Afloat

by Guy de Maupassant

Free public domain classic — Noveliopdf

The Project Gutenberg eBook of Afloat (Sur l'eau)

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

Title: Afloat (Sur l'eau)

Author: Guy de Maupassant

Illustrator: Edouard Riou

Translator: Laura Ensor

Release date: June 29, 2015 [eBook #49318] Most recently updated: October 24, 2024

Language: English

Other information and formats: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/49318

Credits: Produced by Dagny and Marc D'Hooghe (Images generously made available by the Hathi Trust)

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK AFLOAT (SUR L'EAU) ***

AFLOAT

(SUR L'EAU)

By

GUY DE MAUPASSANT

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY RIOU

TRANSLATED BY LAURA ENSOR

LONDON GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS BROADWAY, LUDGATE HILL GLASGOW, MANCHESTER, AND NEW YORK 1889

This Diary contains no story and no very thrilling adventure. While cruising about on the coasts of the Mediterranean last Spring, I amused myself by writing down every day what I saw and what I thought.

I saw but the water, the sun, clouds and rocks,—I can tell of nought else,—and my thoughts were mere nothings, such as are suggested by the rocking of the waves, lulling and bearing one along.

AFLOAT

April 6th.

I was sound asleep when my skipper Bernard awoke me by throwing up sand at my window. I opened it, and on my face, on my chest, in my very soul, I felt the cold delicious breath of the night. The sky was a clear blue gray, and alive with the quivering fire of the stars.

The sailor, standing at the foot of the wall, said:

"Fine weather, sir."

"What wind?"

"Off shore."

"Very well, I'm coming."

Half-an-hour later I was hurrying down to the shore. The horizon was pale with the first rays of dawn, and I saw in the distance behind the bay des Anges the lights at Nice, and still further on the revolving lighthouse at Villefranche.

In front of me Antibes was dimly visible through the lifting darkness, with its two towers rising above the cone-shaped town, surrounded by the old walls built by Vauban.

In the streets were a few dogs and a few men, workmen starting off to their daily labour. In the port, nothing but the gentle swaying of the boats at the side of the quay, and the soft plashing of the scarcely moving water could be heard; or at times the sound of the straining of a cable or of a boat grazing against the hull of a vessel. The boats, the flagstones, the sea itself seemed asleep under the gold-spangled firmament, and under the eye of a small lighthouse which, standing out at the end of the jetty, kept watch over its little harbour.

Beyond, in front of Ardouin's building yard, I saw a glimmer, I felt a stir, I heard voices. They were expecting me. The Bel-Ami was ready to start.

I went down into the cabin, lighted up by a couple of candles hanging and balanced like compasses, at the foot of the sofas which at night were used as beds, I donned the leathern sailor's jacket, put on a warm cap, and returned on deck. Already the hawsers had been cast off, and the two men hauling in the cable, had brought the anchor apeak. Then they hoisted the big sail, which went up slowly to the monotonous groan of blocks and rigging. It rose wide and wan in the darkness of the night, quivering in the breath of the wind, hiding from us both sky and stars.

The breeze was coming dry and cold from the invisible mountain that one felt to be still laden with snow. It came very faint, as though hardly awake, undecided and intermittent.

Then the men shipped the anchor, I seized the helm, and the boat, like a big ghost,

glided through the still waters. In order to get out of the port, we had to tack between the sleeping tartans and schooners. We went gently from one quay to another, dragging after us our little round dingy, which followed us as a cygnet, just hatched from its shell, follows the parent swan.

As soon as we reached the channel between the jetty and the square fort the yacht became livelier, quickened its pace, and seemed more alert, as though a joyous feeling had taken possession of her. She danced over the countless short waves,—moving furrows of a boundless plain. Quitting the dead waters of the harbour, she now felt under her the living sea.

There was no swell, and I directed our course between the walls of the town and the buoy called Cinq-cents francs (Twenty pounds sterling) that marks the deeper channel; then, catching the breeze astern, I made sail to double the headland.

The day was breaking, the stars were disappearing, for the last time the Villefranche lighthouse closed its revolving eye, and I saw strange roseate glimmers in the distant sky, above the still invisible Nice; the heights of the Alpine glaciers lighted up by the early dawn. I gave the helm over to Bernard, and watched the rising sun. The freshened breeze sent us skimming over the quivering violet-tinted waters. A bell clanged, throwing to the wind the three rapid strokes of the Angelus. How is it that the sound of bells seems livelier in the early dawn, and heavier at nightfall? I like that chill and keen hour of morn, when man still sleeps, and all Nature is awakening. The air is full of mysterious thrills unknown to belated risers. I inhale, I drink it; I see all life returning, the material life of the world; the life that runs through all the planets, the secret of which is our eternal puzzle.

Raymond said:

"We shall soon have the wind from the east."

Bernard replied:

"More likely from the west."

The skipper Bernard is lean and lithe, remarkably clean, careful and prudent. Bearded up to his eyes, he has a frank look and a kindly voice. He is devoted and trusty. But everything makes him anxious at sea; a sudden swell that foretells a breeze out at sea, a long cloud over the Esterel mountains announcing a mistral to westward, even a rising barometer, for that may indicate a squall from the east. Moreover, a capital sailor, he exercises a constant supervision and carries cleanliness to such an extent, as to rub up the brasses the moment a drop of water has touched them.

His brother-in-law, Raymond, is a strong fellow, swarthy and moustached, indefatigable and bold, as loyal and devoted as the other, but less variable and nervous, more calm, more resigned to the surprises and treachery of the sea. Bernard, Raymond and the barometer are sometimes in contradiction with each other, and perform an amusing comedy with three personages, of which one, the best informed, is dumb.

"Dash it, sir, we're sailing well," said Bernard.

We had, it was true, passed through the gulf of La Salis, cleared La Garoupe, and were approaching Cape Gros, a flat low rock stretching out on a level with the water.

Now, the whole Alpine mountain range appeared, a monster wave threatening the sea, a granite wave capped with snow, where each pointed tip looks like a dash of spray motionless and frozen. And the sun rises behind this ice, shedding over it the light of its molten silver rays.

Then directly after, as we round the Antibes headland, we discover the Lerins Isles, and further off behind them, the tortuous outline of the Esterel. The Esterel is the stage scenery of Cannes, a lovely keepsake kind of mountain of faintest blue, elegantly outlined in a coquettish and yet artistic style, washed in water-colours on a theatrical sky by a good-natured Creator for the express purpose of serving as model

for English lady landscape painters, and as a subject of admiration for consumptive or idle royal highnesses.

With each hour of the day, the Esterel changes its aspect, and charms the gaze of the upper ten.

In the morning the chain of mountains, correctly and clearly cut out, is sharply delineated on a blue sky; a tender and pure blue, the ideal blue of a southern shore. But in the evening, the wooded sides of the slopes darken and become a black patch on a fiery sky, on a sky incredibly red and dramatic. Never have I seen elsewhere such fairy-like sunsets, such conflagrations of the whole horizon, such an effulgence of clouds, such a clever and superb arrangement, such a daily renewal of extravagant and magnificent effects which call forth admiration but would raise a smile were they painted by men.

The Lerins Isles, which to the east close the Gulf of Cannes and separate it from the Gulf of Juan, look themselves like two operatic islands placed there for the satisfaction and delight of the invalid and winter sojourners.

Seen from the open sea, where we now are, they resemble two dark green gardens growing in the water. Out at sea, at the extreme end of Saint-Honorat stands a romantic ruin, its walls rising out of the waves, quite one of Walter Scott's castles, ever beaten by the surf, and in which, in former days, the monks defended themselves against the Saracens; for Saint-Honorat always belonged to monks, except during the Revolution. At that period the island was purchased by an actress of the Comédie-Française.

Stronghold, militant monks, now toned down into the fattest of smilingly begging Trappists, pretty actress come thither no doubt to conceal her love affairs in the dense thickets and pines of this rock-belted islet; all, down to the very names; "Lerins, Saint-Honorat, Sainte-Marguerite," fit for Florian's fables, all is pleasing, coquettish, romantic, poetic and rather insipid on the delightful shores of Cannes.

To correspond with the antique manor embattled, slender and erect, which looks towards the open sea at the extremity of Saint-Honorat, Sainte-Marguerite is terminated on the land side by the celebrated fortress in which the Man in the Iron Mask and Bazaine were confined. A channel about a mile long stretches out between the headland of the Croizette and the fortress, which has the aspect of an old squat house, devoid of anything imposing or majestic. It seems to crouch down dull and sly, a real trap for prisoners.

I can now see the three gulfs. In front, beyond the islands, lies that of Cannes; nearer, the Gulf Juan, and behind the bay des Anges, overtopped by the Alps and the snowy heights. Further off, the coasts can be seen far beyond the Italian frontier, and with my glasses I can sight at the end of a promontory the white houses of Bordighera.

And everywhere, all along the endless coast, the towns by the seashore, the villages perched up on high on the mountain side, the innumerable villas dotted about in the greenery, all look like white eggs laid on the sands, laid on the rocks, laid amongst the pine forests by gigantic birds that have come in the night from the snowlands far above.

Villas again on the Cape of Antibes, a long tongue of land, a wonderful garden thrown out between the seas, blooming with the most lovely flowers of Europe, and at the extreme point, Eileen Rock, a charming and whimsical residence that attracts visitors from Cannes and Nice.

The breeze has dropped, the yacht hardly makes any progress. After the current of land wind that lasts all night, we are waiting and hoping for a whiff of sea air, which will be most welcome, wherever it may blow from.

Bernard still believes in a west wind, Raymond in an east one, and the barometer remains motionless at a little above 76.

The sun now radiant, overspreads the earth, making the walls of the houses sparkle

from afar like scattered snow, and sheds over the sea a light varnish of luminous blue.

Little by little, taking advantage of the faintest breath, of those caresses of the air which one can hardly feel on the skin, but to which nevertheless lively and well-trimmed yachts glide through the still waters, we sail beyond the last point of the headland, and the whole gulf of Juan, with the squadron in the centre of it, lies before us.

From afar, the ironclads look like rocks, islets, and reefs covered with dead trees. The smoke of a train runs along the shore between Cannes and Juan-les-Pins, which will perhaps become later on the prettiest place on the whole coast.

Three tartans with their lateen sails, one red and the other two white, are detained in the channel between Sainte-Marguerite and the mainland.

All is still, the soft and warm calm of a morning's springtide in the south; and already it seems to me as if I had left weeks ago, months ago, years ago, the talking, busy world; I feel arise within me the intoxication of solitude, the sweet delights of a rest that nothing will disturb, neither the white letter, nor the blue telegram, nor the bell at my door, nor the bark of my dog. I cannot be sent for, invited, carried off, overwhelmed by sweet smiles, or harassed by civilities. I am alone, really alone, really free. The smoke of the train runs along the seaside; while I float in a winged home that is rocked and cradled; pretty as a bird, tiny as a nest, softer than a hammock, wandering over the waters at the caprice of the wind, independent and free! To attend to me and sail my boat, I have two sailors at my call, and books and provisions for a fortnight.

A whole fortnight without speaking, what joy! Overcome by the heat of the sun I closed my eyes, enjoying the deep repose of the sea, when Bernard said in an undertone:

"The brig over there has a good breeze."

Over there it was true, far away in front of Agay, a brig was advancing towards us; I could distinctly see with my glasses her rounded sails puffed out by the wind.

"Pooh, it's the breeze from Agay," answered Raymond, "it is calm round Cape Roux."

"Talk away, we shall have a west wind," replied Bernard.

I leant over to look at the barometer in the saloon. It had fallen during the last half hour. I told Bernard, who smiled and whispered:

"It feels like a westerly wind, sir."

And now my curiosity awakens; the curiosity special to all those who wander over the sea, which makes them see everything, notice everything, and take an interest in the smallest detail. My glasses no longer leave my eyes; I look at the colour of the water on the horizon. It remains clear, varnished, unruffled. If there is a breeze, it is still far off.

What a personage the wind is for the sailors! They speak of it as of a man, an all-powerful sovereign, sometimes terrible and sometimes kindly. It is the main topic of conversation all the day through, and it is the subject of one's incessant thoughts throughout the days and nights. You land folk, know it not! As for us, we know it better than our father or our mother, the invisible, the terrible, the capricious, the sly, the treacherous, the devouring tyrant. We love it and we dread it; we know its maliciousness and its anger, which the warnings in the heavens or in the depths, slowly teach us to anticipate. It forces us to think of it at every minute, at every second, for the struggle between it and us, is indeed ceaseless. All our being is on the alert for the battle; our eye to detect undiscernible appearances; our skin to feel its caress or its blow, our spirit to recognize its mood, foresee its caprices, judge whether it is calm or wayward. No enemy, no woman gives us so powerful a sensation of struggle, nor compels us to so much foresight, for it is the master of the sea, it is that thing which we may avoid, make use of, or fly from, but which we can

never subdue. And there reigns in the soul of a sailor as in that of a believer, the idea of an irascible and formidable God, the mysterious, religious, infinite fear of the wind, and respect for its power.

"Here it comes, sir," Bernard said to me.

Far away, very far away, at the end of the horizon, a blue-black line lengthens out on the water. It is nothing, a shade, an imperceptible shadow; it is the wind. Now we await it motionless, under the heat of the sun.

I look at the time, eight o'clock, and I say:

"Bless me, it is early for the westerly wind."

"It will blow hard in the afternoon," replied Bernard.

I raised my eyes to the sail, hanging flat, loose and inert. Its great triangle seemed to reach up to the sky, for we had hoisted on the foremast the great fine-weather gaff topsail and its yard overtopped the mast-head by quite two yards. All is motionless, we might be on land. The barometer is still falling. However, the dark line perceived afar, approaches. The metallic lustre of the waters is suddenly dimmed and transformed into a slatey shade. The sky is pure and cloudless.

Suddenly, around us the polished surface of the sea is rippled by imperceptible shivers gliding rapidly over it, appearing but to be effaced, as though it were riddled by a rain of thousands of little pinches of sand.

The sail quivers slightly, and presently the main boom slowly lurches over to starboard. A light breath now caresses my face, and the shivers on the water increase around us, as though the rain of sand had become continuous. The cutter begins to move forward. She glides on upright, and a slight plash makes itself heard along her sides. I feel the tiller stiffen in my hand, that long brass crossbar which looks in the sun like a fiery stem, and the breeze steadily increases. We shall have to tack, but what matter; the boat sails close to the wind, and if the breeze holds, we shall be able to beat up to Saint-Raphaël before the sun goes down.

We now approach the squadron, whose six ironclads and two despatch boats turn slowly at their anchors, with their bows to the west. Then we tack towards the open sea to pass the Formigues rocks, which are marked by a tower in the middle of the gulf. The breeze freshens more and more with surprising rapidity, and the waves rise up short and choppy. The yacht bends low under her full set of sails, and runs on, followed by the dingy, which with stretched-out painter is hurried through the foam, her nose in the air and stern in the water.

On nearing the island of Saint-Honorat we pass by a naked rock, red and bristling like a porcupine, so rugged, so armed with teeth, points, and claws as to be well-nigh impossible of access; and one must advance with precaution, placing one's feet in the hollows between the tusks: it is called Saint-Ferréol.

A little earth, come from no one knows where, has accumulated in the holes and crevasses of the rock, and lilies grow in it, and beautiful blue irises, from seeds which seem to have fallen from heaven.

It is on this strange reef, in the open sea, that for five years lay buried and unknown the body of Paganini. The adventure is worthy of this artist, whose queer character, at once genial and weird, gave him the reputation of being possessed by the devil, and who, with his odd appearance in body and face, his marvellous talent and excessive emaciation, has become an almost legendary being, a sort of Hoffmanesque phantasm.

As he was on his way home to Genoa, his native town, accompanied by his son, who alone could hear him now, so weak had his voice become, he died at Nice of cholera, on the 27th May, 1840.

The son at once took the body of his father on board a ship and set sail for Italy. But the Genoese clergy refused to give burial to the demoniac. The court of Rome was consulted, but dared not grant the authorization. The body was, however, about to be disembarked, when the municipality made opposition, under the pretext that the

artist had died of cholera. Genoa was at that time ravaged by an epidemic of this disease, and it was argued that the presence of this new corpse might possibly aggravate the evil.

Paganini's son then returned to Marseilles, where entrance to the port was refused him for the same reasons. He then went on to Cannes, where he could not penetrate either.

He therefore remained at sea, and the waves rocked the corpse of the fantastic artist, everywhere repelled by men. He no longer knew what to do, where to go, on which spot to lay the dead body so sacred to him, when he espied the naked rock of Saint-Ferréol in the midst of the billows. There at last he landed the coffin, and buried it in the centre of the islet.

It was only in 1845 that he went back with two of his friends to take up the remains of his father, and transfer them to Genoa to the Villa Gajona.

Would one not have preferred that the extraordinary violinist should have remained at rest upon the bristling reef, cradled by the song of the waves as they break on the torn and craggy rock.

Further on, in the open sea, rises the castle of Saint-Honorat, which we had already perceived as we rounded the Cape of Antibes, and further on still, a line of reefs ended by a tower called "Les Moines."

They are now quite white with surf and echoing with the roar of the breakers.

They form one of the most dangerous perils of the coast during the night, for they are marked by no light, and they are the cause of frequent wrecks.

A sudden gust heels us over, so that the water washes the deck, and I give orders for the gaff topsail to be lowered, the cutter being no longer able to carry it without endangering the safety of the mast.

The waves sink, swell, and whiten; the wind whistles, ill-tempered and squally,—a

threatening wind, which cries "Take care!"

"We shall have to go and sleep at Cannes," said Bernard.

And in fact, at the end of half an hour, we had to lower the standing jib, and replace it by a smaller one, taking a reef in the sail at the same time; then a quarter of an hour later we had to take in a second reef. Thereupon I decided to make for the harbour at Cannes, a dangerous harbour, without shelter; a roadstead open to the south-westerly sea, where the ships are in constant danger. When one thinks what a considerable amount of wealth would accrue to the town, by the large number of foreign yachts that would flock there, were they certain of finding a proper shelter, one understands how inveterate must be the indolence of this southern population, who have not yet been able to obtain from government such indispensable works. At ten o'clock we dropped anchor opposite the steamboat Le Cannois, and I landed, thoroughly disappointed at the interruption of my trip. The whole roadstead was white with foam.

CANNES, April 7th, 9 P.M.

Princes, Princes, everywhere Princes. They who love Princes are indeed happy.

No sooner had I set foot yesterday morning on the promenade of the Croisette than I met three, one behind the other. In our democratic country, Cannes has become the city of titles.

If one could open minds in the same manner as one lifts the cover off a saucepan, one would find figures in the brain of the mathematician; outlines of actors gesticulating and declaiming in a theatrical author's head; the form of a woman in that of a lover's; licentious pictures in that of a rake; verses in the brain of a poet; and in the cranium of the folk who come to Cannes there would be found coronets of every description, floating about like vermicelli in soup.

Some men gather together in gambling houses because they are fond of cards, others meet on race-courses because they are fond of horses. People gather together at

Cannes because they love Imperial and Royal Highnesses.

There they are at home and, in default of the kingdoms of which they have been dispossessed, reign peacefully in the salons of the faithful.

Great and small, poor and rich, sad and gay, all are to be found, according to taste. In general they are modest, strive to please, and show in their intercourse with humbler mortals, a delicacy and affability that is hardly ever found in our own députés, those Princes of the ballot.

However, if the Princes, the poor wandering Princes without subjects or civil list, who come to live in homely fashion in this town of flowers and elegance, affect simplicity, and do not lay themselves open to ridicule, even from those most disrespectfully inclined, such is not the case with regard to the worshippers of Highnesses.

These latter circle round their idols with an eagerness at once religious and comical; and directly they are deprived of one, they fly off in quest of another, as though their mouths could only open to say "Monseigneur" or "Madame," and speak in the third person.

They cannot be with you five minutes without telling you what the Princess replied, what the Grand Duke said; the promenade planned with the one, the witty saying of the other. One feels, one sees, one guesses that they frequent no other society but that of persons of Royal blood, and if they deign to speak to you, it is in order to inform you exactly of what takes place on these heights.

What relentless struggles, struggles in which every possible ruse is employed in order to have at one's table, at least once during the season, a Prince, a real Prince, one of those at a premium. What respect one inspires when one has met a Grand Duke at lawn tennis, or when one has merely been presented to Wales,—as the mashers say.

To write down one's name at the door of these "exiles," as Daudet calls them, of

these tumble-down Princes, as others would say, creates a constant, delicate, absorbing and engrossing occupation. The visitor's book lies open in the hall between a couple of lackeys, one of whom proffers a pen. One inscribes one's name at the tag end of some two thousand names of every sort and description, amongst which titles swarm and the noble particle de abounds! After which, one goes off with the haughty air of a man just ennobled, as happy as one who has accomplished a sacred duty, and one proudly says to the first person met: "I have just written down my name at the Grand Duke of Gerolstein's!" Then in the evening at dinner one says, in an important tone: "I noticed just now, on the Grand Duke of Gerolstein's list, the names of X..., Y..., and Z..." And everyone is interested and listens as if the event were of the greatest importance.

But why laugh and be astonished at the harmless and innocent mania of the elegant admirers of Princes, when we meet in Paris fifty different races of hero-worshippers who are in no wise less amusing.

Whoever has a salon must needs have some celebrities to show there, and a hunt is organised in order to secure them. There is hardly a woman in society and of the best, who is not anxious to have her artist or her artists; and she will give dinners for them in order that the whole world may know that her's is a clever set.

Between affecting to possess the wit one has not, but which one summons with a flourish of trumpets, or affecting Princely intimacies—where is the difference?

Among the great men most sought after by women, old and young, are most assuredly musicians. Some houses possess a complete collection of them. Moreover, these artists possess the inestimable advantage of being useful in the evening parties. However, people who desire a superlative rara avis, can hardly hope to bring two together in the same room. We may add that there is not a meanness of which any woman, a leader of society, is not capable, in order to embellish her salon with a celebrated composer. The delicate attentions usually employed to secure a painter or

only a literary man, become quite inadequate when the subject is a tradesman of sounds. For him allurements and praise hitherto unknown are employed. His hands are kissed like those of a King, he is worshipped as a God, when he has deigned to execute his Regina Coeli. A hair of his beard is worn in a ring; a button fallen from his breeches one evening in a violent movement of his arm, during the execution of the grand finale of his Doux Repos, becomes a medal, a sacred medal worn in the bosom hanging from a golden chain.

Painters are of less value, although still rather sought after. They are not so divine and more Bohemian. Their manners are less courteous and above all not sufficiently sublime. They often replace inspiration by broad jests and silly puns. They carry with them too much of the perfume of the studio, and those who by dint of watchfulness have managed to get rid of it, only exchange one odour for another, that of affectation. And then they are a fickle, light, and bragging set. No one is certain of keeping them long, whereas the musician builds his nest in the family circle.

Of late years, the literary man has been sought after. He presents many great advantages: he talks, he talks lengthily, he talks a great deal, his conversation suits every kind of public, and as his profession is to be intelligent, he can be listened to and admired in all security.

The woman who is possessed with the mania for having at her house a literary man, just as one would have a parrot whose chatter should attract all the neighbouring concierges, has to take her choice between poets and novelists. There is more of the ideal about the poet, more spontaneity about the novelist. The poets are more sentimental, the novelists more positive. It is a matter of taste and constitution. The poet has more charm, the novelist has often more wit. But the novelist presents dangers that are not met with in the poet: he pries, pillages, and makes capital of all he sees. With him there is no tranquillity, no certainty that he will not, some day, lay

you bare in the pages of a book. His eye is like a pump that sucks up everything, like the hand of a thief that is always at work. Nothing escapes him; he gathers and picks up ceaselessly; he notices the movements, the gestures, the intentions, the slightest incidents and events; he picks up the smallest words, the smallest actions, the smallest thing. He makes stock from morning till night of these observations out of which he will make a good telling story, a story that will make the round of the world, which will be read, discussed, commented upon by thousands and thousands of people. And the most terrible part of all is that the wretch cannot help drawing striking portraits, in spite of himself, unconsciously, because he sees things as they are, and he must relate what he sees. Notwithstanding the cunning he uses in disguising his personages, it will be said: "Did you recognize Mr. X... and Mrs. Y... They are striking resemblances?"

It is assuredly as dangerous for people in good society to invite and make much of novelists, as it would be for a miller to breed rats in his mill.

And yet they are held in great favour.

When, therefore, a woman has fixed her choice on the writer she intends to adopt, she lays siege to him by means of every variety of compliments, attractions, and indulgence. Like water which, drop by drop, slowly wears away the hardest rock, the fulsome praise falls at each word on the impressionable heart of the literary man. Then, when she sees that he is moved, touched, and won by the constant flattery; she isolates him, severing, little by little, the ties he may have elsewhere, and imperceptibly accustoms him to come to her house, make himself happy, and there enshrine his thoughts. In order the more thoroughly to acclimatise him in her house, she paves the way for his success, brings him forward, sets him in relief, and displays for him, before all the old habitués of the household, marked consideration and boundless admiration.

At last, realising that he is now an idol, he remains in the temple. He finds,

moreover, that the position affords him every advantage, for all the other women lavish their most delicate favours upon him to entice him away from his conqueror. If, however, he is clever, he will not hearken to the entreaties and coquetries with which he is overwhelmed. And the more faithful he appears, the more he will be sought after, implored, and loved. Ah! let him beware of allowing these drawing-room syrens to entice him away; he will immediately lose two-thirds of his value, if he once becomes public property.

Soon he forms a literary circle, a church of which he is the deity, the only deity, for true faiths never have more than one God. People will flock to the house to see him, to hear him, to admire him, as one comes from afar to visit certain shrines. He will be envied! She will be envied! They will converse upon literature as priests talk of dogmas, scientifically and solemnly; they will be listened to, both the one and the other, and on leaving this literary salon, one will feel as though one were quitting a cathedral.

Other men are also sought after, but in a lesser degree; for instance, generals, who, neglected by society and not held in much greater consideration than députés, are yet in demand amongst the middle classes. The député is only in request at moments of crisis. He is kept on hand, by a dinner now and then during a parliamentary lull. The scholar has also his partisans—every variety of taste exists in nature; and a clerk in office is himself highly esteemed, by folk who live up six pairs of stairs. However, these sort of people do not come to Cannes; there are only a few timid representatives to be seen of the middle class.

It is only before twelve o'clock that the noble visitors are to be met on the Croisette.

The Croisette is a long semi-circular promenade that follows the line of the beach, from the headland in front of Sainte-Marguerite down to the harbour overlooked by the old town.

Young and slender women,—it is good style to be thin,—dressed in the English

fashion, walk along with rapid step, escorted by active young men in lawn-tennis suits. But from time to time appears some poor emaciated creature, dragging himself along with languid step, and leaning on the arm of a mother, brother or sister. He coughs and gasps, poor thing, wrapped up in shawls notwithstanding the heat, and watches us, as we pass, with deep, despairing and envious glances.

He suffers and dies, for this charming and balmy country is the hospital of society and the flowery cemetery of aristocratic Europe.

The terrible disease which never relents, and is now called tuberculosis, the disease that gnaws, burns and destroys men by thousands, seems to have chosen this coast on which to finish off its victims.

How truly in every part of the world, this lovely and terrible spot must be accursed, this ante-room of Death, perfumed and sweet, where so many humble and royal families, burghers or princes, have left someone, some child on whom they concentrated all their hopes, and lavished all their love and tenderness.

I call to mind Mentone, the warmest and healthiest of these winter residences. Even as in warlike cities, the fortresses can be seen standing out on the surrounding heights, so in this region of moribunds, the cemetery is visible on the summit of a hill.

What a spot it would be for the living, that garden where the dead lie asleep! Roses, roses, everywhere roses. They are blood red or pale, or white, or streaked with veins of scarlet. The tombs, the paths, the places still unoccupied and which to-morrow will be filled, all are covered with them. Their strong perfume brings giddiness, making both head and legs falter.

And all those who lie there, were but sixteen, eighteen, or twenty years of age.

One wanders on from tomb to tomb, reading the names of those youthful victims, killed by the implacable disease. 'Tis a children's cemetery, a cemetery similar to the young girls' balls, where no married couples are admitted.

From the cemetery the view extends to the left in the direction of Italy as far as the Bordighera headland, where the white houses stretch out into the sea; and to the right as far as Cape Martin, which dips its leafy coast in the water.

Nevertheless all around, all along these delightful shores, we are in the home of Death. But it is discreet, veiled, full of tact and bashfulness, well bred in fact. Never does one meet it face to face, although at every moment it passes near.

It might even be thought that no one dies in this country, so thorough is the complicity of deceit in which this sovereign revels. But how it is felt, how it is detected; how often a glimpse is caught of its black robes! Truly all the roses and the orange blossoms are requisite, to prevent the breeze being laden with the dread smell which is exhaled from the chamber of death.

Never is a coffin seen in the streets, never any funeral trappings, never is a death-knell heard. Yesterday's emaciated pedestrian no longer passes beneath your window, and that is all. If you are astonished at no longer seeing him, and inquire after him, the landlord and servants tell you with a smile, that he had got better and by the doctor's advice had left for Italy. In each hotel Death has its secret stairs, its confidants, and its accomplices. A philosopher of olden times would have said many fine things upon the contrast of the elegance and misery which here elbow one another.

It is twelve o'clock, the promenade is now deserted, and I return on board the Bel-Ami, where awaits me an unpretending breakfast prepared by Raymond, whom I find dressed up in a white apron, frying potatoes.

All the remainder of the day, I read.

The wind was still violently blowing, and the yacht danced between her anchors, for we had been obliged to let go the starboard one also. The motion ended by benumbing me, and I fell into a long doze. When Bernard came into the cabin to light the candles it was seven o'clock, and as the surf along the quay made landing

difficult, I dined on my boat.

After dinner I went up and sat in the open air. Around me Cannes stretched forth her many lights. Nothing can be prettier than a town lighted up and seen from the sea. On the left, the old quarter with its houses that seemed to climb one upon the other, mingled its lights with that of the stars; on the right, the gas lamps of the Croisette extended like an enormous serpent a mile and a half long.

And I reflected that in all the villas, in all the hotels, people were gathered together this evening, as they were last night, as they will be to-morrow, and that they are talking. Talking! about what? the Princes! the weather! And then? ... the weather! ... the Princes! ... and then ... about nothing!

Can anything be more dreary than table d'hôte conversation? I have lived in hotels, I have endured the emptiness of the human soul as it is there laid bare. In truth, one must be hedged in by the most determined indifference, not to weep with grief, disgust, and shame, when one hears men talk. Man, the ordinary man, rich, known, esteemed, respected, held in consideration, is satisfied with himself, and he knows nothing, he understands nothing, yet he talks of intelligence as though he knew all about it.

How blinded and intoxicated we must be by our foolish pride, to fancy ourselves anything more than animals slightly superior to other animals. Listen to them, the fools, seated round the table! They are talking! Talking with gentle confiding ingenuousness, and they imagine that they are exchanging ideas! What ideas? They say where they have been walking: "It was a very pretty walk, but rather cold coming home;" "the cooking is not bad in the hotel, although hotel food is always rather spicy." And they relate what they have done, what they like, what they believe.

I fancy I behold the deformity of their souls as a monstrous foetus in a jar of spirits of wine. I assist at the slow birth of the commonplace sayings they constantly repeat;

I watch the words as they drop from the granary of stupidity into their imbecile mouths, and from their mouths into the inert atmosphere which bears them to my ears.

But their ideas, their noblest, most solemn, most respected ideas, are they not the unimpeachable proof of the omnipotence of stupidity,—eternal, universal, indestructible stupidity?

All their conceptions of God, an awkward deity, whose first creations are such failures that he must needs recreate them, a deity who listens to our secrets and notes them down, a God who, in turn, policeman, Jesuit, lawyer, gardener, is conceived now in cuirass, now in robes, now in wooden shoes; then the negations of God based upon pure terrestrial logic, the arguments for and against, the history of religious beliefs, of schisms, heresies, philosophies, the affirmations as well as the doubts, the puerility of principles, the ferocious and bloody violence of the originators of hypotheses, the utter chaos of contestation, in short, every miserable effort of this wretchedly impotent being man, impotent in conception, in imagination, in knowledge, all prove that he was thrown upon this absurdly small world for the sole purpose of eating, drinking, manufacturing children and little songs, and killing his neighbour by way of pastime.

Happy are those whom life satisfies, who are amused and content.

There are some such who, easily pleased, are delighted with everything. They love the sun and the rain, the snow and the fog; they love festivities as well as the calm of their own homes; they love all they see, all they do, all they say, all they hear.

They lead either an easy life, quiet and satisfied amid their offspring, or an agitated existence full of pleasures and amusement.

In neither case are they dull.

Life, for them, is an amusing kind of play, in which they are themselves actors; an excellent and varied show, which though offering nothing unexpected, thoroughly

delights them.

Other men, however, who run through at a glance the narrow circle of human satisfactions, remain dismayed before the emptiness of happiness, the monotony and poverty of earthly joys.

As soon as they have reached thirty years of age all is ended for them. What have they to expect? Nothing now can interest them; they have made the circuit of our meagre pleasures.

Happy are those who know not the loathsome weariness of the same acts constantly repeated; happy are those who have the strength to recommence each day the same task, with the same gestures, amid the same furniture, in front of the same horizon, under the same sky, to go out in the same streets, where they meet the same faces and the same animals. Happy are those who do not perceive with unutterable disgust that nothing changes, and that all is weariness.

We must indeed be a slow and narrow-minded race to be so easily pleased and satisfied with what is. How is it that the worldly audience has not yet called out, "Curtain," has not yet demanded the next act, with other beings than mankind, other manners, other pleasures, other plants, other planets, other inventions, other adventures?

Is it possible no one has yet felt a loathing for the sameness of the human face, of the animals which by their unvarying instincts, transmitted in their seed from the first to the last of their race, seem to be but living machinery; a hatred of landscapes eternally the same, and of pleasures never varied?

Console yourself, it is said, by the love of science and art.

But is it not evident that we are always shut up in ourselves, without ever being able to quit ourselves, for ever condemned to drag the chains of our wingless dream.

All the progress obtained by our cerebral effort, consists in the ascertainment of material facts by means of instruments ridiculously imperfect, which however make

up in a certain degree for the inefficiency of our organs. Every twenty years, some unhappy inquirer, who generally dies in the attempt, discovers that the atmosphere contains a gas hitherto unknown, that an imponderable, inexplicable, unqualifiable force can be obtained by rubbing a piece of wax on cloth; that amongst the innumerable unknown stars, there is one that has not yet been noticed in the immediate vicinity of another, which had not only been observed, but even designated by name for many years. What matter?

Our diseases are due to microbes? Very well. But where do those microbes come from? and the diseases of these invisible ones? And the suns, whence do they come from?

We know nothing, we understand nothing, we can do nothing, we foresee nothing, we imagine nothing, we are shut up, imprisoned in ourselves. And there are people who marvel at the genius of humanity!

Art? Painting consists in reproducing with colouring matter monotonous landscapes, which seldom resemble nature; in delineating men, and striving without ever succeeding, to give the aspect of living beings. Obstinately and uselessly one struggles to imitate what is; and the result is a motionless and dumb copy of the actions of life, which is barely comprehensible even to the educated eye that one has sought to attract.

Wherefore such efforts? Wherefore such a vain imitation? Wherefore this trivial reproduction of things in themselves so dull? How petty!

Poets do with words what painters try to do with colours. Again, wherefore?

When one has read four of the most talented, of the most ingenious authors, it is idle to open another. And nothing more can be learned. They also, these men, can but imitate men. They exhaust themselves in sterile labour. For mankind changing not, their useless art is immutable. Ever since our poor minds have awakened man is the same; his sentiments, his beliefs, his sensations are the same. He has neither

advanced nor retrograded; he has never moved. Of what use is it to me to learn what I am, to read what I think, to see myself portrayed in the trivial adventures of a novel?

Ah! if poets could vanquish space, explore the planets, discover other worlds, other beings; vary unceasingly for my mind the nature and form of things, convey me constantly through a changeful and surprising Unknown, open for me mysterious gates in unexpected and marvellous horizons, I would read them night and day. But they can, impotent as they are, but change the place of a word, and show me my own image, as the painters do. Of what use is all this?

For man's thought is motionless.

And the precise limits, so nigh, so insurmountable, once attained, it turns like a horse in a circus, like a fly shut up in a bottle, fluttering against the sides and uselessly dashing itself against them.

And yet, for want of any better occupation, thought is always a solace, when one lives alone.

On this little boat, rocked by the sea, that a wave could fill and upset, I know, I feel, how true it is that nothing we know exists, for the earth which floats in empty space is even more isolated, more lost than this skiff on the billows. Their importance is the same, their destiny will be accomplished. And I rejoice at understanding the nothingness of the belief and the vanity of the hopes which our insect-like pride has begotten!

I went to bed, cradled by the pitching of the boat, and slept with the deep slumber that one sleeps at sea, till the moment when Bernard awoke me to say:

"Bad weather, sir, we cannot sail this morning." The wind had fallen, but the sea, very rough in the open, would not allow of our making sail for Saint-Raphaël.

Another day that must be spent at Cannes!

At about twelve o'clock, a westerly wind again got up, less strong than the day before, and I resolved to take advantage of it and visit the squadron in gulf Juan.

In crossing the roads, the Bel-Ami jumped about like a goat, and I had to steer very carefully in order to avoid, with each wave which took us broadsides, having a mass of water dashed in my face. Soon however I was sheltered by the islands and entered the channel under the fortress of Sainte-Marguerite.

Its straight wall stretches down to the rocks, washed by the waves, and its summit hardly overtops the slightly elevated coast of the island. It is somewhat like a head crammed down between two high shoulders.

The spot where Bazaine descended can be easily made out.

It was not necessary to be much of a gymnast to slide down those accommodating rocks.

The escape was related to me with every detail, by a man who pretended to be, and probably was, thoroughly well informed.

Bazaine was allowed a good deal of liberty, his wife and children being permitted to come and see him every day. Madame Bazaine, who was an energetic woman, declared to her husband that she would leave him for ever, and carry off the children, if he would not make his escape, and she explained her plan. He hesitated at first, on account of the danger of the flight and the doubtfulness of success, but when he saw that his wife was determined to carry out her plan, he consented.

Thereupon, every day some toys for the little ones were brought into the fortress, amongst others an entire set of appliances for drawing-room gymnastics. Out of these toys was made the knotted rope that the Marshal was to make use of. It was very slowly made, in order to give rise to no suspicion, and when finished it was hid away by a friendly hand in a corner of the prison yard.

The date of the flight was then decided upon. They chose a Sunday, the supervision appearing to be less rigorous on that day.

Madame Bazaine then absented herself for a few days.

The Marshal usually walked about in the yard till eight o'clock in the evening, in company with the governor of the prison, a pleasant man whose agreeable conversation was a resource to Bazaine. Then he would go back to his rooms, which the chief jailor locked and bolted in the presence of his superior officer.

On the evening of the escape, Bazaine pretended he was indisposed, and expressed a wish to retire an hour earlier than usual. He returned therefore to his apartment, but as soon as the governor had gone off to call the jailor and tell him to lock up the captive, the Marshal came out again quickly and hid himself in the yard.

The empty prison was locked up, and each man went home.

At about eleven o'clock Bazaine, armed with the ladder, left his hiding place, fastened the ropes, and made his descent on to the rocks.

At dawn of day, an accomplice unfastened the ladder and threw it over the walls.

Towards eight o'clock in the morning, the governor, surprised at not seeing anything of his prisoner, who was wont to be an early riser, sent to enquire about him. The Marshal's valet refused, however, to disturb his master.

At length at nine o'clock, the governor forced open the door and found the cage empty.

On her side Madame Bazaine, in order to carry out her scheme, had applied to a man who was indebted to her husband for a most important service. She appealed to a grateful heart, and gained an ally both energetic and devoted. Together they settled all the details; she then went in an assumed name to Genoa, and under pretext of an excursion to Naples hired for a thousand francs (forty pounds sterling) a day, a little Italian steamer, stipulating that the trip should last at least a week, and that it might be extended to another week on the same terms.

The vessel started, but no sooner were they at sea, than the traveller appeared to

change her mind, and asked the captain if he would object to going as far as Cannes to fetch her sister-in-law. The sailor willingly consented, and he dropped anchor on Sunday evening in the gulf Juan.

Madame Bazaine was set on shore and ordered the boat to keep within hail. Her devoted accomplice was awaiting her in another boat near the promenade of the Croisette, and they crossed the channel which separates the mainland from the little island of Sainte-Marguerite. There her husband was waiting on the rocks, his clothes torn, face bruised, and hands bleeding. The sea being rather rough, he was obliged to wade through the water to reach the boat, which otherwise would have been dashed to pieces against the coast.

When they returned to the mainland, they cast the boat adrift.

They rejoined the first boat, and then at last the vessel, which had remained with steam up. Madame Bazaine informed the captain that her sister-in-law was not well enough to join her, and pointing to the Marshal, she added:

"Not having a servant, I have hired a valet. The fool has just tumbled down on the rocks and got himself in the mess you see. Send him, if you please, down to the sailors, and give him what is necessary to dress his wounds and mend his clothes."

Bazaine went down and spent the night in the forecastle.

The next morning at break of day, they were out at sea; then Madame Bazaine again changed her mind, and pleading indisposition, had herself reconducted to Genoa.

However, the news of the escape had already spread, and the populace hearing of it, a clamouring mob assembled under the hotel windows. The uproar soon became so violent, that the terrified landlord insisted on the travellers escaping by a private door.

I relate this story as it was told to me, but I guarantee nothing.

We drew near the squadron, the heavy ironclads standing out in single file, like

battle towers built in the sea. They were the Colbert, the Dévastation, the Amiral-Duperré, the Courbet, the Indomptable, and the Richelieu; two despatch boats, the Hirondelle and the Milan; and four torpedo boats going through evolutions in the gulf.

I wanted to visit the Courbet, as it passes for the most perfect type in the French navy.

Nothing can give a better idea of human labour, of the intricate and formidable labour done by the ingeniously clever hands of the puny human animal, than the enormous iron citadels which float and sail about bearing an army of soldiers, an arsenal of monstrous arms, the enormous masses of which are made of tiny pieces fitted, soldered, forged, bolted together, a toil of ants and giants, which shows at the same time all the genius, all the weakness, and all the irretrievable barbarousness of the race, so active and so feeble, directing all its efforts towards creating instruments for its own self-destruction.

Those who in former days raised up cathedrals in stone, carved as finely as any lacework, fairy-like palaces to shelter childish and pious fancies, were they worth less than those who now-a-days launch forth on the sea these iron houses, real temples of Death?

At the same moment that I leave the ship to get on board my cockleshell, I hear the sound of firing on shore. It is the regiment at Antibes practising rifle shooting on the sands and amongst the pine-woods. The smoke rises in white flakes, like evaporating clouds of cotton, and I can see the red trousers of the soldiers as they run along the beach.

The naval officers suddenly become interested, point their glasses landwards, and their hearts beat faster at this spectacle of mimic warfare.

At the mere mention of the word war, I am seized with a sense of bewilderment, as though I heard of witchcraft, of the inquisition, of some far distant thing, ended long

ago, abominable and monstrous, against all natural law.

When we talk of cannibals, we proudly smile and proclaim our superiority over these savages. Which are the savages, the true savages? Those who fight to eat the vanquished, or those who fight to kill, only to kill?

The gallant little soldiers running about over there, are as surely doomed to death, as the flocks of sheep driven along the road by the butcher. They will fall on some plain, with their heads split open by sabre cuts, or their chests riddled by bullets, and yet they are young men who might work, produce something, be useful. Their fathers are old and poverty-stricken, their mothers, who during twenty years have loved them, adored them as only mothers can adore, may perchance hear in six months or a year, that the son, the child, the big fellow, reared with so much care, at such an expense and with so much love, has been cast in a hole like a dead dog, after having been ripped open by a bullet and trampled, crushed, mangled by the rush of cavalry charges. Why have they killed her boy, her beautiful boy, her sole hope, her pride, her life? She cannot understand. Yes, indeed, why?

War! fighting! slaughtering! butchering men! And to think that now, in our own century, with all our civilisation, with the expansion of science and the height of philosophy to which the human race is supposed to have attained, we should have schools, in which we teach the art of killing, of killing from afar, to perfection, numbers of people at the same time; poor devils, innocent men, fathers of families, men of untarnished reputation. The most astounding thing is that the people do not rise up against the governing power. What difference is there then between monarchies and republics? And what is more astounding still, why does society not rise up bodily in rebellion at the word "war."

Ah yes, we shall ever continue to live borne down by the old and odious customs, the criminal prejudices, the ferocious ideas of our barbarous forefathers, for we are but animals, and we shall remain animals led only by instinct, that nothing will ever

change.

Should we not have spurned any other than Victor Hugo, who should have launched forth the grand cry of deliverance and truth?

"To-day, might is called violence, and is beginning to be condemned; war is arraigned. Civilisation, at the demand of all humanity, directs an inquiry and indicts the great criminal brief against conquerors and generals. The nations are beginning to understand that the aggrandizement of a crime can in no way lessen it; that if murder is a crime, to murder a great many does not create any attenuating circumstance; that if robbery is a disgrace, invasion cannot be a glory.

"Ah! Let us proclaim the peremptory truth, let us dishonour war."

Idle anger, poetic indignation! War is more venerated than ever.

A clever artist in such matters, a slaughtering genius, M. de Moltke, replied one day to some peace delegates, in the following extraordinary words:

"War is holy and of divine institution; it is one of the sacred laws of nature; it keeps alive in men all the great and noble sentiments, honour, disinterestedness, virtue, courage, in one word it prevents them from falling into the most hideous materialism."

Therefore to collect a herd of some four hundred thousand men, march day and night without respite, to think of nothing, study nothing, learn nothing, read nothing, be of no earthly use to any one, rot with dirt, lie down in mire, live like brutes in a continual besotment, pillage towns, burn villages, ruin nations; then meeting another similar agglomeration of human flesh, rush upon it, shed lakes of blood, cover plains with pounded flesh mingled with muddy and bloody earth; pile up heaps of slain; have arms and legs blown off, brains scattered without benefit to any one, and perish at the corner of some field while your old parents, your wife and children are dying of hunger; this is what is called, not falling into the most hideous materialism!

Warriors are the scourges of the earth. We struggle against nature and ignorance;

against obstacles of all kinds, in order to lessen the hardships of our miserable existence. Men, benefactors, scholars wear out their lives toiling, seeking what may assist, what may help, what may solace their brethren. Eager in their useful work, they pile up discovery on discovery, enlarging the human mind, extending science, adding something each day to the stock of human knowledge, to the welfare, the comfort, the strength of their country.

War is declared. In six months the generals have destroyed the efforts of twenty years' patience and genius. And this is what is called, not falling into the most hideous materialism.

We have seen war. We have seen men maddened and gone back to their brute estate, killing for mere pleasure, killing out of terror, out of bravado, from sheer ostentation. Then when right no longer exists, when law is dead, when all notion of justice has disappeared, we have seen ruthlessly shot down, innocent beings who, picked up along the road, had become objects of suspicion simply because they were afraid. We have seen dogs as they lay chained up at their master's gate, killed in order to try a new revolver; we have seen cows riddled with bullets as they lay in the fields, without reason, only to fire off guns, just for fun.

And this is what is called, not falling into the most hideous materialism. To invade a country, to kill the man who defends his home on the plea that he wears a smock and has no forage cap on his head, to burn down the houses of the poor creatures who are without bread, to break, to steal furniture, drink the wine found in the cellars, violate the women found in the streets, consume thousands of francs' worth of powder, and leave behind misery and cholera.

This is what is called, not falling into the most hideous materialism.

What have they ever done to show their intelligence, these valiant warriors? Nothing. What have they invented? Guns and cannons. That is all.

The inventor of the wheelbarrow, has he not done more for humanity by the simple

and practical idea of fitting a wheel between two poles, than the inventor of modern fortifications?

What remains of Greece? Books and marbles. Is she great by what she conquered, or by what she produced? Was it the invasion of the Persians that prevented her from falling into the most hideous materialism? Was it the invasion of the barbarians that saved Rome and regenerated her?

Did Napoleon the First continue the great intellectual movement begun by the philosophers at the end of the last century?

Well, yes, since governments assume the right of death over the people, there is nothing astonishing in the people sometimes assuming the right of death over governments.

They defend themselves. They are right. No one has an absolute right to govern others. It can only be done for the good of those who are governed. Whosoever governs must consider it as much his duty to avoid war, as it is that of the captain of a vessel to avoid shipwreck.

When a captain has lost his ship, he is judged and condemned if found guilty of negligence or even of incapacity.

Why should not governments be judged after the declaration of every war? If the people understood this, if they took the law into their own hands against the murdering powers, if they refused to allow themselves to be killed without a reason, if they used their weapons against those who distributed them to slaughter with, that day war would indeed be a dead letter. But that day will never dawn!

AGAY, April 8th.

"Fine weather, sir."

I get up and go on deck. It is three o'clock in the morning; the sea is calm, the infinite heavens look like an immense shady vault sown with grains of fire. A very

light breeze comes from off the land.

The coffee is hot, we swallow it down, and, without losing a moment, in order to take advantage of the favourable wind, we set sail.

Once more we glide over the waters towards the open sea. The coast disappears, all around us looks black. It is indeed a sensation, an enervating and delicious emotion to plunge onward into the empty night, into the deep silence on the sea, far from everything. It seems as though one was quitting the world, as though one would never reach any land, as though there were no more shores and even no more days. At my feet, a little lantern throws a light upon the compass, that guides me on my way. We must run at least three miles in the open to round Cape Roux and the Drammont in safety, whatever may be the wind when the sun has risen. To avoid any accidents, I have had the side-lights lit, red on the port and green on the starboard side. And I enjoy with rapture this silent, uninterrupted, quiet flight.

Suddenly a cry is heard in front of us. I am startled, for the voice is near; and I can perceive nothing, nothing but the obscure wall of darkness into which I am plunging, and which closes again behind me. Raymond who watches forward says to me: "'Tis a tartan going east, put the helm up sir, we shall pass astern." And of a sudden, nigh at hand, uprises a vague but startling phantom; the large drifting shadow of a big sail, seen but for a few seconds and quickly vanishing. Nothing is more strange, more fantastic, and more thrilling, than these rapid apparitions at sea during the night. The fishing and sand boats carry no lights, they are therefore only seen as they pass by, and they impart a tightening of the heart strings, as of some supernatural encounter.

I hear in the distance the whistling of a bird. It approaches, passes by, and goes off. Oh that I could wander like it!

At last dawn breaks, slowly, gently, without a cloud, and the day begins, a real summer's day.

Raymond asserts that we shall have an east wind, Bernard still believes in a westerly one, and advises my changing our course, and sailing on the starboard tack straight towards the Drammont, which stands out in the distance. I am at once of his opinion, and under the gentle breath of a dying breeze, we draw nearer to the Esterel. The long red shore drops into the blue water, giving it a violet tinge. It is strange, pretty, bristling with numberless points and gulfs, capricious and coquettish rocks, the thousand whims of a much admired mountain. On its slopes, the pine forests reach up to the granite summits, which resemble castles, towns, and armies of stones running after each other. And at its foot the sea is so clear, that the sandy shoals or the weedy bottoms can be distinguished.

Ay, verily, I do feel on certain days such a horror of all that is, that I long for death. The invariable monotony of landscapes, faces and thoughts, become an intensely acute suffering. The meanness of the universe astonishes and revolts me, the littleness of all things fills me with disgust, and I am overwhelmed by the platitude of human beings.

At other times, on the contrary, I enjoy everything as an animal does. If my spirit, restless, agitated, hypertrophied by work, bounds onward to hopes that are not those of our race, and then after having realised that all is vanity, falls back into a contempt for all that is, my animal body at least, is enraptured with all the intoxication of life. Like the birds, I love the sky, like the prowling wolf, the forests; I delight in rocky heights, like a chamois; the thick grass, I love to roll in and gallop over like a horse, and, like a fish, I revel in the clear waters. I feel thrilling within me, the sensations of all the different species of animals, of all their instincts, of all the confused longings of inferior creatures. I love the earth as they do, not as other men do; I love it without admiring it, without poetry, without exultation; I love with a deep and animal attachment, contemptible yet holy, all that lives, all that grows, all we see; for all this, leaving my spirit calm, excites only my eyes and my heart: the days, the nights, the rivers, the seas, the storms, the woods, the hues of dawn, the

glance of woman, her very touch.

The gentle ripple of water on the sandy shore, or on the rocky granite affects and moves me, and the joy that fills me as I feel myself driven forward by the wind, and carried along by the waves, proceeds from the abandonment of myself, to the brutal and natural forces of creation, from my return to a primitive state.

When the weather is beautiful as it is to-day, I feel in my veins the blood of the lascivious and vagabond fauns of olden times. I am no longer the brother of mankind, but the brother of all creatures and all nature!

The sun mounts above the horizon. The breeze dies away as it did the day before yesterday; but the west wind foretold by Bernard, does not rise any more than the easterly one, announced by Raymond.

Till ten o'clock, we float motionless like a wreck, then a little breath from the open sea starts us on our road, falls, rises again, seems to mock us, glancing across the sail, promising at each moment a breeze that does not come. It is nothing, a mere whiff, a flutter of a fan; nevertheless it is sufficient to prevent our being stationary. The porpoises, those clowns of the sea, play about around us, dashing out of the water with rapid bounds, as though they would take flight, striking into the air like lightning, then plunging and rising again further off.

At about one o'clock, as we lay broadside on to Agay, the breeze completely gave way, and I realized that I should sleep out at sea if I did not man the boat to tow the yacht and take shelter in the bay.

I therefore made the two men get into the dingy, and when at a distance of some thirty yards or so, they began to tug me along. A fierce sun was glaring on the water, and its burning rays beat down upon the decks.

The two sailors rowed in slow and regular fashion like worn-out cranks, which, though working with difficulty, ceaselessly continue their mechanical labour.

The bay of Agay forms a very pretty dock, well sheltered and closed on one side by

upright, red rocks, overlooked by the semaphore on the summit of the mountain, and prolonged towards the open sea by the Ile d'Or, so called on account of its colour; while on the other side is a line of sunken rocks, and a small headland level with the surface of the water, bearing a lighthouse to mark the entry.

At the further end is an inn, ready for the entertainment of skippers of vessels, that have taken refuge there from stress of weather, or for fishermen during the summer; and a railway station where trains only stop twice a day, and where no one ever gets out; and a pretty river that winds away into the Esterel, as far as the valley named Malin-fermet, which is as full of pink oleanders as any African ravine.

No road leads from the interior to the delicious bay. A pathway only, takes you to Saint-Raphaël, passing through the porphyry quarries of Drammont; but no vehicle could use it. We are therefore quite lost in the mountain.

I resolved to wander about till nightfall, in the paths bordered by cistus and lentisk. The scent of wild plants, strong and perfumed, filled the air, mingling with the powerful resinous breath of the forest, which seemed to pant in the heat.

After an hour's walk, I was deep among the pine trees, scattered sparsely on a gentle declivity of the mountain. The purple granite,—the bones of the earth,—seemed reddened by the sun, and I wended my way slowly, happy as the lizards must be on burning hot stones; when I perceived on the summit of the mountain, coming towards me, without seeing me, two lovers lost in the depths of their love dream.

'Twas a charmingly pretty sight; on they came, with arms entwined, moving with absent footsteps through the alternating sun and shade, that flecked the sloping banks.

She appeared to me very graceful and very simple, with a grey travelling dress and a bold coquettish felt hat. I hardly saw him, I only noticed that he seemed well bred. I had seated myself behind the trunk of a pine tree, to watch them pass by. They did not perceive me, and continued their descent with interlocked arms, silently, and

without a word, so much did their love absorb them.

When I lost sight of them, I felt as though a sadness had fallen on my heart. A felicity that I knew not, had passed near me, and I guessed that it was the best of all. And I returned towards the bay of Agay, too dejected now to continue my stroll.

Until the evening, I lay stretched out on the grass, by the side of the river, and at about seven o'clock I went into the inn for dinner.

My men had warned the innkeeper, and he was expecting me. My table was set in the white-washed room, by the side of another at which were already settled my love-stricken couple, face to face, with eyes fondly gazing upon each other.

I felt ashamed at disturbing them, as though I were committing a mean and unbecoming action.

They stared at me for a few seconds, and then resumed their low-toned conversation.

The innkeeper who had known me for a long time took a seat near mine. He talked of wild boars, and rabbits, the fine weather, the mistral, about an Italian captain who had slept at the inn a few nights before, and then, to flatter my vanity, he praised my yacht, the black hull of which I could see through the window, with its tall mast, and my red and white pennant floating aloft.

My neighbours, who had eaten very rapidly, soon left. As for me, I dawdled about looking at the slight crescent of the moon, shedding its soft rays over the little roadstead. At last I saw my dingy nearing the shore, scattering lines of silver as it advanced through the pale motionless light that fell upon the water.

When I went down to my boat, I saw the lovers standing on the beach gazing at the sea.

And as I went off to the quick sound of the oars, I still distinguished their outlines on the shore, their shadows erect side by side. They seemed to fill the bay, the night, the heavens, with a symbolic grandeur, so penetrating was the atmosphere of love they

diffused around them, so widespread over the far horizon.

And when I had reached my yacht, I remained seated a long while on deck, overcome with sadness without knowing wherefore, filled with regrets without knowing why, unwilling even to decide on going down to my cabin, as though I would fain absorb a little more of the tenderness they had diffused around them. Suddenly, one of the windows of the inn was lit up, and I saw their profiles on the bright background. Then my loneliness overpowered me, and in the balminess of the springlike night, at the soft sound of the waves on the sand, under the delicate crescent shedding its rays over the sea, I felt in my heart such an intense desire of love, that I was near crying out in my envious distress.

Then, all at once, I became ashamed of this weakness, and, unwilling to admit to myself that I was a man like another, I accused the moonshine of disturbing my reason.

I have moreover always believed, that the moon exercises a mysterious influence on the human brain.

It fills poets with vagaries, rendering them delightful or ridiculous, and produces on lovers' affections, the effect of Ruhmkorff's pile on electric currents. The man who loves in a normal manner under the sunlight, adores with frenzy under the moon.

A youthful and charming woman maintained to me one day, I forget on what occasion, that moon strokes are infinitely more dangerous than sun strokes. They are caught, she said, unawares, out walking perchance on a beautiful night, and they are incurable; you remain mad; not raving mad, not mad enough to be shut up, but mad of a special madness, gentle, incurable; and you no longer think on any subject like other men.

I have certainly been moon-struck to-night, for I feel strangely unreasonable and light headed; and the little crescent in its downward course towards the sea affects me, melts me to tears, and rends my heart.

Wherein lies the power of seduction of this moon, aged dead planet that it is, rambling through the heavens with its yellow face and sad ghostly light, that it should thus agitate us, we whom even our vagabond thoughts disturb?

Do we love it because it is dead? as the poet Haraucourt says:

"Puis ce fut l'âge blond des tiédeurs et des vents. La lune se peupla de murmures vivants: Elle eut des mers sans fond et des fleuves sans nombre, Des troupeaux, des cités, des pleurs, des cris joyeux, Elle eut l'amour; elle eut ses arts, ses lois, ses dieux, Et lentement rentra dans l'ombre."[1]

Do we love it because the poets, to whom we owe the eternal illusion that surrounds us in this world, have dimmed our sight by all the images they have seen in its pallid rays, have taught our over-excited sensibility to feel in a thousand different ways, the soft and monotonous effects it sheds over the world?

When it rises behind the trees, when it pours forth its shimmering light on the flowing river, when it descends through the boughs on to the sand of the shaded alleys, when it mounts solitary in the black and empty sky, when it dips towards the sea, stretching out on the undulating surface of the waters a vast pathway of light, are we not haunted by all the charming verses with which it has inspired great dreamers?

If we wander forth by night in joyous spirits, and if we see its smooth circle, round like a yellow eye watching us, perched just over a roof, Musset's immortal ballad is recalled to our mind.

And is it not he, the mocking poet, who immediately presents it to us through his eyes?

"C'était dans la nuit brune, Sur le clocher jauni La lune Comme un point sur un I. Lune, quel esprit sombre Promène an bout d'un fil, Dans l'ombre, Ta face ou ton profil?"[2]

If we walk on some evening full of sadness, on the beach by the side of the ocean

illuminated by its rays, do we not, in spite of ourselves, at once recite the two grand and melancholy lines:

"Seule au-dessus des mers, la lune voyageant, Laisse dans les flots noirs tomber ses pleurs d'argent."[3]

If we awake, to find our bed lighted up by a long beam coming in at the window, do we not feel at once as though the white figure evoked by Catulle Mendè's were descending upon us:

"Elle venait, avec un lis dans chaque main, La pente d'un rayon lui servant de chemin."[4]

If, in some evening walk in the country, we suddenly hear the long sinister howl of a farm dog, are we not forcibly struck by the recollection of the admirable poem of Leconte de Lisle, les Hurleurs?

"Seule, la lune pâle, en écartant la nue, Comme une morne lampe, oscillait tristement. Monde muet, marqué d'un signe de colère, Débris d'un globe mort au hasard dispersé, Elle laissait tomber de son orbe glacé Un reflet sépulcral sur l'océan polaire."[5]

At the evening trysting place, one saunters slowly through the leafy path, with arm encircling the beloved one, pressing her hand, and kissing her brow. She is perhaps a little tired, a little moved, and walks with lagging step.

With a lily in each hand she came, The slanting beam her pathway.

A bench appears in sight, under the leaves bathed by the soft light, as by a calm shower.

In our hearts and minds, like an exquisite love-song, the two charming lines start up:

"Et réveiller, pour s'asseoir à sa place Le clair de lune endormi sur le banc!"[6]

Can one see the lessening crescent, as on this evening, cast its fair profile on the vast sky spangled with stars, without thinking of the end of that masterpiece of Victor

Hugo's, which is called "Boaz Endormi:"

"Et Ruth se demandait, Immobile, ouvrant l'oeil à demi sous ses voiles, Quel Dieu, quel moissonneur de l'éternel été Avait, en s'en allant, négligemment jeté Cette faucille d'or dans le champ des étoiles."[7]

And who has better described the moon, courteous and tender to all lovers, than Hugo:

"La nuit vint, tout se tut; les flambeaux s'éteignirent; Dans les bois assombris, les sources se plaignirent. Le rossignol, caché dans son nid ténébreux, Chanta comme un poète et comme un amoureux. Chacun se dispersa sous les profonds feuillages, Les folles, en riant, entraînèrent les sages; L'amante s'en alla dans l'ombre avec l'amant; Et troublés comme ou l'est en songe, vaguement, Ils sentaient par degrés se mêler à leur âme, A leurs discours secrets, à leur regards de flamme, A leurs coeurs, à leurs sens, à leur molle raison, Le clair de lune bleu qui baignait l'horizon."[8]

And I remember also the admirable prayer to the moon, which is the opening scene, of the eleventh book of Apuleius' Golden Ass.

Still all the songs of mankind are not enough to account for the sentimental sadness with which this poor planet inspires us.

We pity the moon, in spite of ourselves, without knowing the reason, and for this it is we love it.

Even the tender feeling we bestow on it is mingled with compassion; we pity it like an old maid, for we vaguely feel, the poets notwithstanding, that it is not a corpse but a cold virgin.

Planets, like woman, need a husband, and the poor moon, disdained by the sun, is nothing more nor less than an old maid, as we mortals say.

And it is for this reason that, with its timid light, it fills us with hopes that cannot be realized, and desires that cannot be fulfilled.

All that we vainly and dimly wait and hope for upon this earth, works in our hearts like mysterious but powerless sap, beneath the pale rays of the moon. When we raise our eyes to it, we quiver with inexpressible tenderness and are thrilled by impossible dreams!

The narrow crescent, a mere thread of gold, now dipped its keen gleaming point in the water, and gradually plunged gently and slowly till the other point, so delicate that I could not detect the moment of its vanishing, had also disappeared.

Then, I raised my eyes towards the inn. The lighted window was closed. A dull melancholy crushed my heart, and I went below.

[1] Then it was the fair age of balminess and breezes. The moon became peopled with living whispers; She had bottomless seas and numberless rivers, Flocks, cities, tears, and cries full of joy, She had love; she had her arts, her laws, her gods, Then slowly sank back into darkness.

[2] 'Twas in the dusky night, Above the yellowed steeple, Stood the moon Like a dot on an I. By what sombre spirit Is thy face or profile, Swung as from a thread Through the shadows of the sky?

[3] Alone above the seas, the wandering moon Lets fall her silver tears in the black billows.

[4] "With a lily in each hand she came, The slanting beam her pathway.

[5] Alone the pale moon parting the clouds Like a gloomy lamp, sadly oscillates Dumb world, marked by a sign of anger, Fragment of a dead globe dispersed at haphazard, She let fall from her frozen orb A sepulchral reflection on a polar ocean.

[6] And, to take her place, one awakens A ray of moonlight asleep on the bench.

[7] And Ruth, motionless, Asked herself, as she opened her half-closed eye under her veil, What God, what reaper of the eternal summer, Had negligently thrown as he passed by This golden sickle in the starry field.

[8] Night fell, all was hushed; the torches died out Under the darkening woods, the springs lament. The nightingale, hidden in its shady nest, Sang like a poet and like a lover. In the depths of the dark foliage all dispersed, The madcaps laughing carried off the wise, The fair one disappeared in the gloom with her lover And with the vague trouble of some dream They felt by degrees intermingled with their souls, With their secret thoughts, with their glances of flame, With their hearts, their senses, with their yielding reason The blue moonlight that bathed the vast horizon.

April 10th.

No sooner had I lain down than I felt sleep was impossible, and I remained lying on my back with my eyes closed, my thoughts on the alert, and all my nerves quivering. Not a motion, not a sound, near or far, nothing but the breathing of the two sailors through the thin bulkhead, could be heard.

Suddenly, something grated. What was it? I know not. Some block in the rigging, no doubt; but the tone—tender, plaintive, and mournful—of the sound sent a thrill through me; then nothing more. An infinite silence seemed to spread from the earth to the stars; nothing more—not a breath, not a shiver on the water, not a vibration of the yacht, nothing; and then again the slight and unrecognisable moan recommenced. It seemed to me as I listened, as though a jagged blade were sawing at my heart. Just as certain noises, certain notes, certain voices harrow us, and in one second pour into our soul all it can contain of sorrow, desperation, and anguish. I listened expectantly, and heard it again, the identical sound which now seemed to emanate from my own self,—to be wrung out of my nerves,—or rather, to resound in a secret, deep, and desolate cry. Yes, it was a cruel though familiar voice, a voice expected, and full of desperation. It passed over me with its weird and feeble tones as an uncanny thing, sowing broadcast the appalling terrors of delirium, for it had power to awake the horrible distress which lies slumbering, in the inmost heart of every living man. What was it? It was the voice ringing with reproaches which

tortures our soul, clamouring ceaselessly, obscure, painful, harassing; a voice, unappeasable and mysterious, which will not be ignored; ferocious in its reproaches for what we have done, as well as what we have left undone; the voice of remorse and useless regrets for the days gone by, and the women unloved; for the joys that were vain, and the hopes that are dead; the voice of the past, of all that has disappointed us, has fled and disappeared for ever, of what we have not, nor shall ever attain; the small shrill voice which ever proclaims the failure of our life, the uselessness of our efforts, the impotence of our minds, and the weakness of our flesh.

It spoke to me in that short whisper, recommencing after each dismal silence of the dark night, it spoke of all I would have loved, of all that I had vaguely desired, expected, dreamt of; all that I would have longed to see, to understand, to know, to taste, all that my insatiable, poor, and weak spirit had touched upon with a useless hope, all that, towards which it had been tempted to soar, without being able to tear asunder, the chains of ignorance that held it.

Ah! I have coveted all, and delighted in nothing. I should have required the vitality of a whole race, the varying intelligence, all the faculties, all the powers scattered among all beings, and thousands of existences in reserve; for I bear within myself every desire and every curiosity, and I am compelled to see all, and grasp nothing.

From whence, therefore, arises this anguish at living, since to the generality of men it only brings satisfaction? Wherefore this unknown torture, which preys upon me? Why should I not know the reality of pleasure, expectation, and possession?

It is because I carry within me that second sight, which is at the same time the power and despair of writers. I write because I understand and suffer from all that is, because I know it too well, and above all, because without being able to enjoy it, I contemplate it inwardly in the mirror of my thoughts.

Let no one envy, but rather pity us, for in the following manner does the literary

man, differ from his fellow-creatures.

For him no simple feeling any longer exists. All he sees, his joys, his pleasures, his suffering, his despair, all instantaneously become subjects of observation. In spite of all, in spite of himself, he analyses everything, hearts, faces, gestures, intonations. As soon as he has seen, whatever it may be, he must know the wherefore. He has not a spark of enthusiasm, not a cry, not a kiss that is spontaneous, not one instantaneous action done merely because it must be done, unconsciously, without reflection, without understanding, without noting it down afterwards.

If he suffers, he notes down his suffering, and classes it in his memory; he says to himself as he leaves the cemetery, where he has left the being he has loved most in the world: "It is curious what I felt; it was like an intoxication of pain, etc...." And then he recalls all the details, the attitude of those near him, the discordant gestures of feigned grief, the insincere faces, and a thousand little insignificant trifles noted by the artistic observation,—the sign of the cross made by an old woman leading a child, a ray of light through a window, a dog that crossed the funeral procession, the effect of the hearse under the tall yew trees in the cemetery, the face of the undertaker and its muscular contractions, the strain of the four men who lowered the coffin into the grave, a thousand things in fact that a poor fellow suffering with all his heart, soul and strength, would never have noticed.

He has seen all, noticed all, remembered all, in spite of himself, because he is above all a literary man, and his intellect is constructed in such a manner, that the reverberation in him is much more vivid, more natural, so to speak, than the first shock, the echo more sonorous, than the original sound.

He seems to have two souls, one that notes, explains, comments each sensation of its neighbour, the natural soul common to all men, and he lives condemned to be the mere reflection of himself or others; condemned to look on, and see himself feel, act, love, think, suffer, and never be free like the rest of mankind; simply, genially,

frankly, without analysing his own soul after every joy, and every agony.

If he converses, his words often wear the air of slander, and that only because his thoughts are clear-sighted, and that he cannot refrain from investigating the secret springs, which regulate the feelings and actions of others.

If he writes, he cannot refrain from throwing into his books all that he has seen, all he has gathered, all he knows; he makes no exception in favour of friends or relations, but he pitilessly lays bare the hearts of those he loves or has loved, with a cruel impartiality,—exaggerating even to make the effect more powerful,—wholly absorbed by his work, and in no wise by his affections.

And if he loves, if he loves a woman, he will dissect her, as he would a corpse in a hospital. All she says, all she does, is instantly weighed in the delicate scales of observation, which he carries within him, and is docketed according to its documentary importance. If in an unpremeditated impulse she throws herself on his neck, he will judge the action, considering its opportuneness, its correctness, its dramatic power, and will tacitly condemn it, if he feels it artificial, or badly done.

Actor and spectator of himself and of others, he is never solely an actor, like the good folk who take life easily. Everything around him becomes transparent, hearts, deeds, secret intentions; and he suffers from a strange malady, a kind of duality of the mind, that makes of him a terribly vibrating and complicated piece of machinery, fatiguing even to himself.

Owing to his peculiarly morbid sensibility, he is no happier than one flayed alive, to whom nearly every sensation becomes a torture.

I can remember dark days, in which my heart was so lacerated by things I had only caught sight of for a second, that the memory of those visions, has remained within me like grievous wounds.

One morning, in the Avenue de l'Opéra, in the midst of a stirring and joyous crowd, intoxicated with the sunlight of the month of May, I suddenly caught sight of a

creature, for whom one could find no name, an old woman bent double, dressed in tatters that had been garments, with an old straw bonnet stripped of its former ornaments, the ribbons and flowers having disappeared in times immemorial. And she went by, dragging her feet along so painfully, that I felt in my heart, as much as she did, more than she could, the aching pain of each of her steps. Two sticks supported her. She passed along without seeing anyone, indifferent to all—to the noise, the crowd, the carriages and the sun! Where was she going? She carried something in a paper parcel hanging by a string. What was it? Bread? Yes, without a doubt. Nobody, no neighbour had been able or willing to do this errand for her, and she had undertaken herself, the terrible journey from her garret to the baker. At least two hours must she spend, going and coming. And what a mournful struggle! Surely as fearful a road, as that of Christ on his way to Calvary!

I raised my eyes towards the roofs of the tall houses. She was going up there! When would she get there? How many panting pauses on the steps, in the little stairway so black and winding?

Every one turned round to look at her! They murmured "Poor woman!" and passed on. Her skirt, her rag of a skirt hardly holding to her dilapidated body, draggled over the pavement. And there was a mind there! A mind? No, but fearful, incessant, harassing suffering! Oh, the misery of the aged without bread, the aged without hope, without children, without money, with nothing before them but death; do we ever think of it? Do we ever think of the aged famished creatures in the garrets? Do we think of the tears shed by those dimmed eyes, once bright, joyous, full of happy emotion.

Another time, it was raining, I was alone, shooting in the plains of Normandy, plodding through the deep-ploughed fields of greasy mud, that melted and slipped under my feet. From time to time, a partridge overtaken, hiding behind a clod of earth, flew off heavily through the downpour. The report of my gun, smothered by

the sheet of water that fell from the skies, hardly sounded louder than the crack of a whip, and the grey bird fell, its feathers bespattered with blood.

I felt sad unto tears, tears as plentiful as the showers that were weeping over the world, and over me; my heart was filled with sadness and I was overcome with fatigue, so that I could hardly raise my feet, heavily coated as they were with the clay soil. I was returning home when I saw in the middle of the fields, the doctor's gig following a cross-road.

The low black carriage was passing along, covered by its round hood and drawn by a brown horse, like an omen of death wandering through the country on this sinister day. Suddenly, it pulled up, the Doctor's head made its appearance, and he called out:

"Here."

I went towards him, and he said:—

"Will you help me to nurse a case of diphtheria? I am all alone, and I want someone to hold the woman, while I take out the false membrane from her throat."

"I'll come with you," I replied, and I got into his carriage.

He told me the following story:—

Diphtheria, terrible diphtheria that suffocates unhappy creatures, had made its appearance at poor Martinet's farm.

Both the father and son, had died at the beginning of the week. The mother and daughter, were now in their turn dying.

A neighbour who attended to them, feeling suddenly unwell, had taken flight the day before, leaving the door wide open, and abandoning the two sick people on their straw pallets, alone, without anything to drink, choking, suffocating, dying; alone, for the last twenty four-hours!

The doctor had cleaned out the mother's throat and made her swallow; but the child,

maddened by pain and the anguish of suffocation, had buried and hidden its head in the straw bedding, absolutely refusing to allow itself to be touched.

The doctor accustomed to such scenes, repeated in a sad and resigned voice:

"I cannot really spend all day with these patients. By Jove, these do give one a heart ache. When you think that they have remained twenty-four hours without drinking. The wind blew the rain in on to their very beds. All the hens had taken shelter in the fire-place."

We had reached the farm. The doctor fastened his horse, to the bough of an apple-tree before the door, and we went in. A strong smell of sickness and damp, of fever and mouldiness, of hospital and cellar greeted our nostrils as we entered. In this grey and dismal house, fireless and without sign of life, it was bitterly cold; the swampy chill of a marsh. The clock had stopped; the rain fell down into the great fire-place, where the hens had scattered the ashes, and we heard in a dark corner the noise of a pair of bellows, husky and rapid. It was the breathing of the child. The mother, stretched out in a kind of large wooden box, the peasant's bed, and covered with old rags and old clothes, seemed to rest quietly. She slightly turned her head towards us.

The doctor inquired:

"Have you got a candle?"

She answered in a low depressed tone:

"In the cupboard."

He took the light, and led me to the further end of the room towards the little girl's crib.

She lay panting, with emaciated cheeks, glistening eyes, and tangled hair, a pitiable sight. At each breath, deep hollows could be seen in her thin strained neck. Stretched out on her back, she convulsively clutched with both hands the rags that covered her,

and directly she caught sight of us, she turned her face away, and hid herself in the straw.

I took hold of her shoulders, and the doctor, forcing her to open her mouth, pulled out of her throat a long white strip of skin, which seemed to me as dry as a bit of leather.

Her breathing immediately became easier, and she drank a little. The mother raising herself on her elbow watched us. She stammered out:

"Is it done?"

"Yes, it's done."

"Are we going to be left all alone?"

A terror, a terrible terror shook her voice, the terror of solitude, of loneliness, of darkness, and of death that she felt so near to her.

I answered:

"No, my good woman, I will stay till the doctor sends you a nurse."

And turning towards the doctor, I added:

"Send old mother Mauduit; I will pay her."

"Very well, I'll send her at once."

He shook my hand, and went out; and I heard his gig drive off, over the damp road.

I was left alone with the two dying creatures.

My dog Paf had lain down in front of the empty hearth, and this reminded me that a little fire would be good for us all. I therefore went out to seek for wood and straw, and soon a bright flame lit up the whole room, and the bed of the sick child, who was again gasping for breath.

I sat down, and stretched out my legs in front of the fire.

The rain was beating against the window panes, the wind rattled over the roof. I

heard the short, hard wheezing breath of the two women, and the breathing of my dog who sighed with pleasure, curled up before the bright fire-place.

Life! life! what is it? These two unhappy creatures, who had always slept on straw, eaten black bread, suffered every kind of misery, were about to die! What had they done? The father was dead, the son was dead. The poor souls had always passed for honest folk, had been liked and esteemed as simple and worthy fellows!

I watched my steaming boots and my sleeping dog, and there arose within me, a shameful and sensual pleasure, as I compared my lot with that of these slaves.

The little girl seemed to choke, and suddenly the grating sound became an intolerable suffering to me, lacerating me like a dagger, which at each stroke penetrated my heart.

I went towards her:

"Will you drink?" I said.

She moved her head to say yes, and I poured a few drops of water down her throat, but she could not swallow them.

The mother, who was quieter, had turned round to look at her child; and all at once a feeling of dread took possession of me, a sinister dread that passed over me, like the touch of some invisible monster. Where was I? I no longer knew! Was I dreaming? What horrible nightmare was this?

Is it true that such things happen? that one dies like this? And I glanced into all the dark corners of the cottage, as though I expected to see crouching in some obscure angle, a hideous, unmentionable, terrifying thing, the thing which lies in wait for the lives of men, and kills, devours, crushes, strangles them; the thing that delights in red blood, eyes glistening with, fever, wrinkles and scars, white hair and decay.

The fire was dying out. I threw some more wood on it, and warmed my back, shuddering in every limb. At least, I hoped to die in a good room, with doctors

around my bed and medicines on the tables! And these women had been all alone, for twenty-four hours in this wretched hovel, without a fire, stretched on the straw with the death rattle in their throats! At last I heard the trot of a horse and the sounds of wheels; and the nurse came in coolly, pleased at finding some work to do, and showing little surprise at the sight of such misery.

I left her some money and fled with my dog; I fled like a malefactor, running away in the rain; with the rattle of those two throats still ringing in my ears,—running towards my warm home where my servants were awaiting me and preparing my good dinner.

But I shall never forget that scene, nor many other dreadful things, that make me loathe this world.

What would I not give at times, to be allowed not to think, not to feel, to live like a brute in a warm, clear atmosphere, in a country mellow with golden light, devoid of the raw, crude tones of verdure, a country of the East where I might sleep without weariness, and wake without care, where restlessness is not anxiety, where love is free from anguish, and existence is not a burden.

I should choose there a large square dwelling, like a huge box sparkling in the sun.

From the terrace, I should look upon the sea and the white wing-like pointed sails of the Greek and Turkish boats, as they flit to and fro. The outer walls have hardly any apertures. A large garden with air heavily laden under the overshadowing palm-trees, forms the centre of this Oriental home. Sprays of clear water shoot up under the trees, and fall back again with a slight splash, into a broad marble fountain sanded with golden dust. Here I should bathe often, between two pipes, two dreams, or two kisses.

I should have slaves, black and handsome, draped in light airy clothing, noiselessly running hither and thither over the heavy carpets.

My walls should be soft and rebounding, with the round contours of a woman's

bosom, and on the divans encircling each room, numberless cushions of every shape, should permit of my reposing in every conceivable attitude.

Then, when I should tire of my delicious repose, of my immobility, of my eternal day-dream; satiated with the calm enjoyment of my own well-being, then, I would order a horse to be brought to my door—a horse black or white, as fleet as a gazelle.

And I would spring upon his hack, and in a furious gallop, quaff the tingling intoxicating air.

And I would dart like an arrow, over the glowing country which fills the eye with delight, and has all the bouquet of wine.

In the calm hour of eve, I would fly in a mad career, towards the vast horizon dyed rose colour in the setting sun. Out there, all becomes rose in the twilight: the sun-burnt mountains, the sand, the garments of the Arabs, the dromedaries, the horses, the tents! The rose-coloured flamingoes fly upwards from the marshes to the rose-coloured sky, and I should scream with delight, plunged in the boundless infinite rosiness, of all that surrounds me.

I shall be released from the sight of the streets and the deafening noise of cabs on the pavement, from the sight of black-coated men, seated on uncomfortable chairs, as they sip their absinthe and talk over business.

I should ignore the state of the money market, political events, changes of ministry, all the useless frivolities on which we squander our short and vapid existence. Why should I undergo these worries, these sufferings, these struggles? I would rest sheltered from the wind in my bright and sumptuous dwelling.

The winged dream was floating before my closed eyelids, and over my mind as it sank to rest; when I heard my men awakening, lighting the boat's lantern, and setting to work at some arduous and lengthy task.

I called out to them:

"What on earth are you doing?"

Raymond replied in a hesitating voice:

"We are getting some lines ready, sir; for we thought that you would like to fish, if it was fine enough at sun-rise."

Agay is during the summer, the rendezvous of all the fishermen along the coast. Whole families come there, sleeping at the inn or in the boats, eating bouillabaisse on the beach, under the shade of the pine trees, the resinous bark of which crackles in the sun.

I inquired:

"What o'clock is it?"

"Three o'clock, sir."

Then, without rising, I stretched out my arm, and opened the door that separated my room from the forecastle.

The two men were squatting in the low den, through which the mast passes in fitting into the step; the den was full of such strange and odd things, that one might take it for a haunt of thieves; in perfect order along the partitions, instruments of all kinds were suspended: saws, axes, marling spikes, pieces of rigging, and saucepans; on the floor between the two berths, a pail, a stove, a barrel with its copper circles, glistening under the immediate ray of light from the lantern which hangs between the anchor bitts, by the side of the cable tiers; and my men were busy, baiting the innumerable hooks hanging all along the fishing lines.

"At what hour must I get up?" I asked.

"Why, now, sir, at once."

Half an hour after, we all three embarked on board the dingy, and left the "Bel-Ami" to go and spread our net at the foot of the Drammont, near the Ile d'Or.

Then when our line, some two or three hundred yards long, had sunk to the bottom,

we baited three little deep-sea lines, and having anchored the boat by sinking a stone at the end of a rope, we began to fish.

It was already daylight, and I could distinctly see the coast of Saint-Raphaël, near the mouth of the Argens, and the sombre mountains of the Maures, themselves running out seawards till they came to an end, far away in the open sea, beyond the gulf of Saint-Tropez.

Of all the southern coast, this is the spot I am fondest of. I love it as though I had been born there, as though I had grown up in it, because it is wild and glowing, and because the Parisian, the Englishman, the American, the man of fashion, and the adventurer have not yet poisoned it.

Suddenly the line I held in my hand quivered, I started, then felt nothing, and again a slight shock tightened the line wound round my finger, then another one more violent, shook my whole hand, and with beating heart, I began to draw in the line, gently, eagerly, striving to peer through the transparent blue water, and soon I perceived in the shadow of the boat, a white flash describing rapid circles.

The fish thus seen appeared to me enormous, and when on board it was no bigger than a sardine.

Then I caught many others, blue, red, yellow, green, glittering, silvery, striped, golden, speckled, spotted, those pretty rock fish of the Mediterranean, so varied, so coloured, that seem painted to please the eye; then sea-urchins covered with prickles, and those hideous monsters of the sea, conger-eels.

Nothing can be more amusing than the uplifting of a sea fishing line. What will come out of the sea? What surprise, what pleasure, or what disappointment at each hook pulled out of the water! What a thrill runs through one when from afar some large creature is perceived struggling, as it rises slowly towards us!

At ten o'clock we had returned on board the yacht, and the two men beaming with delight, informed me that our take weighed twenty-three pounds.

I was, however, doomed to pay dearly for my sleepless night! A sick headache, the dreadful pain that racks in a way no torture could equal, shatters the head, drives one crazy, bewilders the ideas, and scatters the memory like dust before the wind; a sick headache had laid hold of me, and I was perforce obliged to lie down in my bunk with a bottle of ether under my nostrils.

After a few minutes, I fancied I heard a vague murmur which soon became a kind of buzzing, and it seemed as if all the interior of my body became light, as light as air, as though it were melting into vapour.

Then followed a numbness of spirit, a drowsy, comfortable state, in spite of the persisting pain, which, however, ceased to be acute. It was now a pain which one could consent to bear, and not any longer the terrible tearing agony, against which the whole tortured body rises in protest.

Soon the strange, and delightful sensation of vacuum I had in my chest, extended, and reached my limbs, which in their turn became light, light as though flesh and bone had melted away and skin only remained; just enough skin to permit of my feeling the sweetness of life, and enjoy my repose. Now I found that I no longer suffered. Pain had disappeared, melted, vanished into air. And I heard voices, four voices, two dialogues, without understanding the words. At times they were but indistinct sounds, at other times a word or two reached me. But I soon recognized that these were but the accentuated buzzing of my own ears. I was not sleeping, I was awake, I understood, I felt, I reasoned with a clearness, a penetration and power which were quite extraordinary; and a joyousness of spirit, a strange intoxication, produced by the tenfold increase of my mental faculties.

It was not a dream like that created by haschich, nor the sickly visions produced by opium; it was a prodigious keenness of reasoning, a new manner of seeing, of judging, of estimating things and life, with the absolute consciousness, the certitude that this manner was the true one.

And the old simile of the Scriptures, suddenly came back to my mind. It seemed to me that I had tasted of the tree of life, that all mystery was unveiled, so strongly did I feel the power of this new, strange, and irrefutable logic. And numberless arguments, reasonings, proofs, rose up in my mind, to be, however, immediately upset, by some proof, some reasoning, some argument yet more powerful. My brain had become a battle-field of ideas. I was a superior being, armed with an invincible intelligence, and I enjoyed prodigious happiness in the sensation of my power.

This state lasted a long, long time. I still inhaled the fumes of my ether bottle. Suddenly, I perceived that it was empty. And I again began to suffer.

For ten hours I endured this torture for which there is no remedy, then I fell asleep, and the next day, brisk as after convalescence, having written these few pages I left for Saint-Raphaël.

SAINT-RAPHAËL, April 11th.

On our way here the weather was delightful, and a light breeze carried us over in six tacks. After rounding the Drammont, I caught sight of the villas of Saint-Raphaël hidden amongst the pine-trees, among the little slender pines beaten all the year round, by the everlasting gusts of wind from Fréjus. Then I passed between the Lions, pretty red rocks that seemed to guard the town, and I entered the port, which, choked up with sand at the further end, obliges one to remain some fifty yards off the quay. I then went on land.

A large crowd was gathered in front of the church. Some one was being married. A priest was authorising in Latin with pontifical gravity, the solemn and comical act which so disturbs mankind, bringing with it so much mirth, suffering, and tears. According to custom, the families had invited all their relatives and friends to the funereal service of a young girl's innocence, to listen to the piously indecorous ecclesiastical admonitions, preceding those of the mother, and to the public benediction, bestowed on that which is otherwise so carefully veiled.

And the whole country-side, full of broad jokes, moved by the greedy and idle curiosity that draws the common herd to such a scene, had come there to see how the bride and bridegroom would comport themselves. I mingled with the crowd, and watched it.

Good heavens, how ugly men are! For at least the hundredth time, I noticed, in the midst of this festive scene, that, of all races, the human race is the most hideous. The whole air was pervaded by the odour of the people, the nauseous, sickening odour of unclean bodies, greasy hair and garlic, that odour of garlic, exhaled by the people of the South, through nose, mouth, and skin, just like roses spread abroad their perfume.

Certainly men are every day as ugly, and smell as obnoxious, but our eyes accustomed to the sight of them, our nostrils used to their odour, fail to distinguish their ugliness and their emanations, unless we have been spared for some time the sight and stink of them.

Mankind is hideous! To obtain a gallery of grotesque figures, fit to raise a laugh from the dead, it would be sufficient to take the ten first-comers, set them in a line, and photograph them with their irregular heights, their legs, either too long or too short, their bodies too fat or too thin, their red or pale, bearded or smooth faces, their smirking or solemn looks.

Formerly, in primeval days, the wild man, the strong naked man, was certainly as handsome as the horse, the stag or the lion. The exercise of his muscles, a life free from restraint, the constant use of his vigour and his agility, kept up in him a grace of motion, which is the first condition of beauty, and an elegance of form, which is produced only by physical exercise. Later on, the artistic nations, enamoured of form, knew how to preserve this grace and this elegance in intelligent man, by the artificial means of gymnastics. The care bestowed on the body, the trials of strength and suppleness, the use of ice-cold water and vapour baths, made the Greeks true

models of human beauty, and they have left us their statues, to show us what were the bodies of these great artists.

But now, O Apollo! look at the human race moving about in its festive scenes. The children rickety from the cradle, deformed by premature study, stupefied by the school life that wears out the body at fifteen years of age, and cramps the mind before it is formed, reach adolescence with limbs badly grown, badly jointed, in which all normal proportions have completely disappeared.

And let us contemplate the people in the street, trotting along in their dirty clothing! As for the peasant! Good Heavens! Let us go and watch the peasant in the fields, his gnarled knotted frame, lanky, twisted, bent, more hideous than the barbarous types exhibited in a museum of anthropology.

In comparison how splendid are those men of bronze, the negroes; in shape, if not in face; how elegant, both in their movements and their figure, the tall lithe Arabs. Moreover, I have yet another reason for having a horror of crowds.

I cannot go into a theatre, nor be present at any public entertainment. I at once experience a curious and unbearable feeling of discomfort, a horrible unnerving sensation, as though I were struggling with all my might, against a mysterious and irresistible influence. And in truth, I struggle with the spirit of the mob, which strives to take possession of me.

How often have I observed that the intelligence expands and grows loftier, when we live alone, and that it becomes meaner and lower, when we again mix among other men. The contact, the opinions floating in the air, all that is said, all that one is compelled to listen to, to hear, to answer, acts upon the mind. A flow and ebb of ideas goes from head to head, from house to house, from street to street, from town to town, from nation to nation, and a level is established, an average of intellect is created, by all large agglomerations of individuals.

The inherent qualities of intellectual initiative, of free will, of wise reflection and

even of sagacity, belonging to any individual being, generally disappear the moment that being is brought in contact with a large number of other beings.

The following is a passage from a letter of Lord Chesterfield to his son (1751) which sets forth with rare humility, the sudden elimination of all active qualities of the mind, in every large body of people:

"Lord Macclesfield, who had the greatest share in forming the bill, and who is one of the greatest mathematicians and astronomers in Europe, spoke afterwards with infinite knowledge, and all the clearness that so intricate a matter would admit of, but as his words, his periods, and his utterance were not near so good as mine, the preference was most unanimously, though most unjustly, given to me.

"This will ever be the case; every numerous assembly is mob, let the individuals who compose it be what they will. Mere reason and good sense is never to be talked to a mob; their passions, their sentiments, their senses and their seeming interests, are alone to be applied to.

"Understanding they have collectively none, &c...."

This deep observation of Lord Chesterfield's, a remark, however, that has often been made, and noted with interest by philosophers of the scientific school, constitutes one of the most serious arguments against representative government.

The same phenomenon, a surprising one, is produced each time a large number of men are gathered together. All these persons, side by side, distinct from each other, of different minds, intelligences, passions, education, beliefs, and prejudices, become suddenly, by the sole fact of their being assembled together, a special being, endowed with a new soul, a new manner of thinking in common, which is the unanalysable resultant of the average of these individual opinions.

It is a crowd, and that crowd is a person, one vast collective individual, as distinct from any other mob, as one man is distinct from any other man.

A popular saying asserts that "the mob does not reason." Now why does not the mob

reason, since each particular individual in the crowd does reason? Why should a crowd do spontaneously, what none of the units of the crowd would have done? Why has a crowd irresistible impulses, ferocious wills, stupid enthusiasms that nothing can arrest, and, carried away by these thoughtless impulses, why does it commit acts, that none of the individuals composing it would commit alone?

A stranger utters a cry, and behold! a sort of frenzy takes possession of all, and all, with the same impulse, which no one tries to resist, carried away by the same thought, which instantaneously becomes common to all, notwithstanding different castes, opinions, beliefs, and customs, will fall upon a man, murder him, drown him, without a motive, almost without a pretext, whereas each one of them, had he been alone, would have precipitated himself, at the risk of his life, to save the man he is now killing.

And in the evening, each one on returning home, will ask himself what passion or what madness had seized him, and thrown his nature and his temperament out of its ordinary groove; how he could have given way to this savage impulse?

The fact is, he had ceased to be a man, to become one of a crowd. His personal will had become blended with the common will, as a drop of water is blended with and lost in a river.

His personality had disappeared, had become an infinitesimal particle of one vast and strange personality, that of the crowd. The panics which take hold of an army, the storms of opinion which carry away an entire nation, the frenzy of dervish dances, are striking examples of this identical phenomenon.

In short, it is not more surprising to see an agglomeration of individuals make one whole, than to see molecules, that are placed near each other form one body.

To this mysterious attraction, must without doubt be attributed the peculiar temperament of theatre audiences, and the strange difference of judgment, that exists between the audience of general rehearsals, and that of the audience of first

representations, and again between the audience of a first representation, and that of the succeeding performances, and the change in the telling effects, from one evening to another; and the errors of judgment condemning a play like Carmen, which, later on, turns out an immense success.

What I say about crowds, must be applied to all society, and he who would carefully preserve the absolute integrity of his thought, the proud independence of his opinion, and look at life, humanity and the universe as an impartial observer free from prejudice, preconceived belief and fear, must absolutely live apart from all social relations; for human stupidity is so contagious, that he will be unable to frequent his fellow-creatures, even see them, or listen to them, without being, in spite of himself, influenced on all sides by their conversations, their ideas, their superstitions, their traditions, their prejudices, which by their customs, laws and surprisingly hypocritical and cowardly code of morality, will surely contaminate him.

Those who strive to resist these lowering and incessant influences, struggle in vain amidst petty, irresistible, innumerable and almost imperceptible fetters; and through sheer fatigue soon cease to fight.

But a backward movement took place in the crowd; the newly-married couple were coming out. And immediately I followed the general example, raised myself on tip-toe to see,—and longed to see,—with a stupid, low, repugnant longing, the longing of the common herd. The curiosity of my neighbours had intoxicated me; I was one of a crowd.

To fill up the remainder of the day, I decided on taking a row in my dingy up the Argens. This lovely and almost unknown river, separates the plains of Fréjus from the wild mountain range of the Maures.

I took Raymond, who rowed me along the side of the low beach to the mouth of the river, which we found impracticable and partly filled up with sand. One channel only communicated with the sea; but so rapid, so full of foam, of eddies and of

whirlpools, that we were unable to ascend it.

We were therefore obliged to drag the boat to land, and carry it over the sandhills to a kind of beautiful lake, formed by the Argens at this spot.

In the midst of a green and marshy country, of that rich green tint given by trees growing out of water, the river sinks down between two banks, so covered with verdure, and with such high impenetrable foliage, that the neighbouring mountains are barely visible; it sinks down, still winding, still looking like a peaceful lake, without showing or betraying that it continues twisting its way through the calm, lonesome and magnificent country.

As in the low Northern plains, where the springs ooze out under the feet, running over and vivifying the earth like blood, the clear, cold blood of the soil; so here, we find again the same strange sensation of exuberant nature which floats over all damp countries.

Birds, with long legs dangling as they fly, spring up from amongst the reeds, stretching their pointed beaks heavenwards; while others, broad-winged and slow, pass from one bank to another with heavy flight, and others, smaller and more rapid, skim along the surface of the river, darting forward like rebounding pebbles. Innumerable turtle-doves cooing on the heights, or wheeling about, fly from tree to tree, and seem to exchange messages of love. One feels a sensation that all around this deep water, throughout all this plain, up to the foot of the mountains, there is yet more water; the deceitful water of the marsh, sleeping yet living; broad clear sheets, in which the skies are mirrored, over which the clouds flit by; in which, widely scattered, all manner of strange rushes spring up; the fertile limpid water, full of rotting life and deathly fermentation; water breeding fever and miasma, at the same time food and poison, spreading itself out in attractive loveliness, over the mysterious mass of putrefaction beneath it. The atmosphere is delightful, relaxing and dangerous. Over all the banks which separate the vast still pools, amid all the

thick grasses, swarms, crawls, jumps, and creeps a whole world of slimy, repugnant, cold-blooded animals. I love those cold, subtle animals that are generally avoided and dreaded; for me there is something sacred about them.

At the hour of sunset the marsh intoxicates and excites me. After having been all day a silent pond lying hushed in the heat, it becomes at the moment of twilight, a fairy-like and enchanted country. In its calm and boundless depths the skies are mirrored: skies of gold, skies of blood, skies of fire; they sink in it, bathe in it, float and are drowned in it. They are there up above, in the immensity of the firmament, and they are there below, beneath us, so near and yet so completely beyond our touch, in that shallow pool, through which the pointed grasses push their way like bristling hairs. All the colour with which earth has been endowed, charming, varied, and enthralling, appears to us deliciously painted, admirably resplendent, and infinitely shaded around a single leaf of the water-lily. Every shade of red, rose, yellow, blue, green, and violet are there, in a little patch of water which shows us the heavens, and space, and dreamland, and the flight of the birds as they skim across its face. And then there is still something else,—I know not what,—in the marshes beheld in the setting sun. I feel therein a confused revelation of some unknown mystery, an original breath of primeval life, which is, perhaps, nothing more than the bubble of gas rising from a swamp at the fall of day.

SAINT-TROPEZ, April 12th.

We left Saint-Raphaël at about eight o'clock this morning, with a strong northwest breeze.

The sea in the gulf, though it had no waves, was white with foam, white like a mass of soap-suds, for the wind, the terrible wind from Fréjus which blows almost every morning, seemed to throw itself on the water, as though it would tear it to pieces, raising a rolling mass of little waves of froth, scattered one moment, reformed the next.

The people at the port having assured us that this squall would fall towards eleven o'clock, we decided upon starting with three reefs in, and the storm-jib. The dingy was placed on board at the foot of the mast, and the Bel-Ami seemed to fly directly it left the jetty. Although it carried scarcely any sail, I had never felt it dash along like this. One might have thought that it hardly touched the water, and one would never have suspected that it carried at the bottom of its large keel, two and a-half yards deep, a slab of lead weighing over thirty cwt., besides thirty-eight cwt. of ballast in its hold, and all we had on board in the shape of rigging, anchors, chains, cables and furniture.

I had soon crossed the bay, at the further end of which the Argens throws itself into the sea; and as soon as I was under shelter of the coast the breeze completely fell. It is there that the splendid, sombre, and wild region begins, which is still called the land of the Moors. It is a long peninsula, composed of mountains; with a contour of coasts over sixty miles long.

Saint-Tropez, situated at the entry of the lovely gulf, formerly called Gulf of Grimaud, is the capital of the little Saracen kingdom, of which nearly every village, built on the summit of a peak in order to secure it from attack, is still full of Moorish houses with arcades, narrow windows, and inner courtyards, wherein tall palm trees have grown up, and are now higher than the roofs.

If one penetrates on foot into the unknown valleys of this strange group of mountains, one discovers an incredible country, devoid of roads, and lanes; without even footpaths, without hamlets, without houses.

At intervals, after seven or eight hours' walking, appears a hovel, often abandoned, or sometimes inhabited by a poverty-stricken family of charcoal burners.

The Monts des Maures have, it appears, a system of geology peculiar to themselves, a matchless flora said to be the most varied in Europe, and immense forests of pines, chestnuts, and cork trees.

Some three years ago, I made an excursion into the very heart of the country, to the ruins of the Chartreuse de la Verne, and have retained an ineffaceable recollection of it. If it is fine to-morrow I shall return there.

A new road follows the sea, going from Saint-Raphaël to Saint-Tropez. All along this magnificent avenue, opened up through the forest by the side of a matchless beach, new winter resorts are being started. The first one planned is called Saint Aigulf.

This bears a peculiar stamp. In the midst of a forest of fir trees stretching down to the sea, wide roads are laid out in every direction. There is not a house, nothing but the barely indicated plan of the streets, running through the trees. Here are the squares, the cross-roads and the boulevards. The names are even written up on metal tablets: Boulevard Ruysdaël, Boulevard Rubens, Boulevard Van Dyck, Boulevard Claude Lorrain. One wonders at all these painters' names. Why indeed? Simply because the Company has decided, like God before he lit the sun: "This shall be an artists' resort!"

The Company! No one knows in the rest of the world, all this word contains of hopes, dangers, money gained, and money lost on the Mediterranean shores! The Company! fatal and mysterious word, deep and deceitful!

In this instance however the Company seems to have realized its expectations, for it has already found purchasers, and of the best, amongst artists. At various places one reads: "Building lot bought by M. Carolus Duran; another by M. Clairin, another by Mlle. Croizette, etc." Nevertheless—Who can tell? The Mediterranean Companies are not in luck just now. Nothing is more ludicrous than this fury of speculation, which generally ends in terrible failures. Whosoever has gained ten thousand francs (four hundred pounds) over his field, at once buys ten millions (four hundred thousand pounds) worth of land at twenty sous (ten pence) the metre, in order to sell it again at twenty francs (sixteen shillings). Boulevards are traced, water is

conveyed, gasworks are prepared, and the purchaser is hopefully expected.

The purchaser does not make his appearance, but instead of him—-ruin.

Far off in front of me I perceive the towers and the buoys, that mark the breakers on both sides, at the opening of the gulf of Saint-Tropez.

The first tower is called "Tour des Sardinaux," and marks a regular shoal of rocks, level with the top of the water, some of which just show the tips of their brown heads; the second one has been christened "Balise de la Sèche à l'huile."[1]

We now reach the entrance of the gulf, which extends back between two ridges of mountains and forests as far as the village of Grimaud, built at the very extremity, on a height. The ancient castle of Grimaldi, a tall ruin that overlooks the village, appears in the distant haze like the evocation of some fairy scene.

The wind has fallen. The gulf looks like an immense calm lake, into which, taking advantage of the last puffs of the squall, we slowly make our way.

To the right of the channel, Sainte-Maxime, a little white port, is mirrored in the water which reflects the houses topsy-turvy, and reproduces them as distinctly as on shore. Opposite, Saint-Tropez appears, guarded by an old fort.

At seven o'clock Bel-Ami anchored by the quay, at the side of the little steamboat which carries on the service with Saint-Raphaël. The only means of communication between this isolated little port, and the rest of the world is by this Lion de Mer, an old pleasure yacht, which runs in connection with a venerable diligence, that carries the letters, and travels at night by the one road which crosses the mountains.

This is one of those charming and simple daughters of the sea, one of those nice modest little towns; which, fed upon fish and sea air, and breeder of sailors, is as much a produce of the sea as any shell. On the jetty, stands a bronze statue of the Bailli de Suffren.

The pervading smell is one of fish and smoking tar, of brine and hulls. The stones in

the streets glitter like pearls, with the scales of the sardines, and along the walls of the port, a population of lame and paralysed old sailors bask in the sun, on the stone benches. From time to time they talk of past voyages, and of those they have known in bygone days, the grandfathers of the small boys running yonder. Their hands and faces are wrinkled, tanned, browned, dried by the wind, by fatigue, by the spray, by the heat of the tropics and by the icy cold of Northern seas, for they have seen, in their roamings over the ocean, the ins and outs of the world, every aspect of the earth and of all latitudes. In front of them, propped upon a stick, passes and repasses the old captain of the merchant service, who formerly commanded the Trois-Soeurs, or the Deux-Amis, or the Marie-Louise or the Jeune-Clémentine.

All salute him, like soldiers answering the roll-call, with a litany of "Good day, captain," modulated in many tones.

This is a true land of the sea, a brave little town, briny and courageous, which fought in days of yore against the Saracens, against the Duc d'Anjou, against the wild corsairs, against the Connétable de Bourbon, and Charles-Quint, and the Duc de Savoie, and the Duc d'Epernon. In 1637, the inhabitants, fathers of these peaceful citizens, without any assistance repelled the Spanish fleet, and every year they renew with surprising realism, the representation of the attack and their defence, filling the town with noisy bustle and clamour, strangely recalling the great popular festivities of the middle ages.

In 1813, the town likewise repulsed an English flotilla, that had been sent against it.

Now it is a fishing town, and the produce of its fisheries supplies the greater part of the coast with tunny, sardines, loups, rock-lobsters, and all the pretty fish of this blue sea.

On setting foot on the quay after having dressed myself, I heard twelve o'clock strike, and I perceived two old clerks, notary or lawyer's clerks, going off to their midday meal, like two old beasts of burden, unbridled for a few minutes while they

eat their oats at the bottom of a nosebag.

Oh, liberty! liberty! our sole happiness, sole hope, sole dream! Of all the miserable creatures, of all classes of individuals, of all orders of workers, of all the men who daily fight the hard battle of life, these are the most to be pitied, on these does fortune bestow the fewest of her favours.

No one believes this,—no one knows it. They are powerless to complain; they cannot revolt; they remain gagged and bound in their misery, the shamefaced misery of quill-drivers.

They have gone through a course of study, they understand law, they have taken a degree, perhaps.

How dearly I like that dedication by Jules Vallès:

"To all those, who, nourished upon Greek and Latin, have died of starvation."

And what do they earn, these starvelings? Eight to fifteen hundred francs, (thirty-two to sixty pounds) a year!

Clerks in gloomy chambers, or clerks in office, you should read every morning over the door of your fatal prison, Dante's famous phrase:

"Abandon hope, all ye who enter here!"

They are but twenty when they first enter, and will remain till sixty or longer. During this long period not an event takes place! Their whole life slips away in the dark little bureau, ever the same, carpeted with green portfolios. They enter young, at the age of vigorous hopes; they leave in old age, when death is at hand. All the harvest of recollections that we make in a life-time, the unexpected events, our loves,—gentle or tragic memories, our adventures, all the chances of a free existence, are unknown to these convicts.

The days, the weeks, the months, the seasons, the years, all are like. They begin the day's work at the same hour; at the same hour, they breakfast; at the same hour, they

leave; and this goes on for sixty or seventy years. Four accidents only constitute landmarks in their existence: marriage, the birth of the first-born, and the death of father, or mother. Nothing else; stop though, yes, a rise in salary. They know nothing of ordinary life, nothing of the world! Unknown to them are the days of cheerful sunshine in the streets, and idle wanderings through the fields, for they are never released before the appointed hour. They become voluntary prisoners at eight o'clock in the morning, and at six, the prison doors are opened for them, when night is at hand. But, as a compensation, they have, for a whole fortnight in the year, the right,—a right indeed much discussed, hardly bargained for and grudgingly granted,—to remain shut up in their lodgings. For where can they go without money?

The builder climbs skywards; the driver prowls about the streets; the railway mechanic traverses woods, mountains, plains; moves incessantly from the walls of the town, to the vast blue horizon of the sea. The employé never quits his bureau, his coffin, and in the same little mirror, wherein he saw himself a young fellow with fair moustache the day of his arrival, he contemplates himself bald, and white-bearded, on the day of his dismissal. Then, all is finished, life is played out, the future closed. How can he have reached this point? How can he have grown old without any event having occurred, without having been shaken by any of the surprises of existence? It is so nevertheless. He must now make way for the young! for the young beginners!

Then the unfortunate mortal steals away, more wretched than before, and dies, almost immediately from the sudden snapping of the long and obstinate habit of his daily routine, the dreary routine of the same movements, the same actions, the same tasks at the same hours.

As I went into the hotel for breakfast, an alarmingly big packet of letters and papers was handed to me, and my heart sank as at the prospect of some misfortune. I have a fear and a hatred of letters; they are bonds. Those little squares of paper bearing my

name, seem to give out a noise of chains, as I tear them open,—of chains linking me to living creatures, I have known or know.

Each one inquires, although written by different hands: "Where are you? What are you doing? Why disappear in this way, without telling us where you are going? With whom are you hiding?" Another adds: "How can you expect people to care for you, if you run away in this fashion from your friends? It is positively wounding to their feelings."

Well then, don't attach yourselves to me! Will no one endeavour to understand affection, without joining thereto a notion of possession and of despotism. It would seem as if social ties could not exist without entailing obligations, susceptibilities, and a certain amount of subserviency. From the moment one has smiled upon the attentions of a stranger, this stranger has a hold upon you, is inquisitive about your movements, and reproaches you with neglecting him. If we get as far as friendship, then each one imagines himself to have certain claims; intercourse becomes a duty, and the bonds which unite us seem to end in slip-knots which draw tighter. This affectionate solicitude, this suspicious jealousy, eager to control, and to cling, on the part of beings who have met casually, and who fancy themselves linked together because they have proved to be mutually agreeable, arises solely from the harassing fear of solitude, which haunts mankind upon this earth.

Each of us, feeling the void around him, the unfathomable depth in which his heart beats, his thoughts struggle, wanders on like a madman with open arms and eager lips, seeking some other being to embrace. And embrace he does, to the right, to the left, at haphazard, without knowing, without looking, without understanding, that he may not feel alone. He seems to say, from the moment he has shaken hands: "Now, you belong to me a little. You owe me some part of yourself, of your life, of your thoughts, of your time." And that is why so many people believe themselves to be friends, who know nothing whatever of each other, so many start off hand in hand,

heart to heart, without having really had one good look at one another. They must care for some one, in order not to be alone, their affections must be expended in friendship or in love, but some vent, must be found for it incessantly. And they talk of affection, swear it, become enthusiastic over it, pour their whole heart into some unknown heart found only the evening before, all their soul into some chance soul with a face that has pleased. And from this haste to become united, arise all the surprises, mistakes, misunderstandings and dramas of life.

Just as we remain lonely and alone, notwithstanding all our efforts, so in like manner we remain free, notwithstanding all our ties.

No one, ever, belongs to another. Half unconsciously we lend ourselves to the comedy,—coquettish or passionate, of possession, but no one really gives himself—his ego—to another human being. Man, exasperated by this imperious need to be the master of some one, instituted tyranny, slavery and marriage. He can kill, torture, imprison, but the human will inevitably escapes him, even when it has for a few moments consented to submission.

Do mothers even possess their children? Does not the tiny being but just entered into the world, set to work to cry for what he wants, to announce his separate existence, and proclaim his independence?

Does a woman ever really belong to you? Do you know what she thinks, whether even she really adores you? You kiss her sweet body (waste your whole soul on her perfect lips): a word from your mouth or from hers—one single word—is enough to put between you, a gulf of implacable hatred!

All sentiments of affection lose their charm, when they become authoritative. Because it gives me pleasure to see and talk with some one, does it follow that I should be permitted to know what he does, and what he likes? The bustle of towns, both great and small, of all classes of society, the mischievous, envious, evil-speaking, calumniating curiosity, the incessant watchfulness of the affections

and conduct of others, of their gossip and their scandals, are they not all born of that pretension we have, to control the conduct of others, as if we all belonged to each other in varying degrees? And we do in fact imagine that we have some rights over them, and on their life, for we would fain model it upon our own; on their thoughts, for we expect them to be of the same style as our own; on their opinions, in which we will not tolerate any difference from ours; on their reputation, for we expect it to conform to our principles; on their habits, for we swell with indignation, when they are not according to our notions of morality.

I was breakfasting at the end of a long table, in the hotel Bailli de Suffren, and still occupied with the perusal of my letters and papers, when I was disturbed by the noisy conversation of some half-dozen men, seated at the other end.

They were commercial travellers. They talked on every subject with assurance, with contempt, in an airy, chaffing authoritative manner, and they gave me the clearest, the sharpest feeling of what constitutes the true French spirit; that is to say, the average of the intelligence, logic, sense and wit of France. One of them, a great fellow with a shock of red hair wore the military medal, and also one for saving life,—a fine fellow. Another, a fat little roundabout, made puns without ceasing and laughed till his sides ached at his own jokes, before he would leave time to the others to understand his fun. Another man with close-cut hair, was re-organizing the army and the administration of justice, reforming the laws and the constitution, sketching out an ideal Republic to suit his own views, as a traveller in the wine trade. Two others, side by side, were amusing each other thoroughly with the narrative of their bonnes fortunes; adventures in back parlours of shops, and conquests of maids-of-all-work.

And in them I saw France personified, the witty, versatile, brave and gallant France of tradition.

These men were types of the race, vulgar types, it is true, but which have but to be

poetized a little, to find in them the Frenchman, such as history—that lying and imaginative old dame—shows him to us.

And it is really an amusing race, by reason of certain very special qualities, which one finds absolutely nowhere else.

First and foremost it is their versatility, which so agreeably diversifies both their customs, and their institutions. It is this, which makes the history of their country resemble some surprising tale of adventure in a feuilleton, of which the pages "to be continued in the next number," are full of the most unexpected events, tragic, comic, terrible, grotesque. One may be angry or indignant over it, according to one's way of thinking, but it is none the less certain that no history in the world is more amusing, and more stirring than theirs.

From the pure art point of view—and why should one not admit this special, and disinterested point of view, in politics as well as in literature?—it remains without a rival. What can be more curious, and more surprising, than the events which have been accomplished in the last century?

What will to-morrow bring forth? This expectation of the unforeseen is, after all, very charming. Everything is possible in France, even the most wildly improbable drolleries, and the most tragic adventures.

What could surprise them? When a country has produced a Joan of Arc, and a Napoleon, it may well be considered miraculous ground.

And then the French love women: they love them well, with passion and with airy grace, and with respect.

Their gallantry cannot be compared to anything in any other country.

He who has preserved in his heart, the flame of gallantry which burned in the last centuries, surrounds women with a tenderness at once profound, gentle, sensitive and vigilant. He loves everything that belongs to them; everything that comes from them, everything that they are; everything they do. He loves their toilette, their

knick-knacks, their adornments, their artifices, their naïvetés, their little perfidies, their lies and their dainty ways. He loves them all, rich as well as poor, the young and even the old, the dark, the fair, the fat, the thin. He feels himself at his ease with them, and amongst them. There he could remain indefinitely, without fatigue, without ennui, happy in the mere fact of being in their presence.

He knows how, from the very first word, by a look, by a smile, to show them that he adores them, to arouse their attention, to sharpen their wish to please, to display for his benefit all their powers of seduction. Between them and him there is established at once, a quick sympathy, a fellowship of instincts, almost a relationship through similarity of character and nature.

Then begins between them and him a combat of coquetry, and gallantry; a mysterious, and skirmishing sort of friendship is cemented, and an obscure affinity of heart and mind is drawn closer.

He knows how to say what will please them, how to make them understand what he thinks; how to make known, without ever shocking them, without offending their delicate and watchful modesty, the admiration, discreet yet ardent, always burning in his eyes, always trembling on his lips, always alight in his veins. He is their friend and their slave, the humble servitor of their caprices, and the admirer of their persons. He is ever at their beck and call, ready to help them, to defend them, as secret allies. He would love to devote himself to them, not only to those he knows slightly, but to those he knows not at all, to those he has never even seen.

He asks nothing of them but a little pretty affection, a little confidence, or a little interest, a little graceful friendliness or even, sly malice.

He loves, in the street the woman who passes by, and whose glance falls upon him. He loves the young girl with hair streaming down her shoulders, who, a blue bow on her head, a flower in her bosom, moves with slow or hurried step, timid or bold eye, through the throng on the pavements. He loves the unknown ones he elbows, the

little shopwoman who dreams on her doorstep, the fine lady who lazily reclines in her open carriage.

From the moment he finds himself face to face with a woman, his heart is stirred, and his best powers are awakened. He thinks of her, talks for her, tries to please her, and to let her understand that she pleases him. Tender expressions hover on his lips, caresses in his glance; he is invaded by a longing to kiss her hand, to touch even the stuff of her dress. For him, it is women who adorn the world, and make life seductive.

He likes to sit at their feet, for the mere pleasure of being there; he likes to meet their eye, merely to catch a glimpse of their veiled and fleeting thoughts; he likes to listen to their voice, solely because it is the voice of woman.

It is by them, and for them, that the Frenchman has learnt to talk, and to display the ready wit which distinguishes him.

To talk! What is it? It is the art of never seeming wearisome; of knowing how to invest every trifle with interest, to charm no matter what be the subject, to fascinate with absolutely nothing.

How can one describe the airy butterfly touch upon things by supple words, the running fire of wit, the dainty flitting of ideas, which should all go to compose talk?

The Frenchman is the only being in the world who has this subtle spirit of wit, and he alone thoroughly enjoys and comprehends it.

His wit is a mere flash and yet it dwells; now the current joke, now the wit, which illumines the national literature.

That which is truly innate, is wit in the largest sense of the word, that vast breath of irony or gaiety, which has animated the nation from the moment it could think or speak: it is the pungent raciness of Montaigne and Rabelais, the irony of Voltaire, of Beaumarchais, of Saint-Simon, and the inextinguishable laughter of Molière.

The brilliant sally, the neat epigram, is the small-change of this wit. And nevertheless, it is yet an aspect of it, a characteristic peculiarity of the national intelligence. It is one of its keenest charms. It is this that makes the sceptical gaiety of Paris life, the careless cheerfulness of their manners and customs. It is part and parcel of the social amenity.

Formerly, these pleasant jests were made in verse, now-a-days they appear in prose. They are called, according to their date, epigrams, bons mots, traits, hits, gauloiseries. They fly through town and drawing-room, they spring up everywhere, on the boulevard as well as Montmartre. And those of Montmartre are often just as good as those of the boulevard, they are printed in the papers; from one end of France to the other, they excite laughter. For, at least, the French know how to laugh.

Why should one good thing more than another, the unexpected, quaint, juxtaposition of two terms, two ideas or even two sounds; a ridiculous pun, some unexpected cock-and-bull story, open the floodgates of our gaiety, causing explosions of mirth, fit to blow up all Paris and the provinces like a mine?

Why do all the French laugh, while all the English and all the Germans can understand nothing of the fun? Why? solely and wholly because they are French, because they possess the intelligence which is peculiar to the French, and because they possess the delightful, enviable gift of laughter.

With them, moreover, a little mother-wit, enables any government to hold its own.

Good spirits takes the place of genius, a neat saying consecrates a man at once, and makes him great for all posterity. The rest matters little. The nation loves those who amuse it, and forgives everything to those who can make it laugh.

A glance thrown over the past history of France, will make us understand that the fame of their great men, has only been made by flashes of wit. The most detestable princes have become popular by agreeable jests, repeated and remembered from

century to century.

The throne of France, is maintained by the cap and bells of the jester.

Jests, jests, nothing but jests, ironic or heroic, polished or coarse,—jests float for ever to the surface in their history, and make it like nothing so much as a collection of puns and witticisms.

Clovis, the Christian king, cried on hearing the story of the Passion:

"Why was I not there with my Franks?" This prince, in order to reign alone, massacred his allies and his relations, and committed every crime imaginable. Nevertheless, he is looked upon as a pious and civilizing monarch.

"Why was I not there with my Franks?"

We should know nothing of good King Dagobert, if the song had not apprised us of a few particulars, no doubt erroneous, of his existence.

Pepin, wishing to remove the king Childeric from the throne, proposed to Pope Zacharias the following insidious question:

"Which of the two is the most worthy to reign? He who worthily fulfils all the kingly functions without the title, or he who bears the title without knowing how to reign?"

What do we know of Louis VI.? Nothing. Pardon! In the battle of Brenneville, when an Englishmen laid hands upon him, crying, "The king is taken," this truly French monarch replied: "Do you know, knave, that a king can never be taken, even at chess?"

Louis IX., saint though he was, has not left a single good saying to remember him by. In consequence, his reign appears to the French a wearisome episode, full of orisons and penances.

That noodle, Philip VI., beaten and wounded at the battle of Crécy, cried as he knocked at the gates of the castle of Arbroie: "Open: here are the fortunes of

France!" They are still grateful to him for this melodramatic speech. John II., made prisoner by the Prince of Wales, remarks, with chivalrous good will, and the graceful gallantry of a French troubadour, "I had counted upon entertaining you at supper to-night; but fortune wills otherwise, and ordains that I should sup with you."

It would be impossible to bear adversity more gracefully.

"It is not for the King of France to avenge the quarrels of the Duke of Orleans," was the generous declaration of Louis XII. And it is, truly, a kingly saying; one worthy of the remembrance of all princes.

That hare-brained fellow Francis I., more apt at the pursuit of the fair sex, than at the conduct of a campaign, has saved his reputation, and surrounded his name with an imperishable halo, by writing to his mother those few superb words, after the defeat of Pavia: "All is lost, Madame, save honour."

Does not that phrase remain to this day as good as a victory? Has it not made this prince more illustrious, than the conquest of a kingdom? We have forgotten the names of the greater number of the famous battles, fought in these long bygone days; but shall we ever forget: "All is lost, save honour?"

Henry IV.! Hats off, gentlemen! Here is the master! Sly, sceptical, tricky, deceitful beyond belief, artful beyond compare; a drunkard, debauchee, unbeliever, he managed by a few happy and pointed sayings, to make for himself in history, an admirable reputation as a chivalrous, generous king, a brave, loyal, and honest man.

Oh! the cheat! well did he know how to play upon human stupidity!

"Hang yourself, brave Crillou, we have gained the day without you."

After a speech like this, a general is always ready to be hanged, or killed for his master's sake.

At the opening of the famous battle of Ivry: "Children, if the colours fall, rally to my white plumes, you will find them always on the road to honour and victory."

How could a man fail to be victorious, who knew how to speak thus to his captains and his troops?

This sceptical monarch wishes for Paris; he longs for it, but he must choose between his faith and the beautiful city: "Enough," he murmurs, "after all Paris is well worth a mass!" And he changes his religion, as he would have changed his coat. Is it not a fact, however, that the witticism caused a ready acceptance of the deed? "Paris is well worth a mass," raised a laugh among the choicer spirits, and there was no violent indignation over the change.

Has he not become the patron of all fathers of families, by the question put to the Spanish Ambassador, who found him playing at horses with the Dauphin: "Are you a father, M. l'Ambassadeur?"

The Spaniard replied: "Yes, sir."

"In that case," said the King, "we will go on."

But he made a conquest for all eternity of the heart of France, of the bourgeoisie, and of the people, by the finest phrase that prince ever pronounced,—a real inspiration of genius, full of depth, heartiness, sharpness, and good sense.

"If God prolongs my life, I hope to see in my kingdom no peasant so poor, that he cannot put a fowl in the pot for his Sunday's dinner."

It is with words such as these, that enthusiastic and foolish crowds are flattered and governed. By a couple of clever sayings, Henry IV. has drawn his own portrait for posterity. One cannot pronounce his name, without at once having a vision of the white plumes, and of the delicious flavour of a poule-au-pot.

Louis XIII. made no happy hits. This dull King had a dull reign.

Louis XIV. created the formula of absolute personal power: "The State is myself."

He gave the measure of royal pride in its fullest expansion: "I have almost had to wait."

He set the example of sonorous political phrases, which make alliances between two nations: "The Pyrenees exist no longer!"

All his reign is in these few phrases.

Louis XV., most corrupt of Kings, elegant and witty, has bequeathed to posterity that delightful keynote of his supreme indifference: "After me, the deluge."

If Louis XVI. had been inspired enough to perpetrate one witticism, he might possibly have saved his kingdom. With one bon mot, might he not perhaps have escaped the guillotine?

Napoleon I. scattered around him by handfuls, the sayings that were suited to the hearts of his soldiers.

Napoleon III. extinguished with one brief phrase, all the future indignation of the French nation in that first promise: "The Empire is peace." The Empire is peace! superb declaration, magnificent lie! After having said that, he might declare war against the whole of Europe, without having anything to fear from his people. He had found a simple, neat, and striking formula, capable of appealing to all minds, and against which facts would be no argument.

He made war against China, Mexico, Russia, Austria, against all the world. What did it matter? There are people yet, who speak with sincere conviction of the eighteen years of tranquillity he gave to France: "The Empire is peace."

And it was also with his keen words of satire, phrases more mortal than bullets, that M. Rochefort laid the Empire low, riddling it with the arrows of his wit, cutting it to shreds and tatters.

The Maréchal MacMahon himself has left as a souvenir of his career to power: "Here I am, here I remain!" And it was by a shaft from Gambetta that he was, in his turn, knocked down: "Submission or dismissal."

With these two words, more powerful than a revolution, more formidable than the

barricades, more invincible than an army, more redoubtable than all the votes, the tribune turned out the soldier, crushed his glory, and destroyed his power and prestige.

As to those who govern France at this moment, they must fall, for they are devoid of wit; they will fall, for in the day of danger, in the day of disturbance, in the inevitable moment of see-saw, they will not be capable of making France laugh, and of disarming her.

Of all these historical phrases, there are not ten really authentic. But what does it matter, so long as they are believed to have been uttered by those to whom they are attributed:

"Dans le pays des bossus Il faut l'être Ou le paraître,"[2]

says the popular song.

Meanwhile the commercial travellers were talking of the emancipation of women, of their rights, and of the new position in society they longed for.

Some approved, others were annoyed; the little fat man jested without ceasing, and ended the breakfast, as well as the discussion, by the following entertaining anecdote:

"Lately," said he, "there was a great meeting in England, where this question was discussed. One of the orators had been setting forth numerous arguments in favour of the women's case, and wound up with this observation:

"To conclude, gentlemen, I may observe that the difference between man and woman is after all, very small."

A powerful voice, from an enthusiastic and thoroughly convinced listener, arose from the audience, crying: "Hurrah for the small difference!"

[1] Buoy of the oily scuttle-fish!

[2] In the country of hunchbacks One must be so, Or at least appear so.

SAINT-TROPEZ, April 13th.

As it was remarkably fine this morning, I started for the Chartreuse de la Verne.

Two recollections draw me towards this ruin: that of the sensation of infinite solitude and the unforgettable melancholy of the deserted cloister; and also that of an old peasant couple, to whose cottage I had been taken the year before by a friend who was guiding me across this country of the Moors.

Seated in a country cart, for the road soon became impracticable for a vehicle on springs, I followed the line of the bay to its deepest point. I could see upon the opposite shore the pine woods where the Company is attempting to create another winter resort. The shore indeed is exquisite, and the whole country magnificent. Then the road plunges into the mountains, and soon passes through the town of Cogolin. A little further on, I quitted it for a rough broken lane, which was scarcely more than a long rut. A river, or rather a big stream, runs by the side, and every hundred yards or so, cuts through the ravine, floods it, wanders away a little, returns, loses itself again, quits its bed and drowns the track, then falls into a ditch, strays through a field of stones, appears suddenly to calm down into wisdom, and for a while follows its due course; but seized all at once by some wild fancy, it precipitates itself again into the road, and changes it into a marsh, in which the horse sinks up to the breast-plate, and the high vehicle up to the driving seat.

There are no more houses; only from time to time, a charcoal burner's hut; the poorest live in absolute holes. Is it not almost incredible that men should inhabit holes in the ground, where they live all the year, cutting wood and burning it to extract the charcoal, eating bread and onions, drinking water, and sleeping like rabbits in their burrows, in narrow caverns hewn in the granite rocks. Lately, too, in the midst of these unexplored valleys, a hermit has been discovered, a real hermit, hidden there for these thirty years, unknown to anyone, even to the forest rangers.

The existence of this wild man, revealed by I know not whom, was, no doubt,

mentioned to the driver of the diligence, who spoke of it to the post-master, who talked of it to the telegraph clerk male or female, who flew with the wonder to the editor of some little local paper, who made out of it a sensational paragraph, copied into all the country journals of Provence.

The police set to work, to hunt out the hermit, without apparently causing him any alarm, whence we may conclude that he had kept all needful papers by him. But a photographer, excited by the news, set off in his turn, wandered three days and three nights amongst the mountains, and ended by photographing some one, the real hermit some say, an impostor, others will tell you.

Last year then, the friend who first revealed to me this strangely quaint country, showed me two creatures infinitely more curious, than the poor devil who had come to hide in these impenetrable woods, a grief, a remorse, an incurable despair, or perhaps simply the mere ennui of living.

This is how he first discovered them. Wandering on horseback among these valleys, he suddenly came across a prosperous farm: vines, fields, and a farmhouse, which looked comfortable though humble.

He entered. He was received by a woman, a peasant, about seventy years old. The husband, seated under a tree, rose and came forward to bow.

"He is deaf," she said.

He was a fine old fellow of eighty, amazingly strong, upright, and handsome. They had for servants, a labourer and a farm-girl. My friend, a little surprised to meet these singular persons in the midst of a desert, enquired about them. They had been there for a long time; they were much respected, and passed for being comfortably off, that is, for peasants.

He came back several times to visit them, and little by little became the confidant of the wife. He brought her papers and books, being surprised to find that she had some ideas, or rather remains of ideas, which scarcely seemed those of her class. She was,

however, neither well read, intelligent nor witty, but there seemed to be, in the depths of her memory, traces of forgotten thoughts, a slumbering recollection of a bye-gone education. One day, she asked him his name:

"I am the Count de X...," he said. Moved by the obscure vanity which is lodged deep in all souls, she replied:

"I too am noble."

Then she went on, speaking for certainly the first time in her life, of this piece of ancient history, unknown to anyone.

"I am the daughter of a colonel. My husband was a non-commissioned officer in my father's regiment. I fell in love with him, and we ran away together.

"And you came here?"

"Yes, we hid ourselves."

"And you have never seen your family since?"

"Oh no! don't you see my husband was a deserter."

"You have never written to anyone?"

"Oh no!"

"And you have never heard anyone speak of your family, of your father, or mother?"

"Oh no, mama was dead."

This woman had preserved a certain childishness, the simplicity of those who throw themselves into love, as if over a precipice.

He asked again:

"You have never told this to anyone?"

She answered: "Oh no! I can say it now, because Maurice is deaf. As long as, he could hear, I should not have dared to mention it. Besides, I have never seen anyone but the peasants since I ran away."

"At least, then, you have been happy?"

"Oh yes; very happy. I have been very happy. I have never regretted anything."

Well, I also had gone last year to visit this woman, this couple, as one goes to gaze at some miraculous relic.

I had contemplated with surprise, sadness, and even a little disgust, this woman who had followed this man, this rustic Adonis, attracted by his hussar uniform, and who had continued to see him under his peasant's rags, with the blue dolman slung over his back, sword at his side, and the high boot with clanking spur.

She had, however, become a peasant herself. In the depths of this wilderness, she had become perfectly accustomed to this life without luxuries, without charm, or delicacy of any sort, she had adapted herself to these simple manners. And she loved him still. She had become a woman of the people, in cap and coarse petticoat. Seated on a straw-bottomed chair at a wooden table, she eat a mess of cabbage, potatoes and bacon from an earthenware plate. She slept on a straw mattress beside him.

She had never thought of anything but him! She had regretted neither ornaments, nor silks, nor elegance, nor soft chairs, nor the perfumed warmth of well-curtained rooms, nor repose in a comfortable bed. She had never needed anything but him! As long as he was there, she had wanted nothing else!

She was quite young when she abandoned life, the world, and those who had brought her up and loved her. Alone with him she had come to this savage ravine. And he had been everything to her, everything that could be longed for, dreamt of, expected, ceaselessly hoped for. He had filled her life with happiness from one end to another. She could not have been happier.

Now I was going for the second time to see her again, filled with the surprise, and the vague contempt, with which she inspired me.

She lived near the Hyères road, on the opposite slope of the mountain on which stands the Chartreuse de la Verne; and another carriage was awaiting me on this

road, for the deep track we had followed, had now ceased and become a mere footpath, only accessible to pedestrians and mules.

I started therefore alone, on foot, and with slow steps to climb the mountains. I was in a delightful wood, a real Corsican thicket, a fairy tale wood composed of flowering creepers, aromatic plants with powerful scents, and huge magnificent trees.

The granite fragments in the track sparkled as they rolled beneath my steps, and in the openings between the branches, I saw sudden peeps of wide gloomy valleys full of verdure, winding lengthily away to the distance.

I was warm, the quick blood flowed within my flesh, I felt it coursing through my veins, burning, rapid, alert, rhythmical and alluring as a song; the vast song brutish and gay, of life in movement under the sun. I was happy, I was strong, I quickened my pace, climbed the rocks, ran, jumped, and discovered every minute a larger view, a more gigantic network of desert valleys, from whence not one single chimney sent up a wreath of smoke.

Then I reached the top, dominated by other heights, and after making some circuit, perceived on the slope of the mountain before me, a bleak ruin, a heap of dark stones, and of ancient buildings supported by lofty arcades. To reach it, it was necessary to go round a large ravine, and to cross a chestnut grove. The trees, old as the abbey itself, enormous, mutilated and dying, had survived the building. Some have fallen, no longer able to sustain the weight of years; others, beheaded, have now only a hollow trunk in which ten men could conceal themselves. And they look like a formidable army of giants, who in spite of age and thunderbolts are ready still to attempt the assault of the skies. In this fantastic wood one feels the mouldy touch of centuries, the old, old life of the rotting roots, amidst which, at the feet of these colossal stumps, nothing can grow. For amongst the grey trunks the ground is of hard stones and a blade of grass is rare.

Here are two fenced springs, or fountains, kept as drinking places for the cows.

I approach the abbey, and find myself face to face with the old buildings, the most ancient of which date back to the 12th century, while the more recent are inhabited by a family of shepherds.

In the first court, one sees by the traces of animals, that a remnant of life still haunts the spot; then after traversing crumbling and tumbling halls, like those of all ruins, one reaches the cloister, a long and low walk still under cover, surrounding a tangled square of brambles and tall grasses. In no spot in the world, have I felt such a weight of melancholy press upon my heart, as in this ancient and sinister cloister, true pacing court of monks. Certainly, the form of the arcades and the proportions of the place contribute to my emotion, to my heartache, and sadden my soul by their action on my eyes, exactly as the happy curve of some cheering bit of architecture would rejoice them. The man who built this retreat must have been possessed with a despairing heart, to have an inspiration so desolate and dreary. One would fain weep and groan within these walls, one longs to suffer, to reopen all the wounds of one's heart, to enlarge and make the very utmost of all the sorrows compressed within it.

I climbed upon a breach in the wall to see the view outside, and I understood my emotion. Nothing living around, nothing anywhere but death. Behind the abbey, a mountain ascending up to the sky, around the ruins the chestnut grove, in front a valley, and beyond that, more valleys,—pines, pines, an ocean of pines, and on the far horizon, pines still on the mountain tops.

And I left the place.

I crossed next a wood of cork trees, where, a year ago, I had experienced a shock of strong and moving surprise.

It was on a grey day of October, at the time when they strip the bark of these trees, to make corks of it. They strip them thus from the foot to the first branches, and the denuded trunk becomes red, a blood red as of a flayed limb. They have grotesque

and twisted shapes; the look of maimed creatures writhing in epileptic fits, and I suddenly fancied myself transported into a forest of tormented beings, a bleeding and Dantesque forest of hell, where men had roots, where bodies deformed by torture, resembled trees, where life ebbed incessantly, in never-ending torment by these bleeding wounds, which produced upon me the tension of the nerves and faintness that sensitive people feel at the sudden sight of blood, or the unexpected shock of a man crushed, or fallen from a roof. And this emotion was so keen, this sensation so vivid, that I imagined I heard distracting cries and plaints, distant and innumerable; I touched one of these trees, to reassure my fainting spirit, and I fancied, I beheld my hand, as I drew it back, covered with blood.

To-day they are cured—till the next barking.

At length the road appears, passing near the farm which has sheltered the long happiness of the non-commissioned officer of hussars, and the Colonel's daughter.

From afar, I recognize the old man walking among the vines. So much the better; the wife will be alone in the house.

The servant was washing in front of the door.

"Your mistress is here," I said.

She replied, with a singular look, in the accent of the south:

"No, sir; since six months she is no more."

"She is dead?"

"Yes, sir."

"And of what?"

The woman hesitated, then muttered:

"She is dead—dead, I tell you."

"But of what?"

"Of a fall, then!"

"A fall! where from?"

"From the window."

I gave her a few pence.

"Tell me about it," I said.

No doubt she strongly wished to talk of it, no doubt, too, she had often repeated this history for the last six months, for she retailed it at great length, as a story well-known by heart and invariable in its repetition.

Then I learnt that for thirty years, the old deaf man had had a mistress in the neighbouring village, and that his wife having learnt this by chance from a passing carter, who spoke of it without knowing who she was, rushed panting and bewildered to the attic, and there hurled herself from the window, not perhaps with deliberate purpose, but impelled by the torture of the horrible agony caused by her discovery, which goaded her forward in an irresistible gust of passion, like a whip lashing and cutting. She had flown up the staircase, burst open the door, and without knowing, without being able to stop her headlong speed, had continued to run straight ahead and had leaped into empty space.

He had known nothing of it; he did not know even now; he would never know, because he was deaf. His wife was dead, that was all. All the world must die some time or other!

I could see him at a distance giving orders by signs to his labourers.

Then I caught sight of the carriage which was waiting for me in the shade of a tree, and I returned to Saint-Tropez.

April 14th.

I was going to bed yesterday evening, although it was only nine o'clock, when a telegram was handed to me. A friend, one of my dearest, sent me this message: "I am at Monte-Carlo for four days, and have been telegraphing to you at every port on

the coast. Come to me at once."

And behold, the wish to see him, the longing to talk, to laugh, to gossip about society, about things, about people; the longing to slander, to criticize, to blame, to judge, to chatter, was alight within me in a moment, like a conflagration. On that morning, even, I should have been furious at this recall, yet in the evening I was enchanted at it; I wished myself already there, with the great dining-room of the restaurant full of people before my eyes, and in my ears that murmur of voices in which the numbers of the roulette table dominate all other phrases, like the Dominus vobiscum of the church services.

I called Bernard.

"We shall start at about four o'clock in the morning for Monaco," I said to him.

He replied philosophically:

"If it is fine, sir."

"It will be fine."

"The barometer is going down, though."

"Pooh! it will go up again."

The mariner smiled an incredulous smile.

I went to bed and to sleep.

It was I who woke the men. It was dark, and a few clouds hid the sky. The barometer had gone down still more.

The two men shook their heads with a distrustful air.

I repeated:

"Pooh! it will be fine. Come, let us be off!"

Bernard said:

"When I can see the open, I know what I am about; but here, in this harbour, at the

end of this gulf, one knows nothing, sir, one can see nothing; there might be a fearful sea on, without our knowing anything about it."

I replied:

"The barometer has gone down, therefore we shall not have an east wind. Now, if we have a west wind, we can put into Agay, which is only six or seven miles off." The men did not seem much reassured; however, they got ready to start.

"Shall we take the dingy on deck," asked Bernard.

"No, you will see it will be quite fine. Let it tow astern as usual."

A quarter of an hour later, we had quitted the harbour, and were running through the entrance of the gulf, to a light and intermittent breeze.

I laughed.

"Well you see, the weather is good enough."

Soon, we had passed the black and white tower built upon the Rabiou shoal, and although sheltered by Cape Camarat which runs far out into the open sea, and of which the flashing light appeared from minute to minute, the Bel-Ami was already lifted forwards by long powerful slow waves; those hills of water which move on, one behind the other, without noise, without shock, without foam, menacing without fury, alarming in their very tranquillity.

One saw nothing, one only felt the ascent and descent of the yacht over the dark and silently moving waters.

Bernard said:

"There has been a gale out at sea to-night, sir; we shall be lucky if we get in without accident."

The day broke brightly over the wild crowding waves, and we all three looked anxiously seawards to see if the squall were returning.

All this time the boat was running a great pace before the wind and with the tide.

Already Agay appeared on our beam, and we held counsel whether we should make for Cannes, to escape the rough weather, or for Nice, running to seaward of the isles.

Bernard would have preferred Cannes: but as the breeze did not freshen, I decided in favour of Nice.

For three hours all went well; though the poor little yacht rolled like a cork in the awful swell.

No one who is unacquainted with the open sea, that sea of mountains, moving with weighty and rapid strides, separated by valleys which change place from second to second, filled up and formed again incessantly, can guess, can imagine the mysterious, redoubtable, terrifying and superb force of the waves.

Our little dingy followed far behind us, at the extremity of forty yards of hawser, through this liquid and dancing chaos. We lost sight of it every moment, then suddenly it would reappear perched on the summit of a wave, floating along like a great white bird.

Here is Cannes in the depth of its bay, Saint-Honorat with its tower standing up among the waves, and before us the Cape d'Antibes.

The breeze freshened little by little, and the crests of the waves became flocks of sheep, those snowy sheep which move so fast, and of which the countless troop careers along without dog or shepherd under the endless sky.

Bernard said to me:

"It will be all we shall do to make Antibes."

And indeed seas began to break over us, with inexpressible and violent noise. The sharp squalls shook us, throwing us into yawning gulfs, whence as we emerged, we righted ourselves with terrible shocks.

The gaff was lowered, but at every oscillation of the yacht, the boom touched the waves and seemed ready to tear away the mast, which if it should fly away with the

sail, would leave us to float alone and lost upon the wild waves.

Bernard cried out:

"The dingy, sir."

I turned to look. A huge wave filled it, rolled it over, enveloped it in foam as if it would devour it, and, breaking the hawser by which it was made fast to us, took possession of it, half sinking, drowned; a conquered prey which it will presently throw upon the rocks down there, below the headland.

The minutes seem hours. Nothing can be done, we must go on, round the point in front of us, and when we have done that, we shall be sheltered, and in safety.

At last we reach it! The sea is now calm and smooth, protected as it is by the long tongue of rocks and earth which forms the Cape of Antibes.

There is the harbour from which we started only a few days ago, although it seems to me we have been voyaging for months, and we enter just as noon is striking.

The men are radiant on finding themselves back again, though Bernard repeats at every other moment:

"Ah, sir! our poor little boat; it went to my heart, to see it go down like that!"

As for me, I took the four o'clock train, to go and dine with my friend in the principality of Monaco.

I wish I had time to write at length about this surprising state; smaller than many a village in France, but wherein one may find an absolute sovereign, bishops, an army of Jesuits and seminarists more numerous than that of the ruler; an artillery, the guns of which are nearly all rifled, an etiquette more ceremonious than that of his lamented Majesty Louis XIV., principles of authority more despotic than those of William of Prussia, joined to a magnificent toleration for the vices of humanity, on which indeed, live both sovereign, bishops, Jesuits, seminarists, ministers, army, magistrates, every one in short.

Hail to this great pacific monarch, who without fear of invasion or revolution, reigns peacefully over his happy little flock of subjects, in the midst of court ceremonies which preserve intact the traditions of the four reverences, the twenty-six handkissings, and all the forms used once upon a time around Great Rulers.

This monarch, moreover, is neither sanguinary nor vindictive, and when he banishes, for he does banish sometimes, the measure is put in force with the utmost delicacy.

Is a proof needful?

An obstinate player, on a day of ill luck, insulted the sovereign. A decree was issued for his expulsion.

During a whole month, he prowled around the forbidden Paradise, fearing the sword blade of the archangel, in the guise of the sabre of the policeman. One day, however, he hardened his heart, crossed the frontier, reached the very centre of the kingdom in thirty seconds, and penetrated into the precincts of the Casino. But suddenly an official stopped him:

"Are you not banished, sir?"

"Yes, sir, but I leave by the next train."

"Oh! in that case it is all right. You can go in."

And every week he came back: and each time, the same functionary asked him the same question, to which he invariably gave the same answer.

Could justice be more gentle?

Within the last few years, however, a very serious and novel case occurred within the kingdom.

This was an assassination.

A man, a native of Monaco, not one of the wandering strangers of whom one meets legions on these shores—a husband, in a moment of anger, killed his wife; killed her

without rhyme or reason, without any excuse that could be accepted.

Indignation was unanimous throughout the principality.

The Supreme Court met to judge this exceptional case (a murder had never taken place before), and the wretch was with one voice, condemned to death.

The indignant sovereign ratified the sentence.

There only remained to execute the criminal. Then arose a difficulty. The country possessed neither guillotine nor executioner.

What was to be done? By the advice of the minister of Foreign affairs, the Prince opened negotiations with France to obtain the loan of a headsman and his apparatus.

Long deliberations took place in the ministry at Paris. At last they replied by sending an estimate of the cost of moving the woodwork and the practitioner. The whole amounted to sixteen thousand francs (six hundred and forty pounds).

The Monarch of Monaco reflected that the operation would cost him dear; the assassin was certainly not worth that price. Sixteen thousand francs for the head of a wretch like that! Never!

The same request was addressed to the Italian government. A King and a brother would no doubt show himself less exacting than a Republic.

The Italian government sent in a bill which amounted to twelve thousand francs, (four hundred and eighty pounds).

Twelve thousand francs! It would be necessary to impose a new tax, a tax of two francs (twenty pence) a head! This would be enough to cause serious, and hitherto unknown trouble in the State.

Then they bethought them of having the villain beheaded by a simple soldier. But the general, on being consulted, replied hesitatingly, that perhaps his men had scarcely sufficient practice to acquit themselves satisfactorily of a task, which undoubtedly demanded great experience in the handling of the sword.

Then the Prince again assembled the Supreme Court, and submitted to it this embarrassing case.

They deliberated long, without finding any practical way out of the difficulty. At last the first president proposed to commute the sentence of death, to that of lifelong imprisonment, and the measure was adopted.

But they did not possess a prison. It was necessary to fit one up, and a gaoler was appointed who took charge of the prisoner.

For six months all went well. The captive slept all day on a straw mattress in the nook arranged for him, and his guardian lazily reclined upon a chair before the door, while he watched the passers-by.

The Prince, however, is economical—extravagance is not his greatest fault—and he has accurate accounts laid before him of the smallest expenses of his State (the list of them is not a long one). They handed him, therefore, the bill of the expenses incurred in the creation of this new function, the cost of the prison, the prisoner, and the watchman. The salary of this last was a heavy burden on the budget of the Sovereign.

At first he merely made a wry face over it; but when he reflected that this might go on for ever (the prisoner was young), he requested his Minister of Justice to take measures to suppress the expense.

The minister consulted the President of the Tribunal, and the two agreed to suppress the expense of a gaoler. The prisoner, thus invited to guard himself, could not fail to escape, which would solve the question to the satisfaction of all parties.

The gaoler was therefore restored to his family, and it became the duty of a scullion from the palace kitchen, to carry to the prisoner his morning and evening meals. But the captive made no attempt to recover his liberty.

Finally, one day, as they had neglected to furnish him with food, they beheld him tranquilly appear at the palace to claim it; and from that day forward, it became his

habit to come at meal-times to the palace, to eat with the servants, whose friend he became, and thus save the cook the trouble of the walk to and fro.

After breakfast, he would take a turn as far as Monte Carlo. He sometimes went into the Casino, to venture a five-franc piece on the green cloth. When he had won, he gave himself a good dinner at one of the most fashionable hotels; then he returned to his prison, carefully locking his door on the inside.

He never slept away a single night.

The situation became a little puzzling, not for the convict, but for the judges.

The court assembled afresh, and it was decided that they should invite the criminal to leave the State of Monaco.

When this decision was announced to him, he simply replied:

"You are pleased to be facetious. Well! and what would become of me in that case? I have no longer any means of subsistence. I have no longer a family. What would you have me do? I was condemned to death. You did not choose to execute me. I made no complaint. I was afterwards condemned to imprisonment for life, and placed in the hands of a gaoler. You took away my guardian. Again I made no complaint.

"Now, to-day, you want to turn me out of the country. Not if I know it. I am a prisoner, your prisoner, judged and condemned by you. I am faithfully fulfilling my sentence. I remain here."

The Supreme Court was floored. The Prince was in a terrible rage, and ordered fresh measures to be taken.

Deliberations were resumed.

Then, at last, they decided to offer to the culprit a pension of six hundred francs (twenty-four pounds), if he would leave the State and live elsewhere.

He accepted.

He has rented a little plot five minutes' walk from the kingdom of his former sovereign, and lives happily upon his property, cultivating a few vegetables, and despising all potentates.

However, the Court of Monaco has profited, though a little late, by this experience, and has made a treaty with the French Government, by which they send their convicts over to France, who keeps them out of sight, in consideration of a modest compensation.

In the judicial archives of the principality, one is shown the decree which settles the pension, by which the rascal was induced to leave the State of Monaco.

Opposite to the palace, rises the rival establishment, the Roulette. There is, however, no hatred, no hostility between them; for the one supports the other, which in return protects the first. Admirable example! unique instance of two neighbouring and powerful families living in peace in one tiny state: an example well calculated to efface the remembrance of the Capulets and the Montagues. Here, the house of the sovereign; there, the house of play; the old and the new society fraternizing to the sound of gold.

The saloons of the Casino are as readily opened to strangers, as those of the Prince are difficult of access.

I turn to the first.

A noise of money, continuous as that of the waves, a noise at once deep, light and terrible, fills the ears from the moment one enters, then fills the soul, stirs the heart, troubles the mind, and bewilders thought. Everywhere this sound, this singing, crying, calling, tempting, rending sound.

Around the tables, a motley crowd of players, the scum of every continent and of every society; mixed with princes, or future kings, women of fashion, bourgeois, money lenders, disreputable women; a mixture unique in the world, of men of all races, of all castes, of all kinds, of every origin; a perfect museum of adventurers

from Russia, Brazil, Chili, Italy, Spain, Germany; of old women with reticules, of disreputable young ones carrying little bags containing keys, a handkerchief, and the three last five-franc pieces which are kept for the green cloth, when the vein of luck shall chance to return.

I approached the first table, and saw ... a pale face, with lined forehead, and hard-set lip; features convulsed, with an expression of evil ... the young woman of Agay bay, the beautiful sweetheart of the sunny wood, and the moonlit bay. He, too, is there, seated before her, his hand resting on a few napoleons.

"Play on the first square," said she.

He inquired anxiously:

"All?"

"Yes, all."

He placed the coins in a little heap.

The croupier turned the wheel. The ball ran, danced, and stopped.

"Nothing further counts," jerks forth the voice, which resumes after a moment:

"Twenty-eight."

The young woman started, and in a hard, sharp tone said:

"Come away."

He rose, and without looking at her, followed her; and one felt that some dreadful thing had sprung up between them.

Some one remarked:

"Good-bye to love. They don't look as if they were of one mind to-day."

A hand taps me on the shoulder. I turn round. It is my friend.

I have only now to ask pardon for having thus trespassed on my reader by talking so much of myself. I had written this journal of day-dreams entirely for myself, or

rather, I had taken advantage of my floating solitude, to capture the wandering ideas which are wont to traverse our minds, like birds on the wing.

But I am asked to publish these few pages, which, unconnected, deficient in composition and in art, follow one after the other without a reason, and abruptly conclude without a motive; simply because a squall of wind put an end to my voyage.

I have yielded to this request. Perhaps I am wrong.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK AFLOAT (SUR L'EAU) ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG™ LICENSE

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg

electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License

included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or

hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg electronic works provided that:

• You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.” • You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works. •

You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work. • You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY

DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement,

and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg

Project Gutenberg is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg's goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 41 Watchung Plaza #516, Montclair

NJ 07042, USA, +1 (862) 621-9288. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks,

online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate.

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.