiled at Boni de Castellane's predictions. No one smiled on the day he told us about William II.'s arrival at Tangiers, M. Delcassé's resignation, and the uninterrupted sequence of our humiliations.

And her salon, usually so peaceful, was stirred even more deeply at the indignant tones of our old friend Gaston Jollivet, whose heart beats always in concert with his mind and his powers, when the judges in the court of appeal had just reinstated Alfred Dreyfus under cover of a corrupt document.

Had you watched Mme de Loynes at that mo-

ment, you would have seen reflected in her face all the feeling she was trying to restrain. She bent over her eternal work—to hide a tear, perhaps. What fruitless efforts! Why had Rochefort fought, and Jules Lemaître, Coppée, Déroulède, Barrès, Judet, and Drumont? Why had Syveton died? Had Sainte-Beuve been wrong when he said to her: "Nothing is useless"? Was her salon to be turned into lists again? Were people going to begin talking about the affair all over again, when, with Caran d'Ache, she had thought that no one would mention it any more?

Just at the right moment, M. Adrien Hébrard, wittiest of Parisians, came in with M. Robert Mitchell, whose great powers are fully appreciated by the readers of the *Gaulois*, and the passions so high a second before were suddenly stilled, and vanished in a glittering torrent of wit, like the smoke of a cigarette into thin air.

M. Adrien Hébrard, our great contemporary of the *Temps*, is a little like the gorgeous gentlemen of the eighteenth century who would not have the pearls sewn on to their garments, but let them fall to the ground so that the passers-by might pick them up. His wit has enriched all who know him. That very day, when M. Francis Chevassu, a writer of a delicate and curious turn of mind, asked him why he had not been to the funeral of a not particularly reputable actress who devoted herself at home to the love-affairs she acted very badly in public, he replied, "No need; I'm quite sure to meet her in a better demi-monde."

Dr. Doyen came in and, amid applause from his colleague Dr. Landolt, exalted the first daring flights

of M. Santos Dumont, and predicted the conquest of the air by human courage,

Another day a charming poet, Musurus Bey, urged M. Dorchain, the author of certain poems very popular in that house, to recite some of his latest compositions. Meanwhile his nephew, the Prince de Brancovan, talked about his travels with Captain Hourst, great sailor and bold explorer, who had just been reprimanded for having stopped the missionaries from drowning or burning themselves somewhere or other in China.

Then shouts, cries, hurrahs drowned our voices, and we rushed to the windows. There was Déroulède, back from exile and taking up his "marche à l'Étoile" again. Going from the Gare de Lyon to the Avenue Victor-Hugo, he got a side view of the Arc de Triomphe, and thought sadly that the only man who could have restored Alsace-Lorraine to us would see the mountain ridges that barred the way to it sink and fall.

Another day there was more cheering. The King and Queen of England came to feel our pulse in preparation for the "Entente Cordiale." From the shouts that acclaimed them they might conclude that it beat true.

Paul Déroulède had been introduced to Mme de Loynes by M. Gauthier de Clagny, a parliamentary speaker always sure of a hearing; all parties regret his premature retirement. Mme de Loynes wished to congratulate him upon his triumphal return. He found her in her eternal armchair, knitting her eternal woollen stocking. Houssaye and Ernest Daudet were leaning against the mantelpiece, as usual. The

circle was a close one, at the request of the hostess, who wanted everyone to be able to say his say, witty or otherwise, with some chance of being heard. Paul Déroulède spoke of the miseries of exile in such moving terms that we never even heard M. Jules Lemaître come in. He was a little late, according to his custom, and sat down at the edge of our circle to make it quite clear that no special place was kept for him.

Pauline, her faithful and devoted housekeeper, had managed to come in unnoticed several times to bring her mistress a cup of tisane and to raise the cushions in her chair. Mme de Loynes was not very well.

"It is the damp," she told the friends who questioned her. She did not like being pitied.

"Come to dinner next Friday," she said to Déroulède when he went away. "You will find various friends delighted to hail you on your return."

He could not miss such an occasion. As a patriot he had shown that he was proud of the ovation the crowd had made him; as poet and man of letters, he was happy at the approval promised by so select and exquisite a circle. He was enchanted by his hostess, who seemed to him an ideal conductor "managing a harmonious whole with consummate skill." And what lovely music it was! The salon might be compared to the little court of some eighteenth-century German capital under the rule of a prince devoted to literature and the arts.

Déroulède came again, then, and I have kept an exact record of this dinner-party, to which Mme de Loynes invited me as well.

The subject for our conversation was supplied by M. Maurice Barrès, then in full possession of his literary renown and high political reputation. That clever editor M. Conard had asked him to write the lives of the twelve greatest writers of the nineteenth century for him; each biography was to form a separate number, and their success, considering who was to write them, was quite certain. But the choice had to be made, and a list drawn up of the twelve authors who were to have the honour of being accounted the greatest, somewhat after the fashion of the twelve peers of a century which had Napoleon for its Charlemagne. M. Barrès thought it would be a good thing during dessert to discuss the matter with the brilliant areopagus of wit round Mme de Loynes' table.

The subject met with immediate approval, and we discussed it with real interest. The first point upon which the speakers disagreed was the right definition of a great author. Is such a one great of himself and solely by merit of his work? Or is he great in proportion to the illumination cast by his work—by the influence he has had and by the position he holds in the development of literary history? "There are authors who are artists and authors who are thinkers," Mme de Staël would have said. Which were we to prefer?

"Look at Lamartine and Victor Hugo," demanded Coppée. "If I went by my feelings I should say the great poet was the author of the *Lac* and the *Crucifix*, but if I think of all that we rhymers owe to the greatest originator of modern poetry, our affection and gratitude should go to the leader of the

romantic school. Wasn't it you, my dear Lemaître, who said: 'But Victor Hugo is the father of us all'?"

"Well," said Jules Lemaître, "we will have both of them. These distinctions are always too narrow. Hugo—and mind, I am no fanatic with respect to him—is great by his work as well as by his performance, and Lamartine had far more influence than has ever been acknowledged."

A certain number of incontestably famous names were selected as a matter of course. The chosen were Chateaubriand, Hugo, Lamartine, Musset, Vigny, Balzac, Stendhal, Flaubert, and finally Renan, the only one who necessitated any voting. Then there were three places for which holders had to be chosen, and over these the discussion raged with the more energy because in their case there were no names possessing an indubitable right.

Henry Houssaye suggested Leconte de Lisle. "He renewed the tradition of Greek poetry in the *Poèmes Antiques*," declared the author of the *Histoire d'Apelles*, not without grace, "and that is the great tradition. Every time that our taste grows corrupt, there arises some master who goes back to that pure and ever-flowing stream, and every time our poetry emerges young again after this bath of Hellenism."

He found an ally in a great friend of Mme de Loynes, M. A. Vlasto, twice a Greek by virtue of his birth and his enlightened taste for the best literature.

"Houssaye is quite right. Ronsard, 'who re-read Homer's *Iliad* in three days,' was the real founder of your classical literature. In the eighteenth century, Chénier, whose mother was a Greek, rediscovered

the real meaning of poetry. In our own day, it was Leconte de Lisle; from him descends the whole Parnassian school—you yourself, my dear Coppée, Sully-Prudhomme, and that glorious Heredia. With Houssaye I vote for Leconte de Lisle, the candidate the Muses would have chosen."

Then Coppée, in the tone, and with the touch of raillery of a Parisian who has still a good deal of the Paris gamin about him:

"If you want to give the palm to a son of the Greeks among modern poets, here is one for you—Béranger."

And when we all exclaimed, he persisted: "Yes, I mean it. Greek art stands for perfection, and what can there be more perfect and more harmonious in its own way than some of Béranger's songs? I know quite well what is putting you off—that piece of nonsense, 'Lisette.' Just as though the Greeks hadn't had Anacreon and lots of others like him! He is the most purely French of all the poets of the century, and the frankest besides; that is what made me think of the Greeks. However, if you won't have him, I have someone else for you: the most powerful, the most prodigious inventor on record in literature, a man who is both an historian whose history is most like a novel, and a novelist whose works are as life-like as ever they can be—Alexandre Dumas—yes—Alexandre Dumas père.

"Don't be so superior, gentlemen. One day, most likely, everything we, and others greater than ourselves, have written will have perished, but D'Artagnan and Monte-Cristo will go on living in the popular imagination. People will not forget them, and that

is the hall-mark and the privilege of genius. So I end with—Béranger or Dumas père."

"There is no historian on your list," remarked Albert Vandal, "so I suggest Michelet, that marvellous reconstructor of the past, or Thiers, with his accuracy and clear understanding, or, better still, Hippolyte Taine, the much-to-be-admired author of the *Origines de la France Contemporaine*, from whom we are all more or less descended."

"Well done!" cried Gaston Jollivet. "That is exactly what Paul Bourget was saying to me last night."

M. Jules Lemaître confined himself to recording his vote in a concise sentence every word of which has remained in my mind:

"I choose Baudelaire, because he wrote a hundred lines that no one else had written before him."

I still remember some of the names that were suggested during the discussion: M. Gaston Calmette proposed Mistral, and supported him in a brilliant speech. He was very warmly seconded by Mme de Loynes; doubtless she remembered the first night of *Mireille*. Sainte-Beuve and Théophile Gautier received many votes. M. Henry Simond pleaded for Sainte-Beuve as another great author who would not disgrace the academic gallery of the *Echo de Paris*. Théophile Gautier had two sponsors, and those of the best: our friend M. Robert Mitchell and M. Gaston Bérardi, a finished man of letters, who also would have polished "Emaux" and carved "Camées" had the busy life of Paris left him time to do so.

Eugène Sue's name even was mentioned, though not very seriously, I am bound to say. If the influence

exerted by an author was to count as a qualification, he certainly had an influence as widespread as it was hateful. We did not stop long over him, any more than over George Sand, whose name was insinuated by Mme de Loynes. She was not a feminist, but she asked whether an author was to be kept out through happening to be a woman. Déroulède supported Émile Augier, with reserve because he was his uncle, but with conviction because he had written the *Gendre de Monsieur Poirier* and *L'Aventurière*. Finally, Ernest Daudet presented his brother's credentials, as they say at the Académie. No one opposed him.

How was the list finally arranged? M. Maurice Barrès must answer that question, but at the same time we may complain that the twelve biographies have never been written. French literature might have been able to count itself the richer by one more great work!

While listening to these fine minds discussing such points in art, as though they were in the groves of Academe, Paul Déroulède would never have suspected that most of them, a few months before, had been eager, excited, furious speakers for the "Patrie Française," making Paris and the provinces echo with the thunders of their kindling speech; that Mme de Loynes had long feared that the most popular of them all would find difficulty in reassuming the tone of literary conversation. After experience on the stage, lecturing was next to be tried, and M. Jules Lemaître was given his opportunity by the "Société des Conférences," which had recently won the approval of all right-thinking persons by putting its platform

at the disposal of Ferdinand Brunetière, shut out of the Sorbonne and the Collège de France by the intolerance of the Government. M. Jules Lemaître was asked to occupy this same platform during the winter of 1907, and he there gave a course on Jean-Jacques Rousseau which was a striking success. Mme de Loynes did not fail to come to the first lecture, and was made perfectly happy. M. Jules Lemaître equalled his best work, if he did not exceed it. His former delicate discernment and versatile criticism were there as before, and in addition a wider outlook and a fuller meaning, the result of the experience gained during those years of strife and of close contact with the national life.

Mme de Loynes was only at M. Jules Lemaître's first lecture. Her doctors twice sentenced her to stay in her own room during 1907, though she declined, with her gentle obstinacy. It meant stopping her dinner-parties, and, worse still, her luncheons too. These latter were especially precious, because of their absolute intimacy. She used to invite M. Jules Lemaître's personal friends, and, what she liked better, people of note in the theatrical world, dramatists, managers, or actors, with whom he might like to discuss various matters. Such were M. Antoine, manager of the Odéon, an original in gesture, daring in temperament, devoted to his work and always doing battle for it; M. Albert Carré, an actor who looks like an officer and has never known failure. Guitry, whose powers we have already praised, almost always came with M. Alfred Capus, for they were twin spirits whom it was cruelty to separate. She used also to have the sublime Mme Sarah Bernhardt,

he divine Mme Bartet, Mme Jeanne Granier, whom she called the kind, or Mlle Brandès with her great dramatic gift, and even Mlle Suzanne Desprès, whose somewhat pronounced and exaggerated style grew more gracious under the influence of the hostess's gentle dignity.

Among her friends I must mention M. Ferdinand Humbert, who had put all his heart and all his powers into his magnificent portrait of M. Jules Lemaître. Here we may note that M. Humbert and M. Jules Lemaître liked to carry on their correspondence in Latin verse. M. Ernest Daudet, faithful among the faithful found; Louis Dausset, valiant comrade of the "Patrie Française," and, most often of all, M. Ernest Judet.

M. Ernest Judet had been with M. Jules Lemaître at the École Normale, when the future author of the delicious piece of mischief known as *La Bonne Hélène* earned the nickname of "Titi," thanks to the freedom of the pleasantries with which he overwhelmed professors and school-fellows alike. Mme de Loynes had a great respect for M. Judet; she had admired his vigorous campaign in the *Petit Journal*, and had encouraged his efforts after he had been given the management of *L'Éclair*, for which his courage and his talents made him well fitted.

Her close friendship with Girardin had left her with a strong bias in favour of the press. More than one newspaper owed its existence to her, as did more than one journalist his reputation. She liked to prove to her friends that, like themselves, she belonged to the office. Besides, she received recruits as well as

veterans with rare kindness, as MM. Paul Acker, Charles Ernest, and Olagnier can bear witness.

She had been doing far too much, and her doctors ordered her sea air. She hesitated between various coast resorts, and finally decided upon Dinard, where one of her friends had a villa. This friend was M. Léon Bailby, manager of *L'Intransigeant*, who is not merely the shrewd journalist as we know him, intelligent, in love with novelty, and cheerfully audacious; for, while he adapts himself to the progress of the present, he knows how to admire the glories of the past. Mme de Loynes could therefore have chosen no better guide in order that this change, from which her doctors promised her real benefit, might interest her as well. M. Bailby took her to Dinan, to St. Malo and to Cancale. He recalled in M. Jules Lemaître's presence the great memories left by Chateaubriand. He made them go to the house in the Rue des Juifs where he was born, and to Mme de Bédé's mansion, in which her grandson, the great author, had written *Les Martyrs*. At Cancale he showed them the little harbour where Armand de Chateaubriand, cousin of René, took ship in his attempt to escape from Fouché's police. He took them to Grand-Bé to see the tomb which seems built of the same granite as the "Génie du Christianisme."

Jules Lemaître in Chateaubriand's country! It was at least interesting to see the critic, who, like Sainte-Beuve, had never professed great admiration for Chateaubriand, wandering along the shore on which the young poet had aired his youthful miseries, before the vision of that vast ocean whose depths had been plumbed by the earlier thinker. Was the

impression made a strong one? This we may learn even now from the fine lectures M. Jules Lemaître is devoting to a study of Chateaubriand.

One thing spoilt Mme de Loynes' visit to Grand-Bé. She had to walk nearly two miles, and go up and down steps to get to the St. Malo boat. This made her hot and she took cold on the crossing. She was shivering when she got to the hotel, and had to go straight to bed. She was in her room for three days, and when she got up the doctors advised her to go back to Paris as soon as possible. She was obliged to leave Dinard without seeing M. Bailby's villa, and as she left she said sadly to him: "I don't believe I ever shall see it!"

She finished the summer in her cottage at Parc-aux-Princes, and went back to Paris earlier than usual. She was always cold all over—cold at heart too, perhaps—and her fire burned more brightly than ever. But at what flame could her aching heart grow warm again? I went often to see her at this time, but I did not suspect her serious condition any more than any other of her friends, for concealing it was her last and greatest effort to please. She would never seem old to her friends, lest their eyes should be saddened; she would not let them know she was ill, for fear of making them anxious. I found her more listless than usual; it struck me that this heroine, whose strength of will I had always admired, had no longer any wish to live. I got to her house one day rather before four o'clock. She was out and had left a message asking me to wait; when she came in I thought her looking very white and weary. Said Pauline: "Yes, you ought to scold Madame.

I begged her not to go out, but she would go round the Bois, though the doctors have forbidden it. It was very cold!" She sat down in her armchair close to the fire to get warm, without troubling to take off her hat.

"Yes, yes, I know, but it was so bright. What a fuss about a little turn in the sun! Will the doctors forbid warmth and light next? Nonsense! I shall not die of it, and even if I did——"

"What a horrid idea! Die! Do you really, for the first time in your life, want to make your friends unhappy?"

"Unhappy? I know who will be. Besides, that will pass, and should I not make them more unhappy still when they saw me a dear old lady worn out and decrepit in a wheel-chair? You were all very kind when you used to tell me that I had so much charm. Well, that was my work in life, and now the charm has gone the work is over! Imbert de Saint-Amand has often told me that Mme de Castiglione veiled her face so that no one should see how time had withered it. I did get a reprieve, but what harm would it do if I were to disappear now?"

"Do you remember the time when Girardin introduced you to me, thirty years ago? How strong I felt then! Do you remember how you came back again in the middle of the Dreyfus affair and our nationalist campaign? Oh! you very soon found me out! I was very ambitious, but it was not for myself, I promise you. What had I to gain?

"Do you remember?—How sweet it is when one is old to have friends to whom one can say: 'Do you remember?'

"No one needs me any more now. Maurice Barrès, whom I do not see as often as I should like, has had two pieces of good fortune within the year—he has been elected to the Académie, and by his constituents. All the forces of the future are with him, and all its joys. How charming Maurice Donnay's lecture at the Académie was the other day! I had to read it—I wasn't well enough to go. Costa, Ségur, and Barboux are in the Académie now; Roujon, Ernest Daudet, Delafosse, and Capus will be there some day, and Déroulède whenever he likes. As for M. Jules Lemaître, he has returned to the path in which he won his fame. Literature, criticism, and the stage are all smiles for him, so he will not need mine as much in the future. If I leave regrets I shall not take remorse with me."

She seemed to meditate.

"Ah! but I shall," she went on. "There is one—I gave pain to Coppée. You know what I mean better than anyone. He forgave me, but I have always hated myself for it. I know he is ill, and when I am allowed to go out I will go to see him. He will speak to me of God—he does that so well—and His justice, and His mercy for sinners, men and women alike. The end does not always sanctify the means, he told me the other day. How right he was!

"Among my many friends you are the one who has chosen the best way; you would not turn into an old man about town, but married a beautiful wife, and they tell me you have the loveliest little girl. If one knew it, one would take the right way."

And she added, with a sad little smile:

"True, one cannot always.

"You know, I am expecting you to dinner next Friday. See," holding out an envelope, "in this is all that remains of the little bunch of violets Amaury Duval pinned on my bodice. Put it, in remembrance of me, into one of M. Jules Lemaître's books.

"But come, we mustn't be mournful. Till Friday, then; you will see how cheerful I shall be. From now till then I shall keep as warm as possible. Good-bye till Friday, my friend."

Friday's dinner never took place; she was in bed, and the doctors said she had a touch of bronchitis. It developed into pleurisy. I went to inquire every day; Pauline shook her head sadly.

One morning I asked by telephone. All Pauline said was: "Your poor friend is dead, sir." And got no further for her sobs.

IV

AT MONTMARTRE

Mme de Loynes had passed gently away, without suffering, and a priest had been with her at the last. Faithful to her lifelong rule with regard to her friends, she had wished at least to spare them anxiety. They heard of her illness and of her death almost simultaneously.

The news came upon them like a thunder-clap. Not one was prepared, and all were crushed with sorrow. Our friend had been mistaken in saying, "Their grief will pass!" I know one whose sorrow is as keen as in the first hour of loss; and I know one at least who carried his with him to a too early grave. She had expressed a wish that her funeral should be a very simple one in her will, by which she left her considerably diminished fortune to her own family, except for certain legacies to friends, and large gifts to charitable institutions. Her executors piously fulfilled her desire. The curé of Saint-Philippe-du-Roule was resolved to perform the last offices in person for this parishioner whose inexhaustible charity he had never appealed to in vain.

When he saw, behind the modest hearse which bore our friend to Montmartre, a procession of all the illustrious men in Paris, members of the Académie, army officers, journalists, authors, artists, politicians of

all parties, the wondering passer-by asked respectfully, "But who is this great lady they are burying to-day? Who was she?" What was she? Charm itself. What matters her name? It would mean nothing to the crowd; but to the elect, to the friends who all desired to escort her on foot to her last dwelling-place, it recalled her sovereignty over them, obeyed without a shadow of revolt, because she was all made of kindness and of gentleness. Later, this name will remind them, if it be necessary, of the woman who came to Paris ignorant, without family, without connections, yet was brave enough to learn, clever enough to become a real power, thanks to her charm, and eager to devote this power to serve causes she believed to be noble ones. When they were defeated, she shared their fate and never found consolation. But at least she escaped the grief of knowing that her life's work would end with her. Hers was the lot of those jewellers who select their pearls with infinite care, and put them together to form a unique necklace, whose value is increased by their assemblage as well as by their rarity. Then comes disaster: the thread breaks, the setting grows loose, and the pearls roll away and are dispersed. Each pearl resumes its own individual value, but the jewel is no more. With infinite skill Mme de Loynes had contrived to form links between all her friends, different as they were and often naturally opposed to one another; she had drawn affinities closer, rounded angles away—had fused them all, so to speak. But death was to unbind the sheaf. Meetings were less frequent, friendships were less closely knit, differences were accentuated, and long-repressed dislikes even rose to the surface.

The keystone had gone. The charm was broken. I have always thought that there was but one inscription that would fit the tomb of this personification of the harmonious: "Here Charm lies buried."

I wanted to see our friend's grave once more. At the funeral, feeling for the dead makes close observation impossible. You walk past, you throw into the yawning chasm a fragment of earth which makes a sound as it falls like a bead slipped down a rosary, and is the last echo from this world that reaches the ears of the dead, closed now for evermore. Then, reverently, you go away.

I wished to look on the grave once more, and take my final farewell.

I have often gone to the Montmartre cemetery. My great friend de Pène lies there. It is but a little way from the *Gaulois* office; above the Rue des Martyrs, on the Butte, as though to guide us, rises the Sacré-Cœur, that great stone watch-tower, where stands, invisible, the sentinel whom the Lord has placed there to keep the vast city. We draw near, and see, clinging to each side of the great church, two cities in strange contrast, side by side: the city of labour and of tumult, of wretchedness and luxury, whither Louise goes down each morning to seek her work, whither Frou-frou comes up each evening on pleasure bent; and the other, the city of mystery and of peace, whither come for their eternal rest all the Frou-frous and all the Louises, at peace from their passions, their pleasures, and their sufferings.

On my first pilgrimage I asked the porter at the gate which way to go, for I did not know where

Mme de Loynes' grave lay. "Go to the inquiry office," said he.

I went. The office looked like a lawyer's chambers. It was clean, yet mournful; tears must have washed the blocks of its parquet flooring. The clerk in uniform looked through various papers and consulted lists, all without the least emotion, then wrote something on a card and handed it to me. I read:—

Paris Cemetery
Position of Grave
Division 30
Row 8
No. 20
Chemin Guersant
De Loynes

Here was poetry enough for an old ballad, but to the official it was a mere item on his list. To reach the Chemin Guersant, I had to go through a dark archway, where there was a rolling as of thunder over my head. It was the Caulaincourt viaduct, which cuts the city of the dead in twain, to let the busy uproar of life flow past—motor-horns, bellowings from motor-omnibuses, shouts from drivers, yells from the news-boys: "Have the *Patrie*! Have the latest news! Have the account of the opening of Mme Lantelme's grave!" And there was the tramp of the passers-by coming in their crowds, hurrying, running, without a thought of time and space, walking heedlessly by the Place of Rest; fancying, perhaps, because they looked down upon the dead, that death was not hovering above their own heads. It was a very carnival of life, side by side with the utter silence of the Beyond; and, like a symbol of this *macabre*

connection, appeared a Muse, whose grace was an honour to its sculptor, and yet she seemed profane in garments that half covered her and suggested nudity.

She was stooping to lay a wreath upon the stone that covered Meilhac's grave. Her face was veiled by a fold in her robe, so that no one could tell whether she was hiding a tear or a smile: one would have said that she commemorates the comedy of death.

I lost myself among the paths, in silent meditation. Then I passed people who prayed or were weeping. Mme de Loynes' tomb is so modestly concealed that I had to ask a caretaker, who readily took me to it. I bowed, as I passed it, before the double stone beneath which lie Émile de Girardin and Delphine Gay, and lifted my hat to Ernest Feydeau's grave, kept like a garden by the pious hands of that clever dramatist, his son. I admired the stone whereon Saint-Marceaux' genius has immortalised Dumas fils. Dumas fils, Girardin, Feydeau—beloved names!

We reached the grave. "There it is," the caretaker told me.

How simple it was! No monument, just a railing above a base of stone, shutting in a strip of earth with a few plants growing on it; at one end a little column with a cross, and on the column the names of two of her relations who had been laid to rest before our friend, then her maiden name and, below it, *Comtesse de Loynes.* That was all. There was no epitaph, nothing but the name.

I had taken from M. Jules Lemaître's book, in

which I had been keeping it, all that remained of the little bunch of violets she had given me. I buried it in the ground, so that something she had treasured might be joined to her remains.

The Comtesse de Loynes had returned to her own place ; in the hour of her death she had gone to lie among her family. Even in death the Dame aux Violettes had shown tact.

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