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STORIES FROM DE MAUPASSANT

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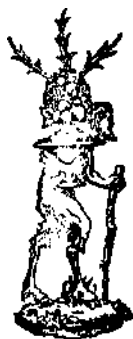
STORIES FROM DE MAUPASSANT

Translated by

E. M.

WITH A PREFACE BY

FORD MADOX FORD



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PREFACE

THE housekeeper in the 'Field of Olives,' an upright and self-respecting peasant, is worried by a man prowling near her master's cottage: she calls him a '*maoufatan*'. How are we to translate this word, meaning malefactor, into anything colloquial? We might write 'tramp'—but that connotes half a dozen things and means nothing in particular. In the English dialect with which I am most familiar a caravan- or tent-dweller is called a 'pikey'; a man or woman really in search of work on the road is a 'traveller'; but of an unknown prowler, a vagabond, a scamp, a malefactor, our peasants would not hazard more than: 'He's up to no good, I dare-say.'

The whole difference of genius in two races lies in these differing methods of approaching a characterisation. In attempting to get near the truth, we sedulously avoid over-statements. We refine; we are adepts in reservation, in periphrases, in suggestion which, as a defect of the quality,

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is often enough not the same thing as suggestiveness. Thus we retain our self-respect.

The Frenchman, with the same intention (I am referring to the nations temperamentally rather than territorially, as if de Maupassant stood for a type of mind more or less representative of the Latin-French), makes a statement that is sharp, clear-cut, and trenchant. His idea is to get an effect, to render at least one side of a truth — and to attain to a self-respect through having done it. I am not here concerned as to which is the better way.

Speaking loosely we may say that there is only one French language. In English there are two, a written one and a spoken. A Frenchman will say: '*J'cproiwe tin desir* ; he will write it too. An Englishman might write: '*I feel a desire*'; he would have to say : '*I want to*' We have in fact a 'literary language,' and, however much we may try, we cannot in writing get very far away from it without giving offence or feeling a slight interior shock. De Maupassant could write a pure and limpid vernacular that was also pure

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and limpid literary French. This makes him peculiarly difficult to a translator: it also gave so literary a writer his chance of immediate popularity. To an English one of the same rank it would have come only after several years of waiting for us to get used to his 'style.'

De Maupassant is popular because he is very interesting. He is that in his incidents, his 'story'; he is that in his presentation; and he is interesting because of his great clearness of diction, of visualisation, and of point of view.

If we examine superficially the 'how' of this interest, we find it to be based on the old formula of 'the surprise which awakens attention, arising out of inevitable things.' In the story called the 'Field of Olives' we have a series of little surprises at the opening. There is the abbe; we imagine him in his long soutane, but it is tucked up at the knee; he is frugal and simple, but he has a nice taste in cooking. His popularity, his devoutness, his muscular strength, his benevolence, and his little weaknesses are well 'got in'; then

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we are surprised to learn that he was once a man of the world with a strong distaste for the church, that he had had a mistress, that he had been passionate to the very edge of murder.*

The tranquil note of the cure of souls and of the field of olives is re-introduced and sustained for just sufficiently long to give contrast to the figure of the '*maou-fatan*.' He, with his continuing antitheses, moral contrasts, divergences of character in the same individual, his reflections upon reformatories, the contest of temperaments between his pseudo father and his real mother, his terrorising and astonishingly convincing position in the unhappy and strange household, with all these incongruous and inevitable elements, the *maou-fat an* is one unceasing surprise. And the more one is surprised, the more one sees

*This 'surprise' is, of course, achieved by the presentation. A passionate man of the world 'reacts' very naturally into religious simplicity. And this, too, renders inevitable the figure of his son, who, with a sort of logical strength of character making for vice, inherits from his mother a contrasting and as if playful viciousness.

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how certainly each event is the effect of a cause. The idea of a violent fight between father and son is so well suggested, that the actual solution, inevitable as is that too, comes as the final surprise. In that way the interest is held literally to the last word: '*la mort.*'

If one examines more minutely, one finds in the actual writing the same quality. Every word is simple and colloquial, but each is vivid and exact; there is never a familiar (which means an uninteresting) succession of phrases. But — and this is the most important quality of all — no unusual or precious word stands out; if it did, it would arrest the attention and stop the flow of the story. These qualities in a 'style,' the slight crepitations of surprise, like the successive small explosions in a motor, keep the story running and lend to it actuality and life. They make it interesting at the third or fourth reading.

The first sentence : '*Quand les hommes du port. . . aperçurent la barque de l' Abbe Vilbois qui revenait de la pêche, ils descendirent sur la plage pour aider à tirer le*

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bateau,⁹ is evidence of de Maupassant's skill in rhythms. It is the opening of a short-long-story not of an anecdotic *conte*. It is leisurely. A *conte* would have commenced : '*Les hommes du port apercevant la barque, . . . descendirent sur la plage pour aider, etc.*' The initial '*Quand*' takes away from the actuality what it adds to the sense of leisure, and, as it were, to the 'atmosphere.' It is a *longueur* of extreme shortness.

These things are the minutiae of a work, but it is the invariable rightness of de Maupassant in all these matters that makes him the great story-teller that he is. His command of the sound of sentences is so singular as to seem merely instinctive: he is by turns narrator, dramatist, and lyric poet, and always in the right places. It is an obvious defect of his qualities that at times he is to English tastes (I am thinking of the last sentences of *The Chairmender*) a rhetorician.

It is invidious, in a preface to a translation, however excellent, to dwell too long upon the wording of the original: the

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Translator in this case has made at least spirited attempts to retain de Maupassant's rhythms. 'The Minuet' is the weakest of the inclusions in this selection—the weakest in the sense of being the least special. It is the 'kind of thing' that many other writers could have done as well, but as a piece of cadenced virtuoso's writing it is well worth reading. The other selections are all of the strongest. They offer evidence of how wide and, for purposes of his art, of how deep was de Maupassant's knowledge of human lives. There is the excellent timidity of the bourgeois, the tranquillity of his life, the active benevolence and the passive acceptance of things as they are, the tacit abstaining from probing their own relationships, of 'Madoiselle Perle.' We have the good-humoured scepticism of 'The Relic,' with its man of the world, and the gay, good-humoured, and still cynical regret of the business man in 'The Wreck.' These are the comparatively articulate 'comfortable' classes.

As expositions of the peasant's being, nothing could be more convincing than

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'Saint-Antoine,' nothing more true or more pathetic than 'The Return.' I can call to mind no exact parallel with Saint-Antoine himself: we may compare him with Falstaff, who was vainglorious, timorous, swilling, humorous, despicable—typical enough of the brute that, in all men, is in a greater or a less degree, below the surface. Falstaff, however, is genially handled. Martin of 'The Return' is, of course, Enoch Arden: one could not desire more typical instances of Latin and of Northern 'handlings/ But examples of this occur in each of these stories. I wonder, for instance, how one of our masters would fyave treated the story of 'The Chair-mender.'

This is one of the best of de Maupassant's *conies* of a special form. ('The Minuet' is another). A moral proposition is stated at the opening, the story is then told in the shape of an anecdote illustrating the proposition. This seems at first sight a contradiction of the theory that is at the base of all art of the type of de Maupassant's.—The only thing of value is die

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concrete fact: the concrete fact is only of value as an 'illustration' of a state of mind, a characteristic in an individual. The fact should be stated first. The 'moral' may or may not be drawn in so many words. Theoretically it ought not to be, because the first duty of an artist is not to comment and, precisely, not to moralise.

That most typical work of its kind, 'Night,' is a succession of concrete instances: their selection is unerring, their presentation too. No moral is drawn: it is left to the reader to conclude whether this is simply a study in alienism, or whether he shall feel if he is so constituted all the emotions that he might subjectivise for himself on the Last Day.

The thing is simply there for you to take or leave: in its flawlessness it is as hard as a paving stone. You like it or you don't; but to say that some other kind of work is better, because it has a moral basis, is to say that an elephant is better than a team of draught oxen. It is something different in species.

Tennyson, for instance, is not a 'handler*

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of short stories, and it would be merely invidious to condemn a work of art for what it is not. His Enoch is an idealised, self-sacrificing, chivalrous and amiable personality. He does what Tennyson admired. Martin, on the other hand, does what he would have done, and what every peasant who was a good sort would have done. He is nearly dumb, he is puzzled, chivalrous too in his own way, because he is anxious to do what is right or to be shewn what is right for him to do. The Northerner—Englishman, Scandinavian, German, Celt, or Russian—will consider that Enoch is the more ennobling conception.

The upholder of *Vart pour Van* will disagree. (Flaubert considered that had France read his *Education Sentimentale*, the horrors of the Debacle would have been spared her.*) His position in these

* I haven't much doubt that he was right. It is, however, amusing to read that Rossetti, who, in his point of view in these matters, was Northern enough, wrote after reading *Madame Bovary*, during the Franco-Prussian war:—'A nation which could produce a work so horrible was bound to end in these disasters.'

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matters is at least logical. Draw life, he says, to the life, and your moral will draw itself. If you are rendering a sunset, do not attempt to put in the metaphysical subjectivities that the sunset raises in you, but catch the sunset and the other things will come to your reader. Every work of art has a profound moral significance, but you must not attempt to impose your own laws upon nature. '*La terre a ses limites mais la betise humaine est infinie.*' You, yourself, share with the rest of humanity, and there is no fact in the realm of moral ideas that is not immediately controvertible; there is, he says, no truth that will not in the course of time become first a platitude and then an untruth. Perhaps, in short, he is only a more prudent soul than the idealist, perhaps he is wiser.

The moral propositions which introduce 'The Minuet' and 'The Chair-mender,' are not, in fact, de Maupassant's morals.' They are technical devices: they strike the notes of the *contes* which follow. Secondly, they are 'illustrations' of the narrator's characters : we are offered in the one

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the point of view of a particular bachelor of the *monde sericux*, in the other that of a doctor of a certain type.

De Maupassant, to use a German locution that would have delighted the compilers of the 'Dictionary of Accepted Ideas,' was the 'Artist as Renderer with a Special Vision/' That his vision was so very special, and his rendering so true to it, makes him the great artist that he is. I have heard it said very cogently that, once you see his secret, all his work from the artist's point of view is the same thing. The criticism is very just. I fancy, however, that it may be applied to every artist who gave to the public only his maturer products. That de Maupassant did : his 'technique' was always the same; there is no very visible progress because there is no 'young work.' As far as the public is concerned he sprang from the head of his Jove fully armed.

It would, however, give a view of him too unhuman, and in consequence too little, to leave it to be imagined that he was always at his best. The story *L'Inutile*

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Beaute, which gives the title to the French volume in which the 'Field of Olives' appears, is of an appalling badness, because it is of an appalling dullness. Yet it rubs shoulders with this masterpiece. In the volume called *he Pere Mi Ion* we may see the first sketch of *Yvette*. This first sketch is nothing at all, it isn't even bad. Yet being worked over, it gave rise to a story that in its way is matchless. De Maupassant in fact had a technique, but it was one that meant great labour, a constant watchfulness. He could go astray, he could pick himself up again, but when he worked by its light, when he had the right subject, when in short he was in the vein, he was not to be surpassed.

The Translator has been hampered by two things in making the present selection, which, up to a point, is representative enough. I should have liked to have seen it bigger, to have seen it include, say, '*Yvette*,' '*ha Pere Amable*,' and half a hundred more. But unfortunately (and I'm not sure that that at least is to our credit as a race), the 'public demand' for de Maupas-

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sant is said to have been hitherto of the smallest. One may hazard a wish that this volume may enlarge it. It isn't in any way practicable to wish for translations of *La Petite Roque*, or of such a masterpiece of pleasant and ferocious irony as *Ce Cochon de Morin*.

I have said that the supreme quality of de Maupassant is his interest. That, after all, is the supreme, because it is the indispensable, quality of all art. We may or may not conceal our moral purposes, we may or may not indulge our tendencies to metaphysical speculation, we may conceive of poetry as of a glamour, we may write always with an eye on the ultimate purposes of things. But before all we must catch the attention of our reader, and hold for the time the stage of his mind. This de Maupassant does by his management of continual 'surprises.' His 'story' engrosses the non-critical, it holds the critic too at the first reading. At the second—and for how many more!—this latter is held by the workmanship, into which he examines with the refreshment and delight that is

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known only to the craftsman examining sound work. That is the real test of art, and it is because of the unobtrusiveness of this workmanship, that for once the critic and the reader may join hands without awaiting the verdict of posterity.

FORD MADDOX FORD

THE FIELD OF OLIVES

WHEN the men of Garandou, a little Provençal seaport at the end of the Bay of Pisca, between Marseilles and Toulon, made out the Abbe Vilbois' boat returning from fishing, they went down to the shore to help in hauling her up.

The Abbe was alone, and, in spite of his fifty-eight years, he pulled at the oars with uncommon energy, like an able seaman. With his sleeves rolled over his muscular arms, with his cassock turned up and held in place by his knees, and partly unbuttoned at the chest, with his three-cornered hat lying on the seat by his side, and wearing instead a cork helmet covered with white cloth, he looked like a robust and exceptional priest in a tropical land, a man more suited for adventure than for saying mass.

From time to time he glanced behind him to make certain of the landing point, then recommenced pulling with a rhythmical, powerful, steady stroke, to show those inferior sailors of the South once

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more how the men of the North can handle the oars.

The boat, keeping her way to the last, ran up the shore as if she meant to climb the sands, ploughing a furrow with her keel; then she stopped short, and the five men who had been watching the Abbe's arrival, drew near, looking pleased, appreciative, and full of good-will towards their priest.

'Well,' said one, with his strong Provencal accent, 'have you had a good catch, monsieur le cure?'

The Abbe Vilbois stowed his oars, changed his helmet for the three-cornered hat, turned down his sleeves, and buttoned up his cassock; then, having resumed the appearance and bearing of a village minister, he replied proudly:

'Yes, yes, excellent — three louns, two murenes, and some girdles.'

The five fishermen went up to the boat, they leant over the gunwale, and with the air of connoisseurs examined the dead creatures, the fat louns, the flat-headed murenes, hideous serpents of the sea, and

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the violet girelles, streaked with zig-zig, golden, orange-coloured stripes.

One of the men said :

'I will carry them home for you, monsieur le cure.'

'Thank you, my boy.'

The priest shook hands all round and started off, followed by the one man, leaving the others occupied with his boat.

He took long, slow strides, with an air of strength and dignity. He was still warm from having rowed with so much vigour; in passing under the light shade of the olive trees he took off his hat now and then to expose, to the sultry evening air cooled a little by a slight breeze, his square forehead, surmounted with white hair, straight and close cut, the forehead of an officer rather than of a priest. The village came into sight, on a rising knoll, in the middle of a broad open valley sloping towards the sea.

It was a July evening. The dazzling sun, nearly touching the jagged crest of the distant hills, cast the interminable shadow of the priest slantingly over the white road

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that was buried under a shroud of dust. An enormous three-cornered hat went along in the neighbouring field, like a large sombre blotch, that seemed to play at climbing nimbly on to all the trunks of the olive trees that it met, to fall again immediately and creep along the ground.

From under the feet of the Abbe Vilbois a cloud of fine dust, of that impalpable flour-like powder with which the Provençal roads are covered in summer, rose up like smoke around his cassock, veiled it and shaded its hem with a grey tint, which, by degrees, grew lighter and lighter. He went along, refreshed now, with his hands in his pockets and die slow and powerful gait off a mountaineer making an ascent. His tranquil eyes looked at the village, his village, where he had been priest for twenty years—the village chosen by him, obtained by great favour, and where he counted on dying. The church—his church—crowned the large cone of houses packed closely together, with its two unequal and square towers of brown stone, that raised, in this beautiful southern valley,

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their ancient silhouettes, more like turrets of a strong castle than belfries of a sacred edifice.

The Abbe felt pleased, for he had caught three loups, two murenes, and some girelles.

He would have this fresh little triumph amongst his parishioners—he whom they esteemed above all, perhaps because he was, in spite of his age, the most muscular man in the neighbourhood. Those slight, innocent vanities were his greatest pleasure. He could cut the stem of flowers in two with a pistol shot, he fenced sometimes with his neighbour the tobacconist, an old regimental Fencing master, and he could swim better than anyone on that coast.

He had once been a man of the world, well known and very elegant—the Baron Vilbois, who had taken orders at diirty-two, after an unfortunate love affair.

Descended from an old Picardian royalist and religious family, who, for several generations, had given their sons to the army, to the bench, or to the church, he had thought at first of following his

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mother's advice and taking orders; then, at the instance of his father, he had decided to go simply to Paris, to take his degree and afterwards to devote himself seriously to the law.

But while he was finishing his studies, his father succumbed to pneumonia after a day's shooting in the fens, and his mother, overcome with grief, died shortly afterwards. Then, having suddenly inherited a large fortune, he gave up the idea of making any kind of career, in order to enjoy the life of a rich man.

Being a handsome youth, and intelligent, although his mind was confined by beliefs, traditions, and principles, hereditary like his muscles of the Picardian squire, he pleased people; he was a success in good society, and enjoyed the life of a high-principled, wealthy, and esteemed young man.

But it happened that, after some meetings at a friend's house, he fell in love with a young actress, quite a young pupil from the Conservatoire, who had made a brilliant debut at the Odeon.

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He fell in love with her with all the violence, with all the passion, of a man born to believe in absolute ideas. He fell in love with her, seeing her through the romantic part in which she had obtained her great success the first time she appeared before the public.

She was pretty, naturally perverse, with the air of a naive child, which he called the air of an angel. She knew how to conquer him completely, how to make of him one of those raving madmen, one of those lunatics that a single glance or a fluttering skirt of a woman kindles into flame on the pile of mortal passions. He took her as his mistress, made her leave the stage, and loved her, for four years, with continually increasing ardour. Certainly, in spite of his name and the honourable traditions of his family, he would have ended by marrying her, if he had not discovered one day that she had been deceiving him for a long time, with the friend who had introduced him to her.

The drama was all the more terrible in that she was enceinte, and he was awaiting

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the birth of the child to make up his mind about the marriage.

When he held in his hands the proofs (some letters he had discovered in a drawer), he reproached her for her unfaithfulness, her perfidy, and her ignominy, with all his half savage brutality.

But she, impudent and audacious, as certain of the one man as of the other, a child of the people that erect barricades, braved and insulted his anger; and when he was on the point of giving way to his fury, she cried:

'Don't kill me. The child is not yours, it's his.'

This arrested him; and she, afraid at last of the death which she saw coming from the glance and terrifying gestures of that man, repeated:

'It isn't yours. It's his.'

He murmured with clenched teeth, thunderstruck :

The child.'

'Yes.'

'You lie.'

He could not believe it. And before the

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persistent menace of his aspect she made a last effort to save her life.

'I tell you it is his. Think how long we have been living together! You would have been a father before now.'

This argument struck him as being like truth itself. In one of those flashes of thought, when so many arguments appear at the same time with illuminating clearness, precise, irrefutable, conclusive, and irresistible, he was convinced; he was sure that he could not be the father of that unborn, miserable offspring of a prostitute; and, suddenly relieved, set free, and almost appeased, he gave up all thought of killing this infamous creature.

He said in a calmer voice :

'Get up, be off, and don't let me ever see you again.'

She obeyed. She was vanquished, and went away.

He never saw her again.

He, for his part, went away also. He went towards the south, towards the sun, and stopped in a village, in the middle of a valley, by the side of the Mediterranean.

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The appearance of a little inn, with a view of the sea, pleased him; he took a-room in it and resolved to stay. He lived there eighteen months, in his grief, in his despair, in complete isolation. He lived there with the preying memory of the treacherous woman, of her charm, her atmosphere, her indescribable sorcery, her presence, and her caresses.

He wandered about the Provencal valleys, walking in the sunlight that fell sifting through the grayish leaves of the olive trees, haunted by his one thought, brain-sick and weary.

But his old pious ideas, his first faith (its ardour a little cooled) returned very gently to his heart in this dolorous solitude. Religion, which had appeared to him before like the abandonment of an unknown world, appeared to him now like a refuge from a life full of deceit and torture. He had preserved the habit of prayer. In his grief he took refuge in that, and he often went, in the twilight, to kneel down in the shadowy church, where the speck of light sparkled from the lamp, alone at the end

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of the choir, sacred guardian of the sanctuary and symbol of the divine presence.

He dared to confide his trouble to God; to his God; and he told Him of all his wretchedness. He asked Him for advice, pity, help, protection, and consolation; and each time he put more feeling into his prayers, which he repeated every day with an increasing fervour.

His bruised heart, eaten up by the love for a woman, remained open and throbbing, always desirous of tenderness; and little by little, by dint of praying, by living like a hermit with growing habits of piety, by abandoning himself to the secret communication of devout souls with the Saviour who consoles and enshrouds the wretched sinner, the mystical love for God took possession of his soul and drove away the other passion.

Then he resumed his early plans, and decided to offer to the Church a shattered life which he had been so near giving her with its purity intact.

He was ordained a priest. Using the influence of his family and his high connec-

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tions, he got himself appointed to serve in this poor village parish in Provence, where chance had thrown him at first; having given away a great part of his wealth to charity, he kept only as much as would allow him to remain useful and helpful to the poor until his death; and he took refuge in a tranquil existence of pious practices and devotion to his fellow beings.

He made a worthy priest, with narrow views, a kind of religious guide with a soldier's temperament, a guide of the Church who masterfully leads into the straight road erring, blind humanity, lost in this forest of life, where all our instincts, our tastes, our desires are tracks that direct us astray. But much of the man of another time remained alive in him. He did not lose his love of violent exercise, active sports, and fencing; and he dreaded women, all of them, with the fear of a child before a mysterious danger.

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II

THE sailor who followed the priest had on the tip of his tongue all the southerner's desire to talk. He was afraid to, for the Abbe cast a spell of respect over his flock. At last he hazarded :

'Well, does your little bastide please you, monsieur le cure?'

This little place was one of those microscopic houses where the Provenjals settle down in summer for a change from town and village. The Abbe had hired this tiny dwelling in a field, five minutes walk from the vicarage (which was too small and confined), in the centre of the parish, close to the church.

He did not live in the bastide continuously even in summer, he only went there for a few days, now and again, to breathe freely in the midst of the fields and to do some pistol practice.

'Yes, my friend,' said the priest, 'I like being there.'

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Built amongst trees, the low pink-painted dwelling came into sight. Striped, welted, and cut into little pieces by the branches and leaves of the olive trees, with which the unenclosed field was planted, the little place seemed to have sprung up like a Provencal mushroom.

A tall woman was to be seen passing many times before the door, preparing a little table for dinner. She laid with methodical deliberation a solitary knife and fork, a plate, a serviette, a piece of bread, a glass. She wore a little Arlesienne cap, peaked up with black silk velvet, with a mushroom-like crown of white muslin.

When the Abbe was within earshot, he called out to her:

'Hey, Marguerite!'

She paused to look up, and recognised her master.

'Te! Here you are, monsieur le cure?'

'Yes. I have brought you a good catch; go and cook this loup immediately, in butter, nothing but butter, melted butter, d'you hear?'

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The servant approaching them examined, with the eye of a connoisseur, the fish which the sailor carried.

'But we have already got a boiled fowl,' she said.

'That can't be helped. Fish a day old is nothing to fish that is fresh from the water. I will have a little feast, it does not happen too often, and besides the sin is not a great one.'

The woman picked out the loup, and as she was going away carrying it, she turned back.

'Oh! A man has been here three times to see you sir!'

He asked with indifference :

'A man! What sort of a man?'

'A fellow that's not much good.'

'What! A beggar?'

'Perhaps, yes, I can't say. I should rather think an evil-doer—a maoufatan.'

The Abbe Vilbois kughed at this Provencal word, which signified a malefactor and a tramp, for he knew of Marguerite's timid disposition; whenever she stayed in the lonely bastide, she would imagine all

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day long and, above all at night, that they were going to be murdered.

He gave some coppers to the fisherman, who went off; and then, having retained all the careful habits and customs of his previous life, he was saying: 'I will go and wash my face and hands/when Marquerite from the kitchen, where she was already scraping the fish, whose scales came off a little besmeared with blood, like infinitesimal silver sequins, called out:

'Look! —here he is/

The Abbe turned to look along the road, and saw a man, who appeared in the distance to be very poorly clad, coming slowly towards the house. He waited, still smiling over his servant's terror, and thinking: 'Really, I believe she is right, he certainly looks like a maoufatan.'

The stranger came near, without hurrying himself, with his hands in his pockets and his eyes on the priest. He was young, with a long, fair curly beard; locks of hair waved about under his soft felt hat, so dirty and knocked about that no one would have been able to guess its original colour

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and shape. He wore a long, maroon overcoat, a pair of trousers frayed at the ankles, and shoes of plaited grass, called espadrilles, which gave him a soft, suspicious, almost silent gait, the inaudible step of a prowler.

When a few strides away from the priest, he took off the ragged felt that screened his brow, baring to view, with rather a theatrical air, a crapulous, worn, good-looking face, a head with a bald patch on the top, a sign of privation or precocious debauch, for this man certainly did not look more than five-and-twenty.

The priest also took off his hat, feeling instinctively that this fellow was no ordinary vagabond, no casual, no labourer out of work, or habitual criminal on the tramp between two terms of imprisonment, speaking nothing but the mysterious slang of the jails.

'Good day, monsieur le cure,' said the man. The priest answered simply, 'Good day to you'—not wishing to address this suspiciously ragged person as 'Monsieur/ They looked at one another fixedly, and

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the Abbe Vilbois, under the gaze of this tramp, felt uneasy and agitated, as though face to face with an unknown enemy; invaded by one of those strange anxieties which creep with shudders through flesh and blood.

At last the vagabond answered:

'Well, d'you know me?'

The priest answered, very astonished :

'I? Not in the least: I don't know you in the least.'

'Ah, not in the least. Take another good look at me.'

'It's no use my looking at you, I am sure I've never seen you in my life.'

'That's true enough,' replied the other, ironically, 'but I will show you someone that you'll know better.'

He put on his hat again and unbuttoned his overcoat. His chest was bare underneath. Around his thin stomach a red belt kept his trousers up over his hips.

He took an envelope out of his pocket; one of those amazing envelopes, stained, marbled with every possible blotch; one of those envelopes produced out of the coat

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linings of wandering scoundrels, together with some sort of papers, either stolen or genuine, the precious upholders of liberty against any gendarme. He drew out a photograph, a carte-de-visite, an old-fashioned portrait gone yellow, rubbed and much worn, warmed in the contact with the man's flesh, and dimmed by the heat of his body.

Then, holding it up on a level with his face, he asked:

'And this one here, do you know him?'

The Abbe took two steps forward to see it better, and stood there growing pale, astounded, for it was his very own portrait given to *her* in the remote time of their love.

He said nothing, not understanding.

The vagabond repeated:

'D'you know him—this one?'

The priest stammered:

'Yes, of course.'

'Who is it?'

'It's myself.'

'Is it really you?'

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'Of course.'

'Well then, look at us—look at both of us now; look at your portrait and look at me.'

He had seen it already, the wretched man. He had seen that these two beings, the one on the card and the one who grinned beside it, resembled each other like two brothers; but he did not yet understand it all, and he faltered.

'What do you want with me in any case?'

Then replied the scoundrel, in a wicked voice:

'What do I want? Why! First of all I want you to recognise me.'

'Who are you, then?'

'Who am I? Go and ask anyone on the road; ask your servant; let us go and ask the mayor if you like, and show him this, and he will fairly laugh, I can tell you! Ah! So you don't want to acknowledge me for your son, papa cure?'

Then, the old man, raising up his arms with a biblical and despairing gesture, groaned:

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'It is not true,'

The young man closed up with him, face to face.

'Ah, it is not true! Ah, Abbe, there's an end to lying now—do you hear.'

His face was menacing and his hands clenched, he spoke with so violent a conviction, that the priest, gradually drawing back, was asking himself which of the two at this moment was mistaken.

However, he persisted once more:

'I have never had a child.'

The other retorted:

'Nor yet a mistress, perhaps?'

The old man uttered resolutely, one single word, a proud avowal:

'Yes.'

'And that mistress was not expecting a child when you drove her away?'

Suddenly the old anger of twenty-five years past, not really stifled, but only im-mured in the depths, broke through the vaultings of faith, of resigned devotion, of complete renunciation, which he had erected over his lover's heart; and, beside himself, he exclaimed:

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'I cast her out because she had deceived me and because she bore the child of another—or else I should have killed her, monsieur, and you too at the same time.'

The young man hesitated, surprised in his turn by the sincere passion of the priest; then he replied slowly:

'Who told you this story, that it was someone else's child?'

'She did, she herself, she told me so, defying me.'

Then the vagabond, without disputing this assertion, concluded with the indifferent tone of a street rough, pronouncing a judgment.

'Oh well! Then it's mother who made the little mistake when she went for you, that's all.'

Regaining mastery over himself, after this outburst of fury, the Abbe inquired:

'And who was it told you that you were my son?'

'She did, when she was dying, monsieur le cure. And then—this.'

He held out the little photograph.

The old man took it in his hand; slowly,

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for a long time, with rising anguish, he compared this unknown prowler with his old likeness, and he could doubt no longer that this was indeed his own son.

A feeling of distress swept into his soul; an inexpressible emotion, unbearably painful, like the remorse of a former crime. He understood a little, he could guess the rest. He saw again the brutal scene of separation. It had been in order to save her own life, threatened by the outraged man, that the woman, the false and perfidious woman, had thrown out that lie at him. And the lie had been successful. A son had been born to him, had grown up, had become this mean street runner, who exhaled the scent of vice as a he-goat exhales his odour.

He murmured:

'Will you come a few steps with me, so that we may have some further talk about this?'

The other chuckled.

'Of course, parbleu! That's just what I came here for.'

They started off together, side by side,

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along the field of olives. The sun had disappeared. The exceeding freshness of a southern twilight spread a cold invisible mantle over the country. The Abbe shivered, and suddenly lifting his eyes with the customary movement of an officiating minister, he perceived all around him, trembling in the sky, the little grayish leafage of the sacred tree which had* sheltered in its frail shadow the greatest sorrow, the only wavering of the Christ.

A short and desperate prayer rose up to his lips, formed by that internal voice, which does not pass at all through the mouth, and by which believers implore the Saviour : 'My God, help me.'

Then, turning towards his son i

'So you say your mother is dead?'

A fresh grief awoke in him while uttering the words, 'your mother is dead,' and gripped his heart; a strange misery of the flesh which has never done with remembering, and a cruel echo of the torture that he had passed through; but still more, perhaps, now that she was gone, a revival of that short, delirious happiness of youth

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whereof nothing remained but the wound of her recollection.

The young man replied :

'Yes, monsieur le cure, my mother is dead.'

'Along time ago?'

'Yes, these three years already.'

Another doubt occurred to the priest.

'How is it you have not come to see me before this?'

The other hesitated.

'I couldn't. I have had hindrances. . . . But pardon my interrupting these disclosures which I will go into later as minutely as you please, in order just to mention that I have eaten nothing since ygsterday morning.'

A sudden feeling of pity quite moved the old man, and holding out both his hands hastily:

'Oh, my poor child,' he said.

The young man received his large, stretched-out hands, which grasped his more slender, warm, and feverish fingers.

Then he answered with that chaffing sneer which hardly ever left his lips:

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'Well, really! I begin to think we shall understand one another after all.'

The priest walked briskly.

'Let us go and dine,' he said.

He thought suddenly, with a little feeling of pleasure, instinctive, confused, and bizarre, of the fine fish that he had caught, which, together with the boiled fowl, would make a good meal for his miserable child.

The Arlesienne, restless and already grumbling, was waiting at the door.

'Marguerite,' called the Abbe, 'clear the table and carry it into the sitting-room. Quickly, quickly, and set two places. Quickly/

The servant was scared at the thought of her master's going to dine with this good for-nothing.

Then the Abbe Vilbois himself commenced to clear away and to transfer the table, laid out for him alone, into the only room on the ground floor.

Five minutes later he was seated opposite the vagabond, before a tureen full of cabbage soup, from which a little cloud of steam rose up between both their faces.

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III

WHEN the plates had been filled, the vagabond began to swallow his soup eagerly in rapid spoonfuls. The Abbe was no longer hungry, and he only sipped the savoury cabbage soup slowly, leaving the bread at the bottom of his plate.

Suddenly he asked:

'How do you call yourself?'

The man laughed with the satisfaction of appeased hunger.

'Father unknown,' said he. 'No other surname than my mother's, which you probably have not forgotten. To make up for that I've two Christian names, which, by-the-bye, are hardly suitable, "Philippe Auguste."'

The Abbe turned pale, and asked with a lump in his throat:

'Why did they give you those names?'

The vagabond shrugged his shoulders.

'You can easily guess. After you had gone, mother wished to make your rival believe that I was his, and he did believe

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it until I was about fifteen. But at that time I commenced to resemble you too much. And he disowned me, the scoundrel. You see, they had given me his two Christian names, Philippe Auguste, and if I had happened not to resemble anyone in particular, or to have been simply the son of a third rascal, who had never shown up, I should call myself to-day, Vicomte Philippe Auguste de Pravallon, the lately recognised son of the count of that name, senator. As for me, I have christened myself "Ill-starred."

'How do you know all that?'

'Because they had it out before me, *parbleu!*-i-rowing each other like anything. You may guess. Ah, that's the sort of thing to open your eyes.'

Something more painful and more tormenting than all he had endured and suffered for the last half-hour oppressed the priest. It created in him a feeling of suffocation, which would grow and would end by killing him; and this came not so much from the things that he heard as from the way in which they were said, and

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from the vile expression of the rascal that underlined their meaning. Between this man and himself, between his son and himself, he was beginning to perceive the depths of moral turpitude, like a foul sewer, which acts like fatal poison on certain souls. Was this a son of his own? He could not yet believe it. He wished for all the proofs, all of them; to learn everything, to hear everything, to listen to everything, to suffer everything. He thought again of the olive trees that surrounded his little bastide, and murmured for the second time: 'Oh, my God, help me.'

Philippe Auguste had finished his soup. He asked: 'Isn't there anything *pioire* to eat, Abbe?'

The kitchen was outside the house, in an adjoining building, and as Marguerite could not hear her master's voice so far, he would call her by striking a Chinese gong, which hung on the wall behind him.

He took up the stick with a leather head, and struck the flat disc of metal several times. A feeble ringing sound came forth at first, then, growing louder, became

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an accentuated, vibrating, piercing, overpowering, ear-splitting uproar—the horrible plaint of beaten brass.

The servant appeared. She had a sour expression, and she cast furious glances at the maoufatan, as if she had a presentiment with her faithful, dog-like instinct, of the drama that had fallen on her master. In her hands she carried the grilled loup, from which wafted up a savoury odour of melted butter. The Abbe divided the fish from end to end with a spoon, and offered the fillet out of die back to the child of his youth:

'I caught it myself a little while ago,' he said, with the remains of pride that welled up in his distress.

Marguerite did not go away.

'Bring some wine—the best, the white wine of Cap Corse.'

She made almost a gesture of revolt, and he had to repeat severely.

'Go along: two bottles.' For, when he offered some wine to anyone, a rare pleasure to him, he always allowed himself a bottle of it.

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Philippe Auguste, beaming, murmured:

'That's prime. It's a long time since I have had a meal like this.'

The servant came back in two minutes. They had seemed long to the Abbe, like eternity, for a desire to know everything was now burning in his blood, consuming it as with an infernal flame.

The bottles had been uncorked, but the servant stayed there with her eyes on the man.

'You may leave us,' the priest said.

She pretended not to hear.

He repeated almost roughly:

'I have told you to leave us alone.'

Then she went off.

Philippe Auguste devoured the fish with voracious haste; his father watched him, more and more surprised and tormented by all the vileness he discovered in this face which resembled his own so much. The little morsels that the Abbe lifted to his lips, that his parched throat refused to swallow, remained in his mouth, and he masticated them a long time, while he

Sought amongst all the questions

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into his mind, the one which he wished to be first answered.

He ended by murmuring :

'What did she die of?'

'The lungs.'

'Was she ill for a long time?'

'About eighteen months.'

'What did it come from?'

'Nobody knows.'

They became silent. The Abbe was pondering. So many things that he might have wished to know before depressed him, for since the day of parting, since the day when he had almost killed her, he had heard nothing whatever about her. Certainly, he had not wished to hear; he had cast her away resolutely into a pit of forgetfulness, her and his days of felicity; but now she was dead, there had sprung up in him an ardent desire to hear all about her, a jealous longing, almost a lover's desire.

He went on :

'She was not living alone, was she?'

'No, she was still with him.'

The old man started.

'With him, with Pravallon?'

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'Why, yes!'

And the formerly betrayed man calculated that this same woman who had deceived him had lived faithfully with his rival for more than thirty years.

He stammered almost in spite of himself:

'Were they happy together?'

The young man replied, chuckling:

'Oh, yes, with up and downs. It would have been all right without me. I always spoilt everything—I did.'

'How, why?' said the priest.

'I have already told you about it. Because he believed I was his son until I was about fifteen. But he was not a fool, the old fellow; he discovered the resemblance quite of his own accord, and then there were rows. As for me, I listened at the key-holes. He accused mother of having taken him in. Mother retorted: "Is it my fault? You knew very well when you took me that I was someone else's." That someone was you.'

'Ah, then, they spoke of me sometimes?'

'Yes, but they never mentioned you before me, except at the last, just at the end,

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in the last days, when mother felt herself lost. They were careful enough in that way, anyhow.'

'And you, you soon learnt that your mother's position was irregular?'

'Rather! I'm not a fool, I'm not, and I never have been. One guesses these things directly, as soon as one begins to know the world.'

Philippe Auguste filled himself glass after glass. His eyes brightened; he was getting drunk all the quicker for his long fast. The priest, noticing his state, was on the point of interfering, when it occurred to him that a drunken man will chatter without reserve of what is uppermost in his mind, and, taking the bottle, he filled the young man's glass again.

Marguerite brought in the boiled fowl. Having placed it on the table, she glared at the tramp again; then she said to her master indignantly:

'But look at him, monsieur le cure —he's drunk.'

'Leave us in peace,' replied the priest, 'and go away.'

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She went out, slamming the door.

He asked:

'What did your mother say about me?'

'Why, just what one always says of a man one has thrown over; that you were not easy to get on with—worrying to a woman—and would have made her life very difficult with your ideas.'

'Did she often say that?'

'Yes, sometimes in a roundabout way, so that I should not understand, but I guessed everything all the same.'

'And you, how did they treat you in that house?'

'Me? Very well at first, and afterwards very badly. When mother saw that I was spoiling her game, she kicked me out.'

'How was that?'

'How was that? Very simple. I had played a few pranks when I was about sixteen, and then those heartless swine put me into a reformatory, to get rid of me.'

He propped his elbows on the table, rested his two cheeks between his hands, and quite inebriated, the balance of his mind upset by the wine, he was suddenly

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seized with one of those irresistible impulses to talk of himself, which make drunkards ramble into the most fantastic bragging speeches.

He smiled prettily, with feminine grace in the curl of the lip, a perverse grace, well known to the priest. Not only did he recognise it, but he felt the hateful and endearing charm that had conquered him and had ruined his life in the past. It was the mother that the child most resembled now • he resembled her not so much in feature as in the captivating and false expression of his face, and above all, by the seduction of the deceitful smiling lips, which seemed to open the door to all the infamy inside.

Philippe Auguste related:

'Ah !Ah! Ah! I have had a life of it, I have, since the reformatory; a funny life, for which a big novelist would give a tidy price, I can tell you! Really pere Dumas, in his *Monte Cristo*, has found nothing more extravagant than what I've passed through.'

He became silent, with the philosophical

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gravity of a drunken man who is reflecting; then, slowly:

'When one wishes a boy to turn out well, one should never send him into a reformatory, whatever he may have done, because of what he learns in there. I had played a good joke, I had, but it turned out badly. As I was fooling about with three chums, all of us a little tight, one evening, towards nine o'clock, on the highroad, near the ford across the Folac, I came across a trap full of people, all asleep. There was the driver and his family, and they were some people from Martinon returning from a dinner in town. I took hold of the horse by the bridle, I led him quietly down into the ferry-boat, and then I shoved the whole thing into the middle of the river. That made some noise: the chap who was driving wakes up, the night was dark, he sees nothing and whips up his gee-gee. Then the old crock starts off with a jump and tumbles into the river, trap and all. All drowned! My pals gave me away. They had laughed enough at first, watching my little joke. Certainly, we didn't think it

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would turn out so badly. We wanted to give them nothing more than a bath, something funny to laugh at.

'Since that I have done worse things to revenge myself for the first, which did not deserve the reformatory, upon my honour. But it's not worth while telling you all. I will tell you only the last, because it will please you, I'm sure, I have revenged you, papa.'

The Abbe looked at his son with terrified eyes, and he ate nothing more.

Philippe Auguste was ready to go on.

'No,' said the priest 'not just now — presently.'

Turning round, he beat the strident gong and made it cry out.

Marguerite entered immediately.

Her master gave his orders in such a harsh voice, that she bent her head submissive and alarmed.

'Bring us the lamp and all that you have still to put on the table, then you need not come in again until you hear the gong.'

She went away, came back and put on the cloth a white porcelain lamp, covered

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with a green shade, a big piece of cheese, some fruit, and then left them.

The Abbe said resolutely:

'Now, I am ready to listen to you.'

Philippe Auguste calmly filled his dessert plate and poured some wine into his glass. The second bottle was nearly empty, although the cure had drunk nothing at all.

The young man coiffled again, stammering, his utterance made thick with food and drunkenness.

'The last, here it is. It's a good one: I had returned home, . . . and I stayed there in spite of them, because they were afraid of me . . . afraid of me. . . . Ah! I'm not a person to be put upon. . . . I'm capable of anything when I'm roused . . . you know . . . they lived . . . not together. He had two houses—he had the house of a senator and the house of a lover. But he lived more with mother than alone, for he could not get on without her. Ah, . . . she was a clever one and a fine one. She knew how to keep hold of a man, she did. She had him in her clutches, body and soul, and she kept him until the end. What fools

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men are. So, I returned, and I made them afraid of me. I know my way about, I do! When I am put to it, for malice, craftiness, and strength, too, I am up to any man alive. Well then, mother fell ill, and he took her to a beautiful estate near the Meulan, in the middle of a park as large as a forest. That lasted about eighteen months . . . as I have told you. . . . Then we saw the end was coming. He came from Paris every day, and he grieved—certainly real grief.

'Then, one morning, they had been chattering for nearly an hour, and I was asking myself what they could find to jabber about so long, when they called me in. And mother said to me :

' " I am near dying, and there is something that I want to disclose to you in spite of the count's advice." She always called him the count in speaking of him. "It is the name of your father, who is still alive."

'I had asked her more than a hundred times . . . more than a hundred times . . . my father's name... more than a hundred

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times . . . and she had always refused to tell me.

'I believe, even, that one day I gave her a slap in the face, to make her blurt it out, but it was no good. And then, in order to get rid of me, she had told me that you had died penniless, that you were a man of not much account, anyhow—an error of her youth, a young girl's mistake, don't you see. She went about it so jolly well, that she took me in completely, took me in with that story of your death.

'Then she said to me:

' "It is your father's name."

'The other, who was seated in an arm-chair, said like this three times :

' "You are doing wrong, you are doing wrong, Rosette."

'Mother sat up in bed, and I see her still, with **her** red cheek bones and brilliant eyes; for she loved me very much, in spite of everything; and she said to him :

' "Then do something for him yourself, Philippe!"

'In speaking to him, she called **him** Philippe, and me she called Auguste.

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'He began to shout like a madman.

"Tor that drunkard, for that scamp, that liberated convict, that . . . that . . . that . . ."

'And he found as many names for me as if he had not tried for anything else all his life.

'I was getting angry, too : mother pacified me, and said to him :

"'You wish him to starve then, for I haven't anything, I haven't."

'He replied, without upsetting himself very much:

"'Rosette, I have given you thirty-five thousand francs a year for thirty years; that makes more than a million. You have lived with me a rich woman, a beloved woman, I may say a happy woman. I do not owe anything to this scoundrel, who has spoilt our last years; and he shall have nothing from me. It is useless to insist. Refer him to the other one if you like. I regret it, but I wash my hands of all this."

'Then mother turned towards me. I said to myself: "Good . . . here I am finding out my father at last . . . if he has got the tin, I am a made man . . ."

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'She continued:

"Your father, Baron Vilbois, is now called the *Abbe* Vilbois, cure of Garandou, near Toulon. He was my lover when I left him for this one."

'And she told me all, except that she made a fool of you about her pregnancy. But women, you know, never can speak the truth.'

He chuckled, letting out unconsciously and freely all his vileness. He drank again, and, with his face continually beaming, lie continued:

'Mother died two days, two days after. We followed her coffin to the cemetery, he and I—isn't it funny ... eh? ... he and I ... and three servants ... that was all. He wept like a cow ... we were side by side ... one would have said the father and the father's son.

'Then we went back to the house. Only we two. I said to myself: "I suppose I must be off without a sou." I had only fifty francs. What could I do to revenge myself?

'He touched my arm, and said:

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' "I want to speak to you."

'I followed him into his study. He sat down before his desk; then, slobbering and all in tears, he told me that he did not wish to be as disagreeable to me as he had told mother; he begged me not to worry you. . . . This concerns us, though, you and me. . . . He offered me a bank note for a thousand . . . a thousand . . . a thousand . . . What could I do with a thousand francs... I . . . a man like me ? I saw that he had more money in his drawer, a whole lot of notes. The sight of all that paper made me itch to stick the beast. I stretched out my hand to take the note he was holding out, but instead of taking hold of his cursed dole, I spring on him, I throw him on to the ground, I grasp his throat until his eyes begin to start out of his head; then, when I saw he was pretty near gone, I gagged him, tied him up hand and foot, undressed him and turned him over. . . . Ah ... ah ... ah.... I revenged you... .'

Philippe Auguste coughed, spluttered with glee, and on his lips, parted with a grin of ferocious gaiety, the Abbe Vilbois

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saw always the old smile of the woman who had made him lose his head.

'And then?' he asked.

'Then.... Ah ... ah ... ah. ... There was a big fire in the grate ... it was in December ... in the cold weather . . . that she died . . . mother ... a large fire of coal ... I took the poker ... I made it red hot . . . and then ... I burned some crosses with it, on his back, eight, ten, I don't know how many. . . . Wasn't that a lark, eh? papa. That's the way diey used to brand the convicts. He writhed like an eel . . . but I had gagged him well ... he couldn't shout. Then I took the notes . . . twelve—with mine that made thirteen (they brought me no luck). And then I bolted, telling the servants not to disturb the count until dinner time, as he was asleep.

'I really thought he would say nothing for fear of the scandal, seeing that he is a senator. I made a mistake. Four days after I was nabbed in a restaurant in Paris. I had three years in chokey. That is why I have not been able to come to see you sooner.'

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He drank again, and stammering so that he could hardly pronounce his words:

'Now papa papa cure!
It's funny to have a priest for a father!
Ah ah you must be nice, very
nice with bibi, because bibi is not of
the common sort and because he
played a good joke is it not true
.... a good one on the old
fellow

The same anger which formerly had maddened the Abbe Vilbois against his treacherous mistress roused him now against this abominable man.

He, who had pardoned so much in God's name, the infamous secrets whispered in the mystery of the confessional, felt without pity, without mercy in his own name, and now he no longer called to his aid the God of succour and of pity, for he understood that no protection, celestial or earthly, can save those here below upon whom fall such misfortunes.

All the ardour of his passionate heart and violent blood, extinguished by his sacred office, awoke with irresistible revolt

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against this scoundrel who was his son, against this resemblance to himself and also to the mother, the infamous mother who had formed him like her, and against the fate which rivetted this wretch to his paternity as a cannonball is rivetted to the foot of a galley slave.

He saw, he foresaw everything in the sudden clearness, awakened by this shock from the twenty-five years of pious sleep and tranquillity.

Suddenly, convinced that he must speak strongly to be feared by this malefactor, and to terrify him from the first, he said, his teeth clenched in fury, and no longer thinking of the man's drunkenness:

'Now that you have told me all, listen to me. You shall go away to-morrow morning. I'll tell you where you are to live. You shall never leave the place without my permission. I will make you an allowance which will be sufficient for your necessities, but it will be small, because I have no money. If you disobey me once, all will be at an end, and you'll have to reckon with me.'

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Although besotted with the wine he had drunk, Philippe Auguste understood the threat. The criminal in him surged up suddenly. He spat out words mingled with hiccoughs.

'Ah, papa, you mustn't try it on with me. . . . You are a cure . . . I have you . . . and you will have to cave in . . . you too . . . like the rest.'

The Abbe started up; and there was twitching in his muscles of an old Hercules an invincible impulse to seize this monster, to bend him like a twig, and to show him that he must yield to his will.

He shouted, shaking the table with both his hands against the other's chest.

'Ah! take care, take care . . . you'll find that I'm not afraid of anyone.'

The drunken man, losing his balance, swayed in his chair. Feeling that he was going to fall, and that he was in the priest's power, he stretched out his hand, with a murderous look, towards one of the knives on the cloth. The Abbe Vilbois saw the movement, and gave a violent push to the table, overturning his son headlong on to

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his back. He lay sprawling on the floor. The lamp rolled over and went out.

For a few seconds a delicate tinkle of glasses, ringing against each other, sounded in the darkness; then there was the thud of a soft body falling, then nothing more.

With the shattering of the lamp the sudden night was shed over them—a night so swift, unexpected, and profound, that they were amazed by it, as though by some frightful event. The drunken man, cowering against the wall, did not move any more; and the priest remained on his chair, immersed in the deep gloom which had swallowed up his anger. This sombre veil cast over him, arresting his passion, stilled also the furious impetuosity of his soul, and other thoughts came to him, as black and sad as the darkness.

Silence fell, the heavy silence of a closed tomb, where nothing seemed to live or breathe any more. No sound came from outside, no rumbling of wheels in the distance, no barking of a dog, no rustle in the branches or along the walls of a faint breath of wind.

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This lasted a long time, a very long time, perhaps for a whole hour. Then suddenly the gong rang out! It rang out under a single blow, hard, sharp, and strong, after which came a strange noise of something falling heavily and of a chair overturning.

Marguerite, still on the alert, came running to the room; but as soon as she had opened the door she drew back amazed at the impenetrable darkness within. Then, trembling, with a beating heart, and in a gasping, low voice, she called out:

'M'sieu l'cure, m'sieu l'cure!'

No one answered, nothing stirred.

'Good Lord, good Lord,' she thought, 'what have they done? What has happened?'

She did not dare to advance, she did not dare to go back to get a light; a wild impulse to run away, to escape, and to shriek out took hold of her, although she felt her legs tremble as if she were going to drop.

She repeated :

'M'sieu l'cure, . . . m'sieu l'cure, it's me — Marguerite.'

But suddenly, in spite of her fear, an in-

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instinctive desire to help her master, and one of those audacities of women which come to them in heroic moments, filled her soul with terrified boldness. She ran to the kitchen and brought her little lamp.

She stopped at the door of the room. At first she observed the vagabond stretched out against the wall asleep, or seeming to be asleep, then the broken lamp, then, under the table, the two black feet and black stockinged legs of the Abbe Vilbois, who, stretched on his back must have struck the gong with his head as he fell.

She panted with fright, her hands trembled. She repeated :

'My God! my God! what is this?'

And approaching nearer, slowly, with short steps, she slipped on something greasy, and very nearly fell down.

Then, stooping low, she noticed that on the red floor a liquid equally red was running, spreading around her feet, and flowing quickly towards the door. She guessed that it was blood!

Nearly out of her mind, she flung away her light in order not to see any more, and

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took to flight; she flew across the dark land towards the village, stumbling headlong against the trees, with her eyes fixed on the distant lights of the houses, and shrieking as she ran.

Her piercing voice swept out into the night like the sinister cry of a screech owl, and it yelled without ceasing: 'The maoufatan! . . . the maoufatan! . . .the maoufatan!'

When she reached the first houses, a number of excited men ran out and surrounded her, but she only struggled amongst them without answering, for she had very nearly lost her senses.

In the end they understood that there was something very wrong in the Abbe's bastide out in the fields, and snatching up whatever came to hand, a number of them ran in a body to offer assistance.

The little pink-tinted cottage in the middle of the field of olives had become invisible and black in the dark and silent night. Ever since the only light of its bright window had been extinguished like an eye that is closed, it had stood immersed,

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lost in the darkness, undiscoverable for anyone not a native of the place.

Soon some lights appeared running along close to the ground, amongst the trees. They ran over the parched grass with long yellow beams; and, struck by their wandering flashes, the twisted branches of the olive trees showed fitfully like monsters, like serpents from hell entwined and writhing. The reflections falling afar brought out of the darkness something pale and indistinct at first; then the low square wall of the little dwelling became pink again in the light of the lanterns. Some villagers who carried them were escorting two gendarmes revolvers in hand, the garde-champetre, the mayor, and Marguerite, who was being assisted by some men. She was in a half-fainting condition.

Before the door that remained alarmingly open, there was a moment of hesitation. But the brigadier seized a lantern, went in first, and was followed by the others.

The old woman had spoken the truth. The blood, congealed now, covered the tiles like a carpet. It had reached the

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vagabond, where he lay with one of his feet and one of his hands in the red pool.

The father and the son were both sleeping, the one with his throat cut, in the sleep everlasting, and the other plunged in a drunkard's slumber.

The two gendarmes rushed upon him, and before he was well awake he had the handcuffs on his wrists. He rubbed his eyes in besotted amazement, muddled with the wine; and when he saw the dead body of the priest, his face took on an expression of bewildered terror.

'How is it he didn't clear out?' *the* mayor wondered.

'He was too drunk,' replied the brigadier.

And they all agreed with him; for the idea would never have occurred to anyone, that, perhaps, the Abbe Vilbois had taken his own life.

THE CHAIR-MENDER

THE first dinner of the shooting season at the Marquis of Bertran's was drawing to a close. Eleven sportsmen, eight young women, and the local doctor were seated around the large brilliantly-lighted table, which was covered with fruit and flowers.

They had been talking of love, and a great discussion arose, the eternal discussion as to whether we are capable of loving truly more than once in our lives. They cited instances of people who had never had more than one serious love affair; they also mentioned others where people had fallen violently in love more than once. Most of the men maintained that the passion of love, like an illness, may attack the same person several times; and that it may bring him even to death's door, if an insurmountable obstacle opposes its course. Although this manner of looking at it seemed incontestable, the women, whose opinions were based rather upon poetic imaginings than upon observed facts, affirmed that love, true and great love, can

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only be an unique experience to us mortals; that it is like a stroke of lightning, and that a heart touched by this kind of love remains empty, ravaged, and burnt up so completely that it is for ever after sterile to strong sentiment, and even to tender dreams.

The Marquis, who had loved many times, opposed this belief vigorously.

'I can tell you that a man can love more than once with his whole heart and soul. You bring up cases of people who've killed themselves for love, as a proof of the impossibility of a second passion. I can answer this by assuring you that, if they had not been fools enough to commit suicide, which took away all chance of a relapse, they would have been cured; and they would have recommenced, and kept it on for the natural term of their lives. It's die same with lovers as with drunkards. He who has drunk will drink again—he who has loved will continue to love. It's a matter of temperament. That's all it is.

They made the doctor umpire in the dispute. He was an old Parisian, who had

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retired into the country. They begged him to give his opinion.

He had none to give, as it happened.

'As the Marquis has said, it is a matter of temperament: however, I have a personal knowledge of a passion which lasted for fifty-five years, without a day's respite, and ended only with death.'

The Marquise clapped her hands.

'Isn't that beautiful! And what a thing to be loved like that. What happiness, to live fifty-five years quite enveloped by an intense and penetrating devotion! How blessed and happy he must have been in a love like that!'

The doctor smiled.

'Indeed, madame, you are not mistaken on the point; the object of that love was a man. You know him well; it is M. Chouquet, the chemist of our market town. As for her, the woman, you knew her too; she was the old chair-mender who called at the castle on her rounds every year. Perhaps you will let me try to explain it to you.'

This calmed the women's enthusiasm,

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and their disgusted expressions seemed to imply that the transports of love were exclusively the privilege of the refined and distinguished beings, who alone seem worthy of interest to people of their world.

The doctor went on :

'Three months ago I was called to this old woman's deathbed. She had arrived here the night before, in the rickety caravan that was her home, drawn by the wretched old horse you may have seen, and accompanied by the two big black dogs, her protectors and her friends. The priest was there already. She made us the executors of her will, and, in order to disclose the motives of her last wishes, she told us the whole story of her life. I do not know anything more curious, or more poignant.

'Her father and mother were travelling chair-menders. She had never slept in a dwelling fixed permanently in the ground.

'When quite little, she ran about in rags, covered with vermin and sordidly dirty. They would pull up on the outskirts of villages, close to the ditch; the horse, un-

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harnessed, browsed by the roadside, the dog slept, with his nose between his paws, and the little girl rolled about in the grass, while the father and mother, in the shade of the elm trees, would set themselves to mend the seats of all the old chairs in the parish. There wasn't much talking in this wandering home. After the few necessary words to settle who should make the round of the houses, uttering the well-known cry : "Chairs to mend!" they would go to work, face to face, or side by side, twisting the rushes in silence. When the child had wandered off too far in her play, or tried to scrape up acquaintance with some ragamuffin from the village, the father's angry voice would call after her: "Will you come back here—you crapule!" They were the only expressions of tenderness she ever heard.

'When she grew bigger, they used to send her to gather in the harvest of worn-out chairs. She got to know the street boys in various places; but the parents of her new friends would call back their offspring brutally : "Come here at once, you **rascal**."

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Don't you let me see you playing about again with dirty bare-footed brats."

'The little urchins often threw stones at her.

'Once some kind ladies gave her a few coppers: she treasured them up carefully.

'One day — she was eleven years old — they were passing through our district when she met the little Chouquet boy, behind the wall of the cemetery. He was crying bitterly, because a playmate had taken two farthings from him. Those tears of a little well-to-do child, of one of those children whose lot she had pictured in her outcast's little brain as being always fortunate and happy, completely upset all her notions. She approached him, and when she had learnt the cause of his sorrow, she put all her savings into his hands, seven sous, which he took as a matter of course, and dried his tears. Then, quivering with joy, she had the audacity to give him a kiss. He was absorbed in the contemplation of the money, and did not think of objecting. Finding herself neither repulsed nor beaten, she renewed her caresses, she

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hugged and embraced him to her heart's content. Then she ran away.

'What was it that took place in that miserable little head? Did she become attached to this boy because she had sacrificed her tiny fortune to him, or because she had given him her first tender kiss? The mystery is the same, whether we are little or big.

Tor months she dreamt of that corner of the cemetery and of that boy. In the expectation of seeing him again, she purloined from her parents, filched one sou here, another there, either from the money paid for the mending of a chair or from what she was given when sent on an errand to buy provisions.

'When she came this way again she had two francs in her pocket, but she could only catch sight of the chemist's son, with a very clean face, behind the windows of the paternal shop, between a large red car-boy and a glass jar, containing a tape-worm preserved in spirit.

'She only loved him all the more, seduced, moved, entranced by this glory of

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coloured water, this apotheosis of brilliant crystals.

'She kept his memory indelible, and when she met him the following year, at the back of the schoolhouse, playing marbles with other boys, she rushed to him, seized hold of him and kissed him with so much violence that he began to howl with fright. Then, to appease him, she gave him all her money—three francs, twenty centimes—a real hoard, which he looked at with wide-open eyes.

'He took it, and let her caress him as much as she wanted.

'For four years, she continued to pour all her savings into his hands. He pocketed them conscientiously in exchange for the kisses he permitted her to give. Once it was thirty sous, on another occasion two francs, once only twelve sous (she cried about it, with grief and humiliation, but the year had been a bad one), and the last time she handed over five francs, a big round coin, which made him laugh with sheer satisfaction.

'She thought of nothing in the world

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but that boy; and he awaited her return with some impatience; he would start running towards her as soon as she appeared in sight, and the girl's heart would leap up at this.

Then he disappeared. He had been sent away to school. She found this out from skilful inquiries, and she used infinite diplomacy to induce her parents to change their round, so as to pass through here during the holiday months. She succeeded in effecting her object after a year of wily plotting. It was two years since she had seen him, and he was hardly recognisable, he was so changed, grown so tall, improved in appearance, and quite imposing in his school tunic, with its row of gilt buttons. He pretended not to see her, and passed proudly by.

She wept over this for two whole days; and ever since that time she suffered endlessly.

'Each year she came back, passed by him without daring to greet him, and without his deigning to give even one glance in her direction. She loved him desperately. She

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said to me, "He is the only man that I have seen on earth, monsieur le medecin. I don't even know if there are any others in existence."

'Her parents died. She went on alone; but she took two big dogs along with the caravan instead of only one - two terrible watchdogs, that nobody would have cared to tackle.

'One day, returning to the village, where her heart had always stayed, she saw a young woman come out of Chouquet's shop, arm in arm with her beloved. It was his wife. He had got married.

'The same evening she threw herself into the horse-pond, near the town hall. Some belated tippler fished her out again, and carried her into the pharmacy. Chouquet, the younger, came down in his dressing gown to attend to the case, and after bringing her round, and without appearing to recognize her at all, he said, in a harsh voice: "You must be mad! Don't be up to these silly tricks again."

'That was enough to cure her. He had spoken to her! She felt happy for a long time afterwards.

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'He refused to accept anything for his services, although she insisted obstinately on paying him.

'And her whole life went on in this way. She mended chairs while thinking of Chouquet. Every year, she saw him behind the plate-glass windows. She got into the habit of buying trifles from him, supplies of drugs. In this way she could look at him closely, and could speak to him, and still give him her money.

'As I have already told you, she died this spring. After having related all this sad story, she ended by begging me to deliver to the man she loved so patiently the savings of her whole life; for she had worked only for him, she said, often depriving herself even of food, in order to put by some money and make sure that he would think of her, at least once more, when she was dead.

'She put two thousand, three hundred, and twenty-seven francs then into my hands. I left the twenty-seven francs with M. le Cure to pay for the burial, and I took away the rest, after she had breathed her last.

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'Next day I went to the Chouquets. They sat finishing their lunch, facing each other, both fat and red, redolent of pharmaceutical products, pompous and self-satisfied.

'They made me sit down; they offered me a glass of liqueur, which I accepted, and I commenced my tale in an unsteady voice, feeling certain that they would be moved to tears.

'As soon as he understood that he had been loved by this wandering mender of chairs, by this disreputable tramp, Chouquet jumped up, fuming with indignation, as if she had stolen from him his reputation, the esteem of all respectable people, his intimate honour, something tender and delicate, that was more dear to him than life.

'His wife, quite as exasperated as he, repeated continually: "That bccgarwoman! That beggarwoman! That beggarwoman!" unable to find anything else to say.

'Chouquet walked to and fro, with long strides, behind the table, his embroidered smoking cap hung sideways over one ear.

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He stammered : "Can you understand it, doctor? It's something too horrible to happen to one! What's to be done? Oh, if I had only known it in her lifetime, I should have had her arrested by the police and thrown into prison. And she would not have come out of it soon, I can tell you.

'I remained astounded at the result of my pious errand. I did not know what to say or what to do. But I had to carry out my mission to the end. I went on again : "She has charged me to give over to you all her savings, which amount to the sum of two thousand, three hundred francs. As the information seems to be so painfully shocking to you, perhaps the best thing would be to devote this money to some charitable object."

'They looked at me, the man and the woman, petrified by the news.

'I pulled the money out of my pocket, the wretched money, from different countries, and of all coinages—gold, silver, and copper intermixed. Then I asked: "Well—what do you want to do?"

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'Mme. Chouquet spoke first: "Of course, as it was that woman's last wish, it seems to me, really, that it will be very difficult for us to refuse."

'The husband, vaguely confused, struck in: "We could always buy something for the children with it."

'I said dryly: "As you please! "

'He replied: "You may as well hand it over, since she has charged you with it. We shall easily be able to find means of using it for some good work."

'I delivered the money, bowed, and went away.

'The next day Chouquet called upon me and said brusquely: "By the bye, hasn't she left her caravan here, that . . . that woman? What do you propose doing with the old thing?"

' "Nothing: you may take it if you like."

' "First-rate; that will just suit me; I will turn it into a tool shed for my kitchen garden."

'He was going off, but I called him back, "She has also left her old horse and her two docjs. Will you have them too?" He

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stopped, greatly surprised: "Why, no! Bless me! What should I do with them? Dispose of them as you please." He laughed, and reached out his open hand, which I took. What would you have? It does not do for the doctor and the chemist in the same district to be on bad terms.

'I have kept the dogs. The cure, who has a large paddock, has taken charge of the old horse. The cart serves as a tool shed for Chouquet; and he has bought five railway shares with the money.

'That is the only instance of deep love I have ever come across in my life.'

The doctor remained silent.

Then the Marquise, whose eyes were full of tears, sighed out: 'Decidedly, it is women alone who know how to love.'

SAINT-ANTOINE

HE had been nicknamed 'Saint-Antoine,' because his name was Antoine, and also, perhaps, because he was a good fellow, merry, jovial, a mighty eater, and a great drinker, and still vigorously enterprising with his servant girls, although he was more than sixty years old.

He was a big peasant landowner of the Caux district, florid in complexion, with a vast girth of chest and stomach, and perched on long legs, which seemed too thin for his corpulent trunk.

Being a widower, he lived alone on his farm, with his maidservant and his two labourers. He managed his property with astuteness and knowledge, careful of the mainchance in business, and with great skill in the care of his stock and the cultivation of his land. His two sons and three daughters had all married well; they lived in the neighbourhood, and came over once every month to dine with their father. His bodily strength was famous in all the sur-

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rounding parishes; it was a current saying about anyone exceptionally powerful: 'He is as strong as our Saint-Antoine.'

When the Franco-German war began, Saint-Antoine swore uproariously, in the village taproom, that he was ready to eat an army of Prussians; for he was a braggart, like a real Normandy peasant — a little craven at bottom, and boastful withal. He would bring down his fist on the wooden table, making the coffee cups and little glasses dance; and, fiery red in the face, with uneasy eyes, he would yell with the affected fury of an easy-going jolly toper: 'I shall have to eat some of them yet, as true as there is a God above us!' In reality, he never expected the Prussians to come as far as Tanneville; but, when he heard that they were already at Rautot, he shut himself up in his house and kept a perpetual watch out of the little kitchen window, expecting every moment to see the points of bayonets appear on the road.

One morning, as he sat at table, taking his soup with his servants, the door flew open, and the mayor of the commune,

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Maitre Chicot, entered, followed by a soldier, who was wearing a black helmet with a brass spike on the top. Saint-Antoine bounded to his feet, and his people looked on thunderstruck, expecting every moment to see him tear the Prussian to pieces; but he only shook hands with the mayor, who said to him: 'Here's one of them for you, Saint-Antoine. They got here last night. Above all, don't you try any of your foolish tricks; they threaten to kill, burn, and destroy for the least little offence. Now, I've warned you. Give him something to cat; there's no harm in the fellow. Good-day. I must be off. There's enough of them for everybody!' And he went out.

Saint-Antoine had turned pale; he looked at his Prussian. He was a stout young fellow, with a pink-and-white skin, blue eyes, fair hair, bearded up to the cheek bones, with an air of innocence, timidity, and good nature. The malicious Norman judged his man at a glance, and, taking heart, invited him, by signs, to sit down. He asked: 'Will you have some soup?'

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The foreigner did not understand. Antoine then, with growing audacity, pushed a plate filled to the brim right under his nose. 'There! you swallow that, you fat

The soldier answered, 'Ja,' and forthwith fell to voraciously, while the farmer, triumphant, feeling his character retrieved in a measure, winked at his servants, who were grimacing strangely, being very afraid, and wanting to laugh at the same time.

When the Prussian had gulped down his plateful, Saint-Antoine helped him to another, which disappeared in the same way; but he drew back, refusing the third, which the farmer tried to force upon him, repeating: 'Come on. Get outside this lot too. You must put on fat, or I'll know the reason why, you pig!'

And the soldier, understanding only that he was desired to eat his fill, laughed good-humouredly, trying to explain by signs that he was satisfied.

Then Saint-Antoine, becoming quite familiar, struck him lightly on the stomach

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with the back of his hand, shouting: 'He has a full paunch, my pig has! You just see if he hasn't.'

Suddenly he writhed with joy, grew crimson, unable to speak, as though he were going to have an apoplectic fit. An idea had come to him, which made him choke with laughter: 'That's it, that's the very thing, "Saint-Anthony and his pig." Here look at my pig.' And the three servants also went off into roars of laughter.

The old man was so pleased with himself, that he ordered up a bottle of cognac of the best sort—the sort that makes your hair curl—and offered it all round. They touched glasses with the Prussian, who smacked his lips to make himself agreeable, and to show them that he thought it famous stuff. Saint-Antoine shouted at him, under his very nose: 'Hey, here's something good! You don't get liquor like this to drink at home! Do you, my pig?'

After this, Father Antoine was never seen abroad without his Prussian. He had found what he wanted in that joke; it was his revenge for everything—the vengeance

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of a big, fat, malicious buffoon. The whole countryside that was reidy to die with fear, laughed and squirmed behind the backs of the conquerors at this prime joke of their Saint-Antoine. Really, the beggar had not his equal anywhere for a bit of fun. He alone was capable of such a farcical set out. There was nobody like him in the world. 'Cre coquin, va!'

Every afternoon he would start off to visit the neighbours, arm in arm with his German, whom he introduced jovially with a slap on the shoulder: 'Here, this is my own pig; only look how fat he's getting, the beast/

And the peasants grinned with delight. —Wasn't he comical, that beggar, Saint-Antoine?

'I will seii him to you, Cesaire, for three pistoles!'

'Done. That's a bargain, Antoine, and I shall invite you to come and eat the black pudding.'

'What I should like best is his trotters.'

'Just feel round his stomach, there's nothing but fat there.'

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They exchanged stealthy winks, without laughing too openly, however, for fear the Prussian should guess that he was being made fun of. Only Antoine himself, growing bolder every day, ventured to pinch his thighs now and then, yelling: 'Here's fat for you,' or slapped him behind, howling: 'All that is pure lard.' He would take him up in his arms of an old colossus capable of lifting a blacksmith's anvil, and shout: 'He weighs six hundred clear, and there's not a pound of waste in the whole carcass.'

He had made it a practice to get people to give his pig something to eat wherever they went calling together. This was the cream of the joke, the great daily diversion—'Give him what you like, he can swallow anything.' And they pressed upon the man bread, butter, potatoes, cold stew, all sorts of food, and pork sausages too, with a sly remark: 'Of your own, and really prime.'

The soldier, simple-minded and gentle, would eat out of civility, pleased at being shown so much attention, and would even

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make himself ill rather than refuse; and he really was growing fat, uncomfortably buttoned up in his uniform, which was getting too tight for him. This delighted Saint-Antoine, who would often say: 'I say, my pig, we shall have to make you a bigger cage presently.'

They had become the best of friends meantime, and when the old man went anywhere on business in the neighbourhood, the Prussian would offer to go with him for the pleasure of being in his company.

The weather was terribly severe; everything was frozen hard; the awful winter of 1870 seemed like another plague added to the misfortunes of France.

Father Antoine liked to be beforehand with his work, and knew how to seize every opportunity. He foresaw that he would be short of manure in the spring, and bought some from a neighbour, who was in pressing need of money; and it was arranged that he should come every evening, at his convenience, to fetch away a load.

Every day then, before nightfall, he

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would start off with his cart, always accompanied by his pig, for the farm of the Haules, a couple of miles away. And each day there was the fun of feeding the animal. The whole countryside could be seen wending its way there, as people go to church on a Sunday to hear mass.

The soldier, however, was evidently beginning to suspect something, and when the laughter around him grew too uproarious, he would roll his eyes about, his uneasy eyes which flashed with anger now and then.

One evening, when he had eaten his fill, he refused to have any more, and attempted to get up to go away. But Saint-Antoine stopped him with a turn of the wrist, and putting both his powerful hands upon his shoulders, pushed him back into his seat with such force that the chair gave way under the man.

A tempestuous gaiety broke out, and Antoine, radiant, picking up his pig, pretended to look to some imaginary wounds. He declared: 'If you don't want to eat any more, you shall be made to drink, by God!'

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And a supply of cognac was sent for to the inn.

The soldier darted vicious glances, but he consented to drink, nevertheless; he was ready to take as much as they wanted him to; and Saint-Antoine set himself to drink against him, to the great joy of the on-lookers.

The Norman, fiery eyed, and as red as a tomato, tilted the bottle, clinked the glass, bawling out, 'To you!'—and the Prussian tossed the spirits down his throat, time after time, without uttering a word.

It was a struggle, a battle, a revenge. Which would drink the other under the table? The excitement was intense. By the time the bottle had been emptied, both had about as much as they could carry; but neither of them had the better of the other. They went away quits, as it were, and that was all. They must have a deciding bout next day.

They went out staggering, and started for home, by the side of the dung cart, loaded with manure, which rolled slowly along the road, drawn by two heavy horses.

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The snow had begun to fall again, and the moonless night was lighted mournfully by the dead whiteness of the plains. The great cold took hold of the two men and increased their intoxication. Saint-Antoine, dissatisfied with himself for not having done better in the contest, found his solace in continually shouldering up against his pig, in the hope of making him tumble headlong into the ditch. The other avoided his pushes by stepping back; and every time he would mutter a few words in German, in an irritated tone, which provoked a burst of laughter from the peasant. At last, the Prussian got exasperated, and, as Antoine was trying to give him another shove, he met it by a heavy blow from the shoulder, which made the colossus stagger.

Inflamed with drink, the old fellow seized the man, put his arms around his body, lifted him up, shook him as though he had been no bigger than a child, and flung him away clear over to the other side of the road. Then, pleased with this feat of strength, he folded his arms, and burst out into laughter again.

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But the soldier picked himself up swiftly, bare-headed, for his helmet had rolled away, and, unsheathing his sword-bayonet, rushed upon Father Antoine.

When he saw him coming, the peasant seized hold of the stock of his whip by the middle — his long carter's whip of holly, straight, strong, and supple like the sinew of an ox.

The Prussian charged, headlong, with the point of his weapon forward, and certain of killing his man. But the old fellow fearlessly caught the blade, which was ready to rip him open, with his bare hand, flung it aside, and, with a sharp blow on the temple from the butt end of his whip, struck down his enemy, who fell senseless at his feet.

Terrified and stupid with astonishment, he surveyed the body, at first shaken with convulsive jerks, then remaining motionless, face downwards in the snow. He stooped over it, turned it on its back, and contemplated it for some time. The man's eyes were closed, and a trickle of blood ran from a cut on the side of the forehead. In

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the dimness of the night Saint-Antoine could see the brown stain of blood on the snow.

He remained standing still, with his head in a whirl, while the loaded cart went on steadily behind the slow pacing horses.

What should he do now? They would shoot him, burn down his farm, and devastate the whole district. What could be done? What could be done? How would he manage to hide the body, conceal this death, and deceive the Prussians? A sound of voices reached him from afar, across the great silence of the snows; then, almost mad with apprehension, he picked up the helmet, forced it on to the head of his victim, laid hold of the body, raised it up in his arms, ran along, caught up the cart, and flung his inanimate burden on to the top of the load. There would be time when he got home to think what must be done next.

He walked slowly, racking his brains, and finding no issue. He saw his ruin, he felt himself lost. He followed the cart into the stable yard. A light shone from a gar-

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ret window, his servant girl was not asleep yet. He backed his team quickly to the edge of the dung hole. He thought that the body lying on the top of the load would soon be underneath the manure, and he made the cart tip backwards.

The soldier disappeared, and was buried, as he had foreseen. Antoine levelled the whole with his fork, and stuck it into the ground near by. He called up his man, ordered him to take the horses out, and went upstairs to his room.

He went to bed, thinking continually of what he had better do next; but not a single idea illuminated his sombre perplexity. He grew more and more terrified lying there, quite still, in his bed. He would certainly be shot! He sweated all over with fear; his teeth chattered, he got up shivering, he felt it impossible to lie quietly under his blankets any longer.

Then he went down into the kitchen, took a bottle of cognac out of the cupboard, and climbed up the stairs again. He gulped down two big drinks, one after the other; it brought the excitement of fresh

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intoxication upon the remaining fumes of the old, without being able to calm the anguish of his soul. He had done a fine stroke of work there, by God, the confounded imbecile fool that he was!

He paced wildly to and fro, seeking for some stratagem, inventing explanations, calling up all his cunning; and from time to time he would swallow a mouthful of spirits, to keep his pecker up, anyhow.

But he could think of nothing to save himself. Nothing whatever.

Towards midnight, his watch-dog, a wolf-like brute, which he had named 'Devorant,' began, as the saying is, to howl at Death. Father Antoine felt a tremor in the very marrow of his bones; and each time the animal took up its lugubrious and prolonged moan a shudder of fear ran from head to foot through the old man's flesh.

He had dropped limply into a chair, his legs having given way under him, stupefied incapable of doing anything; he waited anxiously for Devorant to re-commence his howling plaint, quivering all over with

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sudden starts which an abiding sense of terror sets up in the vibrating tenseness of our nerves.

The clock downstairs struck five. The dog would not stop his howling, and the old peasant felt himself on the verge of madness. He got up to let the brute loose, so as not to hear any more of this noise. He went down, opened the door, and stepped out into the night air.

It was still snowing hard. Everything around was white. The farm buildings stood out in great black masses. The man went up to the kennel. The dog was straining at his chain. Fie let him loose; then Devorant made one great bound, and stopped short, his coat bristling up, his fore-paws rigid, his fangs bared, his nose pointed to the heap of manure.

Saint-Antoine trembled in every limb; he stammered out: 'What's the matter with you now, you dirty cur?' and moved forward a few steps; he scanned the pale obscurity, the undefined, dim shadows of the yard.

At last he made out an indistinct form,

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the form of something like a man sitting on the manure heap.

He gazed at it, paralyzed and gasping with horror. But suddenly he noticed near him the handle of his manure fork, stuck upright there in the ground; he tore it out violently, and in one of those gusts of desperate fear, which drive the greatest cowards to acts of courage, he rushed forward, resolved to see what this thing could be.

It was he — his Prussian, who had emerged, all miry, from his bed of filth, the warmth of which had called him back to life. He had sunk almost unconscious into a sitting position, and remained there, under the powdery fall of snow, covered with filth and gore, soiled, besotted with drink, half stunned from the blow, exhausted by the loss of blood from his wound.

He perceived Antoine, and as yet too dazed to understand anything, made a movement as if to get up. But the old man, as soon as he had recognised him, flew into a transport of brutal rage.

He stuttered, foaming at the mouth:

SAINT-ANTOINE

'Ah, you pig! You pig! You aren't dead yet! You are going to split on me, are you? You wait. . . you wait!'

He rushed upon the German, thrust forward the manure fork, poised like a spear, and with his whole strength drove the four iron prongs right up to the handle, into the man's breast.

The soldier fell backwards and expired with a long death sigh, while the old peasant, withdrawing his weapon from the wounds, drove it down again and again, blow after blow, into the stomach, into the throat, into the chest. He struck the palpitating body like a madman; he stabbed holes in it, from head to foot, and the blood gushed out in great bubbles.

At last, exhausted by the violence of his exertions, he stopped; he drew deep breaths, swallowing the fresh air by mouthfuls, feeling appeased by the murder he had committed.

Then, as the cocks were beginning to crow in the farm-yard, and the first streak of daylight appeared in the sky, he set to work to bury the corpse,

SAINT-ANTOINE

He dug down, right through the layers of manure, struck the earth underneath, went on digging still deeper, went on working with headstrong ardour, with a passionate display of strength, with furious movements of his arms and of his whole body.

When the trench appeared deep enough, he rolled the corpse into it with the four-pronged fork, shovelled the earth back again, stamped it down thoroughly, piled up the heap of manure over it. And he smiled at the thick snowfall, which completed his work, hiding every trace with its white veil.

Then he planted his fork into the dung heap, and went indoors. The cognac bottle, still nearly half full, was standing on the table. He gulped down the lot without once pausing for breath, flung himself on to his bed, and fell fast asleep.

He woke up, sober, calm, and feeling well, with his head clear, capable of thinking coolly over the matter, and ready to meet any emergency.

In less than an hour he was running all

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over the neighbourhood, inquiring everywhere for the missing soldier. He even went so far as to address himself to **the** officers, wishing to know, he said, why his man should have been taken away from him like this.

As the fact of their friendship was notorious, no shadow of guilt ever fell on him; he even volunteered his help in the search that was made, and asserted that the Prussian used to go out late every evening to run after petticoats.

An old retired gendarme, who kept an inn in a neighbouring village, and who happened to have a pretty daughter, was taken upon suspicion, and shot.

THE MINUET

'GREAT misfortunes seldom affect me,' said Jean Bridelle, an old bachelor, who passed for a sceptic: 'I have seen war at close quarters, I strode over corpses without a feeling of pity. Violent outrages of nature or of human beings can make one utter cries of horror or indignation, but do not give one that gnawing sensation at the heart, that shiver that runs up one's back at the sight of certain little distressing things.

Certainly, the most terrible affliction that one can experience is, for the mother the loss of a child, and the loss of a mother for the man. That is awful, fearful; it unhinges and lacerates; but one recovers from these catastrophes as from deep and dangerous wounds. But certain chance meetings, certain things half perceived, divined, certain secret griefs, certain treacheries of fate which stir up in us a whole world of sorrowful thoughts, and afford us, as through a half-opened mysterious door, a swift glimpse of moral sufferings, com-

THE MINUET

plicated and incurable, all the deeper for their seeming placid, all the more piercing for their seeming inaccessible, all the more tenacious for their seeming artificial; these things leave in the soul a trail of sadness, a taste of bitterness, a feeling of disenchantment, which cling to one for a very long time.

I have always before my eyes two or three things which others very likely might never have noticed, and which have penetrated into my heart like long, sharp, and incurable stings.

Perhaps you will not understand the emotion that has remained in me after these fleeting impressions. I will only tell you of one. It is very old now, but as vivid to me as if it had occurred yesterday. It may be that my imagination only is responsible for these feelings.

I am fifty. I was young then, and I was studying the law. Rather gloomy, rather a dreamer, steeped in a philosophic melancholy, I hardly ever cared for glaring cafes, brawling companions, or stupid girls. I got Up early, and one of my greatest

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pleasures was to walk about alone, towards eight o'clock in the morning, in the Pepiniere of the Luxembourg.

You people of to-day cannot remember that Pepiniere. It was like a forgotten garden of another generation, a garden as beautiful as the gentle smile of an old lady. Clustering hedges bordered the straight narrow paths, peaceful little avenues between two walls of formally trimmed foliage. The gardener's large shears kept these bushy partitions incessantly in line, and in certain places there were beds of flowers, or borders of young trees, arranged like school children out for a walk, or groups of magnificent rose bushes, and regiments of fruit trees.

A whole corner of this enticing grove was given up to bees. The straw skeps, carefully spaced about on the beds, opened to the sun their little doors no larger than the hole of a thimble, and all along the pathways one met the bees humming and gleaming like gold, real mistresses of this peaceful spot, real haunters of these tranquil corridor-like walks.

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I went there almost every morning. I sat down on a seat and read. Sometimes I let the book fall on my knees to dream, to listen to bustling Paris all around me, and to enjoy the infinite repose of those old-fashioned hedges of hornbeam.

But I noticed presently that I was not the only one who frequented this place, as soon as the gates were opened; for I met now and then, at the corner of a thicket, face to face, a strange little old man.

He wore shoes with silver buckles, knee-breeches, a snuff-coloured frock coat, a lace ruffle instead of a tie, and an extraordinary grey hat, with a wide brim and a long nap, which made one think of an ante-diluvian epoch.

He was very slight, thin, angular, full of smiles and grimaces. His alert eyes danced and quivered with a continual movement of the lids, and he always carried a superb walking-stick with a gold head, which must have been some splendid keepsake.

This old fellow astonished me at first, then interested me beyond measure. I

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watched him through the walls of leaves, I followed him at a distance, and I waited behind thickets so as not to be seen.

And it happened one morning, when he thought he was alone, that he began to make some curious movements; first, some little gambols and then a bow; then he struck up with his slender feet a sprightly *entrechat*, then he began to turn round courteously, frisked about in a droll way, smiled as though he were before an audience; he saluted gallantly, he waved his arms, his poor little body writhed like a marionette, he directed his lithe, tender, and ridiculous bows to no one. He was dancing!

I remained petrified with astonishment, asking myself which of us two were mad, he or I.

Suddenly he stopped, came forward, as actors do on the stage, then bowed again, retreating with the gracious smiles and kisses of a comedian, which he threw with a trembling hand to the two rows of pruned bushes.

Then he resumed his walk gravely.

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From this day I did not lose sight of him, and each morning he recommenced this incredible performance.

I had an irresistible desire to speak to him. I ventured, and, having greeted him, I said :

'It is a nice day, monsieur.' He bowed.

'Yes, monsieur, it is quite like the olden days.'

A week after we were friends and I learnt his history. He had been a dancing master at the Opera, in the reign of Louis XV. His beautiful stick was a gift from the Comte de Clermont. When one spoke to him of dancing, there was no stopping his chatter.

One day he confided to me :

'I married "La Castris," monsieur. I will introduce you if you wish it, but she does not come here so early. You see, this garden is our joy and our life. It is all that we have of past times. It seems as though we should not be able to exist without it. It is ancient and distinguished, don't you think so? I believe that there is an atmosphere here that has not changed in

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the least since my youth. My wife and I spend every afternoon here. But I come in the mornings, because I rise early.'

When I had finished my lunch, I returned to the Luxembourg, and I soon perceived my friend, who was giving his arm ceremoniously to a little old woman, dressed in black, to whom I was presented. She was 'La Castris,' the celebrated dancer; beloved by princes, beloved by the king, beloved by the gallant circle who seem to have bequeathed to the world an atmosphere of love.

We sat down on a stone seat. It was in May. A perfume of flowers pervaded the neat walks; the bright sun-rays glided through the leaves and scattered yellow patches of light over us.

La Castris' black dress seemed mellowed in the splendour of the afternoon.

The garden was empty. One could hear the fiacres rumbling in the distance.

'Tell me, please,' I said to the old dancer, 'what is the minuet?'

He started.

'The minuet, monsieur, is the queen of

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dances, and the dance of Queens, do you understand? Since we have had no king, we have not had the minuet any more.'

He commenced in a pompous style a long dithyrambic eulogy, of which I understood nothing. I wanted him to describe the steps, all the movements, and the attitudes. He became confused, exasperated with his inability, nervous and discomposed.

But suddenly turning to his old companion, who remained silent and serious, he said:

'Elise, tell me . . . shall we . . . it would be so nice of you . . . shall we . . . show this gentleman what it is?'

She looked all round her uneasily, she rose without saying a word, and placed herself opposite him.

Then I saw something unforgettable.

They went to and fro with childish affectation, smiled, wavered, bowed, and skipped, like two old-fashioned puppets, set dancing by an ancient mechanism a little worn, constructed long before by a skilful workman, after the fashion of his day

THE MINUET

I watched them, with extraordinary sensations disturbing me, with my soul moved by an indefinable melancholy. I seemed to be looking at a mournful and comic apparition; the old-fashioned spirit of a long-past age. I wanted to smile and cry at the same time.

Suddenly they stopped, they had come to the end of the figures of the dance.

They stood for some moments looking at one another, making surprising grimaces; then they embraced; they were both sobbing.

I went away into the country three days after; I have never seen them again. When I returned to Paris, two years later, the Pepiniere had been cleared away. What has become of them without their dear garden of olden times, with its labyrinth of walks, its fragrance of the past, and its beautiful winding avenues of hornbeam?

Are they dead? Do they wander along the modern streets like exiles without hope? Do they dance, quaint phantoms, a fantastic minuet, between the cypress trees in the cemetery, along the paths

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bordered with tombstones, in the moonlight?

Their memory clings to me, it haunts me, tortures me, and remains in me like a wound. Why? I cannot tell.

Doubtless, you will think this ridiculous 1

THE RETURN

THE sea chafes the shore with short, monotonous waves. Little white clouds pass quickly across the wide blue sky, driven like birds by the strong wind; and the village, basking in the sun, nestles in the fold of a dale which slants down to the ocean.

Alone, at the entrance to the hamlet, by the side of the road, stands the house of the Martin-Levesques. It is a fisherman's cottage, with clay walls and a thatched roof bedecked with tufts of blue irises. A few onions, cabbages, parsley, and chervil sprout up in a kitchen garden, that is no larger than a pocket-handkerchief; it forms a square before the door; a hedge separates it from the high road.

The husband has gone out fishing, and in front of the hut the wife is mending a great brown net, which hangs spread out over the wall like an immense spider's web. At the entrance to the garden, a girl of fourteen is sitting on a rush-bottomed chair, tilted against the post of the gate.

THE RETURN

She is mending some linen under-garments — clothes of poor people, that have been patched and darned already. Another girl, a year younger, is nursing a very small baby, as yet too young for speech or gesture; and, squatting down face to face, a couple of mites of two and three grub about in the dust with clumsy hands, throwing handfuls of dirt at each other.

No one speaks a word. Only the baby, which is being hushed to sleep, cries continually with a small, sharp, frail voice. A cat dozes on the window sill, and a number of bees make a great hum over the thick white border of pinks that bloom at the foot of the wall.

The girl, sewing at the gate, calls out suddenly:

'Mother !

The woman answers:

'What's the matter now?'

'Here he is again.'

They have been made uneasy all the morning by a man roaming round the house, an old man who looks like a beggar. They had noticed him first when **they**

THE RETURN

went out to see the father off in his boat. He had been sitting then by the roadside, in front of the cottage. On their return from the shore, they had found him there still, staring at their house.

He looked ill and very wretched. For more than an hour he had not stirred; then, seeing that he was suspected of hanging around for no good, he rose and walked away, trailing his feet wearily.

But before long they had seen him coming back with his slow, tired gait; and he had sat himself down once more, a little further off this time, as if he were bent on watching them.

The mother and the girls felt afraid, the mother especially. She kept on worrying, for she was of a timid nature, and her husband, Levesque, would not return from sea till after nightfall.

Her husband was called Levesque; she had kept the name of Martin; and they, the couple, were known as the Martin-Levesques.

It came about in this way : she had been married first to a sailor called Martin, who

THE RETURN

went every summer to the Newfoundland fisheries.

Within the two years of married life she had had one daughter, and she was expecting another child when the vessel in which her husband sailed, a barque from Dieppe, called the *Deux Sceurs*, disappeared, without leaving a trace.

No news of her ever came, none of the crew returned, and she was considered lost with all hands.

La Martin waited ten years for her man; she had reared her two children with great difficulty; then, as she was considered a worthy, hard-working woman, Levesque, a fisherman of the village, a widower with a boy of his own, had asked her to be his wife. She married him, and again had two children within the next three years.

They had a hard struggle to live. Bread alone was dear enough, and meat was almost unknown in the household. Sometimes, in winter, during the stormy months, they ran into debt with the baker. Nevertheless, the little ones thrived well enough. People would say :

THE RETURN

'They are a worthy couple, these Martin-Levesques. La Martin is a good one for work, and as for Levcsque, the fellow hasn't his equal in a fishing boat.'

The girl at the gate spoke again:

'You'd think he knows us. It may be he's some beggar coming from Epreville or Auzebosc'

But the mother wouldn't hear of it. No — no — she was perfectly sure that this could be no one from the neighbourhood.

As he remained motionless, like a post, with his eyes fixed obstinately on their dwelling, La Martin became furious, and her fear making her brave, she seized the fire shovel and came out of the door.

'What are you doing there?' she shouted at the tramp.

He replied in a hoarse voice:

'Why—I am just taking a breath of air. What harm am I doing you?'

She retorted :

'Why are you spying like this around my house?'

The man rejoined:

THE RETURN

'I'm not doing anyone any harm. Mayn't a man sit down by the road?'

Finding nothing to say in reply, La Martin went in again.

The day wore on slowly. About noon the man disappeared. Towards five o'clock he passed by again. He was not seen any more that evening.

Levesque came home after dark. He listened to the whole story, and concluded :

'I dare say he's only a loafer or some other good-for-nothing.'

And he went to bed quite undisturbed, whilst the woman by his side, was haunted by the image of the prowler who had looked at her with such strange eyes.

At daybreak there was a strong wind blowing, and the seaman, unable to go out that day, settled down to help his wife with her net-mending.

Towards nine o'clock, the eldest girl, a Martin, who had been sent out to fetch the bread, came running home, with a scared face, and called out:

'Oh, mother—here he is again!'

THE RETURN

The woman felt a sudden emotion, and, turning round, said to her man:

'Do go and speak to him, Levesque: make him leave off watching us like this. It upsets me.'

Levesque, a tall fisherman, with a brick-dust complexion, a thick red beard, with light blue eyes, pierced with black specks, and a thick neck, always wrapped up in a woollen muffler against the wind and the rain, walked out with tranquillity and approached the tramp.

They fell to talking.

The mother and the children, anxious and excited, watched them from a distance.

Suddenly the stranger rose and went with Levesque towards the house.

La Martin drew back in agitation. Her husband addressed her:

"Give him a bit of bread and a glass of cider. He's not had a bite since the day before yesterday."

They entered the hut together, followed by the woman and the children. The tramp sat down and began to eat, hanging his head, while they all stared at him.

THE RETURN

The mother stood still, scanning his face; the elder girls, the two Martins, with their backs to the door, one of them holding the baby, never took their eyes off him for a moment; and the two mites also, sitting amongst the ashes on the hearth, stopped playing with the black saucepan, as if lost in wonder at the sight of the stranger.

Levesque, after having sat down, asked :

'So, you've come a long way?'

'I come from Cette.'

'Tramping—like this?'

'Yes, tramping. One must when one hasn't a penny.'

'Where are you going, then?'

'I was coming here.'

'You know someone here?'

'May be I do.'

They ceased. He ate slowly, although he was famished, and he took a sip of cider after each mouthful of bread. His face was worn, wrinkled, and hollowed. He seemed to have undergone great hardships.

Levesque inquired, brusquely:

'What's your name?'

He replied, without raising his head :

THE RETURN

'My name's Martin.'

A strange shudder ran through the woman. She made one step forward, as if to look closer at the vagabond, then faced him, with her arms hanging down, and her mouth open. No one spoke.

At last Levesque began again :

'Are you from these parts?'

He replied:

'Yes, I am.'

And he at last looked up at the woman; their glances met, remained fixed, mingled together, as if they had been linked to each other by their eyes.

She exclaimed, suddenly, in an altered, trembling, low voice:

'Is it you—my man?'

He pronounced, slowly:

'Yes—it's me.'

He did not move, however, and went on masticating his bread.

Levesque, more surprised than disturbed, stammered:

'It's you, Martin?'

The other said, simply:

'Yes—it's me.'

THE RETURN

The second husband asked:

'But where have you been all this time?'

'On the coast of Africa. We foundered after running on a sand bank. Three of us swam ashore. Picard, Vatinel, and me. And then we got captured by some savages, who kept us for twelve years. Picard and Vatinel died; an English traveller, passing through the country, took me with him, and landed me in Cette. And here I am.'

The woman had begun to cry, hiding her face in her apron.

Levesque uttered:

'What on earth are we to do now?'

Martin asked:

'Are you her husband?'

Levesque replied:

'Yes, I am.'

They looked at one another, and became silent. Then Martin, after gazing around at all the children in turn, nodded towards the two girls.

'Are these two mine?'

Levesque said:

'Yes. They're yours.'⁵

THE RETURN

He did not get up, he did not offer to embrace them, he simply remarked:

'Good Lord! Aren't they tall!'

Levesque repeated:

'What on earth are we to do?'

Martin, perplexed, could find nothing to say at first. Then, with an effort, he made up his mind.

'As for me, I will do what you think best. I don't want to do you any harm. It's a nuisance, all the same, seeing that there's the house here. I have two children, you have three—each must look after his own. Then, there's the mother—what about her? Is she yours or mine? I am ready to agree to anything you like; but the house is my own—seeing that my father left it to me, that I was born in it, and that she knows that the papers are with the lawyer.'

La Martin wept continually, with short sobs, her face hidden in her blue linen apron. The two girls had come nearer, and were watching their father uneasily.

He had done eating by then; and, in his turn, he put the question:

'What are we to do?'

THE RETURN

Levesque had an idea :

'We had better go to the priest—let him settle it.'

Martin got up, and as he moved towards his wife, she flung herself on his breast, sobbing out:

'My man! My man! —Oh, my Martin —my poor Martin—is it you?'

She held him clasped in her arms, swayed by this breath of her past, overcome by the rush of memories, reminding her of her youth and of her first embrace.

Martin, also giving way to emotion, kept on kissing her cap. The two children on the hearth, hearing their mother cry, began to howl both together; the last-born, held in the arms of the second Martin girl, screamed out piercingly, like a shrill fife.

Levesque stood by, waiting.

'Come,' he said, at last, 'we must go and have this thing settled.'

Martin released his wife. His eye rested on the two girls, and the mother said to them:

'Aren't you going to kiss your father—you two?'

THE RETURN

They approached him, together, with dry eyes, surprised and intimidated; and he gave each a loud smacking kiss on both cheeks. Beholding this unknown person so close, the little baby screamed so violently as to go off nearly into a fit.

Then the two men started off side by side.

As they happened to be passing by the Cafe du Commerce, Levesque suggested:

'We might just as well go in and have a drink.'

'I don't mind if I do/ Martin said.

They entered the Cafe, and sat down in a room, which, at this early hour, was quite empty.

'Hey, there, Chicot — a round of your best! Here's Martin turned up; Martin, you know, my wife's Martin; you remember Martin of the *Deux Socurs* that was lost.'

And the corpulent, red-faced, bloated inn-keeper, holding three glasses in one hand, and a small decanter in the other, came up to them and observed with the utmost tranquillity:

THE RETURN

'Well—well! So you've turned up then, Martin?'

Martin answered:

'Yes. I have turned up. . . .

THE HOLY RELIC

*To monsieur the Abbe Louis d'Ennemare
Soissons.*

My dear Abbe,

Here is my marriage with your cousin suddenly broken off, and in the most absurd way, because of a silly joke which I played almost involuntarily on my betrothed.

I have recourse to you, my old friend, in the embarrassing situation in which I find myself. You, if anyone, can get me out of this scrape, and I shall be grateful to you to the end of my days. .

You know Gilberte, or rather you think you know her, but does anyone ever know anything of women? All their opinions, their beliefs, their ideas are in the nature of surprises for us. All their mental processes are full of turns and tricks, full of unforeseen and inconceivable reasoning, of a sort of wrong-headed logic, of obstinate resolutions which seem fixed for ever and give way suddenly for no better reason

THE HOLY RELIC

than that a little bird has come to sit on the window-sill.

I need not tell you that your cousin is pious in the extreme, brought up as she was in a convent, by the nuns in Nancy.

That you know as well as I do. What you may not know is the fact that she takes an exalted view of everything else, as well as of religious matters. Her mind is apt to be carried away like a leaf whirling in the wind; and she is a real woman, or rather truly girlish; perhaps more markedly so than the average run of them, ready to be suddenly angry or suddenly moved to tenderness; rushing impetuously into affection as into hatred, and coming back from either in the same way; and pretty, as you know; more charming than one can say—than you will ever know.

Well, we were engaged; I adored her as I still adore her. She seemed to love me.

One evening I received a telegram, summoning me to Cologne, for a consultation, to be followed, perhaps, by a serious and difficult operation. As I had to start the next day, I hastened to say good-bye to

THE HOLY RELIC

Gilberte, and to explain why I could not dine at the house till next Friday — the day on which I hoped to be back. Oh! Beware of Fridays; I assure you that they are most unlucky.

When I spoke of my departure, I saw tears in her eyes, but when I announced my speedy return, she clapped her hands directly, and cried: 'How delightful! You must bring me back something; some trifle, a simple keepsake, but a keepsake selected for me especially; you must find out what is likely to please me most—do you hear? I shall see if you have any imagination.'

She remained thoughtful for a time, then added: 'I forbid you to spend more than twenty francs. The value will consist for me in the intention, in the invention, monsieur, not in the price.'

Then, after another silence, she said, in a low voice, and with downcast eyes: 'If it doesn't cost you anything in the way of money, and the idea is very ingenious, very delicate, I will . . . I shall give you a kiss.'

I was at Cologne the next day. It was a

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bad case, resulting from an awful accident, which had driven an entire family to despair. Amputation was urgent. They put me up, they almost shut me in. I saw around me no one but people in tears, who deafened me with their lamentations; I had to operate upon an exhausted man, who nearly died under the knife. I remained two more nights with him; then, with the first gleam of hope for recovery, I broke away, and got myself driven to the railway station.

But I had made a mistake as to time, I had an hour to wait for my train. I wandered out into the streets, still thinking of my poor patient, when a perfect stranger accosted me.

I do not know German; he was ignorant of French; at last I understood that he was offering holy relics for sale. Gilberte's request for a keepsake flashed into my mind : I knew her fanatical piety. I followed the fellow into a shop full of saintly knick-knacks, and ended by selecting one which he described as 'a little piece of a bone from the Eleven Thousand Virgins/

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The so-called relic was in a beautifully-chased old silver medallion box, which really decided my choice.

I slipped the thing into my pocket, and got into my train.

On arriving home, I wanted to examine my purchase again. I took it out . . . The lid had come off, the relic was lost! . . . I ransacked my clothes, I turned my pockets inside out; but the little bone, not as big as a small pin, had utterly disappeared.

I am, as you know, my dear Abbe, a moderate believer; your broad-minded friendship tolerates my attitude and leaves me free, trusting to the future, as you say; but I am absolutely unbelieving as to the virtues of relics obtained from dealers in such objects of piety, and I know that in this respect, at least, you share my complete scepticism. Therefore, the loss of this particle from the skeleton of some sheep did not at all distress me; and I procured a similar fragment without difficulty, which I carefully fastened with glue into, the chased receptacle.

And I went off to see my fiancée. As

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soon as I entered the room, she ran up, anxious and smiling: 'What have you brought me?'

I pretended to have forgotten all about it; she refused to believe me; I let her beg, pray, and entreat, and when I saw that she was nearly beside herself with curiosity, I produced the holy locket.

She was overwhelmed with delight. 'A relic! Oh! A holy relic!' And she kissed the box passionately. I felt ashamed of my trick.

But a slight uneasiness appeared on her face, and passed at once into the horror of doubt. She gazed searchingly into my eyes:

'Are you sure that the relic is genuine?'

'I am absolutely certain.'

'How so?'

I was fairly caught. To confess that I had bought this bone from a dealer of sorts, who had spoken to me casually in the street, would have been fatal. What could I say? A mad notion came into my head; I replied, lowering my voice, mysteriously :

'I stole it for your sake.'

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She looked at me with her big eyes, marvelling and radiant. 'Oh! you stole it. Where from, tell me?' 'In the cathedral, from the very shrine of the Eleven Thousand Virgins.' Her heart was beating fast. She seemed ready to faint with the excess of happiness.

She murmured:

'Oh! you have done that . . . for me. Tell me . . . tell me all about it.'

This was final. I could not think of going back. I invented a fantastic story, full of precise and surprising details. I had given the beadle a hundred franc note to be left alone; the shrine was being repaired, but it happened to be the dinner hour; the workmen and the clergy were away; and so, by raising up a panel, which I fastened down again afterwards carefully, I had been able to get hold of a little bone (oh, such a little one) from amongst a heap of others (I said a heap, thinking what a lot the remains of Eleven Thousand Virgins' skeletons would amount to). Then I had gone to a jeweller's and bought a precious case worthy of the relic,

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I was not sorry, either, to let her know that the medallion had cost me five hundred francs.

But she cared nothing about the cost; she listened to me, trembling with ecstasy. She murmured: 'How I love you,' and nestled into my arms.

Pray observe: I had committed a sacrilegious theft, I had robbed a church, I had violated the sanctity of a shrine, stolen and profaned the most holy remains. She adored me for that deed; she thought me tender, perfect, divine. There you have the woman, my dear Abbe, the whole woman.

For two months I remained the most admirable of future husbands. In her bedroom she decked out a sort of chapel, magnificently, wherein she deposited that bit of chop-bone, which had, as she believed, made me perpetrate a divine crime of love; and she went into ecstasies before the tiling every evening and every morning.

I had begged of her inviolable secrecy, in my fear, I said, of being arrested, prosecuted, perhaps delivered over to the

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German authorities. She had kept her word.

Well, it happened that early in the summer she experienced a violent desire to behold, with her own eyes, the very place of that feat of mine. She worried her father so successfully (without, of course, confessing the secret reason of her insistence) that he ended by taking her over to Cologne, concealing the plan of their little excursion from me, in accordance with his daughter's wish.

I need not tell you that I have never seen the interior of the cathedral. I do not know in the least where the tomb (is there any tomb?) of the Eleven Thousand Virgins is situated. It appears that this sepulchre is quite inaccessible, alas!

At the end of the week I received ten lines of her writing, breaking off the engagement, and an explanatory epistle from the father, now taken, at last, into her confidence.

One glance at the shrine was enough to reveal to her my fraudulent pretence, all my falsehood, and, at the same time, my

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perfect innocence. She had asked the beadle whether no theft had ever been committed in the cathedral, and the man, laughing at the mere idea, had shown her clearly the impossibility of such a thing.

Therefore, since I had not desecrated a holy edifice, and disturbed, with a profane hand, the repose of venerated remains, I was no longer worthy of my blond and delicate betrothed.

I was forbidden the house. All my entreaties, prayers, and supplications failed to soften the heart of the beautiful devotee.

I was positively ill with grief.

Thereupon, last week, Mme. d'Arville, her cousin, and related to you also, sent word for me to call.

I have just seen her; and here are the conditions on which I may hope to receive forgiveness:

I am to procure a relic, a real, undeniable relic, certified genuine by our Holy Father, the Pope, a relic of some virgin martyr or other.

I am going almost out of mind with worry and anxiety.

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I shall go to Rome if necessary. But I cannot appear suddenly before the Pope with the story of this imbecile affair. Moreover, I doubt whether true relics are ever given to private individuals.

Could you give me an introduction to a Monsignor, or, perhaps, to a French prelate, the possessor of some fragments of a saint? You yourself, have you not by chance in your collection the precious object of my desire?

Save me, my dear Abbe, and I promise you to hasten my conversion by ten years at least.

Mme. d'Arville, who takes a most gloomy view of the matter, remarked to me: 'That poor Gilberte will never marry now.'

My dear fellow, will you let your cousin die the victim of a stupid imbroglio?

I beseech you, contrive something to save her from becoming the eleven-thousand-and-first.

Pardon this. I know I am unworthy; but I embrace you, and I love you with all my heart.

Your old friend,

HENRI FONTAL

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I

IT was really a curious idea I had that evening to choose Mile. Perle as 'queen/

I go every year to keep the Jour des Rois, with my old friends, the Chantals. Chantal was the most intimate friend of my father, who took me there first as quite a small boy. I have continued, and doubtless I shall continue, to visit them as long as I live, and as long as there is a Chantal in this world.

The Chantals, it must be said, lead a peculiar existence; they live in Paris as as though they were living in some small provincial town, in Grasse, or Yvetot, or Pont-a-Mousson.

Their house stands near the Observatory, in a little garden, and they live in that quiet neighbourhood as though buried in the country. They know nothing, they have no notion of the great Paris, of the real Paris; they are so remote, they seem to live far, far away. Sometimes, however,

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they make a momentous excursion into it, an arduous expedition. Mme. Chantal goes forth to 'provision the household.'

Mile. Perle, who has the keys of the store cupboards (for the linen presses are looked after by the mistress of the house)—Mile. Perle, I say, announces that the sugar is almost at an end, that the store of preserves is getting low, and that there is very little raw coffee left at the bottom of the sack.

Thus warned against the approach of famine, Mme. Chantal makes a thorough inspection of what remains, and takes notes in a little book.

When she has done jotting down a multitude of figures, she plunges into long calculations, and then holds an animated discussion with Mile. Perle. They end after a time by agreeing together as to the quantity of each article which is to last them for the next three months; sugar, rice, dried plums, coffee, preserves, tins of green peas, of haricots, of lobster, of fish, salt and smoked, etc., etc.

After which the day is fixed, and the two set forth in a fiacre, a sort of brougham

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with a gallery, for the establishment of a first-class grocer, who lives 'beyond the bridges,' as the saying is, in the new quarter of the capital.

Mme. Chantal and Mile. Perle make this journey together, mysteriously, and return about dinner time, still excited, but tired out with the jolting of the cab, whose roof is piled up with packages and bags, of all sorts, as if it were a country cart.

For the Chantals, the whole part of Paris on the other side of the Seine is comprised in the name of the 'new quarters'; they look upon them as inhabited by an extravagant, noisy, not very honourable population, whose days are wasted in dissipation, who spend the nights in feasting, and fling their money into the gutter. Nevertheless, the young ladies are taken to the theatre over there, from time to time, to the Opera Comique, for instance, or to the Franfais, when the play which fills the bill has been reported on favourably by M. Chantal's daily newspaper.

These girls must be now nineteen and seventeen respectively; they are fine girls,

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tall and fresh, very well brought up; too well brought up; so exceedingly well, that they pass unperceived like two pretty dolls. The idea of paying marked attention to one of the Chantal young ladies would never enter my head. Indeed, one hardly dares to speak to them; they seem so absolutely immaculate that one is inclined to doubt the propriety of addressing them in the common forms of greeting.

As for the father, he is a charming man, very intelligent, very open, very cordial; but he likes repose, calmness, and tranquillity above everything else. He had had a great share in bringing about the fossilised state of his family, so that he can live according to his taste in a stagnant immobility. He reads much, likes to talk, and is very impressionable. He has never rubbed shoulders with mankind at large, and this absence of all contact with the rough world has made his epidermis, his moral epidermis, very sensitive and delicate. The least unusual event moves him, agitates him, and makes him suffer.

The Chantals have friends, however,

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but they are restricted to a few carefully chosen families in the neighbourhood. In the course of each year they also exchange two or three visits with some relations who live far away.

As for myself, I dine with them invariably on the 15th of August, and on the Jour des Rois. It seems to be a sort of imperative duty, as the religious observances of Easter are for all good Catholics.

On the 15th of August, they invite other friends besides myself, but on the Jour des Rois I am the only guest.

II

WELL, this year, as in other years, I had been dining with the Chantals, on the Jour des Rois.

According to custom, I embraced M. Chantal, gave a kiss to Mme. Chantal and Mile. Perle, and made a low bow to Miles. Louise and Pauline. I was at once beset with questions about a thousand things, about the events of the boulevards, about

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politics, about the public opinion on the affairs in Tonkin, and about the doings of our representatives in both Chambers. Mme. Chantal—a big lady, whose ideas always give me the impression of being square, like blocks of cut stone—has the habit of ending every political discussion by the following pronouncement: 'All that is bad seed for the future.' Why is it that I always picture to myself Mme. Chantal's ideas as being square? I don't know in the least; yet everything she says takes that shape in my mind; it is like a square, a large square, with four symmetrical angles. There are other people, whose ideas always seem to me to be quite round and rolling, like a lot of hoops. As soon as these people begin to utter the first sentence about anything whatever, it seems to revolve, and it goes on, it proceeds on in ten, twenty, fifty round ideas, large and small, which I seem to see running one after the other, rolling to the end of the horizon. Other people, again, have ideas that seem pointed. . . . However—that doesn't matter.

We sat down to table as usual, and the

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dinner came to an end without anything that I can remember being said.

With the dessert they brought on to the table the traditional cake of the Jour des Rois. Hitherto M. Chantal had happened to be 'King' every year. Whether it was the result of continuous luck, or of pious fraud on the part of his family, I am unable to say, but the fact is that he invariably found the bean in his slice of cake; and, of course, he would proclaim Mme. Chantal as 'Queen.' Consequently, my astonishment was very great when I felt something extremely hard in a mouthful of cake I was eating, and on which I nearly broke my teeth. I took the thing quietly out of my mouth, and I discovered it was a little china doll, no bigger than a white bean. In my surprise, I said: 'Ah!' Everybody looked at me and Chantal shouted, clapping his hands: 'Gaston has got it! It's Gaston! Long live the King! Long live the King!'

Everyone answered in chorus: 'Long live the King!' I blushed up to my ears, as one often blushes, without reason, when

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one is in a rather foolish situation. I remained, with my eyes lowered, holding this bit of china with the tips of my fingers, trying to laugh, and not knowing what to say or do next, when Chantal exclaimed: 'Come! You must choose a queen now.'

Then I was struck dumb. In a second a thousand thoughts, a thousand surmises crossed my mind. Did they intend me to select one of the Chantal young ladies? Was it a scheme for making me name the one I liked best? Was it a gentle, delicate, soft thrust of the parental hand, impelling me towards a possible marriage? The idea of marriage is always floating in the air of all houses where there are grown-up daughters; it takes on all sorts of forms, all sorts of disguises, it penetrates all sorts of situations. An atrocious fear of compromising my independence invaded me, and also an extreme timidity, before the so obstinately impenetrable attitude of the Miles. Louise and Pauline. To name one of them in preference to the other seemed as difficult as to choose between two drops of water; and then, the fear of being

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drawn into making a venture, by which I might be led to a marriage in spite of myself, quite placidly, by proceedings as discreet, as imperceptible, and as well contrived as this insignificant royalty., troubled me horribly.

But suddenly I had a lucky inspiration, and I offered the symbolical doll to Mile. Perle. Everyone was surprised at first, then — appreciating, doubtless, my good feeling and my discretion — they applauded furiously. They cried: 'Long live the Queen! Long live the Queen.'

As for her, the poor old maid, she was quite abashed; she was scared, trembled, and stammered: 'No . . . no . . . not me . . . I beg you . . . not me . . . I beg you.'

Then, for the first time in my life, I may say, I looked at Mile. Perle, and I wondered who she was.

I had been accustomed to see her in that house as one sees old tapestry armchairs, on which one has sat from one's childhood, without having ever taken any notice of them; till one day, one doesn't know why, because, perhaps, a ray of sun has fallen

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across the seat, one says to oneself, suddenly : 'Hullo, that's a curious piece of furniture,' and thereupon one discovers that the wood has been carved by an artist, and that the cover is of remarkably fine stuff I had never taken any special notice of Mile. Perle.

She was a member of the Chantal household, that was all I knew; but on what grounds? In what relation? She was a tall, thin person, who endeavoured to remain unperceived, but who was not insignificant. She was treated with perfect friendliness; better than a housekeeper, not so well as a near relation. I became conscious now of a good many gradations of shades, of which I had taken no account before. Mme. Chantal addressed her as 'Perle'; the girls said 'Mile. Perle'; and Chantal himself called her only 'Made-moiselle,' with a marked reverence in his tone, it seemed.

I began to observe her. How old was she? Forty? Yes, forty. She was not old, this woman. She was trying to look old. I was suddenly struck by that discovery.

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The manner in which she did her hair, the style of her dress, were ridiculous, and yet, in spite of the way she decked herself out, she appeared by no means ridiculous, because she had so much simple, natural grace, a grace that was veiled and concealed with care. Really, she was a remarkable creature. How was it that I had never noticed this? She arranged her hair in a grotesque combination of little old-fashioned curls, in a quite absurd way; and under this hair of a well-preserved old maid, one saw a large, calm forehead, marked by two deep folds, two lines of enduring sadness, then two blue eyes, large and soft, so timid, so apprehensive, so humble; two beautiful eyes remaining so naive, full of the astonishments of girlhood, of youthful sensations, and also of grief, which had passed behind them, softening without dimming their glance.

The whole face was fine and reserved, one of those faces whose radiance has been extinguished, but which yet remain unladed, unmarked by the weariness and the great emotions of life.

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What a pretty mouth she had, what pretty teeth! But one would think she never dared to smile!

And, suddenly, I could not help comparing her with Mme. Chantal! Certainly, Mile. Perle was better looking, a hundred times better looking, more refined, more noble, more proud.

I was astounded by my observations. Meantime, the champagne was being poured out, and I raised my glass to the 'Queen'; drinking her health with a neatly-turned compliment. At first she had a mind, as I could see very well, to hide her face in her serviette; then, as her lips touched the light-coloured wine, everyone cried out: 'The Queen drinks! The Queen drinks!' She turned quite red and choked. We were all laughing heartily, but I could see plainly that she was much loved by everyone in that house.

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III

DINNER over, M. Chantal took me by the arm. It was his time for smoking his evening cigar—a sacred hour. When he was alone, he went out into the street; when he had someone to dinner he would take his guests up to the billiard room, where he could have his game while he smoked. This evening a fire had been lit in the room, because of the festive occasion, and my old friend took his cue, a cue with a very fine tip, which he proceeded to chalk over most carefully. Then he said :

'You begin, my boy!'

Having known me from a child, he used to treat me with great familiarity, though I was five-and-twenty.

I commenced the game; I made some good strokes, I missed a few others; but as the thought of Mile. Perle haunted my mind, I asked suddenly:

Tell me, Monsieur Chantal, is Mile. perle related to you in any way ?'

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He stopped, much astonished, and looked at me.

'What? Don't you know? Haven't you heard Mile. Perle's story?'

'No.'

'Your father never told you?'

'No.'

'Well, well, that's funny! Ah! Upon my word, that is funny! Oh, but it is quite an adventure.'

He was silent, then commenced again:

'And if you knew how strange it is that you should ask me such a question to-day, on the Jour des Rois.'

'Why?'

'Ah, why! Listen! It is forty-one years ago. Just forty-one years to-day. We lived then in Roiyy le Tors, on the ramparts; but I must first describe the situation of the house, that you may better understand. Roiyy is built on a hill or rather on a sort of mound, dominating a great flat expanse of meadowland. We had a house there, with a beautiful garden, held up, supported high by the old fortifications. The house itself was in the town, you understand—

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in a street—whilst the garden at the back commanded a view of the plain. There was a door opening out of the garden right into the country, at the bottom of a secret staircase, which went down hidden in the thickness of the walls, as one reads in romances. A public road passed along the wall in front of that door, which was supplied with a bell-pull outside, for the peasants, who, in order to avoid the long way round, brought what produce they had to sell straight in that way.

'You see the locality, don't you? Well, that year, on the Jour des Rois, it had snowed for a week. People talked of the end of the world. When we came out on to the ramparts, and looked down at the plain, it chilled one's very spirit to see that immense white country, quite white, frozen, dead, and glistening, as if with a coat of varnish. It seemed as though the Lord God had wrapped up the old earth like this to put it away in the storehouse of worn-out worlds. I assure you that it was very depressing.

'It was a family gathering; there were

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many of us, very many: my father, my mother, my uncle and my aunt, my two brothers, and my four cousins, they were nice girls. I married the youngest afterwards. Of all that company there are only three of us left to-day: my wife, myself, and my sister-in-law, who lives in Marseilles. Sacristi! how a big family can waste away. It makes me shudder to think of it! I was fifteen then, since I am fifty-six now.

'Well, we were celebrating the festival of the Jour des Rois, and we were very merry, very merry! We were all assembled in the drawing-room, waiting for dinner, when my eldest brother, Jacques, said: "I've heard a dog howling in the meadows for the last ten minutes; it must have got lost, the poor beast."

'He had not finished speaking before the bell of the garden door rang out. It had a deep sound, like a church bell, and made you think of the dead. It sent a chill through everybody. My father rang for the servant, and told him to go down and see what it could be. We waited in perfect

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silence, thinking of the snow that covered the whole earth. The man returned, and assured us that there was nothing to be seen. The dog was still howling, unceasingly, and his voice had not altered its position.

'We sat down to table; but we were a little uneasy, especially the younger ones. All went well until the roast course came on, and then the bell was heard to ring three times, in three loud strokes, which seemed to vibrate into our very finger-tips, and made us catch our breath. We remained looking at each other, with our forks in our hands, listening for more, and seized by a sort of supernatural fear.

'It was my mother who spoke at last: "It's astonishing that they should have waited so long before coming back. Don't go alone, Baptiste, one of the gentlemen will go with you."

-My uncle Francois got up. He was a sort of Hercules, very proud of his strength, and perfectly fearless. My father said: "Take a gun with you. One never knows. . . ."

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'But my uncle only took a stick, and went out immediately with the servant.

'We remained trembling and anxious, without eating, without speaking. My father tried to reassure us: "You will see that it is some beggar, or someone who has lost his way in the snow. After having rung once, seeing that we did not open the door directly, he has attempted to find his way again, then, not being able to discover it, he has returned to our gate."

'My uncle's absence seemed to last an hour. He came back furious, swearing: "Nothing, nom de nom! It's a practical joke. There's only that confounded dog out there, howling, about a hundred yards away from the walls. If I had had my gun with me I would have shot the brute."

'We went on with our dinner, but everyone remained anxious. We felt that this was not over yet, that something was going to happen, that the bell would presendy ring again.

'And it did ring, just at the moment that the cake was being cut. My uncle Francois, who had drunk some champagne, declared

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that he was going out to kill that joker, with so much fury that my mother and my aunt rushed to him and clung to his arms. My father, although very calm (he was a little crippled—he had remained lame after a fall from his horse), declared his intention to find out what this meant. He would go himself. My brothers, one eighteen and the other twenty, ran to fetch their guns, and, as nobody paid any attention to me, I got a rook rifle and prepared to follow the expedition.

'We started off immediately. My father and my uncle walked in front, with Baptiste, who carried a lantern. My brothers Jacques and Paul came next, and I went after them, in spite of my mother's entreaties. She remained with her sister and my cousins on the doorstep of the house.

Tor the last hour the snow had been falling thickly, and the trees were laden with it. The firs, bent down with this heavy livid clothing, stood like white pyramids, like enormous sugar-loaves; and one could hardly perceive through the grey veil

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of minute and hurrying flakes, the more frail bushes quite pallid in the darkness.

'The snow fell so thickly, that one could only see ten feet around one. But the lantern threw out a great light in front of us. When We commenced to go down the winding staircase in the wall I felt really afraid. It seemed as though someone were walking behind me, that someone was going to grasp me by the shoulders and carry me *off*. I would have gone back, but I did not dare to, because I should have had to cross the whole garden by myself.

'I heard them opening the door that gave out on to the fields; then my uncle began to swear again: "*Nom d' tin nom!*" the fellow's cleared off again. If I could only catch sight of his shadow I wouldn't miss the beggar, I promise you."

'It was sinister to see the plain, or rather to feel it, before us, for one could not see it under the endless cover of snow above, below, in front, to the right, to the left—everywhere.

'My uncle exclaimed: "Stay, there's that howling dog, though, I will show him

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how I can shoot. It will be something done, anyhow.

'But my father, who was a humane man, objected: "We had much better fetch the poor animal in, it's howling with hunger. It's barking for help, the poor wretch. He calls like a man in distress. Let us go out there."

'We started forward through the curtain, through the thick, continuous fall of snow, through the soft, dense, mossy whirl of flakes which filled the night and the air, which stirred, floated, fell and froze while it melted on one's flesh. It froze one as though it were burning, with a sharp, rapid pain at each touch of the little white flakes upon the skin of one's face.

'We sank up to our knees in the soft, cold mass, and we had to lift our feet very high. As we advanced, the dog's voice became clearer, stronger. My uncle shouted: "Here he is!" We stopped to look at him as one would stop before an enemy at night.

'I myself saw nothing, till I caught up with the others, and then I made out the

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dog that was looking alarming and fantastic, a big black animal, a shepherd's dog with a rough coat and a head like a wolf, standing up on its four paws, right at the end of a long ray of light cast by the lantern on to the snow. He didn't move. He had become quiet and was watching us.

'My uncle said: "It's funny he doesn't come on or run away. I've a good mind to settle him with a shot."

'My father replied firmly: "No, we must take him with us."

'Then my brother Jacques added: "But he isn't alone, there's something else there."

'Indeed, there was something near the dog; something gray, and impossible to distinguish. We moved on again cautiously.

'On seeing us approach, the dog sat down. He did not look vicious. He seemed pleased to see us coming.

'My father went up fearlessly, and patted his head. The dog began to lick his hand; and we found out that he was tied up to the wheel of a little cart, a sort of toy

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waggon, quite enveloped in three or four soft blankets. We lifted up these wrappings carefully, and as Baptiste lowered his lantern to the opening of the queer conveyance, which resembled a dog kennel on wheels, we saw a tiny baby inside, fast asleep.

'We were so astonished that we could not say a word. My father was the first to speak, and as he was large-hearted and of a rather exalted sensibility, he stretched out his hand over the roof of the cart, and said: "Poor little forsaken thing, you shall be one of us!" And he ordered my brother Jacques to wheel our discovery in front of us.

'My father recommenced, as though thinking aloud:

"Some love child, whose poor mother came ringing at my door on this night, in remembrance of the Infant Christ!"

'He stopped again, and shouted out with all his might four times into the night, towards the four corners of heaven: "We have rescued the child!" Then, laying his hand on his brother's shoulder, he mur-

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mured: "Supposing you had fired at the *dog*, Francois!"

'My uncle did not reply, but he made, in the darkness, a large sign of the cross, for he was very pious in spite of his blustering ways.

'The dog, now let loose, followed us home.

'Ah, indeed, it was charming to see our return. We had great difficulty at first in getting the cart up the steps of the rampart. We succeeded, however, and wheeled it along into the hall.

'How funny, happy, and fluttered my mother was! And my four little cousins (the youngest was six), they were like four little hens around a chick. The child, still sleeping, was taken out of its cart at last. It was a girl, about six weeks old. And they found ten thousand francs in gold, yes, ten thousand francs amongst its clothes! My father kept them for her dowry. She was not, it seems, a child of poor people . . . but, perhaps, the child of some nobleman, and of some middle-class woman in the town... or else_____ We made a thousand'

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conjectures, but we never got to know anything . . . nothing . . . nothing. No one knew the dog either. He was a stranger in the district. In any case, he or she, who had come and rung three times at our gate, knew the character of my parents well, to have chosen them for this work of charity.

This is how Mile. Perle, at six weeks old, entered the Chantal household.

, 'But she was only called Mile. Perle, later on. She was baptised at first: "Marie Simonne Claire"; Claire being intended for her surname.

'I assure you that the return to the dining-room was droll, with the little mite, awake, looking around her at those people and those lights with her vague, blue, and perplexed eyes.

'We sat down again, and the cake was divided. I was "King," and I took Mile Perle for "Queen," as you did just now.

— 'The child was adopted and brought up in the family. She grew big; years passed by. She was pretty, tender, and obedient. Everyone loved her, and she would have

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been abominably spoilt if my mother had not put her foot down.

'My mother was a woman who had a great idea of order and social distinctions. She consented to treat little Claire as a child of her own, but she would have it, nevertheless, that the distance which separated us should be properly marked, and the situation kept well in mind.

'And so, as soon as the girl could take it in, she told her her story, and let it penetrate quite gently, tenderly even, into the mind of the little thing, that, for the Chantals, she was an adopted child, accepted, but actually an outsider.

'Claire understood her position with singular intelligence, with surprising intuition, and she knew how to take and to keep the place which was made for her, with so much tact, with so much grace and gentleness, that she often moved my father to tears.

'My mother herself was so much touched by the passionate gratitude and the slightly timorous devotion of this frail and tender being, that she came to call her

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"my daughter." Sometimes, when the little thing had done something good and delicate, my mother would push her spectacles up on to her forehead (an act which always indicated that she was moved), and would exclaim: "But she is a pearl, a perfect pearl, this child!"—In this way the little Claire acquired that name which she has kept. She became and remained for us all "Mademoiselle Perle."

IV

M. CHANTAL stopped speaking. He had seated himself on the billiard table, and he was fidgeting with a billiard ball in his left hand, whilst with his right he was flicking about the cloth which served to rub out the scores from the marking board, and which we called the chalk-cloth. Slightly red in the face, his voice lowered, he was speaking for himself alone, by this time; lost amongst his memories, wandering tranquilly through these ancient things, old happenings, which were taking shape

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in his thoughts, as one goes sauntering in an old home-garden where one has been brought up, and where each tree, each path, each plant, the pointed holly trees, the sweet-scented bay, the yews whose red glutinous berry bursts between die fingers, call up at each step a little fact of our past life, one of those little facts, insignificant and delicious, which form the very ground, the texture of our existence.

As for me, I remained opposite him, leaning back against the wall, my hands resting upon my idle cue.

He began again after a minute: 'Cristi! how pretty she was at eighteen . . . and graceful . . . and perfect . . . Ah! the pretty . . . pretty . . . pretty and good . . . good . . . charming girl. . . She had such eyes... so blue . . . transparent... I have never seen any like them . . . never . . . !'

He stopped speaking again. I asked:

'How is it she did not get married?'

He answered, speaking not to me, but to this passing word, 'married.'

'Why? Why? She didn't wish to . . . didn't wish to. Still she had a dowry of

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thirty thousand francs, and she had several offers... She didn't wish to! She seemed sad about that time. It was when I married my cousin, little Charlotte, now my wife, to whom I had been engaged for six years.'

I raised my eyes to M. Chantal, and it seemed to me that I could see right into his mind, that I was looking suddenly into one of those humble and cruel dramas of honest hearts, of simple hearts, of hearts without reproach; into the depths of one of those unconfessed, unexplored hearts that no one has penetrated, not even those who are their mute and resigned victims.

And a bold curiosity suddenly impelled me: I pronounced :

'You ought to have married her yourself, M. Chantal?'

He started, looked up at me, and said:

' I ! Marry whom?'

'Mile. Perle.'

'What for?'

'Because you loved her. more than the cousin you did marry.'

He looked at me with strange, round, frightened eyes, then stammered out:

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'I loved her . . . I? . . . What? What's put that into your head?'

'Of course! It speaks for itself . . . and it's just because you loved Mile. Perle, that you were so long about marrying your cousin, who had to wait six years for you.'

He dropped the billiard ball which he was holding in his left hand, caught hold of the chalk-cloth, covered his face with it and began to sob. He shed tears in a disconsolate and ridiculous way, trickling like a squeezed sponge; he wept from his eyes, from his nostrils, and his lips all at once. He coughed, sputtered, blew his nose in the chalk-cloth, dried his eyes, sneezed, began again to drip at all the openings of his face, with a noise that reminded one of gargling.

I was scared, ashamed, I wanted to run away, and I did not know what to say, to do, or even attempt to do.

Suddenly Mme. Chantal's voice resounded on the staircase: 'Will you be soon done with your smoking, up there?'

I opened the door and called out:

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'Yes, madame, we are coming down directly.'

Then I hurried back to her husband, and seizing him by the elbows: 'Monsieur Chantal, dear friend, listen to me; your wife is calling you, pull yourself together, pull yourself together quickly, we must go downstairs.'

He stuttered: 'Yes . . . yes . . . downstairs . . . poor girl . . . I am coming . . . tell her I am coming.'

He began to wipe his face conscientiously with the cloth which, for the last two or three years, had been used to rub the chalk marks off the board; then he uncovered his face, smudged all over, half white and half red, his forehead, his nose, his cheeks, and his chin besmeared with chalk, and his swollen eyes still full of tears.

I took hold of his hands and drew him into his room, murmuring: 'I beg your pardon, I really beg your pardon, M. Chantal, for having caused you so much pain . . . but . . . I did not know . . . you understand.' .

He pressed my hand: 'Yes . . . yes . . . •

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there are in life ... difficult moments—'

Then he plunged his face into his wash-hand basin. When he emerged from it he did not yet look quite presentable, but a slight artifice occurred to me. As, on looking in the glass, he appeared uneasy, I suggested: 'It would be a good thing to say downstairs that you've got a bit of chalk in your eye, and then you may cry openly as much as you like.'

He adopted this expedient, and went down, rubbing his eyes with his handkerchief. Everybody was concerned at the accident, and they all wanted to be allowed to look for the piece of chalk, which could not be found, of course; and they related instances of the kind in which it had become necessary to send for the doctor.

As for me, I sat down close to Mile. Perle, and I watched her, tormented by a burning curiosity, a curiosity which became a torture,. She must indeed have been exceedingly pretty, with her soft eyes so large, so tranquil, and so wide open that they looked as if she never closed them as other human beings do. Her costume was rather

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ridiculous, quite the get-up of an old maid, and it disfigured her, without making her look awkward.

It seemed to me that I saw into her, as I had seen into M. Chantal's soul, just now; that I could see there, from one end to the other, that humble, simple, and devoted life; but a desire seemed to force my lips, a harrassing desire to ask her, to find out whether she also had loved him; whether she had, like him, endured the trial of secret and acute suffering, that one does not see, that one does not know, that one does not divine, but which envelopes us at night in the solitude of a room without light. I watched her, I saw her heart beat under the lace trimming of her dress, and I asked myself whether that sweet open face had sighed every evening buried in the moist softness of the pillow, whether she had lain at night with her body shaken by sobs, and burning with the fever of a sleepless couch.

I said, in a stealthy manner, as children do who break a toy just to see what is inside: 'If you had seen M. Chantal

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weeping, a little while ago, you would have pitied him.'

She trembled: 'What do you say? Has he been crying?'

'Oh, yes, he has been crying.'

'And what for?'

She seemed to be much distressed. I answered:

'It was on your account.'

'On my account?'

'Yes. He has been telling me how much he was in love with you in the past, and what an effort it had cost him to marry his cousin instead of you.'

Her pale face seemed to grow a little longer, her steady wide-open eyes, her quiet eyes, shut suddenly and so quickly that they seemed to have closed for ever. She slipped down from her chair to the floor, sinking softly, slowly, as a silken scarf would fall.

I called out: 'Help! Help! Mile. Perk has fainted!'

Mme. Chantal and her daughters were round us at once, and while they were rushing to fetch water, smelling salts, vinegar,

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and so on, I snatched up my hat and escaped.

I walked away quickly, with my heart beating fast, and my mind full of remorse and regret. But now and then I felt pleased with myself. It occurred to me that what I had done was a praiseworthy and necessary action.

I asked myself: Was I wrong. Was I right? They had carried that love within their souls as one may retain a bullet in a closed wound. Would they not be more happy now? It was too late, I thought, for their suffering to begin again, and yet early enough for them to think tenderly of the cruel past.

And, perhaps, one evening in the coming spring, moved by a ray of moonlight filtering through the branches and shining on the grass at their feet, they will hold one another's hands, thinking of all that hidden and cruel suffering; and, perhaps, while that short contact sends a thrill of resuscitated passion through their veins, they will feel at last a little of that emotion they had never before known; and it will

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bring to them, in a second, the rapid and divine sensation of that intoxication, of that delirium, which gives to lovers more felicity in one quivering moment than other people can gather in all their lives.

THE WRECK

YESTERDAY was the 31st of December.

I had been lunching with my old friend Georges Garin, when his man brought in a sealed letter, covered with postmarks, and with a foreign stamp.

Georges said:

'You'll allow me?'

'Of course.'

He began to read through eight pages of large English handwriting, with the lines crossed in every direction. He read slowly, with great attention — with that profound interest one gives to matters near one's heart.

Then he put the letter down on the mantel-piece, and said:

'Well, it's a queer story I never told you — a sentimental adventure, though, which happened to me *once*. Ah! it was a curious way of seeing the New Year in! And it was twenty years ago. . . . I was thirty then, and now I am fifty!

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'I was inspector for the Marine Insurance Company, of which I am the chairman to-day.

'It had been my intention to spend the 1st of January in Paris, as everyone makes a festival of that day, but I received a letter from the managing director, desiring me to go at once to the lie de Re, where a ship belonging to Saint-Nazaire, and insured in our office, had been wrecked. That was at eight o'clock in the morning. I called at the Company's office at ten, to get my instructions, and the same evening I took the fast train, which put me down at La Rochelle the next day. It was the 31st of December.

'Having two hours to spare before the departure of the steamboat *Jean Guiton*, which served the lie de Re, I went for a stroll in the town. It is really a curious town, and with a great deal of character, this La Rochelle. Its streets wind about like a labyrinth; its foot-pavements run under endless arcaded galleries, like those in the Rue de Rivoli, but very sombre; and these galleries, these low-arched mys-

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terious arcades seem to have been erected and left standing like the scenery of dramatic conspiracies, the antique and striking scenery of the far-away past—the heroic and savage past of religious wars. It is quite the true old Huguenot city, grave and discreet, without the superb art, without the wonderful edifices which make Rouen so magnificent, but all the same remarkable in the severity of its aspect, which is also a little sinister: a city of obstinate struggles, where fanaticism hatched its plots, the town where the Calvinist faith found its highest expression, and where the conspiracy of the four sergeants was conceived.

'After wandering about these curious old streets for some time, I went on board a little short steamboat, black and obese, which was to take me to the Tie de Re. She started off puffing irritably, passed between the two antique towers which guard the port, crossed the roadstead, cleared the breakwater constructed by Richelieu, where one sees just awash the enormous boulders enclosing the town like

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a gigantic necklace; then we swung round to the right.

'It was one of those sad, depressing days, which weigh on one's mind, oppress the heart, extinguish all strength and energy; a grey, chilly day, dulled by a heavy fog, which was as wetting as a shower, as cold as frost itself, and as repulsive to breathe as the exhalation of a sewer.

'Under this ceiling of low, sinister vapour, the yellow and shallow sea of this vast sandy shore, remained without a ripple, without any movement, without life; a sea of muddy water, of thick water, of stagnant water. The *Jean Guiton* rolled a little, from force of habit, cut through this opaque and smooth sheet of water, and passed on, leaving a few waves behind, a few undulations which soon calmed down in her wake.

'I began to talk to the captain, a little short-legged man, nearly as round as his ship, and always swaying like her. I wanted to obtain some details about the disaster that it was my mission to investigate. A large ship from Saint-Nazaire, the *Marie*

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Joseph, had gone ashore one stormy night, on the sands off the He de Re.

The gale had driven this vessel so far up, her owner had written, that it had been impossible to get her off again, and there had been hardly any time to rescue her moveable fittings and salve the cargo. I had, therefore, to investigate the situation of the wreck, to estimate her value, to find out if every attempt had been duly made to get her afloat before she was abandoned. I had to act as representative of the Company, which would call me as an expert on their side, should an action in a court of law be found necessary.

'After receiving my report, the directors would take all measures advisable for the protection of our interests.

'The captain of the *Jean Guiton* knew the affair perfectly, having been called to take part with his boat in the attempts made to salve ship and cargo. He related the very simple facts of the story: —The *Marie Joseph*, driven by a furious gale, lost in the night, driving blindly upon a sea of foam—'a sea as white as milk,' said the

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captain—had struck on one of these sand banks, which at low water change the aspect of this part of the coast into that of a boundless Sahara.

'Whilst we talked, I kept on looking about me. Between the ocean and the overhanging sky there was an open space where the eye could travel afar. We were steaming along the land. I asked:

' "Is that the He de Re over there ?"

Yes, monsieur.

'And suddenly the captain, pointing ahead with his right hand, showed me, far away in the offing, an almost imperceptible object, and said:

' "Look, there's your ship!"

' "*The Marie Joseph?*"

' "Yes."

'I was astounded. This blade speck, almost invisible, appeared to me at least three miles distant from the coast.

'I objected:

' "But, captain, there should be a hundred fathom of water on the spot you are pointing at?"

'He began to laugh.

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' "A hundred fathom, my friend! . . . Not two fathom, I can tell you!"

'He was a native of Bordeaux. He continued:

"Here you are, high-water now, 9.40. Go along over the sands, your hands in your pockets, after lunch at the Hotel Dauphin, and I promise that at 2.50 or three at the latest you will reach the wreck dry-shod, my friend, and you will have one hour forty-five minutes to two hours, to hang about there—no more mind or you will be caught by the tide. The further the sea goes out the quicker it comes back. It is as flat as the back of a bed bug, this coast! Start for the land again at ten minutes to five—no later, believe me—and at half-past seven you get safe and sound aboard the *Jean Guiton*, which will put you alongside the Quay of La Rochelle the same evening."

'I thanked the captain, and went away forward to look at the little town of Saint Martin, which we were nearing rapidly.

'It was like any other tiny seaport, of the sort that serve for capitals to the barren

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strings of small islands scattered along the shores of continents. It was a big fishing village, with one foot in the water and one on land, living on fish and fowl, on vegetables and herrings, on radishes and mussels. The island is quite low, with few signs of cultivation, and nevertheless seems thickly populated; but I did not explore the interior.

' After my lunch, I strolled round a small headland; then, as the sea was ebbing rapidly, I started off across the sands and made for what resembled a black rock, which I could see above the water, very far away, out there.

'I walked quickly over this yellow plain, as elastic as living flesh, which seemed to sweat a little under my feet. The sea had been there a moment ago, and now I saw it far away escaping out of sight, and I could not distinguish any longer the dividing line between the sands and the ocean. It was as if, by enchantment, I had been allowed to look at a gigantic and supernatural event. The Atlantic was before me just now, and it had disappeared into die

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vast and arid expanse, as stage scenery sinks through trap doors, and had left me walking in the midst of a desert. Only a flavour, a scent of salt water lingered around me. I sniffed the odour of seaweed, the odour of the surge, the coarse and wholesome odour of the sea-shore. I walked quickly; I did not feel cold any more, I watched the motionless wreck, which grew bigger as I advanced, and now resembled the carcass of a stranded whale.

'She seemed to grow out of the earth, and, on this immense, flat, and yellow expanse, took on an aspect of surprising size. I reached her at last, after an hour's walking.

'She lay over with a heavy list; she was already beginning to break up, and her sides, like the flanks of a dead animal, showed her bared ribs, huge ribs of tarred timber, studded with the heads of enormous nails. The sand had already invaded her interior, had entered through the torn sides, had got a hold on her, had taken possession of her, and would never let her go again. She seemed to have taken root

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in the sandbanks; her bows had sunk deeply into the soft and perfidious surface, whilst the raised stern seemed to throw up to heaven, like a desperate appeal, the two words painted in white on the black planking: *Marie Joseph*.

'I climbed up this corpse of a ship from the lowest side, then, having reached the deck, I descended into the hold. The daylight came through the broken hatchways, and through the rents in the sides; it lighted up, sadly, a sort of long and gloomy chamber, full of demolished woodwork. There was nothing in there but sand, which made a floor to this cavern of planks.

'In order to jot down a few notes as to the state of the vessel, I sat down on the head of an empty cask, and began to write by the light of a large hole, through which I could see the boundless extent of the sands. A queer shuddering sense of cold and solitude ran through me from time to time; and, ceasing to write, I began to listen to the faint, mysterious noises pervading the wreck, to the noise of the crabs

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scuttling along the planks on their fang-like claws, to the noises of a thousand tiny creatures, already making a home of this lifeless thing, and also to the soft and rhythmical sound of the teredo, that gnaws and bores unceasingly, with its whisper, as of a gimlet at work in the old ship's frame, which it excavates and devours.

'Suddenly I heard human voices, at my elbow as it were. I started up as though faced by an apparition. It really seemed, for a moment, as if I were about to see, arising in the depths of this sinister hold, two drowned bodies, ready to tell me all about their deaths. I assure you that it did not take me long to scramble out on deck, hand over hand, and I saw then, standing under the bows of this wreck, a tall man, with three young girls, or rather, a tall Englishman, with three young "misses." Certainly they were a good deal more frightened than I, myself, at this swift apparition of a man upon the deserted ship. The youngest of the girls ran off; the two others clung to their father desperately; as for him, he had opened his mouth, and

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this was the only sign of emotion he allowed himself.

'Then, after a few seconds, he spoke up :

' "Oh, monsieur, you are the owner of this vessel?"

' "Yes, monsieur."

' "May I visit it?"

' "Yes, monsieur."

'He uttered a long English phrase, of which I caught only the word "gracious," repeated several times.

'As he was looking for the best place to climb up, I directed him, and, with the help of my extended hand, he got up first; then we assisted the three girls, who had recovered from their alarm. They were charming, all three, especially the eldest, with fair hair, eighteen years old perhaps, as fresh as a flower, and so delicate! So pretty! Really, pretty English girls are just like the tender products of the sea. You would have said that this one had come out of the sand, and that her hair had retained its hue. With their exquisite freshness, and delicate colouring, they make one think of pink shells, of

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nacreous pearls, rare and mysterious, opening out in the unknown depths of the ocean.

'She spoke French a little better than her father; and she served as an interpreter in the conversation. I had to relate the story of the wreck, with precise details (which I had to invent), as though I had been present at the catastrophe. Then the whole family party went down into the hold of that hulk. As soon as they had got into this sombre, dimly-lighted gallery, they uttered cries of astonishment and admiration ; and instantly the father and the girls produced their sketch books, which had been hidden, doubtless, in their ample waterproof cloaks, and commenced, simultaneously, four pencil sketches of this weird and mournful place.

'They were sitting down, side by side, on one of the beams, and the four books on the eight knees were being covered with little black pencil strokes, which were to represent the devastated interior of the *Marie Joseph*.

'I went on with my inspection of the

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wreck, whilst the eldest of the girls talked to me as she worked,

'I learnt from her they were staying for the winter at Biarritz, and that they had come from there to the He de Re on purpose to see this stranded ship. They had none of the English stiffness, these good people; they belonged to that harmless eccentric class of everlasting wanderers, which England sends out all over the world. The father, tall, spare, with a red face framed in white whiskers, a real living sandwich, a slice of ham cut out in the likeness of a human head, and laid between two pads of hair; the girls, long in the leg, like young storks, thin too, except the eldest, who was also the prettiest of the diree.

'She had such a funny way of speaking French, of talking, of laughing, of understanding you, and of not understanding you, of raising her eyes inquiringly, her blue eyes, blue like the deep sea, of leaving off her sketching to ponder over what you said, of going to work at it again, of saying "yes" or "no," that I would have remained

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there an indefinite time only to listen to her voice and to watch her movements.

'Suddenly she murmured:

' "I hear a little stir on this boat."

'I listened, and I became aware too of a slight noise, of a whispering continuous sound. What was it? I got up to look through an opening, and could not help crying out. The sea had returned, the tide was flowing all around the hulk. I ran up on deck in a hurry. It was too late. The sea hemmed us in, running towards the coast with prodigious speed. No, it was not running, it was gliding, creeping, spreading out like a huge wet blot. No more than a few inches of water covered the sands, but already the head of the stealthy flood was out of sight between us and the coast.

'The Englishman wanted to hurry off at once, but I held him back. Flight was impossible, on account of the deep pools, which we had avoided easily when coming out, but in one of which, now that they were invisible, we would infallibly be drowned if we tried to get back,

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Tor a moment our hearts were filled with horrible anxiety. Then the eldest of the young girls murmured, with a smile:

' "It is we who are the castaways."

'I tried to smile too, but I was seized with fear, a cowardly fear, that had come upon me stealthily, like this treacherous flood tide. All the dangers of our position appeared to me at once. I felt inclined to shout for help. But who was there to hear ?

'The two younger girls had sidled up close to their father, who stood looking with dismay at the sea that had surrounded us.

'The night came upon us as rapidly as the rising tide of the ocean; a heavy, damp, and icy darkness.

'I said :

' "There is nothing else for us to do but to stay on board here and wait."

'The Englishman replied:

' "Oh, yes."

'We remained quite still for a quarter-of-an-hour, for half-an-hour — I don't really know how long, watching around us that yellow water which rose and eddied, which

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seemed to bubble and swirl as if at play upon the immensity of the reconquered sands.

'One of the girls complained of the cold, and the idea of going below occurred to us, to find some shelter from the light nipping breeze, which stung our faces with its chilly breath.

'I looked down the hatchway. The water had flowed into the ship's hold too. There was nothing for it then but to crouch aft in a body, where the bulwarks protected us a little from the wind.

'Darkness now enveloped us, and we remained huddled together, surrounded by water and the shades of night. I felt the shoulder of the English girl pressing against me; she trembled; her teeth chattered now and then; but I felt also the gentle warmth of her body penetrating me; and the communicated warmth was as delicious to me as a kiss.

'We did not talk; we crouched low, very still and silent, like animals sheltering under a hedge during a storm. And all the same, in spite of everything, in spite

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of the night, in spite of the terribly dangerous situation, I felt distinctly happy at being there. I was happy during these long hours of darkness and anxiety spent on these shaky planks, so near to this pretty, tender, and charming young girl.

'I asked myself, whence came this delightful absorption; why this sensation of pleasure and joy?

'Why ? Who can tell ? Because she was there? Who was she? An unknown little English girl! I did not love her, I did not know her at all, and I felt myself softened, conquered! I desired to save her, to devote myself to her service, to commit innumerable follies for her sake. Strange! How is it that the mere presence of a woman can affect us so profoundly? Is it the emanation of her grace that envelopes us with a potent spell, the seduction of prettiness and youth which intoxicates us like a draught of wine?

'Or is it not rather the touch of love, of mysterious love, which for ever seeks to unite human beings, which tries its power as soon as it has placed a man and a woman

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face to face, and which sends over them awakening emotion, a confused, deep, and sweet emotion, as a falling shower moistens the earth to make the flowers grow out of the ground.

'But the silence of the darkness above was becoming awful, the silence of the heavens—for we could hear around us a vague and continuous swirling of water, the low, deadened murmur of the rising sea, and the monotonous lapping of the current against the side of the ship.

'Suddenly I heard a great sobbing. The youngest of the girls had begun to cry. Her father tried to comfort her, and they went on talking in their own language, which I did not understand. I guessed only that he was telling her that there was no danger, but that she was still afraid.

'I said to my neighbour:

"" You must be very cold, mademoiselle ?"

' "Oh, yes—I am very cold."

'I wanted to give her my cloak; she refused to have it; but I had taken it off already, and I covered her with it, disregarding her resistance. In the short struggle

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her hand touched mine, and this contact caused a shiver of delight to run through my whole body.

Tor some time before this the breeze had seemed fresher, the wash of the water sounded louder against the side of the vessel. I stood up; a blustering gale blew in my face. The wind was getting up.

The Englishman noticed this, as well, and remarked, simply:

' "It is bad for us, this. . . ."

'Without doubt, it was bad enough, it was certain death for us if the sea rose ever so little and began to batter this hulk, so shaken and disjointed already, that the first touch of rough weather would be certain to send her to pieces.

'Every moment our anxiety increased, with the greater strength of the squalls. Now the sea was beginning to break a little; and I saw white lines appearing and disappearing in the darkness, the lines of foam; whilst each wave that struck against the *Marie Joseph* sent a shock through her that went straight to our hearts.

'The young girl was trembling; I felt

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her shivering against me, and I felt a mad impulse to seize her in my arms.

Tar off, before us, to the left, to the right, behind us, the white, yellow, and red lights of the light-houses shone along the coast: they turned and blinked like enormous eyes, like the eyes of giants, glaring at us, watching us, waiting eagerly for our disappearance. One of them, especially, irritated me greatly. It went out every thirty seconds, to flash up again immediately, and this one, really, was like an eye, with its eyelid lowered, time after time, over its brilliant glance.

'Now and then the Englishman would strike a match to see the time, then he would silently put his watch back into his pocket. Suddenly he said to me, over the heads of his daughters, with supreme gravity:

"Monsieur, I wish you a happy New Year."

'It was midnight. I extended my hand, which he grasped; then he said something in English, and suddenly he and his three daughters began to sing, all together,

THE WRECK

"Rule Britannia." The grave tune rose up into the black, silent air, and seemed to ascend and vanish into space.

'I felt inclined to laugh at first, then I was seized by an overwhelming and bizarre emotion.

'It was something sinister and superb, this song of the castaways, of the condemned : something like a prayer, and also something greater still, something that one might compare to the old and sublime "*Ave Caesar, morituri te salutant.*"

'When they had ceased, I asked my neighbour to sing something for us—a ballad, a romance, what she liked—in order to make us forget our distress. She consented, and immediately her clear young voice rose lightly into the night. She sang something sad, no doubt, for the long-drawn notes came slowly out of her lips, and went away fluttering, like wounded birds, over the waves.

'The sea got up and rolled upon the dismantled hulk.

'As for me, I thought only of this voice. I thought also of the sirens. If a boat had

THE WRECK

been passing near us, what would the sailors have thought ? My tormented mind strayed away into a dream ! A siren ! Was she, indeed, not a siren, this girl of the sea, who had made me stay on this wrecked ship, and who would be soon sinking with me into the waves !

'But all at once the five of us went rolling headlong to the other side of the deck, for the *Marie Joseph* had heeled over heavily to the right. The English girl had fallen upon me ; I clasped her in my arms, and wildly, without knowing, without understanding what I was doing, but thinking that our last hour had come, I showered kisses on her cheeks, on her forehead, on her hair. The ship did not move after this, and we lay without stirring at all for a time.

'The father's voice said : "Kate !" She whom I held in my arms answered : "Yes," and tried to free herself. Certainly, at that moment, I wished the hulk would fall to pieces, and let me sink with her into the sea.

'The Englishman was heard again :

THE WRECK

"A little capsized—it is nothing. I still have my three daughters."

'Not being able to see the eldest, he had thought, at first, that she was lost overboard. I got to my feet slowly, and suddenly I saw a light on the sea, quite close to us, too. I shouted; a hail came back. It was a boat which was out looking for us; the hotel-keeper had foreseen our imprudence.

'We were saved! I was extremely sorry. They took us off the wreck, and sailed back to Saint Martin.

'The Englishman kept on rubbing his hands and murmuring:

' "A good supper! A good supper!"

'We did indeed sup. I was not happy, ! regretted the *Marie Joseph*.

'We had to part the next day, after many embraces and promises to write to each other.

'They started for Biarritz. I was very near following them there.

'I was hard hit. I had been on the point of asking this girl to marry me. Certainly, if we had spent a week together, it would

THE WRECK

have ended in marriage. How weak and incomprehensible a man shows himself sometimes.

'Two years passed away without my hearing from them; then I received a letter from New York. She was married, and wrote to tell me so. And since then we have written to each other every year on the 1st of January. She tells me her life, speaks of her children, of her sisters, but never of her husband! Why ? Ah, why ? And I, I speak only of the *Marie Joseph*, .. . She is, perhaps, the only woman I have truly loved . . . No . . . that I should have truly loved . . . Ah ! there it is . . . who knows? . . . Events carry you away . . . • And then . . . and then . . . all is over . . . She must be old now . . . I should not know her. . . . Ah ! that one of former times . . . the one of the wreck . . . what a creature! . . . Divine! She writes that her hair has turned white now, it has upset me horribly . . . Ah ! her hair that was so golden! . . . No, my young girl does not exist any longer . . . How sad it is, all this.'

NIGHT

A BAD DREAM

I LOVE the night passionately. I love it as a man loves a woman or his own country, with an instinctive, deep, and invincible love. I love it with all the senses of my being, with my eyes that see it, with my sense of smell that inhales it, with my ears that listen to its silence, and with my whole body, which the darkness caresses. The larks sing in the early sunlight, high up in the blue sky, in the warm atmosphere, in the clear air of light mornings. In the night the owl passes, a black spot that flits across a black space, and rejoicing, intoxicated by the black infinity, utters his cry, vibrating and sinister.

The daylight is fatiguing and wearisome to me. It is brutal and noisy. I get up with difficulty, I dress myself overcome by lassitude, I go out reluctantly, and each step, each movement, each gesture, each word, each thought, demands an effort, as if I had to lift up an over-whelming burden.

But when the sun is sinking, a confused

NIGHT

joy invades me, a joy that enters into all my limbs. I am aroused, I become animated. With the deepening of the twilight I begin to feel myself another man, younger stronger, more alert, much happier. I watch the gradual increase of the vast shadow falling softly down from heaven; it rolls over the town like an impalpable and impenetrable sea wave; it hides, blots out, destroys all colour and form, enveloping houses, beings, and monuments in the clasp of its imperceptible embrace.

Then it seems to me that I must cry out with pleasure like the owls, run along the roofs like the cats; and an impetuous, an overpowering desire for love flames up in my veins.

I walk about, I tramp on for hours, sometimes in the shadowy outskirts of the town, or else in the woods, near Paris, where the wild creatures of my kin, and my brothers the poachers, are astir.

Death lurks continually in the passion of a violent love. But how can I relate clearly what is happening to me? How can I explain even that I am able to tell you my tale

NIGHT

at all? I do not know; I know nothing; I only know that it is so. Listen!

Yesterday — was it yesterday? — yes, without doubt, it must have been, unless it happened before, on some day, in another month, in another year—I do not know. It should be yesterday, however, because daylight has not returned, because the sun has not risen again. But how long has this night lasted? Since when? . . . Who can tell? Who will ever know?

Yesterday, I went out, as I go out every evening, after my dinner. The weather was very fine, very still, very warm. Strolling towards the boulevards, I watched above me the stream of black sky, glittering with stars, between the roofs of the street, which, winding away, made this rivulet of stars curve and undulate like a real river.

Everydiing, from the planets to the gas jets, appeared brilliant in the clear air. So many lights sparkled overhead and in the town below, that they made the darkness luminous. The sheen of brilliant nights is infinitely more joyous than the garish light of day.

NIGHT

On the boulevard, the cafes blazed, people laughed, strolled by, people sat drinking. I entered a theatre for a few moments. What theatre was it? I don't remember now. The amount of light in there depressed me so much, that I went out again, with my heart a little cast down by the shock of the crude glitter on the gilded balconies, by the artificial scintillation of the lustrous crystal, by the fiery barrier of the footlights, by the melancholy of all this brutal and false brilliancy. I reached the Champs Elysees, where the cafe concerts appeared like centres of conflagrations in the midst of the foliage. The chestnuts, touched with the yellow light, looked as if they had been painted, as if they had a phosphorescent glow. And the electric globes, shining like pale moons, like egg-shaped moons fallen from the sky, like enormous pearls, made the lines of gaslight, the odious, filthy gaslight, and the festoons of coloured lamps, look warm in the flood of their nacreous, mysterious, and regal splendour.

I stopped under the Arc de Triomphe,

NIGHT

to look at the avenue, the long and beautiful starlit avenue, going towards Paris, between two long rows of lights and the stars! The stars up there, the unknown stars, cast by haphazard into the infinite space, and tracing those curious figures which cause so much wonder, and give rise to so many dreams.

I went into the Bois de Boulogne, and I stayed there a long time, a long time. A strange shudder passed through me, an unexpected and powerful emotion, an exaltation of mind which verged on madness.

I walked on for a long time, for a long time. Then I retraced my steps. What time was it when I went under the Arc de Triomphe again? I don't know. The town had gone to sleep, and a few clouds—thick, black clouds — had spread themselves slowly over the sky.

For the first time I felt that something extraordinary was going to happen, something unheard of. It seemed to me that the night was turning cold, that the air was thickening, that the night, that my beloved night, was gathering around my

NIGHT

heart. The avenue was deserted now. Two policemen, only, walked about the fiacre-stand, on the highway, lit up faintly by the gaslights, which seemed on the point of dying, a line of waggons, loaded with vegetables, were going to the Halles. They went slowly, laden with carrots, with turnips, and with cabbages. The drivers were lying back asleep, out of sight, and the horses went along, stepping deliberately, each one at the tail of the waggon in front, without any noise on the wooden pavement. In the light of each street lamp, the carrots glowed red, the turnips white, the cabbages green; and they continued, one after the other, those red carts, as red as fire, the white as white as silver, the green as green as emeralds. I followed them for a time, then, turning into the Rue Royale, I came back to the boulevards. No more people anywhere, no more lit-up cafes, only some belated figures hastening along, I had never seen Paris so dead, so deserted. I "pulled out my watch: it was two o'clock.

I was impelled by a force, a necessity to

NIGHT

go on. I went as far as the Bastille. There, I observed that I had never before seen so dark a night, for I could not even distinguish the commemorative column, whose golden genius above was lost in the impenetrable obscurity. A canopy of clouds, as massive as immensity itself, had obliterated the stars, and seemed to crouch down over the earth, as if to swallow it up for ever.

I turned back. There was no one near me now. In the Place du Chateau d'Eau, however, a tipsy man lurched against me, and vanished directly. For some time I could hear his uneven and sonorous footsteps. I went on. At the top of the Faubourg Montmartre a fiacre passed me, going down towards the Seine. I shouted after it. The driver did not answer. A woman was roaming about in the neighbourhood of the Rue Drouot; 'Monsieur, just listen to me.' I quickened my pace in order to escape the outstretched hand. Then nothing more. Before the Vaudeville, a ragpicker was turning over the rubbish in the gutter. His little lantern wavered about

NIGHT

on a level with the ground. I asked him: 'What time is it, my good fellow?'

He growled: 'How am I to know?—I haven't got a watch.'

Then I noticed, suddenly, that the gas lights had been put out. I was aware that, at this season, they are turned off early, before the break of day, through economy; but daylight was yet very far away, so very far from appearing.

'I had better go to the Halles,' I thought: 'there, at least, I shall find some life.'

I started off, but I could not even see enough to find my way. I advanced slowly, as one moves through a dense wood, identifying the streets only by keeping count of those I passed.

Before the Credit Lyonnais, a dog growled. I turned into the Rue de Grammont. I had lost myself. I wandered about; then I recognised the Bourse by the iron railings outside.' All Paris was sleeping, with a profound and terrifying slumber. In the distance, however, a fiacre was rumbling, a solitary fiacre, perhaps the one that had passed me some time before. Trying to

NIGHT

overtake it, I made for the sound of the wheels, crossing the deserted, black streets, quite black, as black as death.

I lost my way again. Where was I ? What stupidity to turn the gas off so early! Not a passer, no one out late, not a single prowler, not even a howl of an amorous cat. Nothing.

Where were the policemen? I said to myself : 'I will shout, they will come.' I shouted. No one answered.

I cried out louder. My voice went forth without an echo, feebly, smothered up, overwhelmed by the night, by the impenetrable night.

I began to yell: 'Help! Help! Help! My desperate appeal remained without response. ^What time was it then? I pulled out my watch, but I had no matches. I listened to the faint ticking of the little piece of mechanism with a strange and extravagant delight. It seemed to be alive! I felt less solitary. What a mystery! ' I started off again, like a blind man, tapping the walls with my stick, and every moment I would raise my eyes towards the sky,

NIGHT

hoping that the day was coming at last; but all space was black, completely black, more profoundly black than the town below.

What hour could it be? I walked on, it seemed to me, for an infinite time; my legs were giving under me, my chest heaved, and I suffered horribly from hunger.

I made up my mind to ring at the first door I came to. I pulled at the brass knob, and the bell rang within the enormous house; it rang out strangely, as though there had been nothing in the house but that vibrating sound.

I waited; there was no answer, no one opened the door. I rang once more, and waited again. Nothing came of it.

I became scared. I ran to the next house and, twenty times in succession, I made the bell ring in the dark lobby where the concierge should have been sleeping.¹ But I could not wake anyone, and I went on further, pulling at the rings, or at the knobs, with all my might, kicking, beating with my stick, with my hands, these doors so obstinately closed.

NIGHT

And suddenly I perceived that I had arrived at the Halles. The great market was deserted, without a sound, without a stir, without a single cart, without a man anywhere, without a heap of vegetables or a bunch of flowers. It was empty, lifeless, abandoned, dead!

I was seized with terror—a horrible terror. What is happening? Oh, my God! what does this mean?

I went away again. But the time? What was the time? Who would tell me the time? No clock up in the towers or on the monuments would strike. I thought, 'I will open my watch glass and feel the hands with my fingers.' I pulled it out... it ticked no more... it had stopped. There was nothing left. Nothing. No more; no movement in the town, not a glimmer of light, not a rustling in the air. Nothing! Nothing more; not even a distant rumble of a fiacre—nothing whatever!

I was on the quays and an icy freshness rose up from the river.

Was the Seine still flowing?

'I wanted to know; I found the steps,

NIGHT

and went down . . . I could not hear the swirling of the current under the arches of the bridge . . . A few more steps . . . then sand and . . . then water . . . I plunged my arm into it . . . it was flowing . . . it was flowing .. . cold . . . cold .. . cold . . . almost frozen . . . almost dried up . . . almost dead.

And I felt, indeed, that I should never have strength enough to climb up again . . . and that I should die there . . . I also . . . die of hunger . . . of fatigue . . . and of cold.

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CHARLES DAVIES

No. 171

Everybody knows *Gulliver* and *The Tale of a Tub*, but Swift's minor pieces are less accessible in a handy format. In this book a collection of the more interesting will be found, exhibiting the Dean in familiar and satiric mood even when preaching.

DAVIES, W. H.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A SUPER-TRAMP

With a Preface by G. BERNARD SHAW

NO. 3

The author tells us with inimitable quiet modesty of how he begged and stole his way across America and through England and Wales until his travelling days were cut short by losing his right foot while attempting to 'jump' a train.

DAVIES, W. H.

LATER DAYS. A pendant to *The Autobiography of a Cuper-Tramp*

No. 48

'The self-portrait is given with disarming, mysterious, and baffling directness, and the writing has the same disarmingness and simpleness.' *Observer*

A POETS PILGRIMAGE

No. 56

A Poet's Pilgrimage recounts the author's impressions of his native Wales on his return after many years' absence. He tells of a walking tour during which he stayed in cheap rooms and ate in the small wayside inns. The result is a vivid picture of the Welsh people, the towns and countryside.

DELEDDA, Grazia

THE MOTHER. A Novel. With an Introduction by

D. H. LAWRENCE. (Awarded the Nobel Prize 1928) No. 105

An unusual book, both in its story and its setting in a remote Sardinian hill village, half civilised and superstitious. The action of the story takes place so rapidly and the actual drama is so interwoven with the mental conflict, and all so forced by circumstances, that it is almost Greek in its simple and inevitable tragedy.

DE MAUPASSANT

STORIES. Translated by ELIZABETH MARTINDALE No. 37

'His "story" engrosses the non-critical, it holds the critical too at the first reading. . . . That is the real test of art, and it is because of the inobtrusiveness of this workmanship, that for once the critic and the reader may join hands without awaiting the verdict of posterity.' *From the Introduction* by FORD MADOX FORD

DE SELINCOURT, Hugh

THE CRICKET MATCH. A Story

No. 108

Through the medium of a cricket match the author endeavours to give a glimpse of life in a Sussex village. First we have a bird's-eye view at dawn of the village nestling under the Downs; then we see the players awoken in all the widely different circumstances of their various lives, pass the morning, assemble on the field, play their game, united for a few hours, as men should be, by a common purpose—and at night disperse.

DIMNET, Ernest

THE ART OF THINKING

No. 170

'Concentration, "never reading but always studying," cHsmising trivialities and only reading masterpieces, orderliness, taking notes, avoiding laziness—it is with such aids to improving the mind that M. Dimnet chiefly deals—and the point of his witty book is that he makes such difficult operations seductive by the charm with which he surrounds both the operations themselves and the results to which they should lead.' *The Times Literary Supplement*

DOS PASSOS, John

ORIENT EXPRESS. A book of travel

No. 80

This book will be read because, as well as being the temperature chart of an unfortunate sufferer from the travelling disease, it deals with places shaken by the heavy footsteps of History. Underneath, the book is an ode to railroad travel.

DOUGLAS, George

THE HOUSE WITH THE GREEN SHUTTERS

A Novel. With an Introduction by j. B. PRIESTLEY NO. 118

This powerful and moving story of life in a small Scots burgh is one of the grimmest studies of realism in all modern fiction. The author flashes a cold and remorseless searchlight upon the back-bittings, jealousies, and intrigues of the townsfolk.

DU MAURIER, George

PETER IBBETSON. Illustrated by the author

No. 169

This novel, written as an autobiography, reveals with a pathetic charm the figure of Peter Ibbetson from boyhood. Some of the scenes are English, but most of the story is in France, the early part of it in Passy and Paris.

DUNSTERVILLE, Major-General L. C.

STALKY'S REMINISCENCES

No. 145

'The real Stalky, General Dunsterville, is so delightful a character that the fictitious Stalky must at times feel jealous of him as a rival. . . . In war he proved his genius in the Dunster Force adventure} and in this book he shows that he possesses another kind of genius—the genius of comic self-revelation and burbling anecdote.' *The Observer*

FARSON, Negley

SAILING ACROSS EUROPE. With an Introduction

•by FRANK MORLEY

No. 111

A voyage of six months in a ship, its one and only cabin measuring 8 feet by 6 feet, up the Rhine, down the Danube, passing from one to the other by the half-forgotten Ludwig'a Canal.

'FAUSSET, Hugh l'Anson

TENNYSON. A critical study

No. 124

Mr. Fausset's study of Tennyson's qualities as poet, man and moralist is by implication a study of some of the predominant characteristics of the Victorian age. His book, however, is as pictorial as it is critical, being woven, to quote *The Times*, 'like an arras of delicate colour and imagery.'

FLAUBERT, Gustave

MADAME BOVARY. Translated by ELEANOR

MARX-AVELING. With an Introduction by HAMISH

MILES

No. 144

". . . It remains perpetually the novel of all novels which the criticism of fiction cannot overlook; as soon as ever we speak of the principles of the art we must be prepared to engage with Flaubert. There is no such book as his *Boëvary* for it is a novel in which the subject stands firm and clear, without the least shade of ambiguity to break the line which bounds it.' PERCY LUBBOCK in *The Craft of Fiction*

FORMAN, Henry James

GRECIAN ITALY. A book of Travel

No. 29

'It has been said that if you were shown Taormina in a vision you would not believe it. If the reader has been in Grecian Italy before he reads this book, the magic of its pages will revive old memories and induce a severe attack of nostalgia.'

From the Preface by H. FESTING JONES

FRASER, Ronald

THE FLYING DRAPER. A novel

No. 165

'After its own prodigal fashion the book rises as high above the general run of novels as Codders did above the other drapers of Primrose Hill.' *Punch*

'This is one of the very best first novels which we have seen since the War, and its author, if he can maintain the standard which he sets here, should go far.' *Daily Mail*

GARNETT, Edward

FRIDAY NIGHTS. Critical Essays

No. 119

'Mr. Garnett is "the critic as artist," sensitive alike to elsmental nature and the subtlest human variations. His book sketches for us the possible outlines of a new humanism, a fresh valuation of both life and art.* *The Times*

3ARNETT, Mrs. R. S.

THE INFAMOUS JOHN FRIEND. A Novel

No. 53

This book, though in form an historical novel, claims to rank as a psychological study. It is an attempt to depict a character which, though destitute of the common virtues of everyday life, is gifted with qualities that compel love and admiration.

GAUGIN, Paul

THE INTIMATE JOURNALS. Translated by VAN

WYCK BROOKS

No. 101

The confessions of genius are usually startling; and Gaugin's *Journals* are no exception. He exults in his power to give free rein to his savage spirit, tearing the shawl from convention's shoulders with a gesture as unscrupulous as it is Rabelaisian.

GIBBS, J. Arthur

A COTSWOLD VILLAGE

No. 138

'For pure observation of people, places and sports, occupations and wild life, the book is admirable. Everything is put down freshly from the notebook, and has not gone through any deadening process of being written up.' *Morning Post*

GISSING, George

BY THE IONIAN SEA. With an Introduction by

VIRGINIA WOOLF

No. B86

Here is the book in which Gissing, for once, turned away from the sombre and care-laden scenes that dominated his outlook as a novelist, and painted at first hand a picture of that classic South whose art and literature and living sense of beauty were the hidden mainspring of his being. Appreciation of Gissing's genius is steadily growing, and these finely polished sketches of travel reflect an essential part of his experience.

GOBINEAU, Le Comte de

THE CRIMSON HANDKERCHIEF AND OTHER
STORIES. Translated from the French by HENRY
LONGAN STUART

No. 137

The three stories included in this volume mark the flood tide of Comte de Gobineau's unique and long-neglected genius. Not even Nietzsche has surpassed him in a love of heroic characters and unfettered wills—or in his contempt for bourgeois virtues and vices.

GOSSE, Sir Edmund

SELECTED ESSAYS. First Series

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SELECTED ESSAYS. Second Series

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A second volume of essays personally chosen by Sir Edmund Gosse from the wide field of his literary work. One is delighted with the width of his appreciation which enables him to write with equal charm on *Wyndham* and on *How to Read the Bible*.

GRAHAM, Stephen

A PRIVATE IN THE GUARDS

No. 89

In his own experiences as a soldier Stephen Graham has conserved the half-forgotten emotions of a nation in arms. Above all he makes us feel the stark brutality and horror of actual war, the valour which is more than valour.

HAMILTON, Mary Agnes

THOMAS CARLYLE

No. 157

Although not a formal biography, being more concerned with the mind of the man, as revealed in his writing, than with the external incidents of his life, it sets both Carlyle and Jane Welsh before the reader in an outline that is alive and challenging.

HASTINGS, A. C. G.

NIGERIAN DAYS. With an Introduction by R. B.

CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM

No. 151

Written with great sincerity and with equal modesty, it is the record of eighteen long years spent on the confines of the Empire, a book devoid of bombast, and without the cheap expression of opinion of the average globe-trotter.

HEARN, Lafcadio

GLEANINGS IN BUDDHA-FIELDS

No. 42

A book which is readable from the first page to the last, and is full of suggestive thought, the essays on Japanese religious belief calling for special praise for the earnest spirit in which the subject is approached.

GLIMPSES OF UNFAMILIAR JAPAN. First Series No. 57

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Sketches by an acute observer and a master of English prose, of a nation in transition—of the lingering remains of Old Japan, to-day only a memory, of its gardens, its beliefs, customs, gods and devils, of its wonderful kindness and charm—and of the New Japan, struggling against odds towards new ideals.

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The marvellous tales which Mr. Hearn has told in this volume illustrate the wonder-loving tendency of the Japanese. The stories are of goblins, fairies and sprites, with here and there an adventure into the field of unveiled supernaturalism.

OUT OF THE EAST

No. 43

Mr. Hearn has written many books about Japan; he is saturated with the essence of its beauty, and in this book the light and colour and movement of that land drips from his pen in every delicately conceived and finely written sentence.

KOKORO

No. 172

The heart, the inner meaning—that is the meaning of the Japanese word of the title. And it is the heart and inner meaning of Japan that Lafcadio Hearn recorded in the clear, musical prose of his essays.

HEMINGWAY, Ernest. Author of *A Farewell to Arms*

MEN WITHOUT WOMEN. Stories No. 159

'Mr. Hemingway has the art of making what he describes take place before our eyes, as if we saw it upon the stage. Brilliant is not a brilliant enough word for it.' *Daily News*

HEYWARD, Du Bose

PORGY. A Tale No. 85

This fascinating book gives a vivid and intimate insight into the lives of a group of American negroes, from whom Porgy stands out, rich in humour and tragedy.

HINDUS, Maurice

BROKEN EARTH No. 174

This is a very human book. It deals with one of the most exciting periods in the history of the Russian village—a period of universal heart-searching with peasants as ever giving free vent to their thoughts and troubles. Like *Red Bread*, the scene of *Broken Earth* is laid in the author's native village.

HOULT, Norah

POOR WOMEN No. 168

'I know of nothing written in late years with which to compare them. They are the unique manifestations which genius always gives us. Norah Hoults gift for narrative is the right magic for story telling.' H. M. TOMLINSON

HOUSMAN, Laurence

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'It is all so good that one is tempted to congratulate Mr. Housman on a true masterpiece.' *Times*.

HOWE, E. W.

THE STORY OF A COUNTRY TOWN. With an
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This American classic brings alive the old-fashioned American of last century, God-fearing, honest, solid and not uncultivated. Critics of modern American life might well read this book to get their views into true perspective.

HUDDLESTON, Sisley

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'His book is a repository of facts marshalled with judgment; as such it should assist in clearing away a whole maze of misconceptions and prejudices, and serve as a sort of pocket encyclopaedia of modern France.' *Times Literary Supplement*

HUDSON, W. H.

MEN, BOOKS AND BIRDS: Letters to a Friend.

With Notes, some Letters, and an Introduction by

MORLEY ROBERTS

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An important collection of letters from the naturalist to his friend, literary executor and fellow author, Morley Roberts, covering a period of twenty-five years.

EWETT, Sarah One

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'The young student of American literature in the far distant future will take up this book and say "a masterpiece!" as proudly as if he had made it. It will be a message in a universal language—the one message that even the scythe of Time spares.'

From the Preface by WILLA CATHER

JOHNSON, Samuel

A JOURNEY TO THE WESTERN ISLANDS OF

SCOTLAND. With a foreword by D. L. MURRAY No. 162

'To Scotland however he ventured; and he returned from it in great good humour, with his prejudices much lessened, and with very grateful feelings of the hospitality with which he was treated; as is evident from that admirable work his *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*' BOSWELL

ONES, Henry Festing

DIVERSIONS IN SICILY. Travel impressions No. 120

Shortly before his death, Mr. Festing Jones chose out *Diversions in Sicily* for reprinting from among his three books of mainly Sicilian sketches and studies. These chapters, as well as any that he wrote, recapture the wisdom, charm and humour of their author.

JOYCE, James

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No. 14

A collection of fifteen short stories by the author of *Ulysses*. They are all of them brave, relentless and sympathetic pictures of Dublin life; realistic, perhaps, but not crude; analytical, but not repugnant.

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MAN. A novel

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'It is a book to buy and read. Its claim to be literature is as good as the claim of the last book of *Gulliver's Travels*. It is by far the most living and convincing picture that exists of an Irish Catholic upbringing. The technique is startling. . . . A most memorable novel.' H. C. WELLS

KALLAS, Aino

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by JOHN GALSWORTHY

No. 24

'The writer has an extraordinary sense of atmosphere.' *Times Literary Supplement*

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KOMROFF, Manuel

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This volume comprises the Travel Records in the Eastern parts of the world of William of Rubruck (1253-5), the Journey of John of Pian de Carpini (1245-7), the Journey of Friar Odoric (1318-30). They describe the marvels and wonders of Asia under the Khans.

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When Marco Polo arrived at the court of the Great Khan Pekin had just been rebuilt. Kublai Khan was at the height of his glory. Polo rose rapidly in favour and became governor of an important district. In this way he gained first-hand knowledge of a great civilisation and described it with astounding accuracy and detail.

LAWRENCE, A. W., edited by

CAPTIVES OF TIPU. Survivors' Narratives No. 125

In addition to the well-known stories of Bristow and Scurry, a soldier and a seaman, who were forcibly Mohammedanised and retained in the service of Mysore till their escape after ten years, extracts are given from an officer's diary of his close imprisonment at Seringapatam.

THE WRECK OF THE *MEDUSA*. The Narratives

of Dard, Correard and Savigny No. 163

In 1816 a French warship ran aground upon an African reef. There was no immediate danger, yet mismanagement and aimless panic developed a series of savageries perhaps unequalled in men of this civilisation. After the desertion of comrades and the wanton destruction of food and drink, follow suicide, murder and cannibalism, mutiny and calculated massacre, on a half-submerged and broken raft.

LAWRENCE, D. H.

TWILIGHT IN ITALY. Travel essays No. 19

This volume of travel vignettes in North Italy was first published in 1916. In *Twilight in Italy* will be found all the freshness and vigour of outlook which made the author a force in literature.

LAWSON, Henry

WHILE THE BILLY BOILS. First Series No. 38

These stories are written by the O. Henry of Australia. They tell of men and dogs, of cities and plains, of gullies and ridges, of sorrow and happiness, and of the fundamental goodness that is hidden in the most unpromising of human soil.

WHILE THE BILLY BOILS. Second Series No. 39

Mr. Lawson has the uncanny knack of making the people he writes about almost violently alive. Whether he tells of jackeroos, bush children or drovers' wives, each one lingers in the memory long after we have closed the book.

LESLIE, Shane

THE END OF A CHAPTER No. no

In this, his most famous book, Mr. Shane Leslie has preserved for future generations the essence of the pre-war epoch, its institutions and individuals. He writes of Eton, of the Empire, of Post-Victorianism, of the Politicians. . . . And whatever he touches upon, he brilliantly interprets.

LINKLATER, Eric

WHITE-MAA'S SAGA

No. 180

'Mr, Linklater has a way with him. He has wit and insight and an unfamiliar background to help him. . . . What he has done, and done remarkably well, is to tell the plain tale of a young man from Orkney who, after fighting in France, tries to become a doctor, fails, and finds something like happiness in another direction.' *Sunday Times*

LITHGOW, William

RARE ADVENTURES AND PAINFULL
PEREGRINATIONS (1582-1645). Edited and
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NO. 109

This is a book of a seventeenth-century Scotchman who walked over the Levant, North Africa and most of Europe, including Spain, where he was tortured by the Inquisition. An unscrupulous man, full of curiosity, his comments are diverting and penetrating, his adventures remarkable.

LUBBOCK, Percy

EARLHAM. A portrait

No. 6

'The book seems too intimate to be reviewed. We want to be allowed to read it, and to dream over it, and keep silence about it. His judgment is perfect, his humour is true and ready; his touch light and prim; his prose is exact and clean and full of music.' *Times*

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Pictures of life as it is lived—or has been or might be lived—among the pilgrims and colonists in Rome of more or less English speech. 'A book of whimsical originality and exquisite workmanship, and worthy of one of the best prose writers of our time.' *Sunday Times*

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No. 5

'No more substantial or more charming volume of criticism has been published in our time.' *Observer*
'To say that this is the best book on the subject is probably true; but it is more to the point to say that it is the only one.' *Times Literary Supplement*

LYND, Robert

BOOKS AND AUTHORS. Critical essays No. 135

Among the modern writers we have appreciations of fyfr-Max Beerbohm, Mr. Arnold Bennett and Mr. H. M. Tomlinson, while Herrick, Keats, Charles Lamb and Hawthorne are a few of the classical writers who are criticised in the book.

MACDONALD, The Rt. Hon. J. Ramsay

WANDERINGS AND EXCURSIONS. Essays No. 132

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald has been a wide traveller and reader, and has an uncommon power of bringing an individual eye—the eye of the artist—to bear upon whatever he sees.

MACHEN, Arthur

DOG AND DUCK. Essays No. 15

'As a literary artist, Mr. Arthur Machen has few living equals, and that is very far indeed from being his only, or even his greatest, claim on the suffrages of English readers.' *Sunday Times*

MASEFIELD, John

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'His style is crisp, curt and vigorous. He has the Stevensonian sea-swagger, the Stevensonian sense of beauty and poetic spirit. Mr. Masefield's descriptions ring true and his characters carry conviction.' *The Observer*

MASON, Arthur

THE FLYING BO'SUN. A Tale N: 47

'What makes the book remarkable is the imaginative power which has re-created these events so vividly that even the supernatural ones come with the shock and the conviction with which actual supernatural events might come.' *From the Introduction*
by EDWIN MUIR

WIDE SEAS AND MANY LANDS. Reminiscences

With an Introduction by MAURICE BARING NO. 7

'This is an extremely entertaining, and at the same time moving, book. We are in the presence of a born writer. We read with the same mixture of amazement and delight that fills us throughout a Conrad novel.' *New Statesman*

MAUGHAM, W. Somerset

LIZA OF LAMBETH. A Tale

No. 141

Liza of Lambeth is Mr. Somerset Maugham's first novel, and its publication decided the whole course of his life. For if it had not succeeded its author could not have turned from medicine to letters. The story reflects much of the experience which Mr. Maugham gathered when he worked in the slums of the East End as a doctor.

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No. 31

A collection of sketches of life in China. Mr. Somerset Maugham writes with equal certainty and vigour whether his characters are Chinese or European.

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Intensely dramatic stories in which the stain of the East falls deeply on the lives of English men and women. On passion and its culminating tragedy he looks with unmoved detachment, ringing the changes without comment and yet with little cynicism.

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'Mr. Maugham has given us a ruthless and penetrating study in personality with a savage truthfulness of delineation and an icy contempt for the heroic and the sentimental.' *The Times*

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No. 179

'Mr. Maugham recently travelled from Rangoon by river to Mandalay, on horseback through the mountains and forests of the Shan States to Bangkok and by sea to Haiphong. Result: *The Gentleman in the Parlour*, a desultory sketch book, very little descriptive of the conventional "sights" but occupied, to our richer delight, with personal encounters and reflections by the way. These are the things that give every journey unique value; but only the artist is sufficiently aware of that to shed the rest and keep only them.' HORACE THOROGOOD in the *Evening Standard*

MENCKEN, H. L.

IN DEFENCE OF WOMEN

No. 50

'All I design by the book is to set down in more or less plain form certain ideas that practically every civilised man and woman hold *in petto*, but that have been concealed hitherto by the vast mass of sentimentalities swathing the whole woman question.' *From the Author's Introduction*

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'He is exactly the kind of man we are needing, an iconoclast, a scoffer at ideals, a critic with whips and scorpions who does not hesitate to deal with literary, social and political humbug in the one slashing fashion.' *English Review*

SELECTED PREJUDICES. Second Series

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'What a master of the straight left in appreciation! Everybody who wishes to see how common sense about books and authors can be made exhilarating should acquire this delightful book.' *Morning Post*

MEREZHKOVSKY, Dmitri

DECEMBER THE FOURTEENTH. A Novel

Translated from the Russian by NATALIE DUDDINGTON

With an Introduction by MARY AGNES HAMILTON

NO, 156

'It lives on its own account, and is as wildly exciting as the story of a conspiracy can be, but it has certain universal qualities. It becomes as you read, not simply an historically accurate picture of a particular revolt, but a picture of all resistance to all tyrants throughout the ages.' DAVID GARNETT

MEYNELL, Alice

WAYFARING. Essays

No. 133

'Her essays have the merit of saying just enough of the subject, and they can be read repeatedly. The surprise coming from that combined grace of manner and sanity of thought is like one's dream of what the recognition of a new truth would be.' Some of the essays so described by George Meredith are here collected in book-form for the first time.

MILES, Hamish

SELECTIONS FROM BYRON. Poetry and Prose No. 154

Byron's poetry, the core of his legend and so often the mirror of his life, is too often left unread. This selection, which includes some examples of his prose, is designed to show not only how his verse reflects the drama of Byron's own life, but also how brilliantly Byron diagnosed the evils of the post-war era in which his stirring life was spent.

MITCHISON, Naomi

CLOUD CUCKOO LAND. A Novel of Sparta No. 88

'Rich and frank in passions, and rich, too, in the detail which helps to make feigned life seem real.' *Times Literary Supplement*

WHEN THE BOUGH BREAKS. Stories of the time
when Rome was crumbling to ruin No. 46

'Interesting, delightful and fresh as morning dew. The connoisseur in short stories will turn to some pages in this volume again and again with renewed relish.' *Times Literary Supplement*

BLACK SPARTA. Stories of Sparta and Athens No. 158

'Her touch is sure, her description admirable. The reader gets a whiff of crushed thyme and of dew on dust as the author tells of Pindar's poetic adventure into Thessaly.' *Times*

MONTAGU, Lady Mary Wortley

THE TRAVEL LETTERS OF LADY MARY
WORTLEY MONTAGU. Edited by A. W.

LAWRENCE

No. 143

In the words of Tobias Smollett: 'These *Letters* will show, as long as the English language endures, the sprightliness of her wit, the solidity of her judgment, the elegance of her taste, and the excellence of her real character. They are so bewitchingly entertaining, that we defy the most phlegmatic man on earth to read one without going through with them.'

MOORE, George

CONFESSIONS OF A YOUNG MAN

No. 76

'Mr. Moore, true to his period and to his genius, stripped himself of everything that might stand between him and the achievement of his artistic object. He does not ask you to admire this George Moore. He merely asks you to observe him beyond good and evil as a constant plucked from the bewildering flow of eternity.' HUMBERT WOLFE

MORAND, Paul

OPEN ALL NIGHT

iVo. 175

Six sketches in post-war feminine psychology. M. Morand's young ladies, whether of Barcelona or Constantinople, Rome or Paris, Buda Pesth or Scandinavia, are all well worth meeting — in print.

'The most interesting book by a young French author we have seen for many months.' J. MIDDLETON MURRY in the *Nation*

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CLOSED ALL NIGHT

No. 176

The masculine pendant to *Open All Night*, showing the post-war man in Dublin, in Berlin, in Paris and in London. An Irish poet turned politician, an ex-officer of the Prussian Guard, and a Syrian who mends the complexions and repairs the bodies of London ladies; these and others appear in M. Morand's lively pages.

'It is a sign of the times that M. Morand should be so naturally included with the immortals, but no one who has revelled in his peculiar talent would deny him that privilege.' *Times*

MORLEY, Christopher

SAFETY PINS. Essays. With an Introduction by

H. M. TOMLINSON

No. 98

Mr. Morley is an author who is content to move among his fellows, to note, to reflect, and to write genially and urbanely; to love words for their sound as well as for their value in expression of thought.

MORLEY, Christopher

THUNDER ON THE LEFT. A Novel No. 90

'It is personal to every reader, it will become for every one a reflection of himself. I fancy that here, as always where work is fine and true, the author has created something not as he would but as he must, and is here an interpreter of a world more wonderful than he himself knows.' HUGH WALPOLE

WHERE THE BLUE BEGINS. A Fantasy No. 74

'Mr. Morley is a master of consequent inconsequence. His humour and irony are excellent, and his satire is only the more salient for the delicate and ingenuous fantasy in which it is set.' *Manchester Guardian*

MURRAY, D. L.

CANDLES AND CRINOLINES. Essays No. 149

Mr. Murray's sub-acid Tory satisfaction enlivens the historical essays, his sanity and penetration make memorable the books he discusses, while the unfailing charm of his style suffuses the reader of his miscellaneous pieces with mood and sentiment such as might be evolved from the glow of candles upon crinolines.

MURRAY, Max

THE WORLD'S BACK DOORS. Adventures. With
an Introduction by HECTOR BOLITHO NO. 61

His journey round the world was begun with about enough money to buy one meal, and continued for 66,000 miles. There are periods as a longshoreman and as a sailor, and a Chinese guard and a night watchman, and as a hobo.

MURRY, J. Middleton

THE EVOLUTION OF AN INTELLECTUAL No. 62

These essays were written during and immediately after the Great War. The author says that they record the painful stages by which he passed from the so-called intellectual state to the state of being what he now considers to be a reasonable man.

DISCOVERIES No. 152

These essays are an attempt to make plain some of the underlying motives of great literature. Shakespeare holds the chief place in the book. In the essays on *Tchekov* and *Russian Literature*; on *Herman Melville* and *American Poetry*-, on *Marcel Proust*—the same fundamental pre-occupation, to discover *la vraie vie*, is shown at work.

NICHOLS, Beverley

- TWENTY-FIVE. An Autobiography No. 147
'I have read every word of it. It has life and good nature. It is full of fun—written with an easy, vivid English.' SOMERSET MAUGHAM in *The Sunday Times*

O'DONNELL, Peadar

- ISLANDERS No. 189
'Mr. Peadar O'Donnell has, as Mr. Robert Lynd truly says, brought a family to life in his novel *Islanders*. . . . The curtain is lifted on the rough heroic struggle for existence of a community of Irish fishermen off the western coast, and we are privileged for a brief space to join them in their griefs and pleasures as one of themselves. . . . It is excellent to find a book in which there is no more straining after effect than there is in the best of Wordsworth's sonnets. There is no hint of mere cleverness from beginning to end.' *Daily Telegraph*

OTLAHERTY, Liam

- SPRING SOWING. Stories No. 26
'Nothing seems to escape Mr. O'Flaherty's eye; his brain turns all things to drama; and his vocabulary is like a river in spate. *Spring Sowing* is a book to buy, or to borrow, or, yes, to steal.' *Bookman*

- THE BLACK SOUL. A Novel No. 99
'*The Black Soul* overwhelms one like a storm. . . . Nothing like it has been written by any Irish writer.' 'Æ' in *The Irish Statesman*

- THE INFORMER A Novel No. 128
This realistic novel of the Dublin underworld is generally conceded to be Mr. O'Flaherty's most outstanding book. It is to be produced as a film by British International Pictures, who regard it as one of the most ambitious of their efforts.

- TWO YEARS No. 190
Although it is a true autobiography this book reads like fiction, carrying one at incredible speed from one country to another, through multitudes of (very) odd jobs, in and out of brothels, taverns and dens of vice. The writer finds time between accounts of his extraordinary adventures to pass judgment on practically everything discussed on a golf course, in a United Services Club or in a Bloomsbury Studio.

O'NEILL, Eugene

THE MOON OF THE CARIBBEES, AND OTHER
PLAYS OF THE SEA. With an Introduction by

ST. JOHN ERVINE

No. 116

'Mr. O'Neill is immeasurably the most interesting man of letters
that America has produced since the death of Walt Whitman.'
From the Introduction

O'SHAUGHNESSY, Edith

VIENNESE MEDLEY. A Novel

No. 51

'It is told with infinite tenderness, with many touches of grave
or poignant humour, in a very beautiful book, which no lover of
fiction should allow to pass unread. A book which sets its
writer definitely in the first rank of living English novelists.'
Sunday Times

PATER, Walter

MARIUS THE EPICUREAN

No. 23

Walter Pater was at the same time a scholar of wide sympathies
and a master of the English language. He describes with rare
delicacy of feeling and insight the religious and philosophic
tendencies of the Roman Empire at the time of Antoninus Pius
as they affected the mind and life of the story's hero.

THE RENAISSANCE

No. 63

This English classic contains studies of those 'supreme artists'
Michelangelo and Da Vinci, and of Botticelli, Delia Robia,
Mirandola, and others, who 'have a distinct faculty of their
own by which they convey to us a peculiar quality of pleasure
which we cannot get elsewhere.'

PICKTHALL, Marnaduke

ORIENTAL ENCOUNTERS

No. 103

In *Oriental Encounters*, Mr. Pickthall relives his earlier man-
hood's discovery of Arabia and sympathetic encounters with
the Eastern mind. He is one of the few travellers who really
bridges the racial gulf.

POWELL, Sydney Walter

THE ADVENTURES OF A WANDERER

No. 64

Throwing up a position in the Civil Service in Natal because he
preferred movement and freedom to monotony and security, the
author started his wanderings by enlisting in an Indian Ambu-
lance Corps in the South African War. Afterwards he wandered
all over the world.

POWYS, Llewelyn

BLACK LAUGHTER

No. 127

Black Laughter is a kind of *Robinson Crusoe* of the continent of Africa. You actually share the sensations of a sensitive and artistic nature suddenly transplanted from a peaceful English village into the heart of Africa.

PROWSE, R. O.

A GIFT OF THE DUSK. With an Introduction by

J. MIDDLETON MURRY

No. 178

The scene is a retreat among Swiss mountains, a place of sunlight and a place of exile, the life of which is depicted as it is really lived beneath the blinds of the sunlit balconies. It is the story of two people who, in a companionship intimate as their loneliness, poignant as their need, discover the gift that the dusk of their lives has to give.

RANSOME, Arthur

RACUNDRA'S FIRST CRUISE

No. 65

'His experiences and adventures in fair and dirty weather, the places he visited, the primitive life of the Esthonian islanders, some extraordinarily beautiful anecdotes, and the charm and humour of Mr. Ransome's writing, form a book of which there is little more to be said than that it is delightful—a pleasure to read from beginning to end.' *The Spectator*

READE, Winwood

THE MARTYRDOM OF MAN

No. 66

'Few sketches of universal history by one single author have been written. One book that has influenced me very strongly is *The Martyrdom of Man*. This "dates," as people say nowadays, and it has a fine gloom of its own; but it is still an extraordinarily inspiring presentation of human history as one consistent process.' H. G. WELLS in *An Outline of History*

REYNOLDS, Stephen

A POOR MAN'S HOUSE

No. 93

Vivid and intimate pictures of a Devonshire fisherman's life. 'Compact, harmonious, without a single—I won't say false—but uncertain note, true in aim, sentiment and expression, precise and imaginative, never precious, but containing here and there an absolutely priceless phrase. . . .' JOSEPH CONRAD

RIESENBERG, Felix

SHIPMATES. Seafaring portraits

No. 107

A collection of intimate character-portraits of men with whom the author has sailed on many voyages. The sequence of studies blends into a fascinating panorama of living characters.

ROBERTS, Captain George

A SERIES OF UNCOMMON EVENTS

M.40

The Manner of his being taken by Three Pyrate Ships which, after having plundered him, and detained him 10 Days, put him aboard his own Sloop, without Provisions, Water, etc.

The Hardships he endur'd for above 20 Days, 'till he arriv'd at the Island of St. Nicholas, from whence he was blown off to Sea; and after Four Days of Difficulty and Distress, was Shipwreck'd on the Unfrequented Island of St. John.

ROBINSON, James Harvey

THE MIND IN THE MAKING. An Essay

No. 9

'For me, I think James Harvey Robinson is going to be almost as important as was Huxley in my adolescence, and William James in later years. It is a cardinal book. I question whether in the long run people may not come to it, as making a new initiative into the world's thoughts and methods.' *From the Introduction* by H. G. WELLS

ROSEBERY, The Earl of

NAPOLEON: THE LAST PHASE

No. 96

Of books and memoirs about Napoleon there is indeed no end, but of the veracious books such as this there are remarkably few. It aims to penetrate the deliberate darkness which surrounds the last act of the Napoleonic drama.

RUTHERFORD, Mark

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MARK RUTHER-

FORD. With an Introduction by H. W. MASSINGHAM NO. 67

Because of its honesty, delicacy and simplicity of portraiture, this book has always had a curious grip upon the affections of its readers. An English Amiel, inheriting to his comfort an English Old Crome landscape, he freed and strengthened his own spirit as he will his reader's.

RUTHERFORD, Mark

THE DELIVERANCE

No. 68

Once read, Hale White [Mark Rutherford] is never forgotten. But he is not yet approached through the highways of English letters. To the lover of his work, nothing can be more attractive than the pure and serene atmosphere of thought in which his art moves.

THE REVOLUTION IN TANNER'S LANE

No. 69

'Since Bunyan, English Puritanism has produced one imaginative genius of the highest order. To my mind, our fiction contains no more perfectly drawn pictures of English life in its recurring emotional contrast of excitement and repose more valuable to the historian, or more stimulating to the imaginative reader.' H. W. MASSINCHAM

SHELVOCKE, Captain George

A PRIVATEER'S VOYAGE ROUND THE
WORLD. With aspersions upon him by WILLIAM

BETAGH. Edited by A. W. LAWRENCE

NO. 142

A book of 1726, well known as the source of the albatross incident and other passages in the 'Ancient Mariner'; it describes the exploits of a private ship of war on the coasts of South America, its wreck on the Crusoe island of Juan Fernandez, and the subsequent adventures of its company in various parts of the Pacific.

SITWELL, Constance

FLOWERS AND ELEPHANTS. With an Introduction by E. M. PORSTER

No. 115

Mrs. Sitwell has known India well, and has filled her pages with many vivid little pictures, and with sounds and scents. But it is the thread on which her impressions are strung that is so fascinating, a thread so delicate and rare that the slightest clumsiness in definition would snap it.

SMITH, Pauline

THE BEADLE. A Novel of South Africa

No. 129

'A story of great beauty, and told with simplicity and tenderness that makes it linger in the memory. It is a notable contribution to the literature of the day.' *Morning Post*

SMITH, Pauline

THE LITTLE KAROO. Stories of South Africa

With an Introduction by ARNOLD BENNETT No. 104

'Nothing like this has been written about South African life since Olive Schreiner and her *Story of an African Farm* took the literary world by storm.' *The Daily Telegraph*

SQUIRE, J. C.

THE GRUB STREET NIGHTS ENTERTAINMENTS

No. 102

Stories of literary life, told with a breath of fantasy and gaily ironic humour. Each character lives, and is the more lively for its touch of caricature.

SULLIVAN, J. W.N.

ASPECTS OF SCIENCE. First Series No. 70

Although they deal with different aspects of various scientific ideas the papers which make up this volume do illustrate, more or less, one point of view. This book tries to show one or two of the many reasons why science may be interesting for people who are not specialists as well as for those who are.

SYMONS, Arthur

PLAYS, ACTING AND MUSIC No. 113

This book deals mainly with music and with the various arts of the stage. Mr. Arthur Symons shows how each art has its own laws, its own Limits; these it is the business of the critic jealously to distinguish. Yet in the study of art as art it should be his endeavour to master the universal science of beauty.

WILLIAM BLAKE. A critical study No. 94

When Blake spoke the first word of the nineteenth century there was none to hear it; and now that his message has penetrated the world, and is slowly remaking it, few are conscious of the man who first voiced it. This lack of knowledge is remedied in Mr. Symons's work.

TCHEKOFF, Anton

TWO PLAYS: *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Sea Gull*.

Translated by GEORGE CALDERON No. 33

Tchekoff had that fine comedic spirit which relishes the incongruity between the actual disorder of the world with the underlying order. He habitually mingled tragedy (which is life seen close at hand) with comedy (which is life seen at a distance). His plays are tragedies with the texture of comedy.

THOMAS, Edward

A LITERARY PILGRIM IN ENGLAND No. 95

A book about the homes and resorts of English writers, from John Aubrey, Cowper, Gilbert White, Cobbett, Wordsworth, Burns, Borrow and Lamb, to Swinburne, Stevenson, Meredith, W. H. Hudson and H. Belloc.

THE POCKET BOOK OF POEMS AND SONGS FOR THE OPEN AIR No. 97

This anthology is meant to please those lovers of poetry and the country who like a book that can always lighten some of their burdens or give wings to their delight, whether in the open air by day, or under the roof at evening; in it is gathered much of the finest English poetry.

TURGENEV, Ivan

FATHERS AND CHILDREN. Translated by CONSTANCE GARNETT No. 83

'As a piece of art, *Fathers and Children* is the most powerful of all Turgenev's works. The figure of Bazarov is not only the political centre of the book, but a figure in which the eternal tragedy of man's impotence and insignificance is realised in scenes of a most ironical human drama.' EDWARD GARNETT

ON THE EVE. Translated by CONSTANCE GARNETT NO. 82

On the Eve is a quiet work, yet over which the growing consciousness of coming events casts its heavy shadow. Turgenev, even as he sketched the ripening love of a young girl, has made us feel the dawning aspirations of a nation.

SMOKE. Translated by CONSTANCE GARNETT NO. 84

In this novel Turgenev sees and reflects, even in the shifting phases of political life, that which is universal in human nature. His work is compassionate, beautiful, unique; in the sight of his fellow-craftsmen always marvellous and often perfect.

V'ERGA, Giovanni

MASTRO-DON GESUALDO. A Novel. Trans- lated by D. H. LAWRENCE NO. 71

Verga, who died in 1922, is recognised as one of the greatest of Italian writers of fiction. 'It is a fine full tale, a fine full picture of life, with a bold beauty of its own which Mr. Lawrence must have relished greatly as he translated it.' *Observer*

VERGA, Giovanni

CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA

No. 173

Giovanni Verga, a Sicilian, died in 1922. His work is of the blood and salt of Sicily. Practically all serious Italian critics regard Verga as the greatest of Italian writers of fiction with the single exception of Manzoni. As far as style goes, Verga aims to be unliterary, to be close to the spoken language of his characters. The story is the original upon which Mascagni's opera was written.

VOIGT, F. A.

COMBED OUT

No. 122

This account of life in the army in 1917-18, both at home and in France, is written with a telling incisiveness. The author does not indulge in an unnecessary word, but packs in just the right details with an intensity of feeling that is infectious.

WATERS, W. G.

TRAVELLER'S JOY. An Anthology

No. 106

This anthology has been selected for publication in the Travellers' Library from among the many collections of verse because of its suitability for the traveller, particularly the summer and autumn traveller, who would like to carry with him some store of literary provender.

WELLS, H. G.

CHRISTINA ALBERTA'S FATHER. A Novel. No. 100

'At first reading the book is utterly beyond criticism; all the characters are delightfully genuine.' *Spectator*
'Brimming over with Wellsian insight, humour and invention. No one but Mr. Wells could have written the whole book and given it such a verve and sparkle.' *Westminster Gazette*

THE DREAM. A Novel

No. 20

'It is the richest, most generous and absorbing thing that Mr. Wells has given us for years and years.' *Daily News*
'I find this book as close to being magnificent as any book that I have ever read. It is full of inspiration and life.' *Daily Graphic*

WHARTON, Edith

IN MOROCCO

No. 41

Morocco is a land of mists and mysteries, of trailing silver veils through which minarets, mighty towers, hot palm groves and Atlas snows peer and disappear at the will of the Atlantic cloud-drifts.

WHARTON, Edith

ITALIAN BACKGROUNDS

No. 114

Mrs. Wharton's perception of beauty and her grace of writing are matters of general acceptance. Her book gives us pictures of mountains and rivers, monks, nuns and saints.

WHITAKER, Malachi

FROST IN APRIL

No. 181 ,

'This collection of short stories, impressions, incidents and mere notes about life has a number of things to recommend it—variety, sincerity, a feeling for beauty and a sort of eagerness that is refreshing.' *Times Literary Supplement*

WITHERS, Percy

FRIENDS IN SOLITUDE. With an Introduction by

LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE

No. 131

Percy Withers, who lived for many years in the Lake Country, selects certain of the dale folk to tell in their own fashion so much the manner of men they are, so much of their life-story, of its prosperities, endurances, pathos, as may make the picture of his own experience more complete and give to it a more human significance.

IN A CUMBERLAND DALE. With an Introduction

by LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE

No. 193

. . . The book is a diary of delights, the delights that a mind humane and sensitive, well-stored and unfatigued, can derive from liberty to trace at leisure the "bright and intricate device of days and seasons" in a treasure-house of beauty like the Lake District. . . . A man must know the district extraordinarily well, and have rare openness and nicety of vision, who can read the book without learning many things which he had never seen there. The writing of it, always good, is often very good indeed.' c. E. MONTAGUE in the *Manchester Guardian*

WAGWILL, Israel

THE KING OF SCHNORRERS

No. 164

Humour of a rich and active character pervades the delightful history of Menhasseh, the magnificently autocratic king of Schnorrers, or Jewish beggars, who, dressed in his dirty rags, was as haughty in demanding charity as in accepting it.

The Life and Letters Series has been reviewed by Mr. Frank Swinnerton in *The Evening News* thus:

'The first volumes of this new and handsome series should meet the most modern taste. Here in beautiful light form are books which have all been previously published within the last three or four years at much higher prices.

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ANTHONY, Katharine

CATHERINE THE GREAT. With a Frontispiece No. 13

'This lively and well-written study is a judicious treatment of a temperament and a reputation, and the whole book is a contribution to the study, not only of Catherine the Great, but of a significant period in Russian history/ *Time and Tide*

BELLOC, Hilaire

A CONVERSATION WITH AN ANGEL No. 27

In this volume of essays Mr. Belloc well maintains his usual high level of pungent and witty writing. His subjects are varied as they are diverting, and include pages on poverty, academic hate and epigrams, on Renan, Gibbon and Macaulay, on witchcraft, pavement artists and bridges.

HOW THE REFORMATION HAPPENED No. 50

This book is well worth reading. . . . Mr. Belloc has marshalled the events of the Reformation into significant intervals and order and charged his narrative so richly with ideas that an old and complex story has become fresh and lucid.' *Manchester Guardian*

BERCOVICI, Konrad

THE STORY OF THE GYPSIES. Illustrated from
photographs by E. o. HOPPE NO. I I

'The author of this fascinating book has not only made researches into the history of this people but has also lived, travelled and been entertained by them. Though it would be extravagant to say that he had the genius of George Borrow, it is certain that he has more respect for the truth and for* scholarly fact than had that great though erratic man.' *Listener*

BIRKENHEAD, The late Earl of, edited by

THE ADVENTURES OF RALPH RASHLEIGH
(a penal exile in Australia 1825-1844). Illustrated from
facsimile pages of the original MS. No. 20

This book reveals, through the sufferings and vicissitudes of a single convict transported to New South Wales for burglary, a vivid picture of the conditions under which the penal code was administered less than a hundred years ago.

BONE, James

THE LONDON PERAMBULATOR. Illustrated
with drawings by MUIRHEAD BONE NO. 23

'The quiet humour of the writer and hand of the artist go together to present the majesty, the beauty, the variety, the oddity of London in a book one would not soon tire of praising.' *Times Literary Supplement*

SROWNLEE, Frank

CATTLE THIEF No. 32

This is the life story of a South African native. In its divination of the native mind the book is a little masterpiece. More than this, the exploits of Ntsukumbini, a member of a family of professional stock thieves, his outwitting of the police, his experiences in the gold mines, his loves and sorrows, make really good reading.

BUTLER, Samuel

EREWHON. A Satire. Illustrated with woodcuts by

ROBERT GIBBINGS

No. 16

'To lash the age, to ridicule vain pretensions, to expose hypocrisy, to deride humbug in education, politics and religion, are tasks beyond most men's power; but occasionally, very occasionally, a bit of genuine satire secures for itself more than a passing nod of recognition. *Errwhon* is such a satire. . . . The best of its kind since *Gulliver's Travels*' AUGUSTIN BIRRELL

ALPS AND SANCTUARIES. Illustrated with two maps

No. 25

'*Alps and Sanctuaries* is essentially a holiday book, and no one ever enjoyed a holiday more keenly than Butler. Here we see him in his most unbuttoned mood, giving the rein to his high spirits and letting his fantastic humour carry him whither it would.' *From the Introduction* by R. A. STRBATFEILD

CUMMINGS, E. E.

THE ENORMOUS ROOM. With a Frontispiece portrait of the Author, and an Introduction by

ROBERT GRAVES

No. 1

'He reveals himself as a man of sensibility and fortitude, and he writes always with such good taste that I do not think anyone reading his book, could feel otherwise than that it is the work of a rare, fine spirit.' *Sunday Times*

DARK, Sidney

FIVE DEANS. With five illustrations

No. 26

'The five Deans drawn and characterised in this book are Colet, Donne, Swift, Stanley, and Inge. . . . It is extraordinarily brilliant, carrying the reader on with unflagging interest from beginning to end. The writer is gifted with a sure instinctive capacity to exclude the dull and the heavy, and to include the humanly interesting and attractive.' *The Church Times*

DAVIES, W. H.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A SUPER-TRAMP.

Illustrated from four portraits of the Author and an

Introduction by GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

No. 6

'I recommend this most remarkable Autobiography of a Super-Tramp to your special attention.' GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

DE KRUIF, Paul

MICROBE HUNTERS. Illustrated by four portraits No. 3

This book captures for the reader something of the intellectual excitement and romance associated with the works of the greater scientists.

HUNGER FIGHTERS

No. 45

'The best detective thriller is no more exciting than this story of the fight of a dozen North Americans, farmers and scientists, to guard the food supply of a quarter of the world. It is written* in the choicest modern American, racy and "high-pressured," and it is intensely dramatic. Mr. de Kruif writes about men, most of them holding Government positions at small salaries, who fought steadily and patiently year after year, to find wheat that would grow in wind, drought and frost, and seed maize that would produce eighty bushels instead of forty.' *Yorkshire Post*

DIMNET, Ernest

THE BRONTE SISTERS. With four Illustrations No. 19

The Bronte Sisters is an ideal co-mingling of critical biography and literary criticism. With great tenderness, with much sympathy, but with rigid intellectual honesty, the author recreates for us the parsonage and its inhabitants, and brings especially to the mentality of Charlotte and Emily Bronte a fresh analytical talent.

DOUGHTY, Charles M.

PASSAGES FROM ARABIA DESERTA. Selected

by EDWARD GARNETT. With a Frontispiece

No. 21

'Charles Montagu Doughty was one of the great men of our day, the author of a unique prose masterpiece. For many readers it is a book so majestic, so vital, of such incomparable beauty of thought, of observation, and of diction as to occupy a place apart among their most cherished literary possessions.' *Observer*

EDINGER, George, and NEEP, E. J. C.

HORATIO NELSON. With four illustrations

No. 44

The British Nation has set Nelson on such a high pedestal in Trafalgar Square that nobody can see what he looks like, and biographers have always held their telescopes to the blind eye. The story of Lord Nelson is the story of the greatest conspiracy of silence of the last hundred and fifty years and is among the great love tragedies of the world.

FOAKES-JACKSON, F. J.

THE LIFE OF SAINT PAUL

No. 48

'Dr. Foakes-Jackson succeeds in giving an impressive account of the Apostle's work and its results on Christianity's life and faith. He emphasizes the human interest in the career and character of one of the most remarkable personalities in history. . . . The work is intended for readers who desire to gain a clear conception of the special contribution made by St. Paul to Christianity, and the conditions in which it was made.' *Times*

GRAVES, Robert

GOOD-BYE TO ALL THAT. With eight illustrations No. 22

'*Good-bye to all That* is a very good book, both picturesque and honest, and excellently written. Robert Graves is a fine poet—none better to-day, in my view. All poets write good prose, and he does. . . . It is the sincere and convincing expression of a distinguished individuality.' ARNOLD BENNETT

HENDY, E. W.

WILD EXMOOR THROUGH THE YEAR No. 37

'Mr. Hendy is one of the best writers among our naturalists, with abundant and intimate knowledge of his country and its wild inhabitants. There must be many people who will find this their book; now that we have lost our old freedom of passage across country, with the rights of way curtailed or quietly filched almost everywhere, Exmoor and Dartmoor mean more than ever.' EDWARD THOMPSON in *The Observer*

HINDUS, Maurice

HUMANITY UPROOTED

No. 41

'I have just read your book. It answers a score of question! I've been asking about Russia and a score of others I should have asked had I known enough to ask them. It is as illuminating and exciting as it is convincing. I've learnt more from it than I have from any other book I've read for years.' *From a Utter to the author* by MR. H. G. WELLS

HORN, Alfred Aloysius

TRADER HORN (The Ivory Coast in the Earlies).

Edited by ETHELREDA LEWIS. With an Introduction

by JOHN GALSWORTHY. Illustrated with portraits No. 4

'This is a gorgeous book, more full of sheer stingo than any you are likely to come across in a day's march among the book-shops of wherever you may be.' *From* MR. JOHN GALSWORTHY'S *Introduction*

THE WATERS OF AFRICA. Edited by

ETHELREDA LEWIS

NO. 28

Even more mysterious than the cannibals and shadowy rivers of Western Africa is the East Coast of fifty years ago with its magic island of Madagascar and its island-sewn Mozambique Channel. Here, as in his other book, the famous conversations of Horn with his editor amplify the old man's narrative.

HUDDLESTON, Sisley

LOUIS XIV: IN LOVE AND WAR. With twelve

illustrations

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Mr. Huddleston, in his reconstruction of the dramatic events of the Grand Siecle, endeavours to explain the springs of Louis' conduct} and he takes a novel view of the resplendent Monarch. The story is told with dramatic force. His love affairs with Marie Mancini, with Henrietta, sister of Charles II of England, with the gentle La Valliere, are freshly related. Altogether, it is a stirring study of a remarkable period of modern history.

JACKSON, Holbrook

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No. 17

'The curious investigator of the future will always be able to see the period's main outlines, and to find them clearly traced in Mr. Holbrook Jackson's animated and attractive pages.' *The Daily Telegraph*

KURLBAUM-SIEBERT, Margarete

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS. With four illustrations No. 43

'This book gives a vivid picture of the bloody turmoil of the time: passionate loyalties and black treacheries, the pageantry and the squalor, the scheming and the futility, of dying Feudalism. There is the enigmatic beauty, sweetness and horror of Queen "Hone Pot," there is Elizabeth of England, her hard rival, and there is the mighty Earl of Bothwell.' *Daily News*

LANGDON-DAVIES, John

A SHORT HISTORY OF WOMEN

No. 42

A most readable and reasonable book in which the author traces the ideas and theories which have been held about the position of women and the treatment which has been meted out to them during the last six thousand years.

LEVEL, Mrs. C. F.

THE MAGIC OF HERBS

No. 34

'Mrs. Level has gone deep into her subject and has brought back wonders from the earliest dawn of science and from all parts of the world . . . treasures of curious and useful information purged of their dross are presented, not too methodically and yet methodically enough.' *Manchester Guardian*

LUBBOCK, Percy

EARLHAM. With a Frontispiece

No. 7

'The book seems too intimate to be reviewed. We want to be allowed to read it, and to dream over it, and keep silence about it. His judgment is perfect, his humour is true and ready; his touch light and prim; his prose is exact and clean and full of music' *Times*

SHADES OF ETON

No. 30

The author was at Eton in the 'nineties of the last century. To those years belong the figures and scenes recalled in this book—in which they appear as they seemed to a boy, and in which an attempt is made to measure the effect of Eton on a boy's imagination. Warre himself, F. W. Warre-Cornish and his wife, H. E. Luxmoore and A. C. Benson were among those who counted most deeply in that impression; these and other figures familiar to Etonians of that time are sketched in detail.

LUDWIG, Emil

GENIUS AND CHARACTER. Illustrated by sixteen portraits

No. 9

'As in his longer biographies, it is the dramatic values of motive and action he seeks, the flashes of illumination in the chiaroscuro investing a lonely figure. This is not a ponderous book; it is a series of vivacious and sometimes very moving studies.' *The Spectator*

MAYO, Katherine

MOTHER INDIA. Illustrated

No. 5

'It is certainly the most fascinating, the most devastating, and at the same time the most important and truthful book that has been written about India for a good deal more than a generation.' *New Statesman*

McCURDY, Edward

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